

**AMERICAN BAR ASSOCIATION
SECTION OF FAMILY LAW**

September 1, 2003

**Diversity Plan
2003**

To be submitted to Section of Family Law Council for Adoption in October 2003

The American Bar Association Section of Family Law enthusiastically embraces the concept of diversity. We believe that diversity in our membership brings a variety of unique and valuable skills and perspectives to the Section and to its members. We recognize, however, that the Section can only expect to make progress in achieving diversity in its membership with a demonstrated commitment to achieving diversity by and in its leadership.

Over the years, the Section has attempted to increase the diversity of its membership and leadership and to increase the participation of lawyers of color, women lawyers, younger lawyers, lawyers with disabilities, gay and lesbian lawyers and lawyers from diverse ethnic backgrounds in the activities of the Section, its committees and its leadership. The Section formed a Diversity Committee in 2002 to draft the Section's Diversity Plan, to assist the Section with reaching out to qualified minority members and to work as a catalyst in the Section to increase the involvement of lawyers of all minorities in the work of the Section.

The goal of diversity can only be achieved with the unequivocal support and participation of the Section's leadership and its Committees and the individual commitment of each Section member. However, it is recognized that in order to achieve our goal, Section leadership and Committees as well as our active members must be given guidance, encouragement, and training to:

- actively recruit lawyers of color, women lawyers, younger lawyers, lawyers with disabilities, gay and lesbian lawyers and lawyers from diverse ethnic backgrounds;
- educate lawyers of color, women lawyers, younger lawyers, lawyers with disabilities, gay and lesbian lawyers and lawyers from diverse ethnic backgrounds about the benefits of section membership including networking, committee work, improved trial skills, practice management, CLE programs, publications and leadership opportunities.
- foster an atmosphere of inclusion to assist in retaining lawyers of color, women lawyers, younger lawyers, lawyers with disabilities, gay and lesbian lawyers and lawyers from diverse ethnic backgrounds once they have become members;
- seek the participation of lawyers of color, women lawyers, younger lawyers, lawyers with disabilities, gay and lesbian lawyers and lawyers from diverse ethnic backgrounds as speakers and authors for section programs and publications; and
- provide lawyers of color, women lawyers, younger lawyers, lawyers with disabilities, gay and lesbian lawyers and lawyers from diverse ethnic backgrounds with opportunities and training to take on leadership roles at both the Committee and Section levels.

It is with this goal in mind that the Section has adopted its Diversity Plan. The Plan is a road map to assist and encourage the members and leaders of the Section to ensure full and equal participation for lawyers of color, women lawyers, younger lawyers, lawyers with disabilities, and lawyers from diverse ethnic backgrounds. This Diversity Plan is a long-range planning tool and will be reviewed annually by the Section's Diversity Committee with a report to be circulated to the Long-Range Planning Committee, in order to prioritize the Section's goals and create new ones.

LONG RANGE GOALS AND ACTION PLAN

1. DEVELOP AND MAINTAIN DIVERSITY IN SECTION OFFICERS AND COUNCIL MEMBERS AND INCREASE DIVERSITY IN COMMITTEE LEADERSHIP.

- a. Obtain unequivocal support and participation of the Section officers, Council members and committee chairs in implementing the Diversity Plan:
 - i) Provide a copy of the Diversity Plan to each existing and incoming Section officer Council member and committee chair together with a letter from the Chair of the Section stressing the importance of the Plan. **Responsibility: Section Chair**
 - ii) Report findings as a Council Meeting agenda item; this would be a verbal report by the Diversity Committee, where possible. **Responsibility: Diversity Committee**

- b. Provide guidance to the Committee Chairs with respect to diversity issues:
 - i) Include diversity materials in the Committee Chairs' Orientation Manual/Handbook, including, but not limited to, the Section's policies and guidelines relating to diversity, a copy of the Section's Title IX Report, a list of resources providing information for diversity on panels and publications and prior committee and liaison reports. **Responsibility: Section staff**
 - ii) Periodically update the above mentioned diversity resource materials. **Responsibility: Section staff**

