“In the 21st century, the legal profession faces no greater challenge than the imperative to advance diversity throughout our ranks,” stated Judge Ellen F. Rosenblum in her capacity as Chair of the 2009-10 ABA Presidential Commission on Diversity that produced the report, Diversity in the Legal Profession: The Next Steps. In that report, she invited readers to “Use this report and recommendations to motivate yourself and encourage others … to take the next steps towards a more diverse and inclusive legal profession.” Young lawyers across the country accepted that invitation by participating in the 2011-12 Next Steps Challenge.

The ABA Young Lawyers Division (YLD) and ABA Center for Racial & Ethnic Diversity (Diversity Center) joined forces to develop the Next Steps Challenge. They launched this national competition for YLD affiliates to develop or enhance their diversity-related initiatives that address one or more of the recommendations in the Next Steps report.

In Spring 2012, four YLD affiliates were selected as finalists. Their representatives were invited to the YLD and Diversity Center joint meeting, which was held in May in Nashville, TN. YLD Chair Michael G. Bergmann and Diversity Center Chair I.S. Leevy Johnson welcomed the following Next Steps Challenge finalists:

- Brian Clary, Chair, Arkansas Bar Association Young Lawyers Section
- Roula Allouch, Executive Committee, Kentucky Bar Association Young Lawyers Division
- Brad Williams, Chair, North Carolina Bar Association Young Lawyers Division
- Mason Wilson, President, Tennessee Bar Association Young Lawyers Division

The top two winners of the competition received support for their programs with a financial subgrant, which was generously

Since 1988, the American Bar Foundation has sponsored a summer research fellowship program to interest undergraduate students from diverse backgrounds in pursuing graduate study in the social sciences. Each year, the ABA Center for Racial and Ethnic Diversity conducts an interactive session for the Fellows to acquaint them with diversity activities in the ABA and learn more about their experiences as potential future lawyers. This year’s cohort is exceptionally gifted, with stellar accomplishments already posted in their portfolios. As representatives of the legal profession’s upcoming generation, these students offer an assurance that the “best is yet to come.”

We invited each ABF Fellow to summarize her summer research project.

Larissa Davis
Examining Law & Social Inequality

This summer I am a research fellow for ABF Director Robert Nelson. His research focuses on the social organization of law and the relationship between law and social inequality. My projects examine diversity in the legal profession.
Communiqué from...

Commission on Racial and Ethnic Diversity in the Profession

By Reginald M. Turner, Jr., Commission Chair

The “tone at the top” refers to an organization’s leadership principles, which set the standard by which the institution operates. If the leaders exemplify certain values or ethics, then their colleagues in the ranks will aspire to those values. If the leaders of an organization manifest a lack of ethics or values, then the people whom they lead will embody that same lack of values. Leaders lead by example.

WHY LEADERSHIP COUNTS

There is perhaps no organization in the world where this is more the case than the United States military. Our military is a hierarchical organization, with a structure that is designed to maintain order and discipline within the ranks, while accomplishing daunting, even heroic tasks in the face of the most stressful circumstances imaginable. Orders flow from command levels down. Subordinates are expected to follow orders, and to do so promptly. In the military context, the tone at the top is an even more powerful influence than it is in other areas, such as business.

That is why the ABA Commission on Racial and Ethnic Diversity in the Profession is interested in exploring the topic of the tone at the top when it comes to the JAG Corps, our nation’s military lawyers. JAG Corps lawyers do the work of military justice. They represent the law within the military. Our military is unlike any other institution, yet it reflects who we are as Americans. Our military justice system must shine as an example of equal justice around the world. In order for it to do so, the JAG Corps must be diverse and inclusive. JAG Corps officers will only prioritize diversity when diversity is fostered and prioritized by the top brass.

The ABA Diversity Commission has formed a Committee on Diversity in the JAG Corps that has sponsored prior efforts, such as assisting in the development of diversity and inclusion training modules for the USAF JAG Corps. At the 2012 ABA Midyear Meeting, we hosted a roundtable discussion, led by USAF Colonel Will Gunn (Retired), the General Counsel for the Department of Veteran’s Affairs. The discussion included many JAG Corps officers and leaders, who shared their thoughts on the history, practical challenges and benefits of diversity and inclusion efforts in the JAG Corps.

