



UNIVERSITY
OF NEVADA
SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

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Rollan Melton
Reno Gazette-Journal
P.O. Box 22000
Reno, Nevada 89520

Dear Rollie:

Couldn't resist writing to brag about how well our second-year students did this year at the 24th Annual Western Student Medical Research Forum, which our medical school hosted. According to Gale Hansen-Starich, Ph.D., who is our medical student research director, Nevada ranked second among the 18 medical school participants, with 24 student abstracts submitted. This is pretty impressive when you realize that they are competing against students from these universities: Arizona; California, San Francisco; California, Davis; California, Irvine; California, Los Angeles; British Columbia; Colorado; Loma Linda; and Washington.

Five students won awards, but the shining star was Second-Year Class President Miguel Rivera who won the Plenary Award as one of four top student papers at the conference. He presented his paper at the joint plenary session of the Western Society for Clinical Investigation and the Western Section of the American Federation for Clinical Research. After Miguel's talk, the moderator of the joint session, Dr. David Rodman, remarked that if he had been a Fellow, his paper would have received the Fellows Award for the best score among all the abstracts submitted. According to Dr. Hansen-Starich, Miguel worked hard on his project, and had to build his own instrumentation for electro-physiology project, not once, but twice.

Miguel came to the U.S. from Puerto Rico at age 16. He spent seven years in the U.S. Air Force, where he was a mental health technician, so his classmates go to him when they have problems. His wife, Monica, is from Bolivia, and they have a daughter, Jasmine.

A lot of the credit goes to the faculty members who serve as mentors to these young scientists. Rivera's mentors are Drs. Jamie Campbell, Carlos Palant, Nelson Publicover and Hansen-Starich.