# NEW YORK STATE BAR ASSOCIATION

# ENVIRONMENTAL LAW SECTION

# Diversity Plan

**Final – January 2004**
**Update – October 2011**

**James J. Periconi, Section Chair 2003-2004**
**Philip Dixon, Section Chair 2011-2012**

## Prepared by the Section's Ad Hoc Committee on Diversity

**2004 Plan**
**John Greenthal, Immediate Past Section Chair**
**Joan Leary Matthews, Committee Chair**
**Eileen Millett, former Committee Co-Chair**
**Michael Lesser**
**James A. Sevinsky**

**2011 Update**
**Joan Leary Matthews**
**John Greenthal**

## Introduction

The Environmental Law Section is committed to having a diverse membership so that those who participate in the Section's activities and the products of the Section's work will be enriched and enhanced by the different perspectives, backgrounds, and experiences of its members.

Data on Section membership indicate that the Section lacks diversity in many respects. As a result, the Section is committed to increasing the heterogeneity of the Section membership from among the many varied individuals in the environmental legal profession. Indeed, the Section has taken an important step at the top: effective June 1, 2004, the majority of the five Section officers are attorneys practicing in the government and not-for-profit sector.

## Committee's Charge

The Section's Executive Committee created the Ad Hoc Committee on Diversity in April 2002 with the following charge:

> [I]dentify the diversity needs of the Section in the areas of membership, programming, and committee functions – and in any other areas that the Committee identifies. The Committee shall develop recommendations strategies, and/or guidelines to address the needs identified.

## Goals

The goals of the Section relating to diversity are to actively recruit attorneys from diverse backgrounds and practice areas on Section committees and in programs, to foster an atmosphere of inclusion of these attorneys, and to benefit from their perspectives. To this end, the Section seeks to vary its membership based on a number of characteristics or factors:

- race and ethnicity
- gender
- sexual orientation
- experience level
- disability
- public sector employment
- not-for-profit sector employment
- corporate counsel employment
- geography
- position within a firm or organization
- practice area within environmental law

## ACTION ITEMS

To achieve the goals identified above, the Committee has identified a number of Action Items.

**Section Message on Diversity**

- Amend the Section Mission Statement to include a commitment to diversity.
- Ensure that the Nominations Committee is informed of the Section's goals for diversity.
- Provide a copy of the Diversity Plan to all existing and incoming Committee and Program Chairs.

**Outreach Efforts**

- Conduct outreach to law student Environmental Law Societies, especially through the efforts of Section members who are alumni of a law school with an Environmental Law Society.
- Establish a Law Professor Committee, which would explore ways to involve Section members in law school student activities.
- Conduct outreach to local and specialty bar associations (e.g., Black, Hispanic, Asian, and Women's Bar Associations).
- Review NYSBA corporate counsel list to identify potential Section members.
- Work with trade associations to identify environmental attorneys in various industry sectors.
- Work with General Counsels and other active Section members from government agencies to attract more members.
- Work with senior attorneys in law firms to encourage participation by younger and more newly admitted attorneys.
- Use Section leaders from underrepresented areas of the State to seek greater participation from attorneys in those areas, including asking Section leaders to speak at County Bar Association meetings.
- Work with Section members who are active in other NYSBA sections to encourage cross-over membership.

**The Personal Touch**

- Schedule personal meetings with prospective and newer members.
- Ensure that first-time registrants feel welcome even prior to a meeting.
- Establish an Ambassador program to greet new members to Section meetings.

- Invite new members to the Executive Committee Reception at each Annual Meeting.

- Establish a mentoring program for new Section members who are newer attorneys.

- Continue and enhance the Minority Law Student Fellowship program, such as by assisting and mentoring Fellows after their Fellowship.

**Speakers at CLE programs and Other Section Events**

- Ensure a greater role of persons with diverse backgrounds and experiences as speakers and panelists at Section programs.

- Develop guidelines for CLE Committee and Program Chairs to encourage selection of diverse panels of speakers.

**Publicity for Efforts to Obtain Diversity**

- Continue to publicize the Subsidization Program to members.

- Encourage and recognize contributions by members.

- Publicize the Section's efforts at increasing diversity in publications of the Section and NYSBA, as well as in other publications.

- Create a webpage for the Ad Hoc Diversity Committee and provide a mechanism for potential new members to ask questions and obtain information via the internet.

## Implementation of Action Items

To implement these Action Items, the Section Officers and other members of the Section's Executive Committee will identify persons responsible for carrying out these items, pursuant to a schedule appropriate to each item. The Appendix to this Report sets forth a preliminary series of tables that the Section Officers and Executive Committee members will fill out as a way to ensure that these Action Items will be realized.

