La Alianza President Represents WSRSL at the 2013 National Latina/o Law School Association (NLLSA) National Conference

Congratulations to Valerie Dionne (Class of 2014) on being elected National Chair for the National Latina/o Law School Association (NLLSA). Valerie represented the William S. Richardson School of Law at the 17th annual NLLSA Conference held on September 26-29th in Santa Fe, New Mexico. For the past year, Valerie served as the NLLSA Pacific Regional Director, which includes all the law schools in California and Hawai’i. This year Valerie was elected, from a field of outstanding candidates, to serve as NLLSA Chair. The election took place in the New Mexico House of Representatives chambers where candidates were able to caucus and give speeches. Valerie is the first ever NLLSA Chairperson from Hawai’i and the William S. Richardson School of Law. She will spearhead national Latina/o advocacy efforts and the planning of next year’s conference.

This year’s conference theme, “Voices Latinas,” embraced the diverse range of views, philosophies and culture that exist within the Latino community. The conference focused on the voices of Latinos across America; explored issues and opportunities facing the Latina/o community; and discussed how members can have an impact as lawyers and leaders. Conference proceedings were held at the State Roundhouse, the New Mexico State Capitol Building.

Discussion panel’s topics included Legal Ethics: Theory and Practice, Insurance Law, Military and National Security, Equal Access to Justice, Legislative Operations, Post-Academic Success, Women in Law, and Marriage Equity. The keynote speaker for the conference was Mary T. Torres, ABA Secretary for the Minority Caucus to the House of Delegates. Ms. Torres also serves as Chair of the ABA’s Commission on Racial and Ethnic Diversity.

The NLLSA Conference also held a national moot court competition featuring the issue of Affirmative Action, arguing Fisher v. University of Texas at Austin, 570 U.S. ____ (2013). The final round of the competition was held at the New Mexico Supreme Court and judged by Chief Justice Petra Jimenez Maes, Justice Edward Chavez, Justice Charlie Daniels, Justice Richard Bosson, and Justice Barbara Vigil.

Here in Hawai’i, La Alianza Latina/o Law Student Organization promotes awareness about, and justice for, the growing and diverse Latina/o community in Hawai’i. It fosters connections between local and global Latina/o communities through advocacy and collaboration, while providing opportunities for law students to engage in academic, cultural, social and community service activities. For more information, or to see how you can get involved with the issues Latina/os face here in Hawaii, please email laalianzawsrsl@gmail.com or visit www.laalianzahawaii.com.