



**Touro College
Graduate School of Education**

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Bronx D.A. Robert T. Johnson, Touro College, and Bullying Experts Hold
Symposium to Provide Violence Prevention Strategies to Teachers and
Administrators**

New York, N.Y. – October 5, 2010 – At a time when reports of bullying are on the rise across the country, with concern about some cases leading to suicide, Touro College’s Equity Assistance Center housed in the Lander Center for Educational Research of the Graduate School of Education hosted a symposium on “Bullying and Harassment: The Most Common Form of Violence” on Sept. 28. The event brought together bullying experts, teachers, school administrators, and non-profits from New York City, Westchester, Long Island, and New Jersey to learn practical strategies to curtail bullying and combat violence.

The Honorable Robert T. Johnson, District Attorney of Bronx County, the event’s keynote speaker, discussed New York Gov. David Paterson’s recent signing of the “Dignity for All Students Act” on Sept. 8, which, aims to ensure that school administrators and educators have the tools and resources in place to afford all students – and particularly those who are traditionally targeted by bullies – an educational environment in which they can thrive.

“This effort to address how young people sometimes treat one another is appropriate and very timely,” Mr. Johnson said. Much of the behavior that we are witnessing, particularly on so-called ‘reality television’ programs, suggests that constant humiliation of others has become an acceptable national sport. The results have been tragic.”

Dr. Stuart Green, chairman of the New Jersey Commission on Bullying in Schools, discussed how bullying is most prevalent in school settings, and noted that contrary to what many believe, bullies do not suffer from poor self-esteem and are, in fact, very popular, especially with adults.

To combat bullying, Dr. Green said, “Schools need to have clear, consistent rules, and meet with the children involved - both the bully and the child who is bullied. School administrators and teachers need to convey that bullying is not acceptable behavior and they need to understand that inaction is not an acceptable reaction to the problem.” He added that bullying is a worldwide

problem and that it usually peaks during the middle school years, in grades 6 through 8, stressing the importance of intervention in the elementary school grades.

Whether in person, in social media, or by text, bullying has become the most common form of violence in schools, according to the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP). The National Education Association (NEA) estimates that 160,000 children miss school every day due to fear of attack or intimidation by other students. Additionally, two-thirds of students believe that schools respond poorly to bullying, according to the NASP, with a high percentage of students believing that adult help is infrequent and ineffective.

“Schools should be a safe place for learning, free from bullying, with a support system of adults who will address the problem immediately,” said Dr. Lamar Miller, Dean of Touro’s Graduate School of Education. “Our students will be teachers very soon, and it is very important that they have access to the tools needed to best address bullying in schools.”

“The symposium provided practical, valuable information that teachers, administrators, and parents can use to combat bullying,” said Dr. Velma L. Cobb, Director of Touro College’s Equity Assistance Center. “We need to give these adults, who spend a lot of time with our children, information that helps identify the most vulnerable students, and how to work together to stop bullying.”

Additional speakers included David Hensel, Coleen Chin, and Miriam Nunberg, attorneys from the New York Office of Civil Rights; Corrine O’Hara, RN, health educator, LGBTQ coordinator, HiTops; and Jason Siros, assistant project director, A World of Difference Institute, Anti-Defamation League.

The event was hosted by Touro College’s Equity Assistance Center-Region II in collaboration with the U.S. Department of Education New York Office for Civil Rights, and was held at the at the Lander College for Women/The Anna Ruth and Mark Hasten School.

Touro’s Graduate School of Education is the second largest in New York state, preparing approximately 4,000 students to become highly professional and competent teachers and administrators in education, special education, mathematics education, school leadership, teaching literacy, TESOL (“teachers of English to speakers of other languages”) and bilingual education. The School received a \$1.9 million federal grant to operate one of 10 “Equity Assistance Centers” in the nation that help public schools address issues of race, gender and national origin that impact on student achievement and opportunity.

Touro is a system of Jewish-sponsored non-profit institutions of higher and professional education. Touro College was established in 1971 primarily to enrich the Jewish heritage, and to serve the larger American community. More than 18,000 students are currently enrolled in its various schools and divisions. Touro College has branch campuses, locations and instructional sites in the New York area, as well as branch campuses and programs in Berlin, Paris, Jerusalem, Moscow, and Florida. Touro University California and its Nevada branch campus, as well as Touro College Los Angeles, are separately accredited institutions governed in common by the same Board of Trustees as Touro College. For further information on Touro College, please go to: <http://www.touro.edu/media/>.

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