



Urban Debate - Strengthening the Diversity Pipeline to Law School

The NAUDL and its urban debate leagues are working to strengthen the diversity pipeline to law school. One of these leagues is the Denver Urban Debate League (DUDL). Since its launch in 2008, the DUDL has had strong connections to the University of Denver's Sturm College of Law (SCOL). Professor Roberto Corrada teaches at the SCOL and is Board Chair for the DUDL. Two years ago, Catherine Smith became Associate Dean for Diversity and Inclusiveness. Dean Smith offered the DUDL a permanent home in the school and today, DUDL students practice and compete in the moot court facilities, use the resources of the law library, and view the SCOL as their "space."

Smith says, "A successful pipeline program is about leveling the playing field by removing educational barriers, then you step aside and let students find their own way, unencumbered." She continues, "Our partnership with the DUDL helps us support students in Denver's public schools in a cost-effective way, sharing mentoring and volunteer time, research resources, and space."

Denver urban debaters are regularly included in law school programs. On September 19th, DUDL debaters teamed up with University of Denver debate team members for a public debate - with teams consisting of one college and one high school debater. The DUDL debaters were coached by DU faculty. Each year, the SCOL invites Denver area high school students to attend Junior/Senior Day to learn about college admissions and the pathways afforded by a law degree. In addition to learning about legal careers, the students participate in a first-year law class.

When it comes to recruiting future law school students, Smith recognizes the challenges in developing and continuing relationships with public high school students in underrepresented communities. "Some will consider DU for their undergrad, but some will leave Denver. It's our hope that, for those who choose to pursue a degree in law, they will consider Sturm, and build a law practice here in Denver."

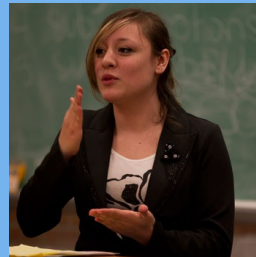
Urban debate programs are well suited to law school diversity pipeline development. The National Association for Urban Debate Leagues, in partnership with its leagues, is working to track urban debaters through college, postsecondary education, and in their careers.

To learn more about the DUDL-SCOL Pipeline Program, read ["Seven Principles: Increasing](#)

Please join the NAUDL in its goal to triple the number of urban debaters!

[Donate Now](#)

In Their Own Words:



Selene Figueroa,
Denver Urban
Debate League

After her parents' divorce, and before she started high school, Selene Figueroa says "I was much more focused on my social life than academics." A teacher encouraged her to attend a high school debate and she was hooked. She says, "I saw high school students talking about important issues, and being heard and taken seriously." She joined the debate team her freshman year and credits her debate experience and time spent at the Sturm College of Law with boosting her confidence and her GPA.

Now a senior at Martin Luther King, Jr. Early College High School, Selene has straight A's and participates in a dual community college enrollment program, earning college credits. "If it weren't for debate, college would not be possible for me," she says.

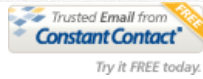
Selene plans to major in political science or philosophy and hopes, one day, to apply to the Sturm College of Law. "I am grateful for the partnership between the Denver Urban Debate League and the Sturm College of Law - not only for how it has helped me, but how it helps all of our debaters."

[Access to Law School Among Students of Color](#)" by Catherine Smith (Iowa Law Review, Vol. 96).

Your support helps ensure that more young people have access to urban debate programs.



National Association for Urban
Debate Leagues
332 South Michigan Avenue,
Suite 500
Chicago, Illinois 60604



Try it FREE today.