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*Diane Portnoy*  
*President and CEO*

## **Institute for Immigration Research Launched at George Mason University**

MALDEN, Mass, April 11, 2012 / A new institute to conduct research about immigrants and their contributions in the United States was launched this month as a joint venture between George Mason University and The Immigrant Learning Center, Inc. (ILC) of Mass.

The Institute for Immigration Research will conduct unbiased research to educate policymakers, media, teachers, students and the business community about the contributions of immigrants as entrepreneurs, workers and consumers. Early research projects will include mapping immigrants' economic activity as well as examining the impact of immigrants in higher education on the economy.

The institute will be located within the College of Humanities and Social Sciences at George Mason University and will work closely with the Center for Social Science Research at Mason, a multidisciplinary research center that examines some of the most pressing social, behavioral and political problems facing contemporary society.

"With all of the heated rhetoric about immigration these days, academically-rigorous research results are needed to cool the discussion with objective information. The Institute for Immigration Research will fill that void," says research director James Witte, who is also a professor of sociology and director of the Center for Social Science Research at George Mason University.

Diane Portnoy, president and CEO of The Immigrant Learning Center, Inc., said of the joint venture, "This institute will expand on the work that's been done by The ILC's Public Education Institute. Since 2003, The Public Education Institute has educated the public and published research about immigrants' contributions as entrepreneurs, workers and consumers in Massachusetts and New England. It is time to expand the focus nation-wide, and I'm thrilled to have such a competent and well-respected partner as George Mason University."

Mason has a strong history of conducting scholarly research on immigration. The Center for Social Science Research has been home to the Mason Project on Immigration, which centers on the immigrant experience in the United States. Members of the project have been committed to furthering a reasoned, empirically informed discussion and debate about the role of immigrant groups within the contemporary United States. The project has focused on the immigrant experience in Northern Virginia, completing original research on Virginia's Latino community, sponsorship of intellectual events and speaking engagements, and introduction of new academic programs in the field of immigration studies.

### **About The Immigrant Learning Center, Inc.**

The Immigrant Learning Center, Inc. (ILC) of Malden, Mass, is a not-for-profit organization that helps immigrants and refugees become successful workers, parents and community members through direct service programs and public education. Our direct service program provides free, year-round English classes to immigrant and refugee adults in Greater Boston. The ILC further supports immigrants through the Public Education Institute, which informs Americans about the economic and social contributions of

immigrants in our society. For more information, visit the website <http://www.ilctr.org> and Facebook page <http://www.fb.com/ImmigrantLearningCenter>.

### **About George Mason University**

George Mason University is an innovative, entrepreneurial institution with global distinction in a range of academic fields. Located in Northern Virginia near Washington, D.C., Mason provides students access to diverse cultural experiences and the most sought-after internships and employers in the country. Mason offers strong undergraduate and graduate degree programs in education, engineering and information technology, organizational psychology, health care and visual and performing arts. With Mason professors conducting groundbreaking research in areas such as climate change, public policy and the biosciences, George Mason University is a leading example of the modern, public university. George Mason University—Where Innovation Is Tradition.

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