
ESPERANZA

LATINA LEADERSHIP NETWORK OF THE CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY

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President Maria Ramirez's Message

Greetings Queridas Hermanas/Dearest Sisters,

Our 22nd conference is scheduled for March 6-7, 2009 at the Sheraton Universal Hotel in Hollywood. To better prepare for this event, we must reflect and evaluate the progress of our organization by looking at where we are and where we need to go. First and foremost, LLN seeks equity. Equity means equality of access to opportunities for employment and advancement and authentic learning that is inclusive and relevant to Latinas from all of our diverse backgrounds. We seek these advances for Latinas who are currently employed in the California community college system and we seek them for all the Latinas who come to our community colleges as students. Equity in employment and educational opportunities has been and continues to be a primary goal of LLN.

A shining example of LLN equity in action is that right now on our board, we have 4 members who are pursuing their doctorates. They are both students and employees. They have their masters, yet most need mentors, staff development opportunities to get the experiences needed to go for high level positions. They are Latinas who care not only about their own advancement, but the advancement of their community. They are highly motivated and seeking opportunities to show they not only have the potential but all the necessary skills and requirements to be well prepared leaders in the educational arena. Women like these, plus the many unnamed Latinas employed throughout the system serve as living role models for Latina students who have for the most part not seen or been exposed to Latinas in educational careers, let alone the possibilities that can be theirs if they follow their dreams.

LLN promotes a historical perspective grounded in our roots to this hemisphere, going back millennia that honor and value the feminine and the power of women's councils and circles. This directly contradicts the stereotypical and narrow roles Latinas and non-Latinas are still taught is our "traditional culture". Today, in the US, we have a woman running for Vice-President and almost nominated a woman candidate for President. Yet, right here to the south of this hemisphere, there are currently Latinas elected and serving as Presidents of their nations. Perception about our abilities, perceptions about the role of machismo, and our culture seem to be bigger obstacles to our success than the reality of our proven ability to lead constructively.

Locally, we have the wonderful example of Rosa Perez, Chancellor of the San-Jose/Evergreen College District, Latina extraordinaire, who knows who she is, where she comes from, maintains the best of her cultura, and is an Educator for all people. She is not an isolated case; we have so many talented Latinas in our midst, a virtual untapped ocean. Now more than ever, it seems that we need support from the top down, Chancellors, CEO's of colleges who are our allies and supporters need to let VP's and Deans, and other supervisors know that mentoring, and providing staff with release time for professional growth opportunities is a form of equity. Such activities strengthen the college's mission not only for their students but for their staff. For Latinas, our strong visibility in the system is intrinsically linked to our students and their success. In Lak'Ech, we are one, Tu Eres Mi Otra Yo.

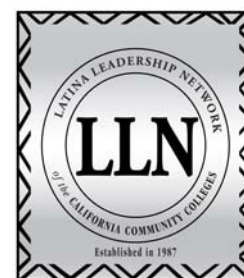
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Important Dates:

Visit our website for more information regarding the 22nd annual LLN Conference from March 6-7, 2009 in Los Angeles at Latina-leadership-network.org.

Also, look for the Student scholarship, Madrina and Employee Grant applications for 2009 and deadline information. AB-540 students encouraged to apply





A Conversation with Dr. Woodruff

California State Chancellor of the Community Colleges

By Carmen Pereida

At LLN's annual retreat, the executive body with the guidance of Dr. Yolanda Ronquillo developed the organization's strategic plan with our intention to increase group unity, visibility and revitalization of our 21 year old network. In accordance with this plan, Maria Ramirez, LLN President, Dr. Nina Genera, Development Officer, Carmen Pereida, VP of the North, and Alicia Sustaita-Parsons, Region One Alternate, met with Dr. Diane Woodruff, State Chancellor of the California Community Colleges on July 24, 2008. Our intent was twofold; first to thank Dr. Woodruff for her support at our past conference and secondly to seek her advice on building a collaborative, working relationship with the new State Chancellor. At the time, it was our understanding that Dr. Woodruff's tenure would be over at the end of July, 2008.

