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Law Students Estimate Half Joined Boycott

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Indiana Daily Student

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IU law students joined a nationwide boycott of classes and rallied outside the School of Law Thursday to protest the lack of tenured minority and women professors on the school's faculty.

The boycott and rally were part of the second nationwide law student strike against unequal treatment of minority and women faculty in law schools across the country.

The first, in which IU did not participate, was held April 6, 1989. Students from about 36 law schools were scheduled to participate in Thursday's strike, including those from Harvard, Yale and the University of California at Berkeley.

"Reports from IU law students and other organizers indicated that about 50 percent of the law students joined the boycott, said strike co-organizer Salvador Vasquez, a law student.

"About 150 students and faculty gathered on the law school steps at 3 p.m. for the rally.

John Baker, IU's only black tenured professor of law, said more pressure needs to be put on the University to hire minorities.

He said he couldn't understand why the law school had only two blacks and six women on the faculty.

"A major law school like this can't stand to have that kind of indifference to diversity," Baker said.

Early afternoon classes appeared to be far short of their full number of students, but professors and students said attendance rates varied from class to class.

Mary O'Connell, associate professor of law, said her morning class had almost perfect attendance. But only 63 of about 130 students attended O'Connell's 2 p.m. class.

The boycott's impact was somewhat diluted by several factors. Several students said they could not afford to skip class because the strike date was too close to finals.

Some professors also were re-scheduling or video-taping classes for the boycotters' benefit, said law student Cindy Huang.
Law students half joined boycott

By Dean Joseph
Indiana Daily Student

IU law students joined a nationwide boycott of classes and rallied outside the School of Law Thursday afternoon to protest what they called "unequal treatment of minority and women professors on the school's faculty." The first, in which IU did not participate, was held April 6, 1983. Reports from IU law students said what drawn to the strike was the same list of complaints that students in other law schools have been highlighting over the years.

"Disjointed thought and discussion and forced people to take a stand on an important issue," said Phyllis Klotman, dean of Women's Affairs. "We can't condescend to women just because they don't fit the white, male model," she said.

"You can't bring people in and then not do something to keep them here," Klotman said. Female professors also might have problems being seen as authority figures because they might have teaching styles that male students in particular are not accustomed to, Klotman said.

"We can't dismiss the boycott and think it wasn't real, that it wasn't important," Garth said. "If the strike is done for the right reasons, it sends a message to the professors that the student body cares about who is on the faculty and about racial issues," she said.

Markarian said she believed most students still went to classes.

"Regardless of the number of
students who boycotted classes, it was a success because it provoked thought and discussion and forced people to take a stand on an important issue," she said.

"I don't think we can downplay the boycott," Garth said. "We're not saying the school is perfect, but we're saying it's a step in the right direction."