BGSU demographer devising new method for estimating illegal immigrants

At a time of often heated debate about immigration, having a system to regularly provide estimates of the illegal immigrant population has probably never been more important.

A BGSU demographer and two colleagues have been developing a new method for producing those numbers with the support of the U.S. Census Bureau.

Dr. Jennifer Van Hook, sociology, has been awarded $166,000 by the census bureau for her work with Jeffrey Passel of the Pew Hispanic Center and Dr. Frank Bean from the University of California-Irvine. The grant represents a renewal of an award she and her colleagues first received in 2003.

The government says, and Van Hook concurs, that close to 11 million immigrants are now in the country illegally. About 57 percent of them are from Mexico, and the total number is estimated to be growing by 450,000 per year.

Arriving at those figures entails some assumptions, but Van Hook hopes to make them firmer using a method that provides a yearly look at immigration rather than a net picture estimated over the 10 years between censuses.

"The U.S. Census Bureau always needs to have good population estimates, and you need to know how many illegal immigrants there are to refine those estimates," she says. But since the census doesn't ask if someone's an illegal immigrant, getting a count is "tricky," she adds.

The census does ask for place of birth, duration of residence in the United States and whether the person is a U.S. citizen, "so we have a pretty fair sense of the size of the foreign-born population," explains Van Hook, who earned a Ph.D. in sociology from the University of Texas in 1996 and has been at BGSU since 1999.

Administrative records—of births, deaths and naturalizations, for example—are used to develop estimates of the legally resident foreign-born population, which in 2000 numbered roughly 23.6 million. At the same time, the 2000 census indicated about 31 million foreign-born people were in the United States, leaving a difference that can be assumed is illegal immigrants—but with assumptions, she points out.

For instance, because foreign-born legal residents leave the country, too, an emigration estimate is built into the legal-resident count. The problem, however, is that the government stopped keeping actual records of "outmigration" of the legally resident foreign-born in the 1950s, so that factor may not be accurately estimated, according to Van Hook.

Described in the May issue of the journal Demography, her method for figuring emigration by that part of the population involves the use of the Current Population Survey (CPS), which is conducted by the census bureau for the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

The survey covers 60,000 households per month, and about 100,000 in a supplement each March, Van Hook says. Every household is interviewed four consecutive months, and again the following year. If occupants have moved from one year to the next, the new ones are interviewed but the survey notes that they are new residents at the address.

Thus, she continues, information is available about how many people have left surveyed households, whether by death, moving elsewhere in the country or leaving the country. And good estimates of deaths can be found at the National Center for Health Statistics, while internal migration numbers can be determined with data from the CPS, which asks where
interviewees lived the previous year. "The leftovers are those who move abroad," she adds, and in her new grant project, those estimates will be used—along with updated estimates of internal migration devised by Bean—to revise prior estimates of illegal immigrants.

The BGSU demographer and her colleagues are among only a few groups in the nation who are working on "credible estimates" of the illegal population, Van Hook says. Their legacy, she says, will be "a continuous series of estimates" with a consistent methodology, which the census bureau desires so it can produce annual numbers that are as accurate as possible.

Accurate figures are also vital to the government’s interest in the impact of illegal immigration, she notes, saying, for example, that if a "guest worker" program is ever established, it will be helpful to know about how many laborers to expect.

BGSU student brings home prize in Russian essay contest

For junior Anna Glett from Bellefontaine, a summer job as a camp counselor for newly emigrated Russian students set off a chain of events that has led to some surprising results.

Working with the Russian children inspired her to take a Russian language class at BGSU. Now, after only four semesters of the language, Glett has won first place in the seventh annual National Post-Secondary Russian Essay Contest sponsored by the American Council of Teachers of Russian (ACTR).

"I received a certificate and the satisfaction of a job well done," she said good humoredly.

Competing in the level-two non-heritage learners division, Glett shared first place with participants from Kenyon College and Yale University, besting others who came from the likes of Columbia and Northwestern universities and Amherst College, among others.

"Anna is the first BGSU student to win such an award," said her teacher, Dr. Irina Stakhanova, adding that the win is more evidence that BGSU students can hold their own against those from elite schools.

