

Leos' visit to D.C. a success

■ **AWARD:** A student was rewarded for her work in voter registration with a trip to Clinton's Inauguration

By Ben Kwasney
Higher Education Reporter

For junior Angelica Leos, the festivities surrounding the Presidential Inauguration in Washington, D.C. last week were an opportunity to see fellow Latinos in positions of power.

"It was inspirational," said Leos, a sociology and Spanish major. "It was exciting for me because I don't see many Latinos up at that level."

She was one of four students in Oregon who won an essay competition sponsored by the Oregon Latino Voter Registration Education Project and El Hispanic News.

The four winners were each awarded a five-day trip to Washington, D.C. for the inauguration activities.

Part of her trip included participation in the Latino Gala Ball, Youth Presidential Ball and Luncheon, and meetings with the Hispanic Congressional Caucus and Senator Ron Wyden. She visited some of the sites in the city as well.

Leos said the inauguration was

the most exciting part of the trip. "You have to be there to feel it," she said.

A highlight of the Presidential Inauguration for Leos was hearing President Clinton make an announcement during his inauguration speech that the Hispanic vote made a difference in his reelection. Leos has dedicated her time to expanding that vote.

Leos worked on voter registration for Latinos this past summer. She traveled to parades, fiestas, malls and other places where Latinos gathered to educate them on the political process.

"In her work through the voter registration, she successfully registered several Latino people who weren't registered," said Angelica Romero, co-director of MEChA.

Besides Leos' work in educating and helping register Latinos to vote, she is also a MEChA correspondence officer, and she has volunteered for CAUSA '96, an organization fighting initiatives similar to California's Proposition 187.

Seeing the results from her work and knowing she has made a difference in the Latino community motivates Leos to continue volunteering, she said.

"By continuing what I'm doing, it's motivating me more," she said. "I'm doing the right thing." Leos'

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— Angelica Leos
Junior, Sociology

peers also recognize the work she does.

"She is hard-working, responsible and very committed and dedicated to her community," Romero said.

Leos' essay, along with her record of academic achievement, leadership and community service were all factors in the award of the trip.

In her essay Leos wrote, "It is our responsibility to show other Latinos who are reluctant to participate in the political process that Latinos are part of this country and should be involved."

As far as becoming a politician someday, Leos said she would rather not.

"I'd rather be the support of someone who runs," she said.

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