

PHILADELPHIA BAR ASSOCIATION BUSINESS LAW SECTION

DIVERSITY ACTION PLAN

Task Force Draft proposed December 14, 2009 Adopted by the Executive Committee May 10, 2010

The Business Law Section of the Philadelphia Bar Association (“**Business Section**”) believes that inclusion, participation and involvement of attorneys from underrepresented groups in Business Section programs and activities is essential.

To help guide the Business Section’s effort to increase inclusion, participation and involvement of attorneys from underrepresented groups in Business Section programs and activities, the Business Section’s Executive Committee created a task force (“**Task Force**”) to assess the Business Section’s current environment and efforts around diversity.

The Task Force was charged with recommending specific ways the Business Section could improve its current initiatives to encourage active involvement in the Business Section and its committees by lawyers regardless of race, ethnicity or religious background, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, disability, age, geography or work environment (large, small and mid-size firms, sole practitioners, government lawyers, in-house counsel, judiciary, part-time, full time). The Task Force focused on four areas: (1) Business Section Environment; (2) Leadership; (3) Outreach and (4) Professional Development.

To consider the four focus areas in greater depth, the Task Force discussed the underlying issues that hindered the Business Section’s growth in its area and recommended actions to improve the Business Section’s outreach. The Task Force has created an overall Diversity Action Plan (the “**Plan**”) for the Business Section. The Plan was submitted and reviewed by the Executive Committee, and adopted on May 10, 2010, with a recommendation for the Task Force to develop measurements and metrics by which to evaluate progress on implementation of the Plan and to report its findings to the Executive Committee from time to time.

To create a culture where all members of the bar association feel valued, supported, comfortable and included in an environment that affords an opportunity to contribute and thrive by attorneys from underrepresented groups.

ACTION STEPS

- 1 Assess information gathered from interviews with members of the Business Section to identify diversity issues and challenges.
- 2 Ensure that the Business Section includes attorneys from underrepresented groups as active members, committee chairs and on the Executive Committee, as appropriate.
- 3 The Task Force will report on the progress of the Plan to the Executive Committee every six months. The Task Force will also make recommendations for action by the Executive Committee, if necessary.
- 4 Allocate an amount in each annual budget to implement the Plan and for events and programs recommended by the Task Force and approved by the Executive Committee.
- 5 Expand the role of the YLD Liaison to include serving as an avenue of communication from the Business Section with concerns regarding diversity and inclusion, participation and involvement of attorneys from underrepresented groups in Business Section programs and activities.
- 6 Solicit input from the affinity bar associations regarding effective means for communicating opportunities to their memberships.

To demonstrate the commitment of the Business Section's Executive Committee to inclusion, participation and involvement of attorneys from underrepresented groups in Business Section programs and activities by developing policies, practices and plans that effectively and proactively implement this Plan.

ACTION STEPS

- 1 The Executive Committee will determine whether a member of the Executive Committee or someone else should be designated as Diversity Liaison to the Business Section's committees.
- 2 The Executive Committee will develop a process that strives to ensure that the Business Section's committees will follow the guidance of the Executive Committee to develop policies, practices and plans for membership and programs in a manner that supports and promotes diversity and inclusion, participation and involvement of attorneys from underrepresented groups in Business Section programs and activities.
- 3 The Executive Committee will work and cooperate with the Business Section's committee leaders in advancing inclusion, participation and involvement of attorneys from underrepresented groups in Business Section programs and activities within their committees, and will encourage, facilitate and support the leaders in each committee to take real and practical steps toward increasing diversity within the committee's leadership and within its activities.
- 4 The Task Force will explore the possibility of sponsoring an event, conference or an organization that is focused on increasing inclusion, participation and involvement of attorneys from underrepresented groups in Business Section programs and activities.

To recruit a more diverse pool of attorneys both for committee membership and for Business Section presentations.

ACTION STEPS

- 1 The Executive Committee will communicate its interest in increasing the participation of attorneys from underrepresented groups.
- 2 The Business Section will host or sponsor discussions, panels, networking events or other events organized by the various affinity bar associations. Where appropriate, the Business Section will seek opportunities to participate in panels or give presentations at these events.
- 3 The Executive Committee will pursue initiatives to attract inclusion, participation and involvement of attorneys from underrepresented groups in Business Section programs and activities by participating in the various bar and other legal associations for attorneys from underrepresented groups and by spreading the word that the Business Section is a comfortable, welcoming place to participate.
- 4 The Business Section should increase the diversity of the pool of actively recruited attorneys from underrepresented groups as candidates from which it recruits for positions as Business Section officers, Executive Committee and committee members, individual committee leaders and promotes and develops Business Section membership and individual committee membership.
- 5 The Business Section will participate in the Philadelphia Diversity Law Group programs, where appropriate.
- 6 The Executive Committee will include attorneys from underrepresented groups whenever it participates in law school programs.

To establish and maintain a systematic and structured process and approach to professional program development that is proactive and will ensure full and equal opportunities and support for attorneys from underrepresented groups to be full and active participants.

ACTION STEPS

- 1 Conduct periodic surveys of the Business Section and other attorneys for ideas of how to improve inclusion, participation and involvement of attorneys from underrepresented groups in Business Section programs and activities.
- 2 Implement suggestions from the survey for the improvement of inclusion, participation and involvement of attorneys from underrepresented groups in Business Section programs and activities, and otherwise work to increase the inclusion, participation and involvement of attorneys from underrepresented groups in Business Section programs and activities.
- 3 Identify and promote meaningful inclusion, participation and involvement of attorneys from underrepresented groups in Business Section programs and activities at all levels of committee activities and program assignments.
- 4 Seek the advice, and learn from the experience, of persons or groups who have studied and successfully achieved greater diversity in organizations or groups with significant similarities to the Business Section. Streamline the process, and educate our Executive Committee and committee leaders, as much as possible by learning from others who have experience in materially similar circumstances. Budget reasonable funding where warranted.

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