

MEMORANDUM

TO: Courtney Carter, NALP Vice-President for Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

FROM: Aisha Joseph
Jennifer Gibert Mencarini
NALP 2023-24 Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Section Co-Chairs

DATE: October 19, 2023

RE: DEI Section Quarterly Board Report #2

The Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Section had an active second quarter.

The Section's second meeting on October 4, 2023, was well-attended with about a total of 50 members online (excluding Mary Beal and Aisha Joseph). The discussion focused on:

1. Section workgroup updates
2. Learn about the NALP DEIB affinity groups
3. Join the discussion/share your knowledge or thoughts about the following **Hot Topics**:
 - Professional Development/Advancement Concerns for Diverse Professionals within our Industry
 - The state of DEIB initiatives in the legal profession in the wake of the *SFFA* Supreme Court decision: how are law schools and legal employers reacting to the fallout.

The Section currently has 677 members, 9 more than at the time of the last Board report. Our next quarterly meeting is scheduled for Thursday, January 11, 2024.

WORK GROUP UPDATES:

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

Vice Chairs: **Bijal Shah**, Senior Manager of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion at Skadden Arps; **Amber Crosby**, Manager of Global Attorney DEI at Latham & Watkins (as of October 9).

We continue to work on identifying programs and articles that are timely and informative, particularly in this time of significant change in the DEI space. We've followed up with all RFPs that we identified earlier this fall, but there's been little appetite to convert declined conference RFPs to articles/webinars. On a positive note, we are collaborating with Samantha Ciriaco of the First-Generation Workgroup on creating effective programming for first-generation law students and attorneys scheduled for early February 2024.

LGBTQ+

Vice Chairs: **LaNitra S. Webb**, Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Lead, Kecker, Van Nest & Peters LLP; **Sarah N. LaFleur**, Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Specialist, Venable (planning to step down as co-chair).

Due to Sarah's decision to step down, we are working with LaNitra to identify a potential co-chair replacement.

No additional updates are available.

Legislative Monitoring

Vice Chair: **Luke Lemmeier**, Legal Recruiting Coordinator, Jones Day.

Luke continues to maintain and expand an online resource to help track DEI-related legislation on both the state and federal levels. At the request of the Gender Non-Binary Inclusion Chairs, we asked Luke to update the online resource to include the status of reproductive rights/bodily autonomy rights legislation in each state. This tracking sheet has been posted to the DEI Section Library on NALP Connect, and Luke has notified the Section that it is accessible there.

Additionally, the workgroup continues to provide relevant articles related to DEI for our members.

Disability Inclusion

Vice Chairs: **Robin Thorner**, Assistant Dean, Office of Career Strategy, St. Mary's University School of Law; **Tobias Rodriguez**, Associate Director, Career Services Office, Chicago-Kent College of Law.

The co-chairs have sent requests to connect with folks on both the employer and school sides to gain further understanding of what is being done around employees' and law students' disability issues. They have invited any Section member to schedule a conversation with the co-chairs to broaden their understanding of what is currently happening before making any recommendations about what should happen.

The co-chairs initially planned to create a short resource with the results of this survey effort, but we are now considering partnering with the NALP Neurodiversity Inclusion Task Force in its effort to create a repository of resources on disability inclusion.

Trans Gender Non-Binary Inclusion

Vice Chairs: **DeShawn Cook**, Diversity & Inclusion Coordinator, Williams & Connolly has replaced Nicole Netkin Collins as of September 1, 2023; **Christopher Neal**, Director of Career Services, Temple University Beasley School of Law.

The Trans Nonbinary Inclusion Work group is hard at work with many exciting initiatives. The co-chairs have created sub-committees to execute each initiative that meet outside of our monthly committee meetings. The last committee meeting was on Thursday, October 12, 2023. The sub-committees are as follows:

1. **Fact Sheet** - Create a document of information (and misinformation) and provide facts to address it all.

2. **Allyship** - Develop guidelines and host a webinar regarding allyship for cisgender individuals.
3. **Conference Guide** - Create a reference guide for conference planning committee about the factors that affect the LGBTQIA+ when the planning committee plans a conference and provide information for conference attendees from the LGBTQIA+ community and allies) on how to ensure a positive conference experience.

The next committee meeting is scheduled for Thursday, November 9, 2023.

Diversity Best Practices Guide Workgroup

Vice Chair: **Alison Ashe-Card**, Associate Dean for Diversity, Equity Inclusion at Duke Law.

At the time of the Section meeting, four section members had volunteered to support the updates to the Diversity Best Practices Guide. The Workgroup had its first planning meeting on Tuesday, October 10, which was well-attended with several enthusiastic new and returning volunteers. The workgroup will have three subcommittees working on the following sections of the guide: (1) law firms, (2) law schools, and (3) diversity, equity, and inclusion resources. Each subcommittee will work together toward completing a first draft by Friday, December 8, and a second draft by Friday January 26. The goal is for the NALP Board to review the second draft at the February Board meeting to provide any feedback that they may have prior to finalizing the updated guide.

The Workgroup's next meeting has been scheduled for Tuesday, December 12, 2023 at 3pm (EST) via Zoom.

Well-Being Champion

Champion: As of September 27, **Lana Manganiello**, Managing Director, Equinox Strategy Solutions has replaced **Julie Anna Alvarez Rivera**, Senior Career Development Manager, Paul Weiss.

We will support Lana with whatever she needs to quickly catch up and advance the Well-Being Committees charges to the greater DEI section including, but not limited to surveying DEI section members for topics they'd be interested in learning more about through well-being circles or through webinars.

The Well-Being Steering Committee will provide each section's champion with a resource document to share with their section by December or January.

ADDITIONAL UPDATES:

- In our previous report, we mentioned that Sheryl Roberts, Smith Anderson, had proposed a brief survey of NALP members focused on ideas and resources to execute Juneteenth celebrations as they relate to the depth and breadth of law firms and law schools' overall DEI strategy. The information obtained could be used to create an online repository that offer resources to others about ideas for Juneteenth commemorations, and data to offer

leadership/management to keep DEI moving forward in a proactive and meaningful way. Courtney, as you recall, in mid-July we met with Sheryl to brainstorm. We stipulated to consider expanding this repository of resources to all heritage month commemorations. Subsequently, Sheryl (and any volunteers) would create the aforementioned information repository that could be housed on NALP Connect and the external NALP website so that non-member (small and midsized firms) could access the information.

Jen and I plan to meet with Sheryl in late October/early November to plan to introduce this project and the information repository as a hot topic discussion at the January 11 quarterly meeting with the goal being for Sheryl to recruit additional volunteers to gather information and resources.

- Pathways to NALP Leadership: Mary Beal and Courtney Carter announced the November 1, 2023, Pathways to Leadership webinar. Following the Section meeting, we reached out to AAPI affinity group co-chair Michael Nguyen requesting his input regarding an affinity-group sponsored Zoom meeting to discuss pathways within NALP for historically underrepresented members and to encourage those members to seek leadership roles. Michael responded that the webinar is focused largely on Board and Exec-level roles, and he would like to see more historically underrepresented folks in the gateway roles such as Nom Comm, Conference Planning, and Regional Rep. Michael gave us permission to share his feedback in this report.