

MEMORANDUM

February 3, 2020

To: Neil Dennis, NALP Board Liaison
Claire Nash, NALP Member Services Coordinator

From: Lezlie A. Griffin, NALP Diversity & Inclusion Section Chair

Re: NALP Diversity & Inclusion Section Board Report, February 2020

The NALP Diversity & Inclusion Section continues to be a strong community within the NALP space. The Section has 562 members currently. Summaries of the reports for the current Vice Chairs for our Work Groups are below.

Vice Chair Reports

- **Diversity Best Practices Guide**
 - *Sherri Thomas, Alicia Currin-Moore, Niya Fonville*
 - The Best Practices Guide work group last met on December 18th. Assignments have been made, and the group aims to have suggested updates completed by the beginning of April.
 - Updates that the group is working on include adding more practical tips and best practices/program ideas that have been successful at schools and firms, creating a list of diversity job fairs/interview programs, and adding sections for veterans and first-gen.

- **Mentoring**
 - *David Cho, Jernee Bramble*
 - The vice-chairs sent introduction emails to the 13 matches in October, with guidance and materials on scheduling their first meeting.
 - In early January, they sent a check-in email to the group to see how things were going. They attached NALP's 2019 Report on Diversity in U.S. Law Firms and the updated Diversity Best Practices Guide, as well as included a link to an article from the National Law Journal on "Looking Beyond Statistical Diversity."
 - The vice-chairs will reach out to the matches before the NALP Conference and offer some advice/suggestions for connecting during the conference.

- **LGBTQ**
 - *José Bahamonde-Gonzalez, Nicole Netkin-Collins*
 - The work group recently proposed a NALP webinar that has been accepted and scheduled. "The Bostock Case: The Potential Impact to Non-Discrimination Policies" is scheduled for Wednesday, March 11th at 5:00pm ET.
 - The work group recently submitted a proposal for the D&I Summit: "A Job for ALL! Promoting an LGBTQ-Inclusive Environment in Law Schools and Legal Workplaces".

- **Legislative Monitoring**

- *Sheila Simhan, Fayola Alibey*
- Washington State Referendum on Affirmative Action: Washington remains one of eight states to have outlawed affirmative action. The state recently held a referendum known as Initiative 1000 to restore affirmative action and allow race, general and other factors to select qualified candidates in public contracting, education and employment. The public voted against the referendum, but advocates are hoping the referendum's loss by a slim margin is a sign that change is still to come.
- U.S. Labor Department Proposed Rule: The U.S. Department of Labor has proposed a new rule where a business or organization contracting with the federal government – therefore receiving taxpayer money – could base employment decisions on religion. Advocates say this could be used to discriminate against workers for all manner of reasons. The rule could authorize discrimination against LGBTQ people, those who are pregnant and unmarried, and any other group or individual deemed unfit based on the employer's religious beliefs. Nearly one-quarter of employees in the United States work for an employer that has a contract with the federal government. If the Department of Labor goes through with a new proposed rule, government-contracted employers could soon be able to fire employees for being LGBTQ or belonging to another minority or marginalized group.

- **Annual Education Conference/Bulletin Article/Webinar Planning**

- *Justine Lewis, Summra Shariff, Yakiry Adal* (No Update)

- **Strategic Planning**

- *Alison Ashe-Card, Benjamin Cheng, Michele Bendekovic* (No Update)

- **First Generation College Graduates**

- *Diane Fears, Crystal McMillan* (No Update)

Environmental Scanning

- During our January 22 call we discussed 1L counseling and recruiting, particularly as it relates to diverse students. Some employer members said that their 1L diversity fellowship applications are down this year compared to previous years. And some school members noted that 1Ls didn't seem to do much applying over winter break (compared to previous classes being more engaged over the break), and were waiting until after they got grades in mid-Jan. Those that waited missed the diversity opportunities that had early January deadlines, and we discussed the fact that employers with the early Jan. deadlines likely got fewer applications. One member mentioned that they opened their diversity fellowship application process during the fall semester, and some 1Ls that applied at that time received offers (without having any grades yet). This topic led to a discussion of whether the decline in applications from diverse students is due to a decline in enrollment of diverse students. I told the section that I'd post a link to the ABA 1L enrollment demographic data on NALPconnect after the call to provide further insight into the matter.

Section Calls

Our third quarterly section call was held on January 22. The call was well attended with robust discussion. I reminded section members of the updated D&I resources added to the NALP website- best practices guide and diversity report. Additionally, Neil Dennis gave a board report, and Mary Beal spoke about the D&I Summit RFP process and the 2020 Annual Education Conference diversity plenary breakfast. We discussed section members volunteering to serve as table leaders, as well as contributing conversation starters. Additionally, Vice Chairs gave work group reports summarizing their current projects. We also discussed 1L counseling/recruiting, as listed above in the environmental scanning summary.

Last Quarterly Section Call:

Call starts at 3:00 PM (eastern time): April 1, 2020

2020-2021 Projects

- First-Gen: I don't know that this section should continue with a first-gen work group since there is also a first-gen work group in the JD Advisors section. The charge encourages collaboration between the two work groups, but I don't think that has happened much over the past couple of years. An additional charge is to consider relevant RFPs, webinars, and articles, but I think that could be included in the Annual Education Conference/Bulletin Article/Webinar Planning charges. That work group should be mindful of including all aspects of diversity, including first-gen and socioeconomic diversity, when developing RFP, webinar, and article ideas.
- Best Practices Guide: I think the Board should explore whether you want to continue this work group for the next year. The current work group and the previous work group have made several great updates. I think it would be fine to skip one year and revisit for 2021-2022, unless there is something specific that the Board wants updated/added to the Guide during the upcoming year.
- New Projects: One of the things that I've wished I had more time to do is to compile relevant D&I news/articles to share with our section. This could be law related, or something from another industry that would be of interest to our members. Although it was something that I aspired to do, I think it's more feasible to have a work group take ownership of it. The group could provide relevant D&I news updates to the section, similar to how the legislative monitoring group provides us with legislative updates. Our NALP news digest often has good D&I related articles in it, but rarely do we have the chance to discuss them as a section. I think if we had a dedicated work group they could provide a brief synopsis on our calls of a couple of the most interesting/relevant news updates that we could discuss briefly, as well as provide some additional news links that we could post to NALPconnect.