

FSU law, medicine rank high for Hispanics

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Members of FSU's Hispanic Student Union hold up awards at a recent ceremony. The Hispanic Business Magazine ranked the FSU law and med schools as third and seventh in the nation for top Hispanic-American graduate programs. / Photo courtesy of Joaquin Alvarez

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Hispanic Business Magazine recently released a list of top ranked Hispanic-American graduate programs—and Florida State University's Colleges of Law and Medicine made the cut.

Nationwide, FSU's Colleges of Law and Medicine ranked third and seventh, respectively.

FSU's policies promote a high level of diversity, creating an environment where Hispanic-American students feel comfortable, College of Medicine Dean John Fogarty said.

“I was quite gratified when I realized how diverse and sensitive we are with issues concerning our environment and the need for an inclusive school,” Fogarty said.

Chair of Department of Clinical Sciences Dr. Ricardo Gonzalez-Rothi said many students simply cannot afford to continue on to graduate school and must cease their education prematurely.

“Unfortunately, some students come from very disadvantaged homes financially, and here at Florida State, we really want to give everyone equal opportunities,” Gonzalez-Rothi said. “We try to select people that will become physicians who serve the needs of Florida, and we don’t want the best not to come to our school simply because they can’t afford it.”

At FSU there are now many progressive programs in place to prevent this from happening.

The Bridge to Clinical Medicine major of the M.S. Program in Biomedical Sciences is a 12-month program that includes need and merit-based scholarships, allowing more students to continue their education.

“AHORA Means Now” is another new initiative that offers scholarships exclusively to Hispanic-Americans and is currently accepting donations from businesses and other organizations from the community.

FSU also offers programs in the College of Law that provide aid for students who qualify.

Former member of the Hispanic Student Union Javier Mesa said he currently attends the FSU law school on a scholarship which cuts his in-state tuition by one-third.

Without FSU’s need-based funding, Mesa would have never been able to study abroad in Oxford.

“It was my first time out of the country besides travel to Venezuela, where I was born, and it would’ve been impossible without that aid,” Mesa said. “FSU Law is already very cheap to attend for a Florida resident, but the aid they have given me made the possibility of attending law school realistic to begin with.”

Mesa said FSU law’s unique populace and high standards of academia make Florida State University a serious contender in the national rankings of schools for Hispanic-Americans.

“FSU Law is an ideal place to study because of its excellent community,” Mesa said. “Professors are always available and interested in speaking to students. The cutthroat environment typical of many law schools doesn’t exist at FSU. There are many organizations and many opportunities to get involved outside of the classroom.”

Fogarty said the recruitment of minorities is necessary to both the College of Law and the College of Medicine because FSU recognizes the importance of diversity in these fields.

“The mission is to produce the kind of doctors Florida needs, and minorities need to be represented in their communities in order to meet these needs,” Fogarty said.