

**Program Outline
State Bar of California Annual Diversity Stakeholder Forum**

**“Plugging the Leaks in the Diversity Pipeline in Today’s Economic Times”
Friday June 5, 2009**

Diversity Stakeholder Forum Goals:

- Provide opportunity for information sharing: What is working – What hasn’t worked;
- Enable Stakeholders to move forward with their own initiatives/projects; and
- Identify and Encourage ongoing collaborations.

9:30: Welcome, Introductions, Overview

- **Opening:** Luis Rodriguez, Chair, Council on Access & Fairness
 - **Welcome:** Howard Miller, President-Elect, Board of Governors
 - **Keynote Speaker:** Hon. LaDoris Cordell (ret.)
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10:00 – 11:00: Morning Plenary - Leaks Along the Pipeline:

Moderator: Teri Cannon, Rod Fong

EARLY EDUCATION

Speakers:

- **Ina Bendich, EXCEL High School, Oakland.** – examples of programs to engage students and develop critical thinking skills, expose students to the legal system and career options in the law.
- **Teri Cannon, Western Association of Schools & Colleges.** - focusing on the achievement gap and programmatic responses involving the legal profession to close the achievement gap through “value-added” programming.

Description: Achieving diversity in the legal profession with the increased entry of diverse attorneys into the legal profession and judiciary must include a focus on the early education pipeline and how to engage, prepare and encourage student aspirations (preschool through high school) to attend college and prepare for a professional career. To maintain the flow of diverse students through the pipeline, the early education pipeline must prepare students from diverse backgrounds to remain in the pipeline through high school and college and must also help to educate students about the legal system and opportunities for a career in the law. Learn about what approaches are being used by members of the legal profession and bar associations and the impact that these programs can have on the future aspirations of students.

Discussion:

- **What is the leak?** Student dropout rates and achievement gaps.
- **Why is it important?** Negative impact on entry and retention of diverse students in to the early pipeline.
- **What has been done?** Programs such as: UC Irvine Project; Law Academy; Mock Trial programs; Street Law, courthouse and law firm visits, etc.
- **What more needs to be done?** Increased bar involvement in programs designed to develop critical thinking skills, student confidence, educational aspirations, and to present positive role models.

COLLEGE

Speakers:

- **Leslie Townsend, Pacific Coast Association of Pre-Law Advisors.** – Role and limitations of pre-law advisors, how stakeholders can help college students & pre-law clubs.
- **Cristina Gapasin, University of California at Davis School of Law.** – Description of programs for college students, e.g. King Hall Outreach Program (KHOP), law school outreach, how college students can prepare themselves for rigors of law school.

Description: Outreach to college needs to be increased, not only to generate more interest in the legal profession, but also to better prepare applicants for the admissions process and the rigors of law school. What can you do to stimulate greater interest in law and assist pre-law students? Learn about the findings in recent studies re: skill sets accounting for successful practice of law and recommendations affecting the LSAT exam.

Discussion:

- **What is the leak?** Not enough students interested in the legal profession; those who are interested may not have the qualifications to gain admissions; and students not prepared for the rigors of law school are more susceptible to academic disqualification in law school. Pre-law advisors have limited financial and technical resources.
- **Why is it important?** Need more college students applying for law school, gaining admissions to law school, and performing better once in law school
- **What has been done?** Pre-law advisors activities; law school outreach; UC Davis KHOP; Bar Association of San Francisco's Destination Law School program and materials; ForPeopleOfColor's pre-law admissions workshops.
- **What more needs to be done?**
 - More outreach to college and diversity students, i.e. contact between students & legal professionals;
 - advisors
 - speakers
 - sponsors
 - mentoring;
 - student visits to law offices, legal departments, courts & law schools;
 - advice re course selection and skills development for law school;
 - financial awareness (budgeting, financial aid, scholarships)
 - distribution via on-line resources

LAW SCHOOL – (supplementing student services, i.e. academic support programs & services for students with disabilities)

Speakers:

- **Rod Fong, Golden Gate University School of Law** – history and purpose of academic support programs; current dilution of services for students from diverse backgrounds; student attrition through academic disqualification & drop-out; lower grades that leads to lower bar pass;
- **Nikki Dinh, Student, Golden Gate University School of Law** - limited access to role models; need for mentoring & guidance; networking opportunities; access to internships; connection to profession.

Description: Academic support programs were originally created to assist students from diverse backgrounds. But because of its successes, most academic support programs have been expanded to serve the entire student body, thus effectively diluting the assistance and support for diverse students. Find out what you can do to help these diverse students with the academic and non-academic issues they will encounter during law school. We also need to consider the impact of law school rankings and other factors affecting diversity in law school admissions.

Discussion:

- **What is the leak?** – Dilution of academic support for diversity students, lack of community for diverse students, e.g. critical mass of students, faculty and staff from diverse backgrounds, marginalization and isolation.
 - **Why is it important?** Potential for higher attrition, lower grades leading to lower bar pass rates.
 - **What has been done?** Increase in bar pass programs possibly ignoring diversity factors; study by Judicial Council re diversity; articles on diverse students in law school.
 - **What more needs to be done?**
 - External support for diversity students:
 - mentoring;
 - tutoring;
 - more role models, internally and externally;
 - more administrators
 - more faculty, fulltime & adjuncts
 - attorney speakers
 - programs, preferably joint with law student groups
 - technical support - guidance
 - speakers
 - sponsorship
 - types of programs
 - career development
 - professional skills development
 - leadership development
 - law school scholarships
 - law school and post-law school employment opportunities
 - law school volunteer opportunities
 - sponsorship for bar association events
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11:00 – 12:30: Morning Breakout Sessions (topics track Plenary discussion)
(discussions being compiled for full report and recommendations)

EARLY EDUCATION – Facilitator: Luis Rodriguez, Los Angeles County, Office of the Public Defender

1. What is the leak?
Was the plenary a complete and accurate description of the leak?
What challenges have we missed, if any?
2. How do we repair it?
What do you know about the programs described in the plenary?
What other solutions do you have?
3. How do we implement it?
What do we need to make this happen?