- c. Provide annual diversity training for current and future Section leaders and Committee Chairs:
 - i) Utilize an outside resource or consultant (e.g. Director of the ABA Commission on Racial and Ethnic Diversity in the Profession) specializing in diversity in organizational (rather than workplace) environments. **Responsibility: Diversity Committee**

- d. Monitor Progress through use of the Committee Status Report:
 - i) Add diversity as a category on the Committee Status Report. **Responsibility: Scope and Correlation Committee**
 - ii) Circulate Committee Status Reports to Council and the Officers in conjunction with the Fall, Spring and Annual meetings and tabulate results following Annual Meeting on an annual basis. **Responsibility: Scope and Correlation Committee**
 - iii) Recognize efforts to diversity at the committee level. **Responsibility: Diversity Committee**
 - iv) Develop written expectations for committees based on the goals of the Section's Diversity Plan. **Responsibility: Diversity Committee**
 - v) Provide follow-up to the committee chairs and leadership to insure that the expectations are being met. **Responsibility: Scope and Correlation Committee**

- e. Endeavor to appoint a diverse Nominating Committee, which reflects the goals of diversity the Section is attempting to achieve. **Responsibility: Section Chair-Elect**

- f. Enhance diversity of the Section leadership and maintain diversity in the leadership of the Section by including these goals in the Section’s by-laws. **Responsibility: Bylaws, Policy and Procedures Committee**
- g. Evaluate the Section’s Diversity Plan annually:
 - i) Assess which initiatives are working and which are not and determine why they are not working; incorporate new ideas; and respond to then existing circumstances. **Responsibility: Diversity Committee**
 - ii) Circulate the Diversity Plan to the ABA Commission on Women in the Profession and the ABA Commission on Racial and Ethnic Diversity in the Profession for their additional input and guidance. **Responsibility: Section staff**
 - iii) Periodically assess the diversity plans of other entities that are associated with the American Bar Association by establishing liaison relationships to obtain new ideas. **Responsibility: Diversity Committee**
 - iv) Report recommended changes to the Diversity Plan to, and seek approval from, Council each year at the Fall meeting. **Responsibility: Diversity Committee**

2. INCREASE DIVERSITY IN MEMBERSHIP

- a. Foster the spirit of inclusiveness in all of the Section’s activities:
 - i) Include “All Section Members Welcome” on signs identifying Committee meetings outside meeting rooms at the Fall and Spring meetings. **Responsibility: Section staff**
 - ii) Invite any non-members to become members at the conclusion of each Committee meeting. **Responsibility: Committee Chairs**
 - iii) Advertise in all materials for the Fall and Spring meetings that non-Committee members are welcome to attend Committee meetings. **Responsibility: Section staff**
- b. Strongly encourage diverse panels in all CLE and Committee programming and diverse participation in all Section publications. **Responsibility: CLE Committee, Publications Development Board, Family Advocate Board and Family Law Quarterly Board**
- c. Establish and sponsor first-timers receptions and committee showcases at each Fall, Spring and Annual Meeting. **Responsibility: Section staff**
- d. Encourage first-time meeting attendees to meet new and existing members and encourage new attendees to take advantage of dine-arounds following the welcome reception for first time attendees to get to know each other and to network. **Responsibility: Fall/Spring/Annual Host Committee**
- e. Establish Mentoring Program for new Section members:
 - i) Establish, in connection with the Membership Committee, a Member Satisfaction Survey and include a mentoring section asking if they want to participate in the Mentoring Program. **Responsibility: Membership Committee**
 - ii) Encourage mentors to urge their mentees to be active in various Committee activities, publications, and programs and to stay in touch between Section meetings. **Responsibility: Membership Committee**
- f. Ensure that first-time meeting registrants feel welcome even prior to the meeting:

