

tered voters were Latino, proving that his support extended far beyond his ethnic base. Some supporters cited his four years in the House; neither opponent had any statehouse experience. On victory night, Barrios gave part of his acceptance speech in Spanish and hugged Hattaway (a for-

mer spokesman for the Gore presidential campaign) on stage.

For Orta, whose great-great-grandparents immigrated from Mexico and who now heads RAZA, the College's Mexican-American student association, Barrios's election underlines the need for mi-

nority candidates to convince voters in increasingly mixed communities that they can represent everyone. Yet Orta, who grew up near Toledo, Ohio, could barely imagine Barrios's victory back home. "Being Hispanic would have been one strike against him, and being gay would have just

Hooray for Harvardwood

ALUMNI IN HOLLYWOOD rolled out the red carpet for 14 undergraduates who flew to Tinseltown during inter-session for "Harvardwood 101," an inside look at the arts and entertainment industry. "It's meant to give them a broad sample of what's available in terms of careers, and to demystify Hollywood," says Mia Riverton '99, a Los Angeles actress (*One on One*, *Strong Medicine*) and co-founder of the alumni network Harvardwood, which spearheaded the trip. Along with a tour of a Warner Brothers studio lot and visits to Creative Artists Agency and Universal Music Group, the students met with TV writers, talent managers, executives, and other Harvard alumni who discussed what they do.

It's a trip Riverton (formerly known to classmates as Esther Riggins) would have appreciated as a student. "There was not a lot of exposure to careers in entertainment when I was at Harvard, and, frankly, Harvard did not have a lot of resources in that area," says Riverton. An economics concentrator with a performance background, she chose to become an actress after a cursory stint in financial services. "When I moved out here I hardly knew anyone established in the field. So I created an e-mail list for 20 or so friends from college who were crazy like me and pursuing their Hollywood dreams."

The list soon grew to 100 alumni. She also met film producer and executive Stacy Cohen '89 (*White Oleander*) and development executive Adam Fratto '90 (*The Dead Zone*), who, as it turned out, "had been trying to reach out to younger Harvard alumni through informational interviews and other means," Riverton says. "We brainstormed about other ways to do that, because it was obvious to us that there was a huge need for some sort of network."

They estimate that several thousand alumni hold prominent positions in arts and entertainment, and that roughly eight percent of young alumni choose to pursue careers in the field. The nascent network, christened "Harvardwood," is now a non-profit entity with more than 1,300 members who trade news, advice, job tips, publicity for events, and other career-related information. The group developed the Harvardwood LA Writers, a monthly gathering where alumni share their work, and earlier this year produced the first Harvardwood Talent Showcase. Harvardwood members hold regular mixers and screening events in Los Angeles and New York City. (To contact Harvardwood, visit www.harvardwood.org, or e-mail harvardwood@mindspring.com.)



Alumni Mia Riverton, Adam Fratto, and Stacy Cohen bask in the sunshine beneath the Hollywood Hills.

The group's primary goals are to increase access on campus to arts and entertainment professionals and to support and inform alumni in the field. They plan to work with a relatively new undergraduate club (the Harvard Entertainment Association), hold events, send representatives to recruitment fairs and to the annual ArtsFirst Festival, and to develop partnerships for career counseling and mentoring. A Harvardwood summer internship program will be offered in conjunction with the Office of Career Services and the Office for the Arts (both of which helped cosponsor the January trip).

"We are entirely volunteer-run at this point," notes Riverton, who puts out three different e-mail publications from her home—a writers' digest, a jobs hotline, and a newsletter. "The next step is to put together an advisory board and develop infrastructure and funding. For example, we'd like to create a searchable on-line alumni database."

To that end, the group has approached the Harvard Alumni Association about creating a formal relationship between the network and the University. For its part, the HAA is examining opportunities to interact with various alumni "shared interest groups" that grow out of a University affiliation, like the Harvard African Students Association Network, Harvard Startups, and the Gay and Lesbian Caucus. "We feel there is a need for the information and resources that we can provide," Riverton says, "and we would love to share the University's resources."

~NELL PORTER BROWN