The Diversity Commission continues its engagement of this topic with a complimentary CLE program at the 2012 ABA Annual Meeting. The program, “Tone at the Top: Equality of Opportunities,” is scheduled for August 3, from 3:45 to 5:15 pm, at the Hyatt Regency Chicago. Confirmed panelists include Vice Admiral Nanette M. DeRenzi, the Navy Judge Advocate General, the highest ranking woman in JAG Corps history; Rear Admiral Frederick J. Kenney, the Judge Advocate General of the U.S. Coast Guard; Major General Kenneth Gray (USA, Retired), the first African American judge advocate to achieve the rank of General in the U.S. military and a pioneer in efforts to diversify the Army JAG Corps; and Colonel James M. Durant III, the top U.S. Air Force JAG Corps officer in the United Kingdom.

The conversation will be moderated by Dr. Arin N. Reeves, a nationally recognized diversity and inclusion expert. She is the author of the groundbreaking book, The Next IQ: the Next Generation of Intelligence for 21st Century Leaders, published by the ABA Center for Racial and Ethnic Diversity.

With such highly qualified and experienced participants, we expect a lively and informative discussion on the diversity and inclusion challenges JAG Corps leaders encounter. Our purpose is to learn and understand what the military does in this area that works and may translate to other sectors. We will discuss emerging diversity and inclusion topics, such as “implicit bias” and “stereotype threat,” and explore the role of JAG Corps leaders in addressing these challenges. We also will highlight the JAG Corps as a viable career option for lawyers—and in particular for diverse lawyers. It is clear—that the military is such a large and complex institution, and given the scope of the legal issues entailed—that JAG Corps experience is excellent work and is superlative training for a wide range of practice areas and responsibilities.

ABA CO-SPONSORS

The ABA understands that JAG Corps lawyers are in a unique, multifaceted practice area. That is why there are so many diverse ABA co-sponsors for this event, including the General Practice, Solo and Small Firms Division; Government and Public Sector Lawyers Division; Criminal Justice Section; Tort Trial & Insurance Practice Section; and Standing Committee on Armed Forces Law. It should also be noted that the ABA’s Executive Director noted that the ABA’s Executive Director Jack Rives is a USAF Lieutenant General (Retired) who served as Judge Advocate General. That is further proof that a career in the JAG Corps is not only its own reward, but is also excellent preparation for socially and legally relevant work post-JAG Corps.

We hope that you are able to make it to this complimentary CLE program. Even for those of us who are not in the military, there is a great deal that we can learn from the men and women who have made serving their country not only their practice, but their way of life. If you are unable to make it, or if you are reading this after the fact, please stay tuned to the Diversity Commission website at www.ambar/CREDP, as we will have future programs on JAG Corps and on many other practice areas where diversity and inclusion are a top priority.
The call for increasing diversity in the legal profession has been audible for decades. Statistics reflect the disparity between the numbers of persons of color in the United States and their representation in the legal profession. Believing that a crucial strategy in diversity efforts is to increase the numbers of law students of color in the “educational pipeline” to the legal profession, the ABA established the Council for Racial and Ethnic Diversity in the Educational Pipeline (Pipeline Council). The Pipeline Council acts as a programmatic incubator for activities that foster a more diverse academic pipeline into the legal profession and provides a forum to address these issues in our educational systems and the legal profession, including the challenges faced by law schools in securing and advancing diverse students.

Recruitment, School Ranking, and Standardized Tests
Law schools compete for students of color by offering scholarships based on merit and need. Since the pool of applying students of color is limited, law schools typically compete for the same set of students. Unfortunately, the size of this pool is insufficient to meet the demand for student of color enrollment. This competition is fostered in part by a narrow view of what constitutes a “meritorious” student, focusing primarily on LSAT scores which also underscore the competitive drive for achieving and sustaining a higher ranking among law schools.