- i) Consider mailing in advance of Fall, Spring and Annual Meetings to all first-time registrants a “How To Get The Most From Your ABA Meeting” information sheet (to be created). **Responsibility: Section Chair and Staff**
 - ii) Prior to each Fall, Spring and Annual Meeting, send first-time attendees a schedule of committee meetings and a welcoming letter with an invitation to attend all committee activities and social functions taking place at the meeting. **Responsibility: Section Chair and Staff**

- g. Follow all Fall, Spring and Annual Meetings with a letter from the Chair of the Section to all first-time registrants thanking them for attending, asking them to share their opinions about the meeting, and inquiring as to what the Section can do for them to enhance their experience at the next meeting. Prepare a report summarizing the responses received and the Chair’s letter and circulate each report to the Section leadership, including Committee Chairs. **Responsibility: Section Chair and Staff**

- h. Develop recruitment/retention materials with a focus on lawyers of color, women lawyers, gay and lesbian lawyers, younger lawyers, lawyers with disabilities, and lawyers of diverse ethnic backgrounds. **Responsibility: Membership Committee**

- i. Try to fund a minority scholarship for attendance at the Fall and Spring Meetings for minority law students in the geographic location of each meeting:
 - i) Advertise the scholarship at each law school in the geographic location of the meetings and send personal letters from the Chair informing each school of the scholarship opportunities. **Responsibility: Sponsorship Committee**
 - ii) Provide the scholarship recipients with mentors from the Section and encourage active participation by the scholarship recipients in activities of the Section after graduating from law school. **Responsibility: Membership Committee**

- j. Coordinate Section representatives attending important minority bar meetings and events in their locations and encourage Section leaders to attend these meetings and events. **Responsibility: Membership Committee**

- k. Appoint liaisons (formal or informal) to each of the national minority bar associations (*e.g.*, National Bar Association, Hispanic National Bar Association, National Asian Pacific American Bar Association, National Native American Bar Association, National Lesbian and Gay Law Association), establish expectations or responsibilities for these liaisons, and fund their attendance at these meetings. **Responsibility: Section Chair**

- l. Involve lawyers who are already involved in local and national minority bar associations in Section activities. An emphasis should be placed on involvement with local minority bar associations because the Section is not usually viewed as a competitor of these associations.
 - i) Encourage joint programming with national and local minority bar associations. **Responsibility: CLE Committee**
 - ii) Communicate first-time registration discounts to members of minority bar associations. **Responsibility: Section Staff**
 - iii) Solicit speakers from minority lawyer bar associations located in the host city and notify the division’s CLE chairs early in the process the mechanism for them to recruit local minority talent. **Responsibility: CLE Committee**
 - iv) Encourage joint sponsorships with minority lawyer and bar associations for Fall and Spring meetings. **Responsibility: Host Committee**

