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Women learn how to survive the political landscape

By Cynthia Reynaud
Argonaut Staff

Growing up, University of Idaho senior Noemi Herrera never saw the connection between politics and its effects on people's lives. Now co-chair of the UI Women of Color Alliance chapter and a recent alumna of the Women's Campaign School at Yale program, Herrera said she plans to run for a political office one day.



Sarah Quint / ARGONAUT - Nancy Bocskor speaks about running for office during the Women's Campaign School in the SUB Silver Room on Thursday. Nancy Bocskor is on the board of directors at the Women's Campaign School at Yale.

Herrera, a psychology major, was one of the main organizers who brought the Women's Campaign School at Yale to UI for the first time. The three day school, whose mission is to teach women of all races the skills to run a successful political campaign, began Thursday.

"I think that being a Latino woman, I have a responsibility to get more women of color involved in politics to bring up our issues, and women's issues," Herrera said.

About 30 women, ranging in attire, age and ethnic background, gathered in the Student Union Building with notebooks open, frantically scribbling notes as speakers told them what they would need to know in order to survive the political scene.

"Making the decision to run is tough," said Nancy Bocskor, keynote speaker and president of the Nancy Bocskor Company. "In politics, you will sleep on a lot of

Staff appreciation fair
SUB Ballroom, Gold and Silver
Rooms
11 a.m.

Diversity training certificate series:
"Breaking the 'Old-Boy' Network"
Administration Building, Room 217
noon

Film: "Iron Jawed Angels"
SUB Borah Theater
7:30 p.m.

Wednesday

Career Expo of the Palouse
Kibbie Dome
9 a.m.

Foreign film series: "Faat Kine"
SUB Borah Theater
7 and 9:30 p.m.

Job search for international students
SUB Ballroom
8 p.m.

Thursday

Work and life workshop: "Protecting
Your Identity"
Idaho Commons Aurora Room
2 p.m.

College success series: "Improve
Your Memory"
Idaho Commons, Room 327
3:30 p.m.

Foreign film series: "Faat Kine"
SUB Borah Theater
7 and 9:30 p.m.

Concert band and wind ensemble
UI Administration Building
Auditorium
8 p.m.

couches while working on campaigns.”

Bocskor taught the students everything from money management and making connections to emotional preparation and shoe shopping.

“This is not a talk I usually have with the guys, though maybe I should,” Bocskor said after speaking to the women about updating their look in order to maintain the polished look constituents expect of a candidate.

Other speakers included Angela Faulkner, president of campaignsecrets.com, and Carolanne Curry, president of the Women’s Campaign School at Yale.

Senior political science major Amaia Kirtland said she was excited about her experience at the campaign school.

“After just the first talk, I got almost three full pages of notes on how to be a good candidate,” she said. “It’s such a good opportunity to bring to women at the university.”

The campaign school began in 1993 at Yale University. Curry was one of the founding board members and later was elected president. She has since brought the program to the University of Houston, Florida International University at Miami and University of Rochester, as well as many other universities and conferences. This is Curry’s first time in the West.

“There’s always such a terrific energy coming from college campuses that revitalizes me,” Curry said. “I’ve been pleasantly surprised at how receptive the University of Idaho has been.”

She said talk of the program coming to Idaho began in January 2004 when two graduates of the program, one of whom was Sonya Rosario, executive director of WOCA, approached her with the suggestion that she visit their home state.

“What made me come out here was the invitation by women who understand the importance of women in campaigning,” she said.

Plans have begun to bring the program back to campus in the future, said Curry.

Women currently hold only 14 percent of political offices in the United States, despite the fact that 51 percent of Americans are women. The campaign school is an attempt to make sure more women are educated on campaigning and getting elected so their voices can be fairly represented, Curry said.

Bocskor put it simply as she spoke to the women Thursday:

“We are in a male dominated political society and you want to be taken seriously.”

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