Hispanic Heritage Month Sept. 15-Oct. 15

In early September, 1974, President Gerald R. Ford declared Sept. 10-16 National Hispanic Heritage Week. This tradition was “upgraded” 14 years later when, on August 17, 1988, Congress authorized the nation’s Hispanic Heritage Month with the dates September 15-October 15.

Faced with tons of ideas while looking for material for this article, I decided to start with a definition of the term “Hispanic.”

This may have been a mistake, because you can find a different definition with each book or web search you try. And that’s after you have decided not to debate the differences between the official “Hispanic” and the popular “Latino.”

One usable definition I found was: “a person of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central American, South American or other Spanish-speaking culture.”

Very often the term is used referring to all populations with ancestral ties to Spain, Latin America or the Spanish-speaking Caribbean.

But what does that tell us about how we should look at National Hispanic Heritage Month? There are about 28 Hispanic countries in the world, and more than 37 million people in the U.S. who claim ancestral ties to one or more of those countries.

How do you take so many different backgrounds and get a single “Hispanic Culture?” It’s too easy to dismiss that question with “you don’t.”

It’s as silly to think you can find a single accepted Hispanic culture as it is to assume that such a culture exists for only 31 days in September and October.

But we can use the general idea of what Hispanic Culture is as a jumping off point to explore the diverse cultures that go into it...just as we can use Sept. 15-Oct. 15 as the time to begin a rewarding and ongoing exploration.

—Sandra Hanson
TCC Student

“TELL ME, I’LL FORGET
TEACH ME, I’LL REMEMBER,
INVOLVE ME, I’LL LEARN”

—BENJAMIN FRANKLIN
MECA has new director, other changes for 2005

Lisa Shyne, former Assistant Director and Lead Education Planner of Multi-ethnic and Cultural Affairs, was appointed MECA Director this summer.

Lisa took over the director’s duties in July, replacing Fred Davis, who left the college for the private sector. “Fred left difficult shoes to fill, and we will all miss him,” Lisa said, “but I am enjoying the challenges of my new role, and am excited about working with our great students this fall.”

In other changes, MECA’s education planner, Chris Stancich, is now based in the Advising-Counseling Center in Building 18, while former neighbors, the Tutoring Center, have joined forces with the Writing Center and moved to the second floor of Building 7.

In their stead, CASA Student Support Services has joined MECA on the top floor of Building 11. They join a neighborhood that includes International Student Services, the Study Abroad program, and Outreach Services.

MECA will continue to offer great services for students, including:

♦ A scholarship search service, to help students learn to find grants and scholarship and then present an effective application.
♦ The emergency book loan, helping students buy books with short-term loans.
♦ Peer advocates to help students find and access TCC resources.
♦ Support for culturally focused clubs such as the Black Student Union, Pride and Allies, The Russian Club, Native American Student Council and others.

MECA/CASA Open House planned for Oct. 28th

The Multi-ethnic and Cultural Affairs Center and the CASA Center will have an open house for students staff and faculty 1:30-3:30p on Friday, October 28. Drop by our office on the top floor of Building 11, meet our staff, and find out more about our services.

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Don’t forget the Club Fair, part of WELCOME WEEK, Sept 28 in the Student Center. If your club celebrates a culture, drop by MECA to see how we can help!

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MECA Staff

Director---------------------------------------------Lisa Shyne
Education Planner---------------------------------Chris Stancich
Office Assistant------------------------------Jamie Burks