- v) Advertise the Section’s programs in periodicals/newsletters directed to minority lawyer bar associations. **Responsibility: Section Staff**
 - vi) Send information on Section membership and benefits to meetings of national minority bar associations. **Responsibility: Section Staff**
 - vii) Obtain lists of minority bar associations from the Commission on Racial and Ethnic Diversity in the Profession and send to the persons on those lists Fall and Spring Meeting brochures. **Responsibility: Section Staff**
 - viii) Personally invite members and leaders of minority lawyer bar associations in the host city to programs and social events, waive any registration fees for the leaders of such associations, and appoint Section members to serve as hosts to such attendees. **Responsibility: Host Committee**
- m. Coordinate efforts with and use the resources of the Commission on Women in the Profession and the Commission on Racial and Ethnic Diversity in the Profession to assist in the recruitment efforts of the Section:
- i) Continue to establish Section Liaisons to the Commission for Women in the Profession and Committee on Racial and Ethnic Diversity in the Profession. **Responsibility: Section Chair**
 - ii) Sponsor joint promotions and membership drives with the Commission for Women in the Profession and the Commission on Racial and Ethnic Diversity in the Profession. **Responsibility: Membership Committee**
- n. Increase flow of information between the Section and the Young Lawyers Division and Law Students Division:
- i) Provide membership materials to law students focusing on benefits and opportunities in the Section for law students and young lawyers. **Responsibility: Membership Committee**
 - ii) Advertise to law students and family law attorneys in the Young Lawyers Division the “basic” programs available at the Fall, Spring and Annual Meetings. **Responsibility: Membership Committee**
- o. Expand the responsibilities of the Young Lawyers Division and Law Student Division liaisons to act as formal conduits for young lawyers and law students:
- i) Obtain appointments for young lawyers and law students within the Section. **Responsibility: Section Chair**
 - ii) Obtain young lawyers or law students (where appropriate) as speakers or as writers for Committee panels and publications. **Responsibility: Committee Chairs**
- p. Develop outreach programming targeted to Young Lawyers:
- i) Co-sponsor a program to educate young lawyers about establishing a career in family law with the Young Lawyers Division, including basic law practice management skills and how to build and run a law practice. Hold the Program at least annually at a meeting of the Young Lawyers Division. **Responsibility: CLE Committee**
 - ii) Utilize the program materials from “Pathways to Leadership” developed by the Commission on Women in the Profession. **Responsibility: CLE Committee**
 - iii) Develop specialized programming with special appeal to minority lawyers of color. **Responsibility: CLE Committee**
 - vi) Encourage each Committee to have an informal liaison from the Young Lawyers Division. **Responsibility: SCOPE Committee**

- vii) Submit articles for publication in the Young Lawyer Division’s publications that cover nuts and bolts aspects of the practice of family law. **Responsibility: CLE and Membership Committees**
 - viii) Develop a column for the Family Advocate targeted to Young Lawyers. **Responsibility: Family Advocate Board**
 - ix) Develop an area on the section web site targeted to Young Lawyers. **Responsibility: Section Staff**
- q. Develop outreach programming targeted at Law Students:
- i) Co-sponsor a program to educate law school students about establishing a career in family law with the Law School Student Division. **Responsibility: CLE Committee**
 - ii) Develop specialized programming with special appeal to minority lawyers. **Responsibility: CLE Committee**
 - iii) Ask Section members who are law professors or who teach course(s) at law schools to speak to students regarding the benefits of membership in the Section of Family Law. **Responsibility: Membership Committee**
 - iv) Host a program at the Fall and Spring meetings for area law students, inviting them to attend a panel discussion on career opportunities in the family law practice and the conference reception. **Responsibility: Membership Committee**
 - v) Develop a “tool kit” for members to use at their local law schools to produce a similar program at the local level. **Responsibility: Membership Committee**
 - vi) Encourage each Committee to have an informal liaison from the Young Lawyers Division. **Responsibility: SCOPE Committee**
 - vii) Submit articles for publication in the Law School Student Division’s publications that address all aspects of the practice of family law. **Responsibility: CLE and Membership Committees**
 - viii) Develop a column for the Family Advocate targeted to law student members. **Responsibility: Family Advocate Board**
 - ix) Develop an area on the section web site targeted to law students. **Responsibility: Section Staff**
- r. Work to establish a family law minority internship program, with the end goal of mentorship and lasting ABA/Section membership and leadership:
- i) The program will be promoted through the Section, Commission on Racial and Ethnic Diversity in the Profession, minority bar associations and law schools. **Responsibility: Section Staff**
 - ii) Applications will be received each Spring for summer internships at selected family law firms in selected cities. **Responsibility: Internship Committee (to be created)**
 - iii) Selection will be based on personal mission statements **and Section diversity goals. Responsibility: Internship Committee (to be created)**
 - iv) Apprenticeship recipients will receive a summer internship and funding to attend the Section’s Fall and Spring Meeting. **Responsibility: Internship Committee (to be created)**
 - v) Recipients will be members of the program until graduating from law school, when they will be given a free Section membership and will be appointed to a Section committee. **Responsibility: Section Staff**

