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Christiana Ochoa (7/22-10/22 Acting; 11/2022-)


Maurer Deans

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New Dean of Maurer signifies continued growth to IU community

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New Dean of Maurer signifies continued growth to IU community

idsnews.com/article/2022/10/new-dean-maurer-law-school-iu-community-christiana-choa-latina



[IDS file photo](#)

The Indiana University Maurer School of Law is seen on Nov. 15, 2021, on 211 S. Indiana Ave. Christina Ochoa will serve as the dean of the Maurer School of Law beginning Nov. 1, 2022.

Christiana Ochoa was recently announced as the Dean of the Maurer School of Law. She is the first Latina dean of the law school. This announcement was celebrated by the Latinx student and staff community here at IU, as they expressed their support for her and look forward to the culture she'll facilitate at the law school.

Ochoa pointed to the law school's legacy being important and central to academic discussions and legal evolution as reason for her excitement to take this position. With its activities in providing top-notch advice to the bench and the bar, the law school occupies a prestigious place over which Ochoa presides.

“It is a huge honor,” Ochoa said. “I am very excited about this job, including the recognition that it is a huge responsibility not just to the school, but to our students and to the larger Latinx community out there who have been incredibly supportive and forthcoming with congratulations and enthusiasm.”

Related: [Christiana Ochoa named dean of the Maurer School of Law]

Director of La Casa Latino Cultural Center, Lillian Casillas, said the support from the Latinx community comes from people who can relate to Ochoa through their background, history and experience on campus. Additionally, Casillas said this new position benefits all students at IU.

“The Latina community is seeing someone at a higher level. There’s that visibility, that advocacy, that connectedness. But also, for the non-Latine, when you’re seeing a leadership that is diverse, then they also have an opportunity to interact with someone who has different thoughts, experiences, and connections,” Casillas said. “It expands the world for folks.”

This world at IU, where 8.7% of degree-seeking undergraduate students, 4.22% of graduate students and 5 to 10% of law students at IU-Bloomington identify as Hispanic and or Latino, can expand when students can see themselves represented in the faculty, Casillas said.

The students who see themselves represented by Ochoa, such as president of the Latinx Law Student Association, Samanthan Espada, see a changed dynamic at the law school and see someone who validates and understands how it is as the only Latina in a professional environment.

Related: [IU launches search for Kelley School of Business dean]

“Dean Ochoa... is the only Latina who has been appointed as a professor in the school of law in Maurer’s history,” Espada said. “And, she has spent the last 19 years as the only Latina at the law school. And so, asking any student what her presence meant before this, it was always an incredibly amazing thing.”

As Espada pointed out, when an IU student sees a dean who is a woman of color, they see someone who understands what it looks like and feels like to be only one of a small group. Espada said students can know that Ochoa is actively going to work on diversity, and she hears and understands concerns differently than any other dean has before because of her background.

“I really look forward to being able to provide for others concrete evidence that their dreams are possible,” Ochoa said. “I bear that with a tremendous amount of humility and very welcome duty, and I look forward to it.”