

# NATIONAL LATINO MEDIA COUNCIL

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## PRESS RELEASE

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### **NATIONAL LATINO MEDIA COUNCIL ENCOURAGED BUT NOT SATISFIED WITH PROGRESS ON NETWORK TELEVISION**

Los Angeles, CA – The National Latino Media Council (NLMC) today released its sixth annual report card, grading ABC, NBC, CBS, and FOX on their performance in promoting diversity at their networks. The report includes grades for each network for Latino actors in regular and recurring roles. It also graded performance for directors, writers/producers, entertainment executives, program development, procurement, and overall network commitment to diversity.

“ABC has done an excellent job of bringing Latino regulars to their primetime shows, helped of course by the many regulars on ‘The George Lopez Show’ and ‘Freddie,’” said Esteban Torres, Chair of the NLMC. “These are quality roles and ABC is running these programs in Spanish on SAP.” In English, they are also having some of the characters speaking Spanish, a realistic reflection of the way we communicate. Kudos to Steve McPhearson and his Executives for presenting us in an organic, three dimensional fashion.”

“NBC has an incredible number of Latino Directors doing a huge number of episodes,” stated Jerry Velasco, President of Nosotros, one of the thirteen advocacy, civil rights organizations under the NLMC umbrella. “CBS has also come on strong. It has the highest number of recurring Latino Actors working on their shows, the second highest number of Latino Directors, along with the second highest number of episodes directed by these talented individuals.”

“FOX has the highest procurement numbers of all the networks,” said Alex Nogales, President/CEO of the National Hispanic Media Coalition, they are three million dollars over their nearest competitor. “When you consider they started in last place, this is outstanding news.” FOX acting numbers in both regular and recurring categories are down, but Peter Liguori, President of Entertainment, is making development deals with prominent Latino Producers, which is expected will bring their numbers up again.

“With the population of 14% and a purchasing power of 700 billion dollars a year, the efforts of the networks to be inclusive point to an understanding of the importance of the Latino community,” Torres pointed out. “We thank all four networks for their continued commitment to the diversity initiatives, but expect better numbers in the next reporting period. Remember, this is not our first, but our sixth annual report. The overall grades for all four networks are encouraging, but performance still lags behind in proportion to our population. In other words, we still have a long ways to go.”

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#### **National Latino Media Council Member Organizations:**

Cuban American National Foundation \* LULAC \* Mexican American Grocers Association \*  
Mexican American Legal Defense & Education Fund \* National Association of Hispanic Publications \*  
National Association of Latino Independent Producers \* National Council of La Raza \* National Hispanic Media Coalition \*  
National Puerto Rican Coalition \* Nosotros \* Puerto Rican Legal Defense & Education Fund \* National Association of Latino Elected Officials \*  
\*Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute\*

## National Latino Media Council - 2005

	<i>ABC</i>	<i>NBC</i>	<i>CBS</i>	<i>FOX</i>
Actors:	<b>A</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>B+</b>	<b>C-</b>
Writers & Producers:	<b>A-</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>B</b>
Directors:	<b>C</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>B+</b>	<b>C</b>
Program Development	<b>A</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>B</b>
Procurement	<b>C</b>	<b>A-</b>	<b>I</b>	<b>A</b>
Entertainment Executives	<b>A</b>	<b>I</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>C-</b>
Network Commitment to Diversity Initiatives	<b>A</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>A</b>
<b>Overall</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C+</b>	<b>C+</b>	<b>C+</b>

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## **Alex Nogales, National Latino Media Council**

Good morning ladies and gentlemen, it's a pleasure to have you all here. Unfortunately, our Chair Esteban Torres cannot join us this morning because of an emergency. I will carry on in his absence.

The National Latino Media Council is made up of thirteen of the largest Latino advocacy civil rights organizations in the nation. They are: the Cuban American National Foundation; League of United Latin American Citizens; also known as LULAC, Mexican American Legal Defense & Education Fund; National Association of Hispanic Publications; National Association of Latino Independent Producers; National Council of La Raza; National Hispanic Media Coalition; National Puerto Rican Coalition; Nosotros; Puerto Rican Legal Defense & Education Fund; National Association of Latino Elected Officials; the Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute, and Mexican American Opportunity Foundation.

