

MEMORANDUM

TO: Fred Thrasher, NALP Deputy Director
Dana Morris, NALP Board Liaison
NALP Board of Directors

FROM: Nicole H. White, Chair, Diversity Section

DATE: June 30, 2010

SUBJECT: NALP Diversity Section - First Status Report

This report summarizes the various activities that the NALP Diversity Section has been engaged in since the section's first in-person meeting at the 2010 NALP Annual Education Conference in beautiful San Juan, Puerto Rico. Despite our section meeting being held on a sunny Thursday afternoon, roughly 40 energized NALP members attended and participated in a very engaging and thought provoking meeting. As a group, we reviewed the charges for the 2010-2011 season and brainstormed ideas for the 2011 Annual Education Conference, future NALP Bulletin Articles, possible webinar topics, and section collaborations. Since our initial gathering at the 2010 NALP Conference, I am happy to report that our section has grown to 69 members.

2011 NALP Annual Education Conference Work Group

Our in-person section meeting took place on April 29, and with the RFP submission deadline scheduled for May 28, we had a lot of work ahead of us. The attendees worked in discussion groups of 5-8 people, and by the conclusion of our meeting, the group had identified 30 proposed topics to develop further into either programs for next year's conference, bulletin articles, or possible webinars. The diversity topics ranged from pipeline programs, recruitment, retention, and professional development. The next course of action was to examine those ideas and identify the ones that would best serve as conference proposals. Our first conference call, which was facilitated by me and the Annual Conference RFP Work Group Vice Chair Demetria Johnson, was held on May 7, and I'm thrilled to report that after subsequent work group calls, those conversations produced 10 conference proposals, including collaborations with the GLBT, and Judicial Clerkship sections. The following proposals were submitted on behalf of the Diversity Section to the Conference Planning Committee:

1. Creating Your Brand – Image Management for Career Success in the New Millennium
2. Diverse Women: Success Strategies in Law Firms
3. Improving Racial and Ethnic Diversity in Federal Clerkships
4. New Model for Leadership in Diversity and Inclusiveness
5. Next Generation Diversity Efforts – Inclusiveness 101
6. Plugging the Pipeline: Addressing the 'Dearth' of Minority Males Matriculating to Law School

7. Strategies for Formalizing Diversity Initiatives Within Your Organization
8. “There’s a Hole in My Pipeline” – How Law Schools and Legal Employers Can Partner to Stem the Loss of Students from the Diversity Pipeline
9. Tiptoeing Around Landmines: Diversity-Related Employment Law
10. “What do Diverse Millennials Want?” – Diversity and Inclusion Millennial Style

Our section members also assisted with conference proposals submitted on behalf of the Experienced Professionals, Lawyer Professional Development, Public Service, and Recruiting Sections. Our group looks forward to hearing which proposals have been accepted, and I would like to take this opportunity to again praise the hard work of the RFP Work Group and our Vice Chair Demetria Johnson.

2010-2011 NALP Bulletin Article Work Group

After our initial section teleconference call, under the guidance of Vice Chair Karen Hester, the Bulletin Article Work Group held a follow-up call on May 25 to further review topics of discussion and generate additional ideas for potential articles. I am pleased to report that the group’s efforts produced 8 bulletin article proposals before the submission deadline. The following five Nuts & Bolts article proposals and three Featured Article proposals are currently under review:

1. Best practices in diversity (Featured Article)
2. Leadership Council on Legal Diversity (Nuts & Bolts)
3. What are firms and schools doing to promote diversity beyond the numbers (Nuts & Bolts)
4. Proven alternatives beyond the GPA / Class Ranking (Nuts & Bolts)
5. The Vault/MCCA Law Firm Diversity Database (Featured Article)
6. How to engage white men and skeptics in the diversity process (Featured Article)
7. Pipeline Initiatives – first impressions for diversity attorneys – what is the best foot for a firm to put forward (Nuts & Bolts)
8. Judicial clerkship programs – overview of the ABA’s two programs (JCP and the Judicial Intern Opportunity Program) (Nuts & Bolts)

Diversity Leadership: The Retention/Inclusion Imperative Workgroup Update

This work group is currently reviewing the 16 profiles which were completed earlier this year. As a reminder, members of last year’s work group interviewed diverse attorneys and legal professionals, celebrating their leadership and accomplishments. The goal of this project is to have the features compiled into a guide and posted to the NALP website, and possibly posting individual profiles to a diversity-related blog (*see Diversity Section Pilot Program*). Most recently, immediate past Chair Kisha Nunez, Vice Chairs Melanie Priddy, Denise Robinson and I discussed the next steps, and I am pleased to report that the work group plans to continue formatting the current profiles, and producing an introductory article for a NALP publication, either in an upcoming bulletin or NALPNow!

In addition to the diversity profiles assignment, this group was charged with creating a best practices guide for retention and inclusion. As per the request of Immediate Past Chair Kisha Nunez, the plan is to solicit volunteers from this work group and the NALP/ALFDP work group to collaborate on this project and begin preliminary conversations.

