

# Southern University Engagement

Director's Remarks as Prepared for Delivery

November 14, 2022

## Introduction/Overview of the U.S. Census Bureau

- The Census Bureau is the nation's premier statistical organization, and our work is critical to helping the public better understand our country—its population, resources, economy, society, and culture.
- I'm sure many of you are familiar with the decennial census, which is the most-well known thing we do. But in addition to that, the Census Bureau conducts surveys on virtually every aspect of life in the United States.
  - For example, the American Community Survey (ACS) is an ongoing survey that provides vital information on a yearly basis about America and its people. Through the ACS, we know more about jobs and occupations, educational attainment, veterans, whether people own or rent their homes—and many, many other topics.
- Public officials, planners, businesses, and others use this information to assess the past and plan the future.
  - Communities use its data to plan for hospitals and schools, support school lunch programs, improve emergency services, build physical infrastructure, and figure out where to start or expand businesses and services.
  - Information from the ACS generates data that help determine how more than billions of dollars in federal and state funds are distributed each year.
- So, our data can assist federal agencies and others in equitably distributing resources and identifying underserved communities.
  - We provide a wealth of data by age, disability, race, ethnicity, sex, income, veteran status, and other key demographic variables to help measure equity.
  - These data are often by geography, which provides meaning and context to the statistical data, and can identify rural and underserved communities.
  - The measures inform policy makers working to advance equity and enable them to propose effective, data-driven solutions.

## Vision for the Census Bureau/Data Equity

- In 2021, President Biden announced a federal agenda to advance equity for all, including people of color and others who have been historically underserved, marginalized, and adversely affected by persistent poverty and inequality.
- Because this goal “requires a systemic approach to embedding fairness in decision-making processes,” we need quality data about our people and economy to advance equity.
- And it so happens that the Census Bureau is the leading provider of quality data about the nation's people and economy.

- We're committed to producing data that paints an accurate portrait of who we are as a nation. This includes race and ethnicity data and a host of other data the Census Bureau produce that show how beautifully diverse our nation is.
- We're continually striving for excellence. And that can be challenging in our current environment. But even in the face of challenges, I believe that we can find new ways to collect data that are more accurate, relevant and most of all are useful to you and the public.
- An important part of our DEI effort includes seeking out and listening to diverse voices. I'm a leader who champions diversity, equity, and inclusion—DEI. I've lived them over a 40-year career and seen firsthand that innovation and excellence are advanced by embracing DEI principles.
- Now, I believe that we promote excellence by embracing equity, diversity and inclusion in our workforce, in our policies and practices, as well as in how we engage stakeholders.
- Let me talk a little more about how we're doing that:
  - First, we're committing to data equity. We created an Equity Data Working Group to assemble Census Bureau data that can help explore disparities and inequities in our society. Check out our web page called Advancing Equity with Data on [census.gov](https://www.census.gov/advancing-equity-with-data).
  - Second, we're incorporating diversity and inclusion in our workplace. Diverse voices are catalysts for innovation, critical thinking and excellence around issues of who we are as a nation. This results in better data quality, data relevance as well as advancing equity.
  - Third, we're engaging with to the full diversity of our stakeholders, including you. The idea is to create continuous partnerships that build trust and communicate the value of Census Bureau data.

## Datasets and Tools

- Now I've talked quite a bit about how we're improving how we collect data. I also want to point out some ways that we disseminate that data. We have a huge range of data sets, data products and visualization tools on [census.gov](https://www.census.gov).
  - One of these tools that may be of interest to you is our Post-Secondary Employment Outcomes (PSEO) tabulations, which provide earnings and employment outcomes for college and university graduates by degree level, major, and which post-secondary institution they attended. And this information is visualized for you in graphs right on our website.
- I encourage you to visit our website and just take a look around. I think you'll be surprised by the range of topics we collect data on, and the tools we have available for you to easily access that data.

## Internship and Employment Opportunities

- One thing I particularly want to talk to you about today is internship and employment opportunities at the Census Bureau.
- As a member of the Census Bureau team, you will be responsible for contributing to the fabric of our nation—where everyone counts. Joining the Census Bureau gives you the opportunity to put your skills to work in a challenging environment where innovation is part of our mission.
- We have a lot of opportunities for people focused on research and analysis, business, social sciences, mathematics, geography, and computer science—and in all the functions who support our technical mission, such as human resources and public relations.
- I encourage you to check out the Careers page on [Census.gov](https://www.census.gov) for more information. There are several programs that might be of interest to you, including:

- The Pathways Internship Program, which provides paid work experience to undergraduate and graduate students
- The Pathways Recent Graduate Program, which allows recent college and university graduates to enter federal service and provides long-term, on-the-job professional training and development.
- The Economic Measurement and Research Internship program, which is specifically for interns in economics, accounting, and related fields.
- The Presidential Management Fellows program offers employment for master's, law, doctoral students throughout the Census Bureau (and other federal agencies).
- We are very keen to promote interest among students in career and research opportunities at Census. And specifically, we want to increase the number of qualified applicants from HCBUs for full-time employment, internships, and research opportunities at the Census Bureau. We have many HBCU graduates throughout the Census Bureau including on our executive team—from institutions such as Norfolk State University, Howard University, North Carolina A&T University, Shaw University, and Jarvis Christian University.

### **Professional Development/Personal Story**

- My own time at the Census Bureau started in January, when I was sworn in as the 26th director of the agency, and the first Latino. I started my professional journey attending San Antonio Community College and Trinity University in Texas, then I attended graduate school and got a master's degree in statistics from the University of Michigan.
- Over my professional career, I have learned that innovation, creativity, and critical thinking are central to maintaining excellence in any field of work. You should absolutely learn the technical content and methods of research and analysis. But never leave your brain in the parking lot. When it comes to research, technical knowledge, and applying methods alone can lead to misleading results.
- Because I've also learned that diversity and inclusion are often unrecognized, potent catalysts for achieving excellence and advancing equity.
- As a scientist and a person of color, the value of including marginalized voices has always been clear to me. From the earliest days of my career, I came to cherish the moments when I saw how my presence and others highlighted the value of diversity and inclusion for my more privileged colleagues.
- You need to develop your critical thinking skills and infuse them with your life experience, your culture, and your values. They are a rich reservoir we all possess, yet seldom leverage as a resource at work or in life.
- There have been too many times over a 40-year career where I have used my life experience and culture (in my case, being a Latino from San Antonio) to help researchers realize that they were defining a problem in a biased fashion or were incorrectly interpreting data analyses that really required community member perspectives to fully understand. You need such enhanced critical thinking to really appreciate and uncover truly effective, culturally relevant, actionable insights from research.
- At the Census Bureau we want and need to hear from diverse voices and experiences. I hope you will consider bringing your voice and experience to work for us, and help us to paint a more accurate portrait of our wonderfully diverse nation.