



## LA RAZA LAW STUDENTS ASSOCIATION AT UCLA SCHOOL OF LAW

La Raza Law Students Association  
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October 10, 2006

Dear Moot Court Honors Program Executive Board,

I write this letter of concern on behalf of the Raza community, as well as other students who have expressed strong concern, in response to the Fall 2006 Moot Court Honors Program Competition.

Moot Court is a unique and important opportunity for law students to obtain experience in appellate brief writing and oral argument. Understanding the influence that Moot Court has in the legal profession, students look forward to the Competition and dedicate themselves to doing well by taking the process very seriously. Unfortunately, this year's Competition incorporates language into a scenario that we find both offensive and as a degradation of the importance of the Moot Court experience.

The 2006-2007 Moot Court Executive Board developed a problem about a man named "El Guapo," a convicted child molester, which the "State of Patron" has filed an indictment against for continuous sexual abuse of a child. The problem includes "facts" such as that the "INS, in their infinite wisdom, chose to deport El Guapo, a convicted child molester, that same week on the condition that El Guapo's sentence for child molestation would be reinstated if El Guapo ever attempted to reenter the United States or was found with its borders" (p.2). Further, the problem includes the words "Beefeater," to describe a hypothetical port of entry at the U.S./Mexico border, and "Agent Jack Daniels," the name of an INS agent who questions El Guapo.

Law school is a difficult and isolating experience for students in general. But it is even more isolating for students of color being that issues of race and ethnicity are not incorporated into the day-to-day curriculum, and are often times completely ignored. Thus, this fact coupled with the low numbers of students of color on campus, creates a hostile, exclusionary, educational environment. Hence, it is an even greater academic hindrance when such an environment is perpetuated by groups who use negative stereotypes about an ethnic community. Not only is the Mexican illegal immigrant in the Moot Court problem a convicted child molester, but every other fictional term created for this problem are names of well-known brands of liquor (Patron, Jack Daniels, Beefeater).

We believe that the "facts", as written, further criminalizes and demonizes Latina/o immigrants, and perpetuates the isolating and negatively charged environment in which students are attempting to academically survive within.

This is a blatantly racist and disrespectful display by the Moot Court Executive Board. It is insensitive that the Board would further the stereotype of Latinos (but especially of Mexicans) as lazy drunks who commit criminal acts, as implicated in this fact pattern. The reasonable inference would be that there is an association between

Mexicans and drunks. Hence, utilizing such a racially charged fact pattern that perpetuates such negative stereotypes (a “Mexican” being a convicted child molester) adds nothing to this exercise and, in fact, only serves to hurt our communities of color as well as continue to feed racist notions to those who refuse to look past them.

We ask for the following, reasonable, remedies to a situation which truly is a disservice to the entire law school, participants and non-participants alike:

1. A re-written fact pattern removing ethnic identity of the parties involved in this problem
2. A public apology that addresses the use of such insensitive language in the problem
3. Develop a system of review in which the Program and their faculty advisor ensure that a situation, such as this, does not occur while still furthering the interests of the Competition

We look forward to your immediate response. If we do not hear from you by next Tuesday, October 17, 2006, we will take further measures. We thank you, in advance, for taking the time to address this issue.

Sincerely,

Angeles Zaragoza  
Co-Chair, La Raza Law Students Association

Martha Casillas  
Co-Chair, La Raza Law Students Association

Na’Shaun Neal  
Co-Chair, Black Law Students Association

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cc: Dean Schill  
Dean Cheadle  
Professor Carbado, Associate Dean  
Professor Holm, Faculty Advisor to Moot Court Honors Program  
Professor Holmquist, La Raza Faculty Advisor