Dr. Nina Genera suggested that we act expeditiously, or else lose the opportunity to tap into Dr. Woodruff's knowledge before she left office. Dr. Woodruff gave us the time we needed to engage our questions. Once we began our conversation, we were pleased to know she was staying until the end of December.

We found Dr. Woodruff to be a person who is down to earth; she is very intelligent and easy to talk to, and she speaks from the heart. Dr. Woodruff gave us ideas and suggestions on how to support the mission and vision of the LLN. Our discussion lead to issues that included supporting the efforts of the LLN through its conferences, the recognition and support needed for our community, and strategies and techniques that open educational and professional pathways for the advancement of Latinas (staff and

students) within the Community College system.

It is rare and uplifting to have an ally like Dr. Woodruff who is more than willing to share her knowledge of how "the system works". We found that Dr. Woodruff believes in supporting historically underrepresented groups. The message she conveyed to us re-enforced our "*In Lak'ech*" and "*Si Se Puede*" attitude.

As Latinas, we sometimes face lack of employment opportunities and this can discourage us from trying. In preparing for advancement, we forget, or don't know how to groom ourselves for professional growth. Dr. Woodruff gave us key strategies for upward mobility and inspired us to share her insights with all of you. Below is a summary of the ideas and activities that she believes are vital for successful preparation or careers within the educational systems.

Strategies for Upward Mobility

- Inform your supervisor of your desire to move upwards and volunteer on special projects along with your supervisor and ask for feedback about your performance
- Work hard within your current position and go beyond your job description
- Ask for suggestions from supervisor on how to approach other people in power
- Attend the leadership conference and trainings - even if you have to pay for it out of your own pocket
- Look for internships using current connections
- Participate on accreditation committees
- See what the rotary club and other various associations have to offer
- Ask questions and remember, your approach is important
- Any conversation with colleagues may be considered an informal interview
- Offer to volunteer to help others and/or in other areas
- Get involved in task force and/or various committees
- Identify the position you want then speak with the person in charge and inform her/him of your intent
- Ask the following questions:
 - What is the education needed for the position?
 - What is the experience needed for the position?
- Get mentors to guide you
- Use intuition
- Find those who want to help you reach your goals
- Let go of those who do not have your best interest at heart
- Take advantage of leadership opportunities
- Find your voice - Kaleidoscope - project what you want
- Do affirmations and visualization

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- Write a daily journal and include ideas like:
"I see myself as ..."
"I am getting ready for ..."
- Put a picture of yourself in the mirror and write under it what you want to be
(Remember, the mind will do that which you may think you cannot do)
- Don't let negative messages get you down
- Take what you have learned, and use it
- Be a mentor to someone else

The Approach

- Validate your supervisor's position (or person in charge of the position you want)
- Use professional language
- Be conscientious of your verbal and non-verbal communication
- Use "I" statements

Remember, we all benefit when we work together!



On Philanthropy and More

By Carmen Castellano, President
Castellano Family Foundation

On March 14th of this year, I was fortunate and honored to participate as a workshop presenter at the 21st annual Latina Leadership Conference held in San Jose. My presentation was on a topic that is very dear to my heart--Philanthropy. As the President of the Castellano Family

Foundation, our mission is to provide funds to *"organizations, primarily in the Santa Clara County community, promoting the arts, Latino culture, Latino leadership, the educational pursuits of Latino students, and special interests of the Trustees."*

In keeping with that mission, we are often asked to make public presentations, and thus my presence at the LLN Conference. The workshop included an overview of how different types of foundations operate. And information on how the Castellano Family Foundation determines what kinds of organizations to support, what criteria we use to determine who receives a grant, and what a grant request looks like. It was heartwarming to witness such an interest in this topic--we had a full house, standing room only.

While preparing for the *"You Too Can Be a Philanthropist"* workshop, I considered how my talk could have a greater and more lasting impact than the one-hour of information I would impart. So I decided to offer participants who attended the workshop an opportunity to submit a grant proposal to the Castellano Family Foundation. We received quite a few very worthwhile proposals. From these, the following were funded: See right side of this page.