Participants in the contest did not know the topic beforehand and were not allowed to take any materials into the one-hour writing session. "None of us expected to win," Glett said. "We have much less classroom time than other schools with Russian language programs."

The topic turned out to be "What Is Your Dream?" or "Kakaiu vas mechta? O chem vy mechtaete?" Glett said. She wrote of her desire to work as an economist, "but not in a bank or a Fortune 500 company," she explained. Rather, she hopes to use economics "to help people make better decisions and lead better lives. I’m still figuring out where and how to do that."

In trying to explain how she did so well on the essay after only four semesters of Russian, the Honors Program student said, "I really enjoyed the class, and when I enjoy something I tend to study more. I also have a strong memory, which has helped."

Glett, an economics major with a math concentration, has volunteered since high school at the camp near Columbus, which helps children ages generally 6-14 adjust to life in the United States. When she needed a class to satisfy an Honors Program requirement, she decided to take Russian 101, and "I was hooked," she says.

Stakhanova’s introductory class encompassed reading, writing and grammar. "The first couple of weeks we spent learning the Cyrillic alphabet and Russian pronunciation. It’s difficult to learn to produce the sounds; there are subtle differences," Glett said.
Glett also had the benefit of a top instructor who encourages students to take advantage of opportunities to expand their language skills and cultural knowledge. Stakhanova was named BGSU's 2002 Master Teacher in recognition of her teaching excellence and dedication to her students. In addition to teaching Russian in the German, Russian and East Asian languages department, she is undergraduate advisor to and director of the study-abroad program in St. Petersburg.

That first Russian class was somewhat of a turning point for Glett, who says, "I did not come into college planning to study a foreign language." She is now minoring in Russian and recently left for a five-week, study-abroad semester in St. Petersburg. She and nine other students are living with host families and taking Russian language classes. When she returns she will again volunteer at the camp. "I can surprise the kids with my new knowledge," she said.

The contest was created by the ACTR in cooperation with the American Council for Collaboration in Education and Language Study to promote the study of Russian in the United States. This year, 650 essays were submitted from 52 universities and colleges. Each essay was ranked by three judges in Russia. More than 100 students from 40 institutions won gold, silver, bronze awards or honorable mention certificates.

Founded in 1974, the ACTR has worked to advance research, training and materials development in the fields of Russian and English language; to strengthen communication within and between the communities of scholars and educators in language, literature and area studies in the United States and the countries of eastern Europe, Russia and Eurasia, and to further educational reform through training, institution building, and technical assistance.

Lowenamed to botanist position in Hawaii for 2007-08

Dr. Rex Lowe, a BGSU biologist since 1970, has been named the G.P. Wilder Chair in Botany at the University of Hawaii for 2007-08.

"Professor Lowe was selected from a list of a dozen highly qualified applicants from around the world," according to Dr. Alan Teramura, chair of the botany department at Hawaii. He added that Lowe's selection was based upon input from both Hawaii faculty and graduate students who reviewed the BGSU biologist's vita, statement of research interests and plans for what he would do as the Wilder Chair.

"In this capacity," Teramura noted, "Professor Lowe will be teaching two courses during the academic year (Limnology and Ecology of Algae in Freshwater Ecosystems) in addition to continuing his research on algal biodiversity."

Lowe came to Bowling Green after earning his Ph.D. from Iowa State University in phycology—the scientific study of algae. His research generally concerns aquatic community ecology of benthic algae, organisms that live at the bottom of aquatic habitats and, because they constitute the base of the food web in most shallow lakes and rivers, are important to the overall health of those ecosystems.

Currently, he is one of many scientists participating in the All Taxa Biodiversity Inventory, a multiyear initiative to identify, name and describe every species of mammal, bird, insect, plant and other life forms in Great Smoky Mountains National Park.

Lowe has a three-year, $399,956 grant from the National Science Foundation to investigate algal biodiversity in the park. He and two BGSU graduate students are working with three other scientists who make up the "Algal Twig," a taxonomic working group. The project is expected to take 10-15 years to complete.