Law schools work to have the highest median undergraduate grade point average and LSAT score because those median scores are important to rankings. The Law School Admissions Council (LSAC) has studied LSAT scores over time and has noted a one standard deviation in average scores between white test takers and African American test takers that typically results in a nine-point difference in LSAT score. This nine-point disparity in LSAT score can often make the difference between a law school applicant receiving a congratulatory acceptance letter or a rejection notice. That difference makes admission of students of color more challenging for law schools, as law schools are conflicted by their desire for higher rankings and greater enrollment of students of color.

Some law schools justify using the LSAT as a predictor of first-time bar passage, another important rankings factor. Any relationship between the two may exist.

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ABA Coalition on Racial & Ethnic Justice

It has been 20 years since the ABA Presidential Task Force on Minorities in the Justice System was created as a result of the aftermath of the Rodney King disturbances. In 1994 the Task Force became what is now known as the Coalition on Racial and Ethnic Justice. COREJ was designed to implement the recommendations of the Task Force and develop partnerships among community groups, civil rights organizations, businesses, religious organizations and bar associations for eliminating racial and ethnic bias in the justice system. COREJ has been a catalyst for eliminating racial and ethnic bias in the justice system.

The ABA must continue to address the issues of social justice and the justice system. COREJ remains the entity ready to address those issues. COREJ is a success today because of the work and dedication of leaders such as Dennis W. Archer, Robert Grey, Jr., Harold Pope, Hon. Nathaniels Jones, Gregory Prince, Tricia Tingle, Paulette Brown, Hon. Allen Webster, Hon. Bernice Donald, Hon. Kurt Schmoke, David Collins, Walter Sutton and Laveda Battle, to name only a few. The legal profession and I truly thank each one of you.

COREJ during the last three years has collaborated with other ABA entities and non-ABA entities to sponsor programs and resolutions. We have partnered with the NBA and the HNBA to address the mortgage crisis. We brought various groups together to address the impact of natural disasters on the justice system. We crossed the country with town halls to bring organizations together to present solutions to the teen violence epidemic. We organized groups to address legal issues surrounding the Haitian community in Miami. We are presently collecting data to analyze the impact of the Stand Your Ground Laws on bias in the justice system. We continue to collaborate with organizations regarding election protection. COREJ and the other entities of the ABA Diversity Center worked extremely well together supporting the respective missions of each entity. COREJ was part of the joint

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W ith the passing of the gavel at the 2012 ABA Annual Meeting, I.S. Leevy Johnson will conclude his tenure as Chair of the Center for Racial and Ethnic Diversity. It has truly been an honor and privilege to serve with (and learn from) him on the Center this past year. His leadership style, vision and ability to gain consensus has positioned the Center at the forefront of diversity and inclusion efforts in the ABA. And, for anyone who personally has had the pleasure of interacting with I.S., you know that he does it all with Southern charm and his own unique, wry sense of humor.

I.S. has developed his well-honed, astute leadership skills over more than forty years of practicing law and actively participating in the bar. He is a founding shareholder and the patriarch of Johnson, Toal and Battiste, P.A., in South Carolina. In addition to being a skilled leader and successful lawyer, I.S. is a trailblazer: He was the first African-American president of the South Carolina Bar and is a past president of the American Bar Endowment. In 1970, I.S. made history when he became one of the first African Americans elected to the South Carolina General Assembly since Reconstruction.

In his “spare time,” he leads the family business as owner of Leevy’s Funeral Home, a generations-old local business founded by his grandparents. His greatest leadership role—he will proudly proclaim to anyone—is his cherished position as grandfather of three lovely granddaughters.

As I.S. prepares to pass the torch to the Center’s incoming Chair, Mary T. Torres, he offers farewell wisdom in the following Q&A:

Q: What do you consider to be a few of the Diversity Center’s most significant accomplishments under your tenure, from September 2009-August 2012?