I want to thank all of the conference participants who submitted a grant proposal. I thoroughly enjoyed my time and participation at the conference. I urge all of you to think of philanthropy as a reachable and meaningful goal worthy of life-long participation and enjoyment.

Note: We are hoping to have Carmen present again in 2009. Come prepared with your ideas for grants.

Project Roar, Yerba Buena High School - \$5,000

Submitted by Valentin Garcia
A Yerba Buena High School pilot transition program designed for incoming, at-risk Latino male ninth graders, which assists students with English, math, and group dynamic skills, and challenges them to start preparing for their future education.

Evergreen Valley College, AB 540 - \$2,500

Submitted by Angelina Duarte
A program designed to assist Evergreen Valley College AB 540 students (immigrant students who are pursuing legal residency) with financial, enrollment, retention, mentoring, and support services.

Modesto Junior College Hispanic Education Conference \$5,000

Submitted by Felicia Osnaya
A program designed to do outreach and motivate high school students to continue their education and identify career goals which features keynote speakers, workshops, entertainment, and other activities.

Total Funds Distributed \$12,500

From C's & D's to Ph.D.

Dr. Jennifer Jovel's Story
By Nina Genera



It's the first week of classes, fall, 1995, and student appointments are back to back, every half hour, mostly filled with brand new first generation college students, who wait until the last minute to enroll in classes, and in most cases, have no idea of what their goals are. I think every California Community College Counselor can identify with this scenario.

I will never forget the day that Enrique Vera showed up for his appointment and brought a friend with him for support. After helping him with his classes, I turned to the quietly shy young lady and asked her what courses she wanted to take. She adamantly informed me that she was just accompanying her friend to his appointment, and had absolutely no plans of going to college herself. I persistently asked her why she didn't want to try a class or two, and she informed me that she had never been a good student throughout her 12 years of schooling, had barely graduated from high school, and not only, was tired of school, but hated it. After engaging her in conversation, digging deeper and cajoling her to take a couple of Chicano Studies classes, along with a Study Skills class I was teaching, Jennifer Jovel walked out of my office with a full time load. (Needless to say, my appointments were all backed up!)

If rags to riches has a parallel in academia, it could be personified by Jennifer Jovel, who went from being a student who just got by in high school, to the proud woman who just earned her Ph.D. in Education from Stanford University this past June. After facing many struggles in high school, Jennifer graduated from Kennedy High School in Fremont, earned her A.A. degree from Ohlone College, her B.A. degree in Social Work from U.C. Berkeley, her M.A. degree in Counseling from San Jose State University, another M.A. degree in Sociology from Stanford University along with her Ph.D. in Education, all of them with highest honors, maintaining a 4.00 G.P.A. throughout her entire college and university career. All this was accomplished by a girl who said she didn't do well in high school, failed Algebra three times and only knew that college was too expensive for her to think about.

"I had no goals and didn't even know what I wanted to do with my life after I graduated from high school," says Dr. Jovel. "I was the first one in my family to go to college and my three brothers and I were raised by a single mom who worked hard to make sure we had the necessities." Jennifer reflects that as she walked out of the Counseling office with a full time load, she remembers it being the first time that someone took an interest in her future. There were few guidance counselors at Kennedy High School because of budget cuts.

Once she was at Ohlone, she felt intimidated by the academic system, not knowing how to study or how to apply for financial aid and other scholarships. However, she remembers acquiring much of this information from the Study Skills class she was enrolled in, and developing her self-esteem and self-confidence through her Chicano Studies courses. Jennifer attended her first LLN Conference in Spring 1997, where she remembers being awestruck and influenced by so many professional Latinas in Education.

Throughout her college career, she funded her studies with financial aid and scholarships, but also did a lot of babysitting and other dead-end jobs to save her money. She realized from that work experience that she wanted a meaningful career interacting and helping people, specifically in teaching or counseling.

