

Law class presidents are on a mission to inspire

March 02, 2018 2:45 PM Alina Hernandez
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From left, Tulane Law School's three class presidents Kerianne Strachan (2018), Garrett Hines (2020), and Gerald Williams (2019) have a common goal—to inspire other students of color to consider careers in law and to be a positive voice for their classmates. (Photo by Paula Burch-Celentano)

When all the ballots were counted, and the dust had settled, Tulane Law School's three class presidents smiled at the realization that for the first time in recent history, all three law school class leaders are African-American. As role models, they are using their platform to inspire other students to achieve their dreams.

"I've tried to step into a role and be that person that others can talk to," said Garrett Hines, who is president of the first-year law student class of 2020. "I hope that they will see that I am always positive. I'm not a quota. I'm not checking a box. I earned

my place here.”

Nationally, law schools have averaged approximately 27 percent diversity in their student populations. So, Hines, class of 2019 president Gerald Williams and class of 2018 president Kerianne Strachan said they try to work every day to reach out to their Tulane classmates, offer support and be a pillar of positive thinking. A goal they share is to be a model to other students of color and to continue to grow enrollment.

The students used Black History Month as an opportunity to talk about being black and attending law school in hopes that others will follow suit and consider law school.

“We know that all throughout history, minorities have had to work a little harder and find opportunities for better jobs or better pay,” said Strachan. “I think my job now in the law school is to use this history as a stepping-stone in my pursuit to being the best person that I can be.”

Williams said his goal is to break down barriers for himself, and his classmates.

“I know I am the face of my class. I want to make it my mission to break down stereotypes about students of color, maybe to change some prejudices,” he said.

As the diversity and race discussion evolves at Tulane Law School, each student commended the recent hire of [Lezlie Griffin](#), assistant dean for career development and diversity initiatives, as a great way to expand resources for students of color.

“We all understand that we are privileged in our roles at the law school,” said Strachan. “We know that our community needs more African-American lawyers. We are inspiring younger students to help those in need, and in the process, change society for the better.”

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—Gerald Williams, 2L class president