"We have found over 40 species new to science thus far in the Smokies; I hope to focus algal research on similar habitats (primarily drippy cliff faces and wetwalls) on each of the Hawaiian
BOWLING GREEN STATE UNIVERSITY

> Top Stories
> In Brief

Calendar
Job Postings
Obituaries

Islands,” Lowe said. “Wetwall habitats are abundant and unexplored on these volcanically active, mountainous islands. I am very much looking forward to see what new species may have evolved.”

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the Procter and Gamble Co. have been among other sources of major research funding for Lowe. His studies have also included impacts of zebra mussels on Great Lakes food webs and of chemicals on stream ecosystem health.

Lowe, who received a bachelor’s degree in botany from Iowa State in 1966, has been a full professor at BGSU since 1981 and won the University’s Olscamp Research Award in 1998.

Mascaro article wins history award

Dr. Thomas Mascaro, School of Communication Studies, is a co-winner of the 22nd annual Covert Award in Mass Communication History. Sharing the award was Dr. Reed W. Smith of Georgia Southern University.


The award, presented by the History Division of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (AEJMC), goes to the best mass communication history article or chapter in an edited collection published the previous year.

The articles by Mascaro and Smith were selected from what the judges agreed was an exceptionally strong field of nominations. This is the second year in a row that judges’ rankings resulted in a tie.

The award was endowed by the late Catherine L. Covert, who was a professor of public communications at Syracuse University and head of the AEJMC History Division.

IN BRIEF

BG@100 open forum updates FMS progress

An open forum will be offered at 1:30 p.m. Thursday (July 6) in 314 Bowen-Thompson Student Union to update faculty, staff and students about progress on the BG@100 project as it proceeds through the Financial Management Solutions (FMS) phase. A short presentation will be followed by a question-and-answer period.
CALENDAR

Monday, July 3
Bingo, noon-1 p.m., Falcon’s Nest, Bowen-Thompson Student Union.

Tuesday, July 4
Independence Day, classes canceled, offices closed.

Wednesday, July 5
Movie, “The Producers,” 9 p.m., Union Theater. Sponsored by Orientation and Registration and First Year Programs.

Thursday, July 6
Administrative Staff Council, 1:30 p.m., Paulsen Conference Room, Saddlemire Student Services Building.
BG@100 Open Forum, 1:30 p.m., 314 Union.
Movie, “The Producers,” 9 p.m., Union Theater.

Monday, July 10
Sundaes on Mondays, free ice cream, 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m., Falcon’s Nest, Union.
Movie, “Rent,” 9 p.m., Union Theater.

Continuing Events
July 4-8
Huron Playhouse Summer Theatre, “1776,” 8 p.m. nightly, McCormick School, 325 Ohio St., Huron. For ticket information and reservations, call the box office at 419-433-4744. Season passes and individual show tickets are available.

Through July 21
Photography Exhibit, Brian Baby, Little Gallery, BGSU Firelands. Gallery hours are 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Monday-Friday.
Art Exhibits, “New Talent 2006,” featuring works from freshman scholarship winners and pieces by School of Art faculty and staff, Union art galleries. Gallery hours are 8 a.m.-9 p.m. Monday-Friday and 10 a.m.-9 p.m.

JOB POSTINGS

FACULTY
There were no jobs posted this week.

Contact the Office of Human Resources at 419-372-8421 for information regarding classified and administrative positions. Position vacancy announcements may be viewed by visiting the HR Web site at http://www.bgsu.edu/offices/hr/.

Employees wishing to apply for these positions must sign a “Request for Transfer” form and attach an updated resume or data sheet. This information must be turned in to Human Resources by the job deadline.

CLASSIFIED
On-campus classified: http://www.bgsu.edu/offices/ohr/employment/BGSU_only/page11151.html

Off-campus classified: http://www.bgsu.edu/offices/ohr/employment/cl_staff/page11145.html

ADMINISTRATIVE
http://www.bgsu.edu/offices/ohr/employment/adm_staff/page11137.html

OBITUARY
There were no obituaries this week.

BG SU