

FOCUS ON COLLABORATION

UNLV'S SALTMAN CENTER FOR CONFLICT RESOLUTION EDUCATES AND COLLABORATES AS IT SERVES THE STATE OF NEVADA

BY GUEST WRITER BY PROF. PETER REILLY

"At the William S. Boyd School of Law, we have been committed to building this kind of curriculum from the inception of the school."

In alternative dispute resolution, the word "collaboration" is highly prized. It means working together with other groups or individuals to create larger pies and "win-win" solutions, where all parties walk away with a bigger, creamier slice of pie than they ever thought possible.

Ideally, collaboration unleashes creativity and the intermingling of thoughts and ideas from fields and pursuits that normally don't intersect, thereby increasing the odds of finding solutions good for *all* parties involved, rather than only for the party that is the most powerful in terms of wealth, weapons or political connections.

The Saltman Center for Conflict Resolution, within UNLV's William S. Boyd School of Law, is a strong advocate of collaboration.

We collaborated with KNPR radio in bringing famed NPR Senior Correspondent Daniel Schorr to UNLV's Ham Concert Hall for a wonderful presentation to the community. Schorr noted that, through their reporting, journalists can sometimes help to prolong conflict and can sometimes help to settle it. He regaled the packed auditorium with stories of a brilliant career spanning from World War II to the present banking crisis.

We collaborated with the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars of Washington, D.C., to present a lecture by two experts entitled "Superpowers and Rogue States: Reducing the Nuclear Danger." During the program, which took place one day after the North Korean government conducted its second nuclear test, experts Robert Litwak from the Wilson Center and Stephen Younger from National Security Technologies, LLC argued that it's time for a new debate on the future of nuclear weapons around the world.

We collaborated earlier this year with the Louis M. Brown International Client Counseling Competition to bring that competition to the law school and to the people of southern Nevada. The center hosted students from 19 countries throughout the world. Each round of competition consisted of law students, in two-person teams, interviewing and counseling a mock client on how to best resolve his or her legal problem. The final round included teams from Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States. The U.S. team (University of Nebraska College of Law) prevailed in the end.

We also collaborated with Mediators of Southern Nevada (MSN) in sponsoring an important judicial forum to let the public meet and ask questions of candidates seeking to be family court and justice court judges. Members of the MSN board of directors acted as moderators, and citizens who came to the forum submitted questions that moderators would then ask the candidates. Many candidates said the event had the largest attendance of any candidate forum they had attended so far.

We have collaborated for several years with the Clark County Neighborhood Justice Center (NJC) to train both law students and community members in mediation. All participants agree to perform voluntary mediation services through the NJC during the year following the training. These newly-minted community mediators get immediate experience helping to solve disputes that have sometimes been festering for months or years (anything from money collection issues, to bothersome barking dogs, to difficult landlord/tenant issues).

We collaborated with the United States Bankruptcy Court (District of Nevada) in making mediation services available to citizens confronting bankruptcy matters. These difficult financial problems continue to impact neighborhoods and communities statewide, and the Saltman Center is here to assist in any way possible as various state and local legislative and judicial bodies begin tackling the issues. For example, we are following, with great interest, the implementation of Assembly Bill 149, cutting-edge legislation calling for the use of mediation services to address the housing foreclosure crisis plaguing people throughout the state.

We are now beginning a collaboration with the Eighth Judicial District Family Court, where the Saltman Center's Strasser Mediation Clinic students will work with divorcing couples who are in the process of splitting assets and possessions (and, yes, some divorcing couples *do* agree to "joint custody" of beloved pets!) The law students who act as mediators in these cases, having received training through both the Neighborhood Justice Center and the Saltman Center, are well-prepared for the complex and sometimes highly emotional challenges they face.

We believe these various collaborations enrich students, the greater community and the state of Nevada. This is a state institution, and we are mindful that we are here both to educate and to serve. As Dean John White writes in his welcome letter to new Boyd law students: "...we emphasize the great responsibility lawyers have, as professionals, as privileged members of the community, and as officers of the court, to work for the betterment of their communities."

We believe that, through our various works at the Saltman Center, we are exhibiting a strong ethic of collaboration that is simultaneously being instilled in our students. If you see potential opportunities for the Saltman Center to constructively collaborate with *your* organization, then by all means contact us. [NL](#)

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