- vi) Apprenticeship recipients will be expected to submit monthly reports during the internship and write a yearly report about the experience for Council. In addition, they will be expected to promote the program by speaking to the Law Student Division and local minority bar associations. **Responsibility: Internship Committee (to be created)**
- vii) Participating law firms will agree to assign a mentor to each apprentice and will assist in providing career assistance and advice. The firm and mentors should be active members of the Section of Family Law. **Responsibility: Internship Committee (to be created)**

3. RAISE AWARENESS THAT DIVERSITY IS VALUED AND WHY

- a. Encourage a policy that the Section co-sponsor programs with other Sections or Divisions only if there is a diverse panel. **Responsibility: Section Officers**
- b. Require Section Liaisons to the Commission on Women in the Profession and the Commission on Racial and Ethnic Diversity in the Profession to:
 - i) report at the Fall and Spring Meetings of the Diversity Committee regarding:
 - (1) current developments and initiatives undertaken by those organizations; and
 - (2) steps taken by the other ABA sections to increase diversity. **Responsibility: Section Liaison**
 - ii) if financially feasible, attend the Women’s Caucus Meeting sponsored by the Commission on Women in the Profession at the ABA Midyear and Annual Meetings. **Responsibility: Section Liaison**
- c. Create and regularly update the Family Law web site for the Diversity Committee and attempt to have other relevant web sites (e.g. Commission on Women in the Profession, Commission on Racial and Ethnic Diversity in the Profession, National Bar Association, National Native American Bar Association, Hispanic National Bar Association, National Asian Pacific American Bar Association, National Lesbian and Gay Law Association etc.) link to the Diversity Committee site. Add links to these organizations to the Family Law Section’s web site. **Responsibility: Section Staff**
- d. Encourage and recognize contributions by minority lawyers and women in the Section’s publications:
 - i) Include photos of contributing authors where appropriate and within publishing guidelines. **Responsibility: Advocate Board, Family Law Quarterly Editor and Publication Board**
 - ii) Include photos acknowledging diversity of membership in membership materials. **Responsibility: Section Staff**
 - iii) Include regular reports on achievements in the diversity area in the *Family Advocate*. **Responsibility: Section Staff**
- e. Continue funding activities of the Diversity Committee to increase diversity and publicize the Section’s efforts at increasing diversity. **Responsibility: Section Council**
- f. Communicate the Section’s commitment to diversity as well as our desire to improve the Section’s image with minority bar associations and younger lawyers and:
 - i) encourage joint programming with the Commission on Women in the Profession, the Commission on Racial and Ethnic Diversity in the Profession, and national and local minority bar associations. **Responsibility: Section Chair**

- ii) encourage joint programming with the Young Lawyers Division and state minority bar affiliate groups. **Responsibility: Section Chair**
 - iii) encourage programming for local law schools in conjunction with the Fall and Spring Meetings. **Responsibility: Section Chair**
 - iv) co-sponsor programs and activities with law schools in host cities. **Responsibility: Host Committee**
 - v) communicate first time registration discounts to young lawyers and minority lawyers. **Responsibility: Section Staff**
 - vi) solicit minority and younger lawyer speakers from bar associations located in the host city. **Responsibility: CLE Committee**
 - vii) advertise programs in periodicals/newsletters for minority bar associations and the Young Lawyer Division. **Responsibility: Section Staff**
 - viii) personally invite members and leaders of minority and younger lawyer bar associations in the host city to programs and social events, waive any registration fees for the leaders of such associations, and appoint Section members to serve as hosts to such attendees. **Responsibility: Host Committee**
- g. Whenever possible, publicize in local and national media the efforts of the Section on its diversity initiatives. **Responsibility: Section Chair and Officers**

The Section Officers and Council Members have approved this Diversity Plan on October 18, 2003 at the Fall Council Meeting of the Section of Family Law.