I.S.: That is a difficult question because so much has been accomplished; it is not easy to prioritize the accomplishments. I will point out that one of the major accomplishments has been the increased credibility and visibility of the Center. This has resulted in some outstanding members of the ABA willing to sacrifice their time and effort to assist the ABA in

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profession. Diversity in the profession remains of practical and personal importance. Practically, diversity contributes to the bottom line, and more accurately reflects the faces of the nation and justice we pursue. However, without the personal thrust of actors within the profession, strides in diversifying the legal profession can be neither fully achieved nor sustained. I hope that the work done at the American Bar Foundation contributes to igniting and sustaining this important thrust.

Larissa Davis is a rising senior at Amherst College, where she serves as Alumni Liaison for the Black Students Union, among other leadership roles. During the past year, she studied abroad at Doshisha University in Kyoto, Japan. After graduation, Larissa intends to pursue a JD/Ph.D. in law and social policy.

Nikita Koraddi
Researching Race & Incarceration

Our country has 5% of the world’s population but 25% of its prison population. Despite a plethora of empirical evidence that points to stubborn recidivism rates, skyrocketing costs, and the dismal failure of the once-applauded “war on drugs,” the United States’ unabashed obsession with mass incarceration is relentless.

In California, a by-product of that obsession has been deemed unconstitutional. In a recent case titled Brown v. Plata, the U.S. Supreme Court held that excessive overcrowding and deplorable conditions in California prisons and the subpar treatment of inmates with crippling physical and mental health conditions (many of which worsen in an environment that is more punitive and less rehabilitative), constitute cruel and unusual punishment and are antithetical to human dignity. An unprecedented, court-mandated reduction in prison population is now serving as the impetus behind the state’s policy reforms.

This is the context of my research at the American Bar Foundation—under the guidance and expertise of Professor John Hagan. In addition to analyzing the broader implications of Brown v. Plata, I hope to learn more about the entrenched racial disparities in incarceration (Black defendants in Cook County, IL., are eight times more likely to be imprisoned for the same drug-related offense than their White counterparts, for instance) and the associated (and disruptive) impacts on communities of color.

Nikita Koraddi—who was born in India and moved to San Diego at the age of 12—is a rising senior at the University of California, Berkeley. She is a clinical intern at the East Bay Community Law Center. Nikita plans to pursue a career in law, research, and public policy.

Deborah Oh
Studying the Global Pecking Order

A central criticism of the U.S. justice system states that minority groups cannot adequately access it due to resource deficiencies. As an inevitable result, disadvantaged populations can become systematically neglected even though the Constitution promises due process.

International human rights treaties additionally champion legal rights, but similar to the American social hierarchy, a distinct hierarchy appears in the global context.

While helping Professor Jothie Rajah of the American Bar Foundation research multilateral human rights agreements, I realized that they frequently employ strong language when enumerating rights. Nonetheless, I also learned that human rights’ violations commonly emerge in extremely destitute areas absent proper governance or a stable economy. One could assume that prosperous countries would intervene to secure enforcement. However, self-interested considerations of influential nations can override involvement.

For instance, many assert that the U.S. should have more aggressively cracked down on rights offenses in Arab Spring countries, including Bahrain, Egypt and Yemen. U.S. policymakers strategically refrained to avoid creating tensions with Saudi Arabia and Israel who opposed reforms. These states established a powerful regional presence, and the U.S. would suffer from straining those alliances.

Thus, a pecking order exists both domestically and internationally. This reflects a disconnect between the values propagated in the U.S. Constitution and human rights agreements and U.S. foreign policy decisions.

Deborah Oh is a rising senior at the Univ. of Southern California (USC). As a nationally ranked policy debater, Debbie obtained a full scholarship from USC’s Trojan Debate Squad. She has completed political internships at the U.S. House of Representatives and the White House. Her ultimate goal is to practice public interest law.

Merritt Steele
Exploring Access to the Civil Justice System

Civil law is thoroughly interwoven into the life of the average American. Every day people must formally and informally interact with the system regarding housing disputes, debt, divorce, and more. These civil disputes require a significant amount of time, money, and energy. For many, lawyers open the door to the civil justice system and its mechanics. However, how do resource-limited families access the same system? Society lacks a clear understanding about how the poor truly access and engage the civil justice system.

