

## **National University's Alternative Dispute Resolution Program Announces Partnership with San Diego Restorative Justice Mediation Program**

*Non-profit mediation program to provide 'real life' application for students*

San Diego, CA, April 15, 2009 – National University's Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) Program, which prepares undergraduate and graduate students to become effective negotiators, mediators and facilitators, today announced that it has selected the San Diego Restorative Justice Mediation Program (RJMP) as its first participating entity. RJMP works with local police and probation departments to offer free mediation services for juvenile crime cases.

The partnership provides students with an opportunity to apply what they've learned in the ADR classroom to real issues in the mediation field. On behalf of RJMP, students will have the opportunity to conduct (TYPE) research, which will be used in the organization's interactions with city policy makers, the development of mediation training processes and publications.

According to RJMP Executive Director Ben Conarroe, the partnership comes at the right time, "The juvenile crime rate continues to rise in San Diego. That means more kids entering an overburdened, under-funded juvenile court system. Our group's services, which have a proven record of reducing recidivism, are more relevant now than ever."

The San Diego RJMP is in the midst of an organizational re-start after several years of inactivity. The partnership will allow them to promote their program to an audience already interested in a career in mediation. This is crucial, as RJMP relies on volunteer mediators to research, facilitate and track the cases it mediates. Currently, San Diego is the only major California city without a funded community-based, nonprofit mediation program.

RJMP is unique because of its Restorative Justice-based philosophy, which emphasizes offender accountability and victim participation in the justice process. This includes Victim-Offender Reconciliation, in which a trained mediator helps juvenile offenders understand the impact on the victims of their crimes.

"This partnership gives students the 'real life' work experience they need. It also enhances their resume and makes them more viable for employment in the field of ADR," said Jack Hamlin, Assistant Professor of Professional Studies at National University's College of Letters and Sciences.

### **About RJMP**

The San Diego Restorative Justice Mediation Program (RJMP) seeks to prevent the spiral of crime among juveniles in San Diego County through Victim-Offender Mediation and community training and involvement. To learn more about RJMP, visit [www.sdrjmp.org](http://www.sdrjmp.org).

### **About National University**

For more information about National University, visit [www.nu.edu](http://www.nu.edu).

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