This report and the grades earned by the four major networks are based on information provided by them. The report focuses only on the primetime scripted programs from Fall of 2004 to Fall of 2005. It grades the networks in all categories, on numbers reflective of where they are as of this date. Given that we are in the sixth year of the diversity initiatives, the National Latino Media Council continues to set the bar higher based on reasonable expectations that performance should be better by this time.

Let me start by saying that there has been incremental progress at all four networks in terms of American Latinos. All four earned an A for "Commitment to Diversity Initiatives." This grade is given based on two criteria: One, institutional programs and measures taken to bring Latinos into the employment ranks both in front and in back of camera. Two, out and out performance, that is, actual hiring, concrete and measurable. Let me now go through the networks one at a time.

## **ABC**

ABC is by far and away the leader in diversifying its workforce both in front and back of camera. Their Actor numbers in both regular and recurring roles are sky high, not only are these numbers high, but as you all know the quality of those roles are impressive. This is also the only network that has two Latino themed programs, The George Lopez Show and Freddie. Additionally, they are bringing American Latinos into the mainstream by realistically portraying us in a three dimensional fashion, to include the Spanish that many of us speak in the majority of metropolitan areas. And if that were not enough, all of their programming can now be seen in Spanish on SAP. Now what they need is the American Latino bilingual audience to tune into these programs so that their viewers continue to increase. We congratulate Steve McPherson, Alex Wallau and their team for their vision, their leadership, and their keen business insight in taking ABC to the top of the diversity ladder.

ABC is also the leader in the Writer/Producer category and they have the highest number of Latino Entertainment Executives among the networks. Where they are down is in the Directors category and in their procurement numbers. We've spoken to the leadership of ABC and they are already busy exploring new and creative ways to fix this situation.

## NBC

NBC has always been one of the leaders in the diversity initiatives and under Kevin Riley this year is no exception. They have huge numbers in the acting category, the second largest number of American Latinos in regular roles and the highest number of Latinos in recurring roles. Most notably is the incredible number of Latino Directors working on NBC programs and the incredible number of episodes they are directing. They also have the second highest procurement numbers and continue to seek new ways of bringing not only Latinos but other people of color into their workforce. As you noticed, they have an incomplete in the Entertainment Executives Category, and that is lamentable because it brings down their overall grade.

## CBS

CBS has the highest recurring number of Latino Actors working on their shows, the second highest number of Latino Directors, along with the second highest number of episodes directed by these folks. They get high marks for the number of highly placed Entertainment Executives – as many of you know the President of Entertainment, Nina Tassler, is Latina. She is sensitive to Latino and other people of color concerns, and is moving rapidly to try and catch up with the diversity leader, ABC. They also have an incomplete in the procurement column and this mark brings down their overall grade. We have a tentative meeting with CBS' Procurement Executives this month and we hope to resolve this issue once and for all.

## FOX

The highest procurement numbers of all the networks are posted by FOX. They are three million dollars ahead of their nearest competitor. We commend them for that, especially since they started lower than the other networks. They have also posted the highest number of program development deals among the networks, which is a reflection of their new President of Entertainment Peter Liguori's commitment to make FOX more competitive than it already is. Their acting numbers have slipped in both the regulars and recurring categories and we look to Peter to bring them up to reasonable levels.

## **SUMMARY**

The number of American Latinos both in front and back of camera have increased, but they are incremental numbers in proportion to our population. The diversity programs that were begun four and five years ago are now bearing fruit and it is not unreasonable to expect that the present numbers will continue to climb and that there will be no backsliding. We want to make it very clear to everyone that diversity programs are fine, but that we grade on performance, not solely on good intentions. The hiring of American Latinos has to accelerate and it isn't just because of the jobs involved, it is because we will be treated as we are perceived and as many of you know,

Latinos are not perceived in a favorable light by a vocal group of people that unfortunately appear on the news on a regular basis and who are helped along by some television anchors masquerading as objective reporters. Who we are, what we are and what we contribute to our nation has to be more clear, more three dimensional so that this perception counters the view of the bigots among us.

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