My research with Professor Rebecca continued on page 6
its efforts to fulfill the Association’s commitment to Goal III, “eliminating bias and enhancing diversity.” As an example, for many months the Center coordinated a collaborative effort to develop a diversity plan for the Association, which the Board of Governors (BOG) approved last June. Now, as the plan is being implemented, the Center helps to promote recruitment and retention of diverse lawyers. I am really proud of this achievement.

Q: What are a couple of challenges that the Diversity Center has encountered during your tenure, and how did you address them?

I.S.: I inherited a recently restructured group that was in the throes of trying to define its role and mission. Unfortunately, there had been some challenges to the way the Center was restructured. So I had to spend a disproportionate amount of my time trying to assure other entities that the Center would not encroach upon their jurisdiction. Fortunately, I had some great leaders to work with, and we were very successful in engaging in several important joint projects. Of course, funding has always been and will continue to be a challenge.

Q: You have held numerous leadership roles in a variety of bar associations. In what ways did your earlier leadership roles prepare you to successfully lead the ABA Center for Racial & Ethnic Diversity?

I.S.: The past three years have been the most rewarding years I have experienced since becoming a member of the ABA. It has been satisfying because of the great work of my fellow members in the Center and its three constituent groups: the Diversity Commission, COREJ and Pipeline Council. And, the excellent staff has really done all of the heavy lifting. The staff is so knowledgeable and dedicated. Having been active in the ABA since 1985, I have been afforded the opportunity to get to know a lot of the decision makers at the ABA. My previous ABA activities gave me name recognition among a lot of people. This helped me to become a recognizable advocate for the Center and propelled me to play a leadership role.

Q: What advice would you offer young lawyers who aspire to assume leadership roles in bar associations generally and the ABA specifically?

I.S.: Young lawyers should become active in their local bar organizations. They should seek assignments that will give them significant experiences in association work. Ascending to leadership positions in bar association work is similar to building a structure. You build the foundation and keep adding on until you reach the top. Once young lawyers get addicted to bar association activities, they will find their participation personally and professionally gratifying, while simultaneously enhancing the legal profession.

Q: Briefly describe the progress you have seen the ABA make with its own diversity efforts in the past 3-5 years.

I.S.: The ABA has made tremendous progress in the last 3 to 5 years. Every presidential candidate in recent years has included their personal commitment to Goal III as a priority. Having the presidents of the ABA embrace and promote equal participation has really been a major shift in the priorities of the ABA since I joined. Diversity was seldom, if ever, mentioned when I started with the ABA almost 30 years ago. I am pleased that it is now an issue that is a permanent part of the ABA’s culture.

Q: Any closing thoughts?

I.S.: I will miss my weekly Monday calls with our staff director, Cie Armstead. We devoted a lot of time to the work of the Center. No issues were too small or too large for us to tackle. I will probably have withdrawals symptoms after August, but I am sure the Center, under Mary’s leadership, will continue to excel.

Kenneth O. C. Imo is a member of the ABA Center for Racial and Ethnic Diversity; the Director of Diversity at WilmerHale in Washington, DC; and a Board member of the Association of Law Firm Diversity Professionals.

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Sandefur focuses on elucidating the formal and informal processes used by low-income Americans to address these common legal issues. My personal contribution focuses on demographics and housing laws. This research is an important step towards making legal assistance accessible at all levels. If policymakers can improve their understanding of these low-income communities, they can implement more effective programs. My research suggests that many overlooked community organizations have a big impact by acting as a bridge between low-income families and legal help. Merely distributing information on tenants’ rights can be enough to encourage families to seek help. Utilizing these procedures could make the law accessible for many disenfranchised minorities and others struggling with poverty.

