

MEMORANDUM

March 16, 2009

TO: Fred Thrasher, NALP Deputy Director

FROM: Dana Morris, Chair, Diversity Section

RE: Fourth Quarter – Final – Section Report

CC: Ritu Bhasin, Board Liaison, Diversity Section

Over the past several months, it's been my pleasure to chair the Diversity Section. I've enjoyed the opportunity to work with a phenomenal group of colleagues who pitched in, cheerfully, to do whatever was necessary to get the job done. In this last report, I'd like to acknowledge their excellent work and input, without which we would not have been successful during this strange roller-coaster year. I'd also like to thank our Board Liaison, Ritu Bhasin, for her support of our efforts. This report summarizes our achievements over the 2008-2009 year:

Association of Law Firm Diversity Professionals (ALFDP) Collaboration

Throughout the year, I've consulted with Marcy Cox (the Board's liaison to ALFDP) and Section members who are also members of ALFDP to explore a working relationship with NALP. As a result of outreach on several levels, we've laid the foundation for new relationship with ALFDP that is already leading to collaboration on NALP initiatives such as the Diversity Summit. In an effort to reinforce those efforts, Marcy Cox and I are sending ALFDP President Sylvia James a letter on behalf of NALP and the Diversity Section inviting members who will be in Washington during the NALP conference to join us at the Diversity Reception.

Diversity Best Practices Guide

In 2004, I had the pleasure of leading volunteers who drafted the first version of what became NALP's Diversity Best Practices Guide. Now, five years later, I have the pleasure of overseeing its revision, which also was one of our charges this year. Karen Hester agreed to lead the group revising the Guide and she did a masterful job of managing the effort, which included significant contributions from Crystal Deazle, Maja Hazell, Kisha Nunez, Gwen Tolbert, and Else (Yadi) Trujillo. Their hard work produced a draft of the revised Guide, which was recently proofed, edited, and sent to Janet Smith for final review. (A copy of the revised draft is attached.) Over the next few weeks, we'll work with Janet on a plan to promote the final product to members.

Expanded Website Listing of Pipeline Initiatives:

Initially, the Section was to be involved in the Street Law Legal Diversity Project as its pipeline focus. However, early in the year, coordination of that program was delegated to able management of the NALP staff. In lieu of that project, I thought it would be helpful if the Section could work on increasing awareness of emerging pipeline efforts being undertaken by NALP member schools as well as employers. At present, the Pipeline Initiatives listing on the NALP website only highlight employers programs.

Now, thanks to the very good work of Kisha Nunez and Nicole (Nikki) White, the Section recently submitted an updated compilation of pipeline programs that now includes law schools. The new listing builds on research from the ABA and LSAC joint report "Collaborating to Expand the Pipeline" and describes programs being directed by NALP member organizations. (A copy of the listing is attached.)

The next steps are to coordinate with Janet Smith to publicize the updated resource and invite members to continue sending updates on their programs.

2009 NALP Education Conference

- **Session Programming**

Members of the Section made an impressive effort to propose programming for consideration at the annual conference. Six of the 14 RFPs submitted by or on the behalf of the Diversity Section were accepted. The following programs will be presented at the conference in April:

 - How Employers Can Partner With Law Schools to Improve Diversity.
 - Leaders in the Legal Community Respond to Diversity Challenges.
 - Mentoring Across the Lines of Gender, Race, and Sexual Orientation.
 - Religion and Culture – Interesting and Challenging Dimensions of Diversity in the Legal Profession.
 - Tools for Constructive Conversations.
 - What Women Want: What do they need to succeed?

- **Diversity Reception Speaker**

I'm pleased to report that we have identified speaker for the Diversity Reception during the annual conference. After considering feedback from members of the Diversity and GLBT Sections, we agreed to invite Christina Guerola Sarchio to give brief remarks. Ms. Sarchio is Partner at the Washington, DC office of Patton Boggs. She's the immediate past Vice President for External Affairs for the Hispanic National Bar Association and is a past President of the Hispanic Bar Association of Washington, DC. She has been a frequent speaker on diversity issues impacting minority lawyers. Her remarks at Diversity Reception will celebrate the importance of advancing diversity and inclusion in current legal marketplace.

NALP Bulletin Articles

Over the course of the year, the Section had two articles published in the *NALP Bulletin*:

- "Improving Diversity at the Partnership Level" by Patricia Patrick and Irene Reed appeared in the December 2008 edition; and
- My article "Telling Tales out of School: Tapping Women Alumni to Improve Retention, Career Satisfaction in Law Firms," ran in the February 2009 edition.

Ongoing Environmental Concerns

In short, the greatest concern among Section members is the ongoing impact of the economic downturn on the legal job market. In particular, most are extremely anxious about the effect the downturn will have on employers' commitment to diversity. In an environment where numerous law firms are forced to reduce staff to remain profitable, programs that enhance the recruitment (diversity job fairs), advancement and retention of minorities and women seem particularly vulnerable to budget cuts. Many members question what will happen with diversity job fairs; many anticipate a steep drop off in employer participation and actual hiring of diverse students. Further, Forbes Magazine recently reported that many firms are laying off their part-time lawyers, 75% of whom are women. It's no secret that attorney terminations are sometimes based on gender-biased evaluations, which always have a disproportionately negative affect on women. We are all concerned on what the future holds as we ride out the economy.

On a more positive note, to sum up, we leave no outstanding tasks to be completed. Looking forward, though, I hope that the Diversity Section will continue efforts to market the updated Best Practices Guide and solicit members to send updates to Pipeline Initiatives listing on the NALP website. I wish

the Section Chair all the best for the upcoming year and I look forward to working with Diversity Section in the future.