



## **Diversity Implementation Committee SCCBA 2007**

### ***Bar Association Recommendations:***

#### Overall Structure, the Creation of a Diversity Committee:

The Minority Access Committee would be re-structured and re-named to create a Diversity Committee, which would be responsible for planning and implementation of the current events that the Minority Access Committee Administers and responsible for monitoring and reporting to the Board of Trustees on Diversity programs within the Bar and current trends in the profession. Current permanent events include The Summer Associates Mixer in Palo Alto and the Unsung Heroes Awards.

The Diversity Committee would also have at least two permanent sub-committees: The Bay Area Minority Summer Clerkship Program (BAMSCP) and the Council of Presidents. Both Sub-committee chairs would be appointed by the President of the Bar and serve one year terms. The Sub-Committee chairs would be responsible for reporting on their work to the Diversity Committee. BAMSCP would operate pursuant to guidelines that will be outlined in a separate document.

The Council of Presidents would consist of all Presidents and President Elects of Minority Affiliate Bar Associations and Women Lawyers, the Rainbow Committee and the Diversity Committee as well as the President and President Elect of the Bar Association. This Sub-Committee would meet at least quarterly or as necessary to discuss issues of mutual concern both inside and outside the Bar and to coordinate events and programs.

The Diversity Committee would be responsible for implementing the following recommendations to the Board of Trustees.

1. **Annual Diversity Award:** Recognize the outstanding diversity efforts of firms, entities and individuals within the legal community with an annual award from the Bar Association.

Status: Need to establish Criteria and When it would be presented. The awards were given last year at Judges' Night to three recipients on a one time basis. **(See attached proposal)**

2. a. **Website Clearinghouse:** Use Diversity Programs link on the SCCBA Pro Bono website to be a clearinghouse of county programs for attorney volunteers and local area schools interested in promoting early awareness of opportunities in the legal profession and give attorneys Pro Bono credit for volunteering.

Status: Currently under construction as part of the Pro Bono Website and would be maintained by diversity liaison with links and contacts to programs from the Bar, members and firms. The program could start with the Diversity Commission Report's Appendices.

- b. **Pipeline Programs:** Combine volunteers for the District Attorney's Law Related Education Program for fifth graders in SJUSD and the SCCBA Law Related Education High School Mock Trial Program. Also coordinate with the County Department of Education to re-institute the Annual Law Day Program for fifth graders.

Status: This would be included in the Website clearinghouse and Law Day Program would be referred to the Diversity Committee.

3. **Diversity Liaison position:** Create within the SCCBA to coordinate and disseminate new and existing diversity programs and information. This person would also staff the Diversity Committee.

Status: Position Created by Executive Director this year.

#### 4 **Diversity Employment Opportunities:**

- Bay Area Minority Clerkship Program for 1L Students:** Continue to support and renew the Bay Area Minority Clerkship Program for 1L students, with particular focus on the Silicon Valley.

Status: Currently running with about 16 employers and about 21 spots for 1<sup>st</sup> year students in its 16<sup>th</sup> year. BASF has dropped out of the program, but the Contra Costa and Alameda Bar Associations are still participating. The main recommendation would be to make this a full committee under SCCBA that the President can appoint or remove along with more recognition for participants. (See attached for detailed recommendations).

5. **Mentorship Programs:** Work with existing mentorship programs like the Role Model Program, through the Minority Access Committee and create mentorship opportunities for new attorneys in firms to interact with older attorneys, through networking and formal relationships.
6. **Foundation:** Explore creating a Foundation to provide students from under-represented groups in Silicon Valley who have demonstrated financial need, with

need based Bar Exam grants and LSAT prep course scholarships. Ideally these students would be working in non-profit or government service. Specific criteria would need to be developed based on these guidelines.

Status: The Bar has never had a program like this and suggestions included partnering with existing non-profits (the Law Foundation, etc...) or to administer a small program within the Bar Association.

7. **Rankings Letter:** Draft an open letter from the Commission to the U.S. News and World Report annual law school ranking survey encouraging them to limit the importance of the LSAT in their findings and encourage the addition of percentage of the rank for diversity admissions and retention.

Status: Already approved by the Board of Trustees in 2006. Chris Arriola will draft the letter for Bruce Sewell and Carlos Moreno to be published in a newspaper with a national reputation once this committee finishes its work. The Fall application period would be the ideal time to put this forward.

8. **Implementation and Priorities:** Require a report to the Board of Trustees on the progress of implementation of these diversity efforts from the Diversity Committee every year in September, including priorities for implementation, and the Diversity Committee shall conduct formal review of progress made in three years.
9. **Silicon Valley Diversity Job Fair:** Consider continuing the Silicon Valley Diversity Job Fair for 2L students and new attorneys, overseen by the Diversity Committee and solicit sponsorships to finance it from General Counsel to reinforce its importance with area law firms.

Status: Currently in limbo this year due to time and expense involved with staff time to administer the program. Suggestions included getting a partner corporation to administer the event (Orrick runs BASF's program) or a non-profit partner (a law school or CA Minority Counsel Program). Additional suggestions included charging a fee to participate and holding the event in mid-August both to accommodate firms and staff time. Due to financial considerations.

## ***Recommendations Members and Firms:***

### **1. Diversity Pledge:**

a. **General Counsel Pledge:** Commission members should continue to support diversity as a good business decision with their client firms and request minority partners as contacts within outside firms.

b. **Commission Pledge:** Firms to sign pledge to strive to implement these recommendations.

**Proposal:** Post all signatory members on the Diversity page of [probonomatch.org](http://probonomatch.org) and other prominent locations such as newsletters and e-mails. Send a letter from the President and Diversity Chair, annually to signatory and other firms asking that they share their progress on implementing the goals below and letting them know that they can nominate themselves for the SCCBA annual diversity award.

Status: Pledge currently signed by 22 firms and institutions in the Valley.

### **2. “Best Practices” Policy:** Diversity Commission members should create a diversity policy within their offices, including a succession plan for the identification and recruitment of diverse leadership and encouragement of formal and informal mentorship plans.

▶ **Mentorship Programs:** Create and maintain programs that promote diversity and reward either financially or with public acknowledgement, successful mentorship efforts.

▶ **Business/Networking for First Years:** Create and promote effective business management training for first year associates, specifically including networking and business development.

▶ **Work/Life Balance:** Promote flexible work schedules for attorneys with families that do not inhibit advancement or leadership opportunities.

▶ **Billable Hours Credit/Work Credit:** Give attorneys credit for Bar Association and diversity activities or mentoring, (whether internal or external) by allotting billable hours or credit at performance review.

### **3. Silicon Valley Diversity Job Fair and Bay Area Minority Clerkship Program:** Support and participate in Diversity Job Fairs and scholarship programs.

Status: About 25 firms and other entities participated in the Job Fair last year and about 16 firms participated in (BAMSCP) this year, how do we increase participation. (see **attached BAMSCP Recommendations**)

4. **Training:** Create and promote ongoing diversity training from the “top down.” Participate in CLE programs at the Bar Association to promote cross-pollination of ideas within the firm.

Status: One of the challenges is the cost of CLE and the desire for firms to provide training solely in house. The Diversity Coordinator would work to create training about diversity to provide concrete examples and assistance to firms to help implement the pledge.