New York State Bar Association - Young Lawyers Section

Diversity Challenge Plan 2011-2012

Theme: "Unity in Diversity"

Diversity Statement: The Young Lawyers Section is committed to promoting diversity in its membership, programs, and initiatives. The Section is comprised of attorneys representing diversity in their age and experience, geography, practice areas, gender, and ethnicity. A diverse network of colleagues allows young attorneys to build perspective and become adept at meeting the demands of the legal profession in the 21st century. Programs and opportunities with an inclusive focus on promoting diversity as a priority initiative will continue to enhance the value of membership in the Young Lawyers Section.

The Young Lawyers Section Diversity Blueprint

Focus: A commitment to diversity in membership and leadership

- The work of the Diversity Committee is a primary concern
  - The Diversity Committee Chair has a seat on the Executive Committee
  - Consider utilizing co-Chairs to broaden the scope and reach of the Diversity Committee
  - Collaboration among leaders
    - Diversity initiative planning and evaluation should include each officer (i.e., Chair, Chair-Elect, Treasurer and Secretary), the Diversity Committee Chair, and the Membership Committee Chair
    - Include the District Representative Coordinator, Public Service and Pro Bono Committee Chair, and other Executive Committee members in planning/evaluation, when appropriate

- Promote and evaluate diversity in new membership
  - The Law Student Committee Chair has a seat on the Executive Committee
    - Re-energize this Committee and encourage collaboration with the Diversity Committee
  - Membership Committee priorities focus on diversity initiatives
    - Reach-out to the NYSBA Membership Committee to coordinate diversity initiatives (i.e., partnership and collaboration opportunities)

- Enhance the effectiveness of YLS presence at the Annual Meeting Diversity Reception
    - Record contact information for Diversity Reception attendees
    - Follow-up with attendees to both join the Young Lawyers Section and become active in Section programs and initiatives (in terms of participation and potential leadership capacities)
- Metrics – Annually, evaluate new member statistics with an inclusive focus on diversity: age and experience, geography, practice areas, gender and ethnicity
    - Evaluation and action steps tasked to Membership and Diversity Committees

➢ Development of diverse leaders – a diverse membership is better served by diverse leaders
- Commitment among officers and veteran members to encourage diverse participation in programs and initiatives
- Translate programs and initiatives into leadership opportunities and Executive committee positions
- Metrics – evaluate the diversity of the Executive Committee and officers every other year; adjust and adapt Section policy/focus on an annual basis, as needed

Focus: Utilize existing programs, complemented with new programs, to promote diversity

➢ Signature Programs
- Ensure signature programs appeal to attorneys with diverse interests and perspectives
    - Consider diversity in content and especially, in program faculty
- Annual Meeting
    - Utilize Annual Meeting ½-day CLE program to include a diversity focus/topic
    - Two-day Bridging-the-Gap program is the ideal opportunity (16 CLE credit hours) to include diverse speakers and topics
    - The Annual Outstanding Young Lawyer Award and Reception are opportunities to promote diversity
- Trial Academy
    - The Young Lawyers Section has made a commitment to providing two scholarships to its annual Trial Academy
        - Develop a Section Diversity Challenge Award presenting the honoree with a scholarship to the Trial Academy (as one of two scholarship recipients)
            - ❖ Create framework and criteria

    - Task the Diversity Committee with identifying/creating diversity initiatives at the United States Supreme Court Admissions Program and Fall Meeting

- Mentoring
    - Incorporate diversity themes with new signature mentoring program pairing young attorney mentors with law student mentees

- District and Local Events
    - District Representatives carry an integral role in bringing statewide diversity initiatives to the local level
    - Encourage each district event to have a diversity focus
    - Attract new diverse members and enhance diversity of existing members
    - Coordinate with minority, women and specialty bar associations
    - Metrics
        - District Representative reports will include a diversity focus in both planning and evaluation

- Section Interaction
    - Section Liaisons carry an integral role in bringing Section diversity initiatives to other substantive Sections in the Association, and vice versa
    - Encourage any co-sponsored Section events to have a diversity focus
    - Feed substantive Sections of the Association with diverse members from the Young Lawyers Section
    - Metrics
        - Section Liaison reports will include a diversity focus in both planning and evaluation

Focus: Prioritize aspects of diversity in outreach initiatives both within and outside of the legal profession

- Given the diversity in membership, every Section program and initiative should have a diversity focus
- During annual budget development, the Treasurer will work with the Section Chair, Diversity Committee Chair, and Staff Liaison to evaluate diversity initiative budget concerns
- The Executive Committee meeting held prior to the start of the new Section year, currently during the Trial Academy, should include an agenda item focusing on resources needed for diversity initiatives in the upcoming year

- Utilize district events to partner with community organizations representing diverse interests in networking, professional development and community service initiatives
    - The Executive Committee will seek to arrange at least one community service event in conjunction with a minority, women and/or specialty bar association annually, preferably also partnering with a community-based organization focused on diverse interests
- Encourage veteran leaders of the Bar Association, Sections and Committees to work with diverse young attorneys in various educational and personal development settings (i.e., Trial Academy, district/Section events, etc.)
- Make community service, pro bono and charitable initiatives committed to diverse interests a priority concern