

# Law school ranked No. 22 for Hispanics

By Andrew Bell/Staff Reporter

In the September 2003 issue of Hispanic Business Magazine, the Texas Tech School of Law is ranked No. 22 in the nation for best law schools for Hispanics.

"This will help to increase our overall reputation across the nation," Law professor Jorge Ramirez said.

Ramirez, director of the international program and associate professor of law, said the magazine look at student services, the retention rate, reputation and the percentage of Hispanic students and professors in the college.

Last year, the school's incoming class included 13 percent of the students that were minorities. This year, the percentage has increased to 17 percent, Ramirez said.

Wesley Cochran, chairman of the administrative committee and profes-

sor of law, explained that, of the 17 percent, 13 percent of the new student class is Hispanic.

"It is great to see the number go up, but we still have a long way to go," Ramirez said.

John Valdez, a third-year law student from El Paso, agrees the ranking could be better, but he is pleased with the improvement.

"I believe my first year in the law school, it was 11 percent," he said. "The state average is 13 to 14 percent. If we can stay above the state average, that would be a great accomplishment."

Ramirez said, in the state of Texas, Hispanics make up 32 percent of the population. In 25 years, Hispanics should be the majority in Texas. In the event that this comes true, Ramirez hopes to see Tech taking the initiative.

"We need to make sure that the

majority of the Hispanic population will be contributing at every level economically. We have to prepare for it now, while we still have time," he said.

Cochran said he believes that it could be a problem to get students to come to the law school.

"It is a problem attracting people to Lubbock. We have a reputation that causes a public relations problem," Cochran said.

However, he said he believes the support of the community and the size of the law school will help the law school.

"We have a smaller student body than other state supported colleges. We have an atmosphere where students know each other and the professors and you can't do that in a larger law school," Cochran said.

Two other law schools from Texas joined Tech in the magazine's rank-

ing. Texas Southern University's Thurgood Marshall School of Law is ranked 20th, while the law school at the University of Texas ranked first in the nation, Ramirez said.

Ramirez said to improve Hispanic recruitment at the law school, more academic support is needed. Improvements on existing programs also are necessary.

"An increase in academic support programs is needed to provide students with the support they need to stay in school," he said. "Improving the Summer Law Institute at the University of Juanaquato would also help."

Programs that could help law students be more successful is another improvement Ramirez would like to see.

"The Hispanic Law Student Association could set up seminars and help students prepare for exams. They

could also help students prepare for the writing in the law review and future interviews," Ramirez said.

Rebecca Ramirez, public relations officer for the Hispanic Law Student Association, said she is pleased that Tech is ranked, but more can be done. Rebecca, a second-year law student from Levelland, said the Hispanic Law Student Association is working to increase Hispanic recruitment.

"We are trying to help recruitment into the law school and the university by visiting high schools and junior highs around Lubbock," she said.

She said that by contacting students when they are younger, the law students can serve as mentors to help the younger students see their potential. Valdez explained that the association will not limit their recruitment to the Lubbock area.

"To help with recruitment, we are going to take different trips to differ-

ent parts of the state to bring more focus on Tech," Valdez said.

The Hispanic Law Student Association held an event on Thursday afternoon that was perfectly timed to follow the ranking. On the patio of the law school, the association celebrated Diez y seis de Septiembre, Rebecca Ramirez said.

The event is in remembrance of the day in 1810 that priest Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla issued a call to revolution, igniting the Mexican overthrow of Spanish rule, she said.

The event included piñatas, a mariachi band, food and drinks.

The event is held annually and members of the community are welcome.

New students are welcome to join in a seminar the association is holding on Tuesday. The topic of the discussion will be how to succeed in the Law School.