



# ESPERANZA

Latina Leadership Network of the California Community Colleges

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## President Martha Robles's Message

Queridas Hermanas,

It's hard to believe that the holiday season is upon us and the new year is just around the corner. The year is rapidly coming to a close and the coming months will be very busy for many of us as we continue to move through each day during these difficult economic times. We, as educators, need to stay positive, remain supportive and continue to encourage our students during these trying times. Over twenty-three years ago, the founders of the Latina Leadership Network had a vision, to search for educational opportunities, mentor, reach out and discover endless possibilities. Despite the many challenges the LLN founding mothers and its members faced, they maintained a strong focus on their vision. Like the founding women, your current leaders, whether on campus leading a local chapter or on the board; are maintaining the invigorating spirit we know.

On behalf of the Executive Board, we would like to recognize and thank you for your participation in the 2009 Annual Conference, which was held in Los Angeles. We greatly appreciate that you so generously contributed your time to assemble and network. We recognize that your attendance was the key to a successful event.

As this edition of the Esperanza reaches the LLN membership, our Annual Conference is in the full planning stage as with the conference committee has been in action. The 2010 annual conference will be held in Visalia March 11 – 13, 2010. A great thank you goes to President Dr. Bill Scroggins and College of the Sequoias for their support and commitment to host the 23<sup>rd</sup> annual conference. The theme for the conference is “The Evolution of the Latina Woman – La Evolución de la Mujer Latina” The conference will kick off with a reception Thursday night and will continue Friday with keynote speakers, workshops, a

conference dinner and our traditional fiesta. The conference will conclude on Saturday with a keynote speaker and brunch.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of you who have worked over the last year to keep the organization functioning on a business level: the region representatives, the conference committee, the officers, and most importantly the members. Thanks to each of you for all that you contribute. Whether you are a student, staff member, faculty or administrator you are in a position to affect the lives of others. With all of you working together, we can achieve anything we set out to do. We are quite an organization! I also want to acknowledge the current Board as they embody the energy, courage and excitement of our founding mothers.

As we continue to evolve and grow, we want to ensure that we are serving you, our members. I intend to do my best as LLN President and am honored to lead this organization. We hope that we are bringing you what you need as a professional, if not, please let us know! I can be contacted at (209) 575-6641 or [roblesm@mjc.edu](mailto:roblesm@mjc.edu). If you have ideas about subject matters you would like to see covered in the Esperanza newsletter contact Colleen Triesch at [cdancer43@yahoo.com](mailto:cdancer43@yahoo.com).

## A Special THANK YOU to Shasta College

On behalf of the LLN Executive Board, I would like to extend a special thank you to all of the Shasta College Faculty, Staff and Administrators for hosting our board meeting on Saturday, October 17, 2009. You so graciously opened up your college campus as well as your homes, welcomed us all in and made us feel very comfortable, just as if we were at home. We truly enjoyed ourselves in the city of Redding and especially while on your beautiful and very serene college campus. We cannot thank you enough for the hospitality and kindness that you showed us. It was appreciated more than you will ever know. Thank you so much!

*The Case of a  
Farm Worker*  
by Lucha Ortega



How many of you have been exposed to farm labor under extreme heat?

On Friday, July 31, 2009 an article titled “Suit: Labor rights violated” in my local newspaper caught my eye and I proceeded to read it. According to the article, the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) is suing the State of California to “protect farm workers from heat illness and death.” I was shocked to read that farm workers’ basic rights to shade and rest whenever they feel ill continue to be violated—even after California mandated these rights into law in 2005.

As I finished reading the article, I was left thinking that for as much gain as we have made to ensure the protection of basic human rights, much remains to be done for farm workers who by picking fruits and vegetables help put food on our table.

As a mature professional woman now working in education, I can’t help but think of “hermanas” in the Latina Leadership Network whose family members continue to work under dire working conditions while holding on to “la esperanza” of succeeding one day in abandoning poverty through the path of obtaining a formal education.

## Vivas!

- ☆ *Viva to our new Financial Aid Director Nohemy Ormelas at Cuesta College!*
- ☆ *Viva to our former director Robin Crawford for her 30+ years of service to Cuesta College!*
- ☆ *Viva to all Latinas who have endured these tough times by hanging in there to continue their education!*
- ☆ *Viva to Martha Robles for passing the Written Qualifying Exams for her doctorate!*
- ☆ *Viva to Region 2 for hosting the LLN Executive Board meeting at Shasta College in Redding, California. A “first” for the North State!*
- ☆ *Viva to Debra Cruz, Citrus College, received her Master’s degree in Educational Counseling from the University at La Verne earlier this year!*

## For Claudia

by Candace Byrne

This week in one of my classes, I used an assignment written years ago by a young *Mexicana* student. Claudia was from Nayarit, and she had come to the US to stay with her American husband’s mother because her husband wanted her to improve her English. She wrote about her grandfather and repeated a story about witches he had often told. Just as I am, my students are always impressed by Claudia’s work. Her grandfather’s story was clearly written in her first draft. In the later drafts her grandfather’s way of storytelling and Claudia’s love of her grandfather came to life.

I’ve lost track of Claudia, and a recent report by the National Women’s Law Center and the Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund reminds me why. This semester, I’ve lost a Native American student whose mother needs counseling and who is the one who can drive her mother to these appointments. A sister of a former Puente student tells me that her older sister has two babies—in three years—and a no good husband who abuses her. I’ve seen two of our former Puente students working at the taco truck, that one of their sisters owns. Both students waiting for admission to the College’s impacted nursing program and both of them are undocumented. They wait despite their fears that they will never be able to practice nursing, as RN licensing requires US documentation. They wait for the Dream Act.

*Listening to Latinas: Barriers to High School Graduation* may focus on high school Latinas, but we in the colleges can learn from it. Here at Shasta College, with *las hermanas* in the Latina Leadership Network, I can do much more than bring Claudia’s revisions into my classes. Check out the report: <http://maldef.org/assets/pdf/ListeningtoLatinas.pdf>. It provides a blueprint for our work in LLN.

## Vivas!

- ☆ *Viva to Nohelia Canales and Vendessa Valverde for earning Tenure at East Los Angeles College! What a way to begin the New Year! These Latina professors are providing positive role models for Latina community college student.*