Association of Law Firm Diversity Professionals (ALFDP) Collaboration Work Group Update

As previously reported to the Board, NALP continues its collaboration with the ALFDP. One of the project's goals is to host quarterly webinars, presenting timely diversity-related topics for the NALP and ALFDP memberships. Some of the subject matters proposed for discussion include: a) law school and law firm collaboration on recruiting diverse students; b) how to improve diverse associate retention; and c) how to support diverse summer associates and maximize their chances for success. A few volunteers were solicited last season to facilitate the process, and dedicated section members Demetria Johnson and Elvera Pollard identified potential presenters for the 2-4 joint ALFDP and NALP webinars. A recent conference call was held with current Vice Chair Rachel Simmonds-Watson, Kisha Nunez, and me to discuss the order of the programs and timeframe for submitting detailed webinar information sheets, similar to the bulletin article proposal process, to the Board for review. We anticipate delivering the information sheets in the coming weeks and hope to host our first webinar in the 3rd quarter.

Pipeline Initiatives Resource Work Group Update

Continuing the work from the 2008-2009 Work Group, this year's group is charged with updating pipeline program information collected from NALP organizations and the ABA/LSAC pipeline directory. At the request of the Board, I spoke with Lisa Quirk, NALP's Director of Electronic Information Systems, to discuss how best to present the information, which will ultimately be posted to NALP's website as resource. I am happy to report that Vice Chairs Chia Kang and Jessica Maroney are in the process of making the requested modifications to the data. A work group conference call will be scheduled in July to discuss the best manner of organizing the information for the NALP website. Chia and Jessica will divide up the list and volunteers will be in charge of (1) verifying the organization's information and (2) seeking permission from those organizations to include on NALP's website. September 30 will serve as the deadline for confirming the organizations' participation in the pipeline resource.

Diversity Section Pilot Program

One of the charges for the Diversity Section is to pilot a diversity-related online community blog, which will feature real-time news and information. Millie Bond, NALP/Street Law Fellow and Diversity Section Member, reached out to me to describe the goals of the pilot program and solicited volunteers from the section to serve on a focus group with NALP staff members. To that end, I recruited Sherry-Ann Smith and Carlos Davila-Caballero to participate in the focus group, and a conference call was held with Millie to discuss the details of the blog. In summary, the blog would provide readers with information about the important diversity work law schools, law firms, corporate legal departments and non-profit organizations are doing to increase diversity in the profession. Examples of content include news, upcoming events, career fair information, pipeline program information, scholarship information (firm/organization name and deadlines), and profiles of diversity professionals and law students in pipeline programs. The site would be open to the public, similar to PSLawNet's blog, and Millie Bond would serve as the Content Manager.

Seeking more input from our membership, the diversity blog idea was an agenda item on the section's June 23 conference call, and Millie gave an overview of the pilot program. I am pleased to report that

section members responded enthusiastically, and Millie is currently soliciting additional volunteers for the focus group and collecting feedback on sample blog postings that were recently circulated to the section.

Environmental Scanning

During our most recent section conference call, attendees of the 2010 Diversity Summit gave a recap of the conference, commenting on the conference's success and offering suggestions for next year's summit, including (1) adding additional networking opportunities; (2) hosting concurrent sessions for professionals of varied experience levels (advanced and beginner/intermediate programming); and (3) holding the event in a different location (four out of the five conferences have been held in Chicago). Section members also highlighted the program on associate competencies presented by Werten Bellamy of Stakeholders, Inc. Participants agreed that the subject of associate competencies and its impact on diverse attorneys will continue to be a topic of conversation and further analysis.

We also discussed the upcoming fall recruitment season, and there is concern that some of the diversity-related career fairs are scheduled too early and too close to each other. Law school-side section members commented that students find it difficult to focus on registration deadlines when they're immersed in their summer employment responsibilities. Employers expressed the difficulty of finding resources to send firm representatives to conflicting job fairs. Our proposal would be for the NALP Board to bring this concern to the sponsoring organizations attention and open the dialogue.

On the same call, section members involved in coordinating diversity-related career fairs reported seeing a decrease in the number of law firm registrants this year in comparison to last year, evidence that the downturn in the economy is still affecting not only the legal community, but also legal diversity initiatives. After the fall recruitment season, our section will revisit this issue and whether diversity career fairs, like the Southeastern Minority Job Fair ("SEMJF"), yield job offers.

Below please find a list of articles of interest shared with the Diversity Section Discussion Group ("listserv") since the 2010 NALP Education Conference in April:

- April 28, 2010
MCCA Press Release
Research Study Reports on Compensation Challenges Faced by Women Partners in Large Law Firms
<http://www.mcca.com/index.cfm?fuseaction=page.viewPage&pageID=2057&nodeID=1>
- June 04, 2010
The Legal Intelligencer
Isla L. Long
Diversity-Minded Tips to Help Associates Succeed
http://www.law.com/jsp/law/careercenter/lawArticleCareerCenter.jsp?id=1202459183836&DiversityMinded_Tips_to_Help_Associates_Succeed
- June 23, 2010
PR Newswire
Bowman and Brooke Launches Diversity Law Blog for Women
<http://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/bowman-and-brooke-launches-diversity-law-blog-for-women-96973744.html>

- June 30, 2010
The Legal Intelligencer
Lois Kimbol
Foster Diversity by Mentoring Incoming Law Students
<http://www.law.com/jsp/law/careercenter/CareerCenterArticleFriendly.jsp?id=1202463141727>

Many thanks for your attention to our section's efforts and progress over the last quarter. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions.