

# MEMORANDUM

February 11, 2010

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

FROM: Kisha Nunez, Chair  
Diversity Section

RE: Diversity Section Third Quarter Report

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This report is an update of the activities in Diversity Section for the third quarter of the NALP year. As we get closer to the Annual Education Conference, section members are continuing to work on the remaining tasks assigned and drumming up new ideas for the section to come.

## **2009/2010 NALP Bulletin Articles**

Of the eight of bulletin article ideas accepted from our section members, two have been published in the November and January issues, they are:

1. A Survey of States Implementing Diversity Credits as Part of Their CLE Requirements

By Gwen Tolbert and Karen Hester

2. Sustaining Diversity and Inclusion Initiatives in the Economic Downturn

By Angela Vallot and Mitchell Karp of VallotKarp Consulting

I am pleased to report that you will continue to see articles highlighting the expertise of section members in the coming March, April, May and June issues.

## **Diversity Leadership Workgroup Update**

The Diversity Leadership Workgroup continues its work on compiling the profiles of both diverse NALP leaders and attorneys at our member firms. To date we have 16 profiles completed and are waiting for a few more submissions. To recap the goal of this project is to celebrate their leadership and to feature their stories, challenges and victories. Workgroup Vice-Chairs, Donna Harris and Crystal Deazle will work with me to format the submissions into a document that will be posted to the NALP website and possibly be made available in hard copy. The goal is to have this process completed in early April, which also includes an introductory article in a NALP publication. for publication in the *NALP Bulletin* and other media.

Secondary to our task of compiling the profiles, this group was also asked to highlight best practices for retention and inclusion efforts and investigate the creation of an informal NALP affinity group for diverse professionals. It is our intention to begin working on this items, but given the importance of these two issues and the scope of creating a best practices guide, I believe that work will still need to be completed

as the Annual Conference draws near. Further, I am of the opinion that the guide may benefit from collaboration with the ALFDP and/or the Lawyer Professional Development Section.

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

Elvera Pollard and Demetria Johnson will be working with a small group of volunteers on the first of our stated goals for this group, which is host quarterly conference calls facilitated by 2-3 ALFDP and/or NALP. Topics and facilitators will be identified shortly and with plans to coordinate with Claudia Rizzo to arrange for dates for the calls, the first of which we hope to have a some point during the 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter of the year. Some preliminary topic ideas include: a) law school and law firm collaboration on recruiting diverse students; b) how to support diverse summer associates; c) how to improve diverse associate retention and d) managing up in a down economy.

Another goal of this group was to create a best practices booklet on how to best integrate diversity professionals and encourage collaboration across departments. While this is timely and worthy project, it is also an ambitious one that will require more time to complete. As such I propose that work continues on this project as the new diversity section is formed with an outline and materials compiled by this current workgroup.

Finally, as previously reported a detailed outline will be made available in mid-April for the long-term project of creating a joint publication on retaining diverse associates, using NALP attrition data and ALFDP best practices advice on coaching and intervention. This is pending Board approval.

### **Collaboration with the Leadership Task Force**

Jessica Dworkin of the Leadership Task Force contacted me regarding a collaboration of our two groups on planning a leadership webinar with a focus on diversity. After consulting with a few section members, it was agreed that "Leading with Cultural Intelligence" would be an ideal topic for the webinar. I pleased to report that Ritu Bhasin and Eric Stern have agreed to facilitate the webinar, which is scheduled for early March. A call is planned in the coming days to outline the topic and goals for the call.

### **Environmental Scanning**

During one of our section calls, a suggestion was made to focus on the issues of school side diversity initiatives, specifically best practices and the integration on the law school campus. Since it's a topic that can be potentially fraught with legal implications a guide was thought to be very helpful along with panels at the Annual Conference, Diversity Summit and/or webinars.

Additionally, concern was raised about firms broadening their criteria in hiring summer associates, which directly affects the recruitment of diverse students. After a good discussion about relying on other indicators of success besides grades, the idea of highlighting diversity recruitment programs was suggested. The thought is that diverse students who are hired through programs like the NYC Bar Fellowship Program may not have been given consideration otherwise, yet a number become successful and productive associates. It has been suggested that a national listing of these programs should be compiled and made available to members, so that they can provide concrete examples of what is working in an effort to get more firms on board. Further, conference programming has also been suggested to include a panel of diversity recruitment program directors and/or representatives from firms that participate in such programs. A tentative title for such a program, as offered by Arthur Fama, could be "Making the Case: Looking Beyond the Numbers."