Although Dr. Jovel's Ph.D. from Stanford gives her the opportunity to teach at a prestigious ivy league university or work for a national educational research institute, Jennifer's heart is in her community. She has been teaching Chicano Studies courses, La Chicana and Chicano Culture, at Ohlone College, where her academic life was born. This last March, Dr. Jovel was able to bring the young women from her classes to our last LLN Conference in San Jose, this time, as their professor and mentor.

Dr. Jovel's story epitomizes the mission and goals of our Latina Leadership Network. Jennifer's perseverance, determination, and strength have taken her full circle. She is passionate about teaching/counseling community college students, where she will be able to give back to students who mirror her high school experience, and prod them...maybe even gently coerce them a little...into taking the challenge she once took, 13 years ago and hopefully following in her footsteps.

CONGRATULATIONS DR. JOVEL AND WELCOME TO OUR RANKS!

Region 2 Brings the Shasta LLN Chapter to life!

Finding the balance, that was my journey. For seven years I had looked for a connection to my culture, core values, language, my identity, and to simply be understood. It became a concern when I found myself completely assimilated to the “mainstream culture” and I felt more Anglo than Mexican. How did this happen? Oh yes, when I looked around the grocery store, the mall, the gas station, and at my colleagues and couldn’t find someone who looked anything like me. As the saying goes, I couldn’t beat them, so I joined them!



Names of ladies Left to Right (Front row): Jeanette Velasquez, Sylvia Ruano, Eva Jimenez, Rebecca Reyes, Rosie Gilbert-Ahrens, Ann Sittig (Back row): Bonita Glavaris, Heather Wylie, Lucha Ortega, Idalia Huckman.

I was introduced to the possibility of attending a Latina Leadership Network Conference. What? A place where I would be surrounded by women who not only looked like me, but also shared a similar culture, language, and rhythm in their souls. I was excited, but also nervous when I arrived. I felt awkward, almost like a fish out of water when I first sat in a very big room full of women with brown skin and black hair. I almost felt as if everyone knew I was more Anglo than Mexican. I felt like crawling into a shell as I ate my breakfast. Here I was, finally surrounded by my own, yet felt more lost than ever. It was evident this would not be a typical conference when our opening session began with music and a Community College Chancellor was dancing to Cuban *sa/sa*. As I stood, danced and clapped my hands I could feel my guard coming down and warming up to what was a familiar feeling. After spending the next few days in workshops, meeting and greeting incredible, talented and spirited women, I found a new charge in my life. I began to reconnect with a part of me that was lost for many years; my soul was no longer dormant.

I returned to Northern California, determined and on a mission. Joining forces with Luz Moreno, another young professional woman like myself, we made the decision to begin our very own journey here at Shasta College.

Six months later in a far away land north of the State’s Capitol our new LLN Chapter is alive. The newly formed Chapter brings together Latina comadres from Tehama, Shasta, Trinity and Butte counties. The Chapter currently has 15 members and is looking to grow by the end of the academic year. It is with spirit, energy, and shared goals that our “sisterhood” has taken life. We Latinas being the minority, in every sense of the word, have found in the North State a unity which gives us strength and encouragement to push forward. We are helping each other grow and also looking to our fellow LLN members throughout the State to nurture our souls and our blood. A heartfelt Thank you to Maria Ramirez, our Comandante, and Nancy Retes, our Region Representative for their vision and their continued support. Que Vivan!

Vivas!

- Viva to **Brenda Arteaga Reynoso, Ohlone College Counselor**, and to all her Puentistas!!!
- Viva to **Colleen Triesch** for walking new AB-540 student/parents to resources at LBCC!!!
- Viva to **Dr. Jennifer Jovel** for her academic accomplishments!!! VIVA!!!
- Viva to **Maria Ramirez, LLN President and Ohlone College Counselor** will be performing **Chicana Her story** at Butte College during the October Diversity Days. Que Viva la Jefal!

Maria Ramirez
Ohlone College Counseling Office
Fremont, CA 94539-0390

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