

PRESS RELEASE



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The Hispanic National Bar Association Launches New Task Force on Law Faculty and Deans

Washington, DC - The Hispanic National Bar Association (HNBA) announces the launch of the first-of-its-kind National Task Force on Hispanic Law Faculty and Deans, aimed at addressing the alarming lack of Hispanic/Latino representation among U.S. law school professors and administrators (including deans), as well as the shortage of professional development resources specifically for Hispanic/Latino professors, deans, and other administrators already in the legal academy.

According to the most recent ABA Profile of the Legal Profession, only 5.8% of lawyers in the U.S. are Hispanic/Latino, even though we constitute over 19% of the general population. The shortage of Hispanic/Latino lawyers across the nation mirrors the paucity of Hispanics in legal academia. Only 9 of the almost 200 deans of ABA-accredited law schools in the 50 states and the District of Columbia are Hispanic/Latino. Estimates have the percentage of full-time Hispanic/Latino law professors at only 5%.

Hispanic/Latino law professors and law school deans are leaders of the profession and play seminal roles in educating future generations of lawyers and law-related professionals. Legal educators are visible role models and

mentors to young people aspiring to careers in law. In addition, Hispanic/Latino legal academics – like other legal academics – frequently are tapped for senior government appointments, judgeships, and other key roles in our democracy. The urgency of this initiative is heightened further by the U.S. Supreme Court’s looming affirmative action decision, which threatens to make the shortage of Hispanic/Latino law students, lawyers, and legal academics even worse.

HNBA President Mariana Bravo has appointed as Co-Chairs of the Task Force Raquel M. Matas and Anthony E. Varona. Raquel Matas is the former Associate Dean for Administration at the University of Miami School of Law and has served as HNBA’s National Law School Liaison. Anthony E. Varona is Dean and Professor at Seattle University School of Law, the first law school dean of Hispanic/Latino heritage of any law school in the Pacific Northwest of the United States. Varona was the first Hispanic/Latino dean at University of Miami School of Law, where he was appointed dean emeritus after the conclusion of his deanship.

President Bravo said, “An increase in the number of Hispanic/Latino law professors and law school deans will translate into an increase in law school enrollment by Hispanic and Latino/a students inspired by educators who hail from their same communities, share their backgrounds and struggles, and in many cases, share a bilingual heritage. The work of this Task Force is long overdue, and I am delighted that former Associate Dean Matas and Dean Varona, with many decades of distinguished nationally recognized service in legal education between them, will lead us in this important work.”

The Task Force will oversee the development of annual summer nationwide online workshops for prospective and existing Hispanic/Latino law faculty and law school deanship aspirants, through programs such as the Michael Olivas Summer Writing Institute and the GO LILA summer workshops, collaboration with other established workshops, and by organizing new initiatives to increase Hispanic and Latino/a diversity in the legal academy. The Task Force will plan in-person “how to become a law professor” workshops at the annual HNBA conferences, assist with matching law faculty and law dean aspirants with suitable mentors, support the professional development of and networking opportunities for currently appointed Hispanic/Latino law faculty, promote better data tracking by national accreditation and membership

associations, and otherwise promote more Hispanic and Latino/a representation in the legal professoriate and decanal ranks.

In addition to Matas and Varona, the HNBA Task Force on Law Faculty and Deans will include as members nationally renowned legal education leaders, known for their dedication to diversifying the legal profession and the academy, including:

Dolores S. Atencio, Esq., Visiting Scholar, U. of Denver Latinx Center|Sturm College of Law

Steven Bender, Prof. & Assoc. Dean for Planning & Strategic Initiatives, Seattle U. School of Law

Kevin R. Johnson, Dean and Mabie-Apallas Prof. of Public Interest Law & Professor of Chicana/o Studies, UC Davis School of Law

José Roberto (Beto) Juárez, Jr., Dean & Prof., Nova Southeastern U. Broad College of Law

Jenny Martinez, Lang Prof. of Law and Dean, Stanford Law School

Margaret Montoya, Prof. Emerita of Law (and Medicine), U. of New Mexico

María Pabón, Professor of Law, former dean, Loyola University New Orleans

Jennifer Rosato Perea, Dean & Prof. of Law, DePaul U. College of Law

Hon. Jenny Rivera, Associate Judge, New York Court of Appeals

Ediberto Román, Prof. of Law, Florida International U. College of Law

Krista Contino Saumby, Esq., Assoc. Director of Career Dev., Elon University School of Law

Paulina Vera, Professorial Lecturer in Law, George Washington U. Law School

This Task Force shall operate as a Presidential Special Committee.

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The Hispanic National Bar Association is an incorporated, not-for-profit, national membership association that represents the interests of over 78,000+ Hispanic attorneys, judges, law professors, legal assistants, law students, and legal professionals in the United States and its territories. Since 1972, the HNBA has acted as a force for positive change within the legal profession by creating opportunities for Hispanic lawyers and by helping generations of lawyers to succeed.