Hispanic Heritage Celebration September 19 at ABAC

TIFTON – The Hispanic Heritage Celebration at Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College will celebrate its 10th year on Sept. 19. The schedule of events will take place from 9:30 a.m.-3:15 p.m. and will feature guest speakers and entertainment.

Hispanic Heritage Day will begin with the viewing of a documentary in Howard Auditorium led by producer John J. Valadez, from 9:30-10:45 a.m. Valadez has been producing and directing award-winning broadcast documentaries for the Public Broadcasting System (PBS) and CNN for the past 14 years. He has been a New York Foundation for the Arts Fellow twice, as well as a Rockefeller Fellow, a PBS/CPB Producers Academy Fellow, and a founding member of the National Association of Latino Independent Producers (NALIP). He currently sits on the Board of Trustees of the Robert Flaherty Film Seminar.

The Hispanic Heritage Day celebration will take place in the Meadows from 11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. with a sampling of traditional and authentic Hispanic food and the presentation of the flags by students of the College Assistance Migrant Program (CAMP). This event is open to the
community and will feature guest speaker Santiago Márquez, vice president and chief operating officer of the Georgia Hispanic Chamber of Commerce (GHCC) in Atlanta.

Márquez joined GHCC in 2008. His main functions include daily operations and development. He came from Boys & Girls Clubs of America, where he worked for four years as the Director of Latino Outreach. He has earned his BA from Georgia State University. He is a native of Cuba, though he has resided in the United States since 1971.

From 2 – 3:15 p.m. a symposium will be held in Howard Auditorium on the Impact of Latino Americans in the United States with panelists Dr. Ricardo Cámara Sánchez, Consul-General of Mexico in Atlanta; Eduardo Díaz, Director of the Smithsonian Latino Center in Washington, D.C.; Dr. Carlos Rodríguez, Senior Associate with the Excelencia in Education Foundation, Washington, D.C.; and Dr. Victor Aurelio Zúñiga González, Author, Director of Research and Extension Division at the University of Monterrey, Mexico; moderated by Márquez.

Sánchez earned a degree in law in 1976 and his Ph.D. in law from the National Autonomous University in Mexico in 2000. He also holds degrees in international political relations from Institut International d’Administration Publique in Paris, France in 1978 and the American Law University of New Mexico in 1993. He joined the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1975 and the Mexican Foreign Service in 1977. He has served in various positions through both government agencies, most recently receiving the rank of Ambassador of the Mexican Foreign Service in April 2012. He received his current post as Consul General of Mexico in Atlanta in 2011.

Díaz is the director of the Smithsonian Latino Center and a 30-year veteran of the arts administration. He is an advisor to the Smithsonian’s secretary and undersecretary for history, art
and culture, as well as to Congress and other governmental agencies of cultural development
issues related to Latino communities in the United States. He earned a law degree in 1976 from
the University of California, Davis, and a bachelor’s degree in 1972 in Latin American Studies at
San Diego State University.

Rodríguez is a principal research scientist for American Institutes for Research. He is recognized as a national expert and scholar on equity, access and educational attainment of
minority populations across the education spectrum. Over the past 20 years, his research and
evaluation expertise has focused on minority student success in science, technology, engineering
and mathematics (STEM) in the post-secondary arena. He received his Ph.D. in Higher
Education from the University of Arizona and his Master’s degree in Bicultural and Bilingual
Studies from the University of Texas at San Antonio.

González is a professor at the University of Monterrey in Mexico. He is an expert in
migrations and serves as the head of the Georgia Project, established in 1997 in Dalton to
address the dual issues of the city's growing Hispanic student population with little or
nonexistent English proficiency and a lack of resources for educating those children. The
program centers on a teacher exchange with Mexico. The program is a nonprofit organization
recognized nationally as a leader in multicultural education. He received a bachelor’s degree in
education from the University of Monterrey; a Master’s degree in sociology from the University
of Paris; and a Ph.D. in sociology of education and culture from the University of Paris.

Hispanic Heritage Month begins on Sept. 15, the anniversary of independence for five
Latin American countries: Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua.
Mexico declared its independence on Sept. 16 and Chile on Sept. 18. The national celebration
ends on Oct. 12 with the observation of the date that Christopher Columbus discovered America.