COLLEGE – Facilitator: Linda McCulloh, Administrative Office of the Courts

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LAW SCHOOL – Facilitator: Marina Hsieh, Santa Clara University School of Law

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2:00 – 3:00: Afternoon Plenary - More Leaks Along the Pipeline:

Moderator: Tina Rasnow

BAR EXAM PREP (current status of bar prep; leaks for diversity students)

Speaker: Rod Fong, Golden Gate University School of Law

Description: Recently, law schools have increased attention to bar passage primarily by tightening admissions requirements and grading standards, expanding academic support services, and developing bar prep courses. As a result, bar pass scores across the nation, including California, have risen. Have bar pass rates changed for diverse students, and more importantly, have more students from diverse backgrounds been admitted to the bar? What can be done to increase the chances of bar passage for diverse students.

Discussion:

- **What is the leak?** Diversity students passing at a lower pass rate than white students.
- **Why is it important?** Need to raise bar pass rates for diversity students to have more lawyers; taking the bar is expensive, e.g. bar exam fees, bar review providers, living expenses, and loss wages.
- **What has been done?** Admissions looking for more qualified applicants (over-reliance on LSAT and UGPA); ASP dilution; Carnegie report defining roles of law school; increase focus on outcomes and assessment; increased resources to bar prep; bar prep courses costs; Are diversity students being served?
- **What more needs to be done?**
 - Admissions practices – less focus on numbers;
 - strengthen support for diversity students:
 - ASP issues;
 - improve academic performance during law school;
 - bar workshops during the semester
 - financial assistance for high cost of taking bar exam;
 - prepare family and friends for two month bar prep period;
 - mentor students on non-academic factors,
 - address stereotype threat factors

LEGAL PROFESSION– (do economic pressures trump diversity; retention within profession)

Speakers:

- **Cindy Faatz, Intel:** View from inside the corporate sector (Intel) re recruitment, hiring, retention and promotion.
- **Roland Dumas, Roberts Information Services:**
 - Law firms are a tournament - they are leaky pipelines by design.

- Hildebrandt data indicates that minorities and women disproportionately enter the profession as "called lawyers" - wishing to provide social value from their work.
They select out of the law firm culture because it doesn't provide a pathway toward their objective and leave the profession for that reason. That can be addressed.
- The shaping of a career: Given the "Call to Action" and similar demands to progress on diversity, firms try to show that a given client's matters are executed by under-represented minorities. The end result is an attorney without strong client relationships or strong experience in a practice area. This "spoiling" of a career can be prevented to shape stronger senior people who will attract and mentor junior attorneys.
- Job search and networking skills:

Description: Current economic conditions have adversely impacted the profession. How has it affected diversity initiatives in law firms and corporate and government legal departments? What impact has it had on attorney employment? What skills are needed for attorneys to maintain/advance their position in their company? What assistance can you provide for your constituents?

Discussion --:

- **What is the leak?** All levels of recruitment, hiring, retention and promotion and continued implementation of diversity programs and initiatives
- **Why is it important?** Continued reduction of diverse attorneys in the profession
- **What has been done?**
- **What more needs to be done?**
 - Help associates maintain position
 - Strategies during unemployment
 - find employment
 - develop skills
 - networking
 - Mentoring
 - Address work-life balance issues
 - More...

JUDICIARY (application process & career planning)

Speakers:

- **Judge Brenda Harbin-Forte, Alameda County Superior Court:**
Present demographic information and appointment statistics
- **Judge Carrie Zepeda-Madrid, Santa Clara County Superior Court:**
“Best job in the profession”
- **Chris Arriola, Santa Clara County Bar Association:** Bar association programs to recruit, support, and promote judicial applicants

Description: Becoming a judge is a great job! Why aren't there more judges from diverse backgrounds? Learn about the bench, the current statistics, and the appointment process.

Discussion:

- **What is the leak?** Are enough diversity candidates making it to the bench?
- **Why is it important?** Judiciary should reflect the demographics of the public.
- **What has been done?** Local and minority bar judicial mentoring programs; counseling on application process and building a “resume”
- **What more needs to be done?**
 - More applicants needed
 - Mentoring
 - Career development
 - How to gain experience
 - Trials
 - Volunteer judging
 - Administrative law judge
 - Community work
 - Professional affiliations
 - Application process
 - JNE
 - Local vetting
 - Diversity bar association input?
 - Interview process

3:00 – 4:30: Afternoon Breakout Sessions (topics to track Plenary discussion)
(discussions being compiled for full report and recommendations)

BAR EXAM PREP – Facilitator: Rod Fong, Golden Gate University School of Law

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LEGAL PROFESSION –Facilitator: Leah Williams, Strategies LLC

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JUDICIARY – Facilitator: Judge Fumi Wasserman, Los Angeles County Superior Court

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4:30 to 5:00: FINAL PLENARY:

Summation from Break Out Sessions re top three points raised in each session.
(discussion being compiled for full report and recommendations)