

BACK STORY



Omar Saucedo, Frank Durand, Nancy Rapoport, Lucy Flores and Oscar Peralta at a Huellas Event.



Judge Gloria Navarro and Melissa Corral at a Huellas Event.



Huellas Students.

LA VOZ – THE LATINO LAW STUDENT ASSOCIATION PREPARING TOMORROW’S LEADERS

BY MELISSA CORRAL AND OSCAR PERALTA

In 2008, La Voz, the Latino law student association at the UNLV William S. Boyd School of Law, launched the *Huellas* program, a nationally recognized four-tier mentorship program. *Huellas*, which means “footprints” in Spanish, matches a local Las Vegas attorney, a Boyd law student, an undergraduate student from UNLV or CSN, and a Las Vegas high school student for the purposes of shared guidance and support, so that participants can better reach their academic and professional goals.

For many Hispanic young people, as for any other group traditionally underrepresented in the field of law, the concept of a legal education or law career is oftentimes quite abstract. Many young Hispanics have no real nexus or exposure to the profession: no mentors, no role models and, really, no one in the legal community with whom they can identify. This student-run mentorship program is designed to serve as a compass, helping guide students toward and through the journey of higher and legal education.

After visiting high schools and colleges to recruit the younger members of the mentorship chain and reaching out to local attorneys, the executive members of La Voz are able to partner up the dozens of participants, organize various social events and raise funds for the program.

Essentially, the program is structured in such a manner as to provide the high school student with three mentors who have been through the college application and admissions process – the high school student’s most immediate horizon. These mentors can share their knowledge regarding the next step: how to navigate the college experience. This early outreach can be crucial for future success.

The college student receives guidance from two people with law school experience who can help with preparation for the LSAT, the admissions process, the rigors of the curriculum, and the intellectual and emotional challenges of law school. The law student has a mentor who can provide tutelage with regard to success in law school, the bar exam, professional

development and the actual practice of law. Lastly, the attorney provides a valuable service to the community and the bar, while learning from the aspirations, convictions and undaunted dispositions of junior mentors.

Countless students have now been through the program. Participating lawyers include federal and state judges, partners at large law firms, solo practitioners, in-house counsel, government attorneys and a variety of other legal professionals.

In 2008, at its mid-annual convention, the Hispanic National Bar Association (HNBA) named La Voz the Law Student Organization of the Year for its work in developing *Huellas*. “We selected La Voz because of its members’ dedication and commitment to mentoring. We see this as a necessary element of achieving diversity in the legal profession,” said Sean A. Andrade, the 2008 HNBA convention chair.

If you would like to become involved in the mentorship program, or are interested in donating, please contact La Voz at lavoynlvlaw@gmail.com. This year’s annual kick-off event will be held in October. Volunteers are always welcome. ■



MELISSA CORRAL is currently a fourth-year part-time law student at the William S. Boyd School of Law. She is the immediate past president of La Voz and of the Student Bar Association.



OSCAR PERALTA is a 2014 juris doctor candidate at the William S. Boyd School of Law and serves as treasurer of La Voz.