



PRESIDENT'S PAGE

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Diversity: What Law Schools Are Doing

Last month, I wrote about what the OCBA was doing with respect to diversity in furtherance of the Orange County Bar Association's Vision Statement and mission. This month, I wanted to feature the good work being done by selected local law schools to foster an atmosphere of inclusiveness (in alphabetical order, below).

Chapman University Dale E. Fowler School of Law is strongly committed to diversity and inclusion and developing the pipeline of underrepresented students to the legal profession. In February, the Law School hosted its annual Diversity Day, which brings over 200 middle and high-school students from the Santa Ana Unified and surrounding school districts to learn about higher education and pursuing a law degree. The law school also had various AVID High School visitation days welcoming students from Mission Viejo, El Toro, El Dorado, and Valencia High Schools. In the spring, the law school hosted the Constitutional Rights Foundation Law Day program which brought nearly 600 high school students from Orange County to learn and engage with the law. The law school has partnered with affiliate bar associations to host many important programs including the Second Annual Diversity and Inclusion Unity in Celebration event, the Elizabeth G. Macias Legal Studies Academy Banquet, and the First Annual Thurgood Marshall Bar Association Installation and Awards Gala. The Fowler School of Law also supports its current law students through various programs and initiatives including the Diversity and Social Justice Forum and its First-Generation Scholars Program and Scholarship.

One of the law school's key programs is the Law School Admission Council (LSAC) sponsored Chapman Law PLUS Program, a five-week summer bridge program which welcomes twenty diverse, first- and second-year college students from community colleges and universities around the country. Students in the PLUS program take real law school classes; work at public interest organizations; and participate in workshops, seminars, professional development activities, and educational field trips. It is the only program of its kind in California. Most of the students come from underrepresented backgrounds and are from California community colleges.

The **University of California, Irvine School of Law** is committed to diversity, inclusion, equity, and excellence in a multitude of ways. Through UCI Law's community pipeline programs, such as the Saturday Academy of Law and the Pre-Law Outreach Program, UCI teaches legal writing skills, explains the demands of law school, and describes the law school application process to high-school and college students from disadvantaged backgrounds. UCI Law's recruiting efforts include outreach to Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs), supporting the programming of the Council on Legal Education Opportunity, Inc. (CLEO), and allocating scholarship support to first-generation students and those from low socio-economic backgrounds.

At UCI Law, the entire community is committed to diversity and inclusion. Affinity groups are active on campus and provide student-

run programs like the Black Law Students Association Gala and the First Generation Panel. This year, UCI Law welcomed two new affinity groups: the First Generation Professionals Association as well as the Middle Eastern and South Asian Law Students Association.

UCI Law's Committee on Equity and Diversity is comprised of students, faculty, and staff, and they strive to create change and address issues of equity and inclusion through support, education, and advocacy. The Committee holds office hours for students, presents faculty workshops on inclusive pedagogy, and recently facilitated the second annual "That's Not What I Meant" Microaggressions Event for the entire UCI Law community.

The Center on Law, Equality, and Race also enriches the UCI Law culture by hosting speaker symposia and movie screenings, and facilitating monthly book discussions through the Perspectives reading group. UCI Law now has an Equity Advisor for the faculty, an Assistant Dean for Student Affairs and Inclusive Excellence, and a Senior Diversity and Outreach Editor on the *Law Review*, all dedicated to promoting equity, diversity, and inclusion for the UCI community.

At **Western State College of Law**, for the past nine years the Immigration Clinic has trained law students in core lawyering skills through pro bono representation of low-income immigrants in Orange County. The majority of the Clinic's students are students of color, many of whom are members of families or identify with communities that have been directly impacted by immigration enforcement trends at the federal level. "For the past two years in particular, interest in the Immigration Clinic has grown, and our students have successfully represented detained clients in high-stakes deportation defense matters before the immigration courts," said founding director and Professor of Law Jennifer Lee Koh. This spring, clinic student Stephanie Barrera was recognized as a Law Student of the Year by *National Jurist Magazine* for her dedication to immigrants' rights work, which arises out of her family's own struggles with the immigration and criminal justice systems. The Immigration Clinic has collaborated with a number of grassroots community organizations working on the frontlines of immigrants' rights advocacy throughout Orange County, and in 2017 received the Community Justice Award from the social justice organization Resilience OC.

The work being done by these law schools to make Orange County a more diverse and inclusive environment is significant and impactful. The OCBA supports these efforts. I believe that the OCBA is most effective when it provides a platform to bring together all Orange County lawyers for the betterment of our profession and the community we proudly serve. According to a saying attributed to an African proverb: "If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together."



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