NEW YORK STATE BAR ASSOCIATION
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The President's Section Diversity Challenge: Working together, everything fits.

Request for Final Report by Sections
(Due Thursday, March 22, 2012)

To the Section and Diversity Challenge Team Leaders:

We are approaching the end of the President Vincent Doyle's Section Diversity Challenge, which officially ends on March 16, 2012. This is the fourth and last piece of the puzzle. We have attached a copy of the brochure for the Challenge so that you can review the overall objectives of the Challenge in completing this report.

But this should not be the end to the efforts to increase diversity. In fact, a number of the diversity plans submitted by Sections envisioned a multi-year diversity effort. To this end, we have asked liaisons from the Committee on Diversity and Inclusion to contact you and to work with you in completing the last section of your report, under the heading *looking to the Future*.

The March 22nd deadline for this report is important since President Doyle will be recognizing those Sections that have completed the Challenge at the House of Delegates meeting in Buffalo on March 31.

Please complete your final report using the outline below, and submit it to Mark Wilson by March 22, 2012 (mwilson@nysba.org, tel. 518.487.5540). Thank you for all of your efforts to increase diversity in your Section!

Sherry Levin Wallach and Glenn Lau-Kee
Co-chairs, Diversity Challenge Committee

Please complete the questions below and return to Mark Wilson: mwilson@nysba.org

COMMERCIAL and FEDERAL LITIGATION SECTION

I. The Diversity Challenge Plan

a. Who are the members of the Section's Diversity Challenge Team (identify leader)?

CFLS Chair David Tennant; Chair-Elect Tracee Davis and the Section's Diversity Committee.

b. What specific parts of the Section's diversity challenge plan were to be executed during the Challenge? What parts were for future efforts?

The new diversity initiatives for 2011-2012 fell into two principal areas: (1) targeting/expanding the Section's mentoring program (to attract more attorneys of color by recruiting minority mentors and mentees, focusing on the minority lawyers attending the Section's Smooth Moves program); and (2) establishing a minority moot court program at each law school in New York, designed to attract college students of color to law school.

1. Mentoring

The chairs of our mentoring committee have been coordinating with the chairs of our diversity committee and actively recruiting attorneys of color to serve as mentors and to diversify our mentee population. This is an ongoing effort.

2. Moot Court

The minority moot court program is a large-scale, multi-year undertaking. We achieved our goal of establishing "one or more" student of color moot court competitions in 2012 – at UB Law – which will be held April 28. The UB Law competition targets minority undergraduates attending UB and students attending a paralegal program at Bryant & Stratton. UB law is expected to expand the competition to other area colleges next year. We have had substantial discussions with Albany Law School as well, and have made progress at Brooklyn Law and New York Law School. We expect two or more law schools to establish minority moot court programs in 2012-2013, joining UB law.

c. What were the goals that the Section set to be accomplished?

See above for new initiatives.

We have two existing, long-term diversity initiatives: (1) minority fellowship program in which we place minority law students in paid summer judicial clerkships in NYS Supreme Court / Commercial Division/ NY County; and (2) Smooth Moves CLE and networking reception for attorneys of color). Both continued in 2011-2012 and will continue.

II. Evaluation

a. Which goals were accomplished?

   See above 1(b).

b. Did you have sufficient resources? Support? Collaboration?

   Yes and no. The minority moot court initiative was labor intensive and required cultivating relationships at laws schools and developing school-specific plans for creating a long-term, stable minority moot court program at each school. We did not have a one-size-fits-all model, or even a good template, to start the discussion at each school – so we experienced some duplication of start-up efforts at Albany and UB Law. Due to a change in personnel at Albany Law School, the initiative stalled for a while, but is back on track. The culmination of the UB Law initiative – with the inaugural competition this April – is a testament to the hard work of Sheldon Smith, a UB law grad and Section member (also my partner). Now that we have model up and running at UB Law, we should be able to "sell" the program close to "shovel ready" at other schools.

c. In the execution of the plan, what worked and what didn't?

   The biggest challenge was having enough people with enough time. We needed a bigger, better organized committee to take ownership of the minority moot court initiative, develop a coordinated state-wide plan, and divide the work. A multi-year "czar" to develop the program was needed. I suspect I may serve in that role as immediate past chair.

d. If you were to do it again, what would you do differently?

   See "c."

e. What was the best part of the Challenge for your Section?

   Knowing the Bar president was committed to supporting our ambitious plans.

III. Looking to the Future

a. What will be the future diversity efforts of the Section?

Very bright. We have great established program (Smooth Moves, minority fellowship) and will be involved in minority moot court competition-building (and support) for years to come. We are also committed to making the Section more attractive to attorneys of color by increasing the diversity of our mentors and mentees.

b. How can the Committee on Diversity and Inclusion assist the Section in these future efforts?

We should re-visit what role the Committee might play in building out, and then supporting, the minority moot court program at each law school in New York.