**New York State Bar Association**
**Environmental Law Section**

**January 2004 Diversity Plan**
**Appendix B Implementation of Action Items**

| ACTION ITEM | SECTION MEMBER(S) ASSIGNED | TARGET DATE FOR IMPLEMENTATION |
|---|---|---|
| **A. Section Message on Diversity** | | |
| 1. Amend the Section Mission Statement to include a commitment to diversity. | Joan Leary Matthews,<br>John Greenthal | Language drafted for Cabinet and Executive Committee approval, October 2011 |
| 2. Ensure that the Nominations Committee is informed of the Section's goals for diversity. | Section Chair,<br>Diversity Liaison | When Nominations Committee established in Fall |
| 3. Provide a copy of the Diversity Plan to all existing and incoming Committee and Program Chairs. | Section Chair | June of each year |
| 4. Appoint a Diversity Liaison and invite that person to participate in Cabinet Conference calls. | Section Chair | |

| ACTION ITEM | SECTION MEMBER(S) ASSIGNED | TARGET DATE FOR IMPLEMENTATION |
|---|---|---|
| **B. Outreach Efforts** | | |
| 1. Conduct outreach to law student Environmental Law Societies, especially through the efforts of Section members who are alumni of a law school with an Environmental Law Society. | Membership Committee | Ongoing<br>Executive Committee approved various benefits for students |
| 2. Establish a Law Professor Committee, which would explore ways to involve Section members in law school student activities. | | |
| 3. Conduct outreach to local and specialty bar associations (e.g., Black, Hispanic, Asian, and Women's Bar Associations). | | NYSBA holds annual diversity event in NYC |
| 4. Review NYSBA corporate counsel list to identify potential Section members. | Membership Committee | Ongoing |
| 5. Work with trade associations to identify environmental attorneys in various industry sectors. | | |
| 6. Work with General Counsels and other active Section members from government agencies to attract more members. | Lou Alexander has done this | Ongoing |
| 7. Work with senior attorneys in law firms to encourage participation by younger and more newly admitted attorneys. | Membership Committee | Ongoing |
| 8. Use Section leaders from underrepresented areas of the State to seek greater participation from attorneys in these areas, including asking Section leaders to speak at County Bar Association meetings. | Membership Committee | |
| 9. Work with Section members who are active in other NYSBA sections to encourage cross-over membership. | Executive Committee members | Ongoing |

| ACTION ITEM | SECTION MEMBER(S) ASSIGNED | TARGET DATE FOR IMPLEMENTATION |
|---|---|---|
| **C. The Personal Touch** | | |
| 1. Schedule personal meetings with prospective and newer members. | Section Chair<br>Membership Committee | |
| 2. Ensure that first-time registrants feel welcome even prior to a meeting. | Section Chair<br>Officers | |
| 3. Establish an Ambassador program to greet new members to Section meetings. | Section Chair<br>Membership Committee | |
| 4. Invite new members to the Executive Committee Reception at each Annual Meeting. | Membership Committee | |
| 5. Establish a mentoring program for new Section members who are newer attorneys. | Membership Committee | |
| 6. Continue and enhance the Minority Law Student Fellowship program, such as by assisting and mentoring Fellows after their Fellowship, and provide incentives for continued participation in the Section. | Ad Hoc Minority Fellowship Committee<br>Executive Committee | Ongoing |

| ACTION ITEM | SECTION MEMBER(S) ASSIGNED | TARGET DATE FOR IMPLEMENTATION |
|---|---|---|
| **D. Speakers at CLE programs and Other Section Events** | | |
| 1. Ensure a greater role of persons with diverse backgrounds and experiences as speakers and panelists at Section programs. | Section Chair<br>Program Chairs<br>CLE Committee | Speaker Selection Guidelines approved by Executive Committee<br>September 25, 2005, updated October 23, 2011 |
| 2. Develop guidelines for CLE Committee and Program Chairs to encourage selection of diverse panels of speakers. | Section Chair<br>Program Chairs<br>CLE Committee | Speaker Selection Guidelines approved by Executive Committee<br>September 25, 2005, updated October 23, 2011 |

| ACTION ITEM | SECTION MEMBER(S) ASSIGNED | TARGET DATE FOR IMPLEMENTATION |
|---|---|---|
| **E. Publicity for Efforts to Obtain Diversity** | | |
| 1. Continue to publicize the Subsidization Program to members. | Section Chair<br>NYSBA Liaison | Ongoing, but open issue for government attorneys |
| 2. Encourage and recognize contributions by members. | Section Chair<br>Journal Editor-in-Chief | Ongoing |
| 3. Publicize the Section's efforts at increasing diversity in publications of the Section and NYSBA, as well as in other publications. | Section Chair,<br>Journal Editor-in-Chief<br>(provided Section has results) | |
| 4. Create a webpage for the Ad Hoc Committee on Diversity and provide a mechanism for potential new members to ask questions and obtain information via the internet. | | |