

MEMORANDUM

TO: Sylvia James, NALP Vice-President for Diversity, Equity & Inclusion
and DEI Section Board Liaison

FROM: Laké Laosebikan-Buggs
LaNitra S. Webb
NALP 2025-26 Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Section Co-Chairs

DATE: October 16, 2025

RE: DEI Section Quarterly Board Report #2

The Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Section's second quarter meeting was held on August 21, 2025 and attended by 55 members. We were pleased to be joined by David Cohen, Counsel at O'Melveny & Myers, to discuss the recent [DOJ guidance](#) directed at recipients of federal funding regarding unlawful discrimination. As a member of O'Melveny's Colleges and Universities industry group and its Diversity Task Force, David provided a legal perspective of the guidance, shared how it interacts with prior related guidance, and provided insights on things to consider given an external environment that heavily scrutinizes DE&I work.

As of October 2025, the DEI Section has 654 members, which is approximately a 4% decrease from October 2024 when there were 681 members.

We were also pleased to be recently notified that the sessions submitted under the DEI Section for the 2026 AEC were confirmed and those sessions are detailed in the next section.

WORK GROUP UPDATES:

Annual Education Conference/*Bulletin+* Article and Webinar Planning

Vice Chair: **Ray English**, Senior Director of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion, Snell & Wilmer

The below proposals for the 2026 AEC were submitted on behalf of the DEI Section and their selection has been confirmed by NALP's Conference Planning Committee.

DEI-related *Bulletin+* article submissions have been sparse thus far, but additional calls for submission will be posted in NALP Connect in hopes of securing volunteers.

Title of Program	All Speakers	Program Description
Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Section		
From Specific to Strategic: A “How-To” Guide for Adapting Identity-Focused Programs for Broader Audiences	Laké Laosebikan-Buggs, LaNitra Webb, Carla Fullwood	As legal employers and law schools attempt to “hold the line” on their commitments to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI), identity-specific programs—designed to support historically excluded communities—are in jeopardy. These programs often provide safe spaces for affinity-based dialogue, mentorship, and professional development. However, a growing challenge within our institutions is how to adapt and scale these initiatives for broader audiences without losing the authenticity, specificity, and integrity of their original intent. This session will offer a practical, step-by-step “How-To” guide tailored to NALP members who are seeking to evolve identity-focused initiatives into inclusive, cross-functional programs that can engage entire student bodies, hiring teams, or organizations.
Reimagining Diversity, Equity & Inclusion: Leading with Vision & Agility	Bendita Malakia, Kia Scipio	As the diversity, equity, and inclusion (DE&I) landscape shifts, it’s critical to reimagine how we advance this work amid resistance and change. In this interactive session, we’ll explore four key areas: the mechanics of implementing DE&I into institutional systems; addressing internal DE&I team barriers that limit progress; evolving as agile leaders while keeping DE&I central in your work; and transforming brainstorming into actionable, future-focused strategies. Join us for a dynamic conversation on sustaining impact, fostering innovation, and leading with purpose in today’s complex environment.

Disability & Neurodiversity Inclusion

Vice Chairs: **Beka Anardi**, Senior Recruiter, Davis Wright Tremaine LLP and **Marti McCausland** Assistant Director, Center for Career Planning & Professional Development, University of Oregon School of Law

A NALP *Bulletin+* article profiling the experience of neurodiverse member, Aaron Baer, was published in this month’s *Bulletin+*.

The following items are in the works:

- NALP *Bulletin+* article highlighting resources to support students and lawyers with
- NALP Webinar on November 12, 4pm ET by Aaron Baer describing his experience learning late in life that he was neurodivergent, how that impacted his experience in BigLaw, his mental health, and how he has used that experience to create a neurodivergent firm.
- NALP Webinar in January for another edition of “Bookmarked - Narratives in Disability.”
- Continuing interviews with disabled legal professionals for a future NALP *Bulletin* article.

Gender Non-Binary Inclusion

Vice Chair: **Deshawn Cook**, Diversity & Inclusion Coordinator, Williams & Connolly

Deshawn has been actively seeking a co-lead for this working group and following an October interest request via NALP Connect, inquiries have flowed in. Pending confirmation of the co-lead, they will be organizing a webinar to tackle topics including helping nonbinary colleagues understand their rights, and tips to support them when navigating less sympathetic spaces.

LGBTQ+

We are actively seeking a Vice Chair to fill this vacancy and submitted another interest request in NALP Connect.

Native and Indigenous Peoples in the Legal Profession

Vice Chair: **Jennifer Mencarini**, Director of Cultural Engagement, Fox Rothschild

The Native and Indigenous Peoples in the Profession Taskforce (2023-25) was charged to review barriers and challenges to inclusion of Native and Indigenous Peoples in the legal profession. This was done through a review of NALP's data and meetings with community stakeholders to gain a better understanding of the challenges faced by Native and Indigenous students and lawyers. Using this information, the Task Force worked to identify and develop resources to help address the severe underrepresentation of Native and Indigenous Peoples in the legal industry, including a Glossary meant as a guide to assist non-Native American and non-Indigenous folks in understanding important terminology and other important issues and challenges faced by Native American and Indigenous Peoples. The Glossary was the final piece of the Task Force's work. It will be published in the November *Bulletin+* and posted as a resource on the NALP website. Although the Task Force has disbanded, we hope that this workgroup will continue to monitor existing and new barriers and challenges to inclusion of Native and Indigenous Peoples in the profession, to continue updating the resources created, and to identify new ones should the need arise.

Well-Being Champion

Champion: **Nada Llewellyn**, Chief Inclusion Officer, US, Herbert Smith Freehills Kramer (US) LLP

Wellbeing Champion Nada Llewellyn shared a series of readings and poems designed to spark deeper conversations about how members are thinking and feeling during a period of significant change and transition. The intention was to create gentle but meaningful entry points for dialogue—using literature as a mirror and catalyst—to help members articulate their experiences of challenge, uncertainty, and renewal. This activity aimed not only to support individual reflection and emotional awareness, but also to strengthen our collective sense of empathy, connection, and resilience as a community navigating transformation together.