Merritt Steele, a rising junior at Cornell University, is from the Cherokee Tribe in Tulsa, OK. She debates on the Cornell Parliamentary Debate team and serves as the vice president of Cornell’s Network of Enlightened Women, an organization that promotes intellectual diversity on campus by educating the community about gender and politics.
meets the ABA Young Lawyers in May 2012.

I thank the Diversity Center staff for their professionalism and support of each entity. These persons have continued to provide excellent service to the entities and the members during very difficult economic times. I thank Deidra Franklin, Sharon Tindall and Gwen Adams who were always there to provide support for COREJ and myself. I thank Cie Armstead for her energy and support for COREJ and the mission of the Diversity Center. I would also like to thank the Reggie Turner, Chair of the Diversity Commission and Michelle Gallardo, Chair of the Pipeline Council, for their leadership as Chairs of their entities, as well as for their support and friendship. I thank I.S. Levy Johnson for his leadership of the Diversity Center during the past three years. I want to thank the many ABA staffers that were always ready to provide assistance—each of you helped make my job as COREJ Chair a pleasure. I thank Ms. LaCruise for allowing me to be a part of the ABA MLK program. I thank all of the COREJ members past and present. Finally, I want to publicly thank Rachel Patrick.

As staff director for COREJ, she wore several different hats and juggled a platter of activities. Ms. Patrick is a true Guardian of social justice.

It has been my privilege and honor to serve as the Chair of COREJ for the last three years. Although my journey as Chair has ended, the mission of COREJ continues. The need for COREJ remains as relevant now as it was twenty years ago. Bias of any type must be exposed, discussed and eliminated in our system of justice.

**ABA Coalition on Racial & Ethnic Justice**

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**Council for Racial and Ethnic Diversity in the Educational Pipeline**

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because exams are standardized tests, which typically favor white students. For example a 2010 Harvard study on the SAT* showed a bias in favor of white students on simpler verbal questions; however, difficult questions showed scores favor African-American students. The study theorized that the simpler questions “are likely reflected in the cultural expressions that are used commonly in the dominant (white) society, so white students have an edge based not on education or study skills or aptitude, but because they are most likely growing up around white people. The more difficult words are more likely to be learned, not just absorbed.” Despite the potentially biased nature of standardized tests, legal education continues to place a premium on scores.

**Stereotype Threat**

The conundrum of test scores is intensified by the impact of stereotype threat on test-takers. Stanford University researcher, Claude Steele has examined test result differences between white and non-white test takers and has determined that something other than test bias may be at work in creating the test-score gap. The gap is so well known that often students of color will have self-doubt before even taking the test, as well as “stereotype threat” - the threat of being viewed through the lens of a negative stereotype, or the fear of doing something that would inadvertently confirm that stereotype.

Steele performed a study* to quantify the impact of stereotype threat on the performance of black students on standardized tests. Researchers administered a thirty-minute verbal test to both black and white Stanford students. When the test was presented as a test of ability, black students performed dramatically less well than whites. When the same test was presented as a study of how problems were solved the black students’ performance rose to match that of the whites.

To their credit, the LSAC has repeatedly urged law schools not to make the LSAT overly important to the admission decision; it was never intended to be used as heavily as some law schools tend to weight the test. The LSAC’s “Beyond the Numbers Report”* regularly features students whose LSAT scores would not typically lead to law school admission if the LSAT was the sole criteria for admission. The report highlights success stories of students who were admitted based on the strength of the rest of their application notwithstanding their otherwise low LSAT score.

When students come to me for advice on taking the LSAT, I tell them that the LSAT is not a test of your ability or intellectual capacity to be a lawyer. I emphasize that it is a test about test taking skills. The LSAT sorts people by testing their confidence to take the test, to answer questions under timed pressure, and to have the confidence in their judgment.

The challenge ahead is that the gap in LSAT scores lowers admission of students of color. Lack of a critical mass and welcoming environment once in law school depresses students’ retention, resulting in a lack of full and meaningful opportunities throughout the profession which limits the number of role models and mentors available to minority lawyers. It is this challenge that must be met by all of us to create a legal profession that reflects communities and world in which we live.

**Rory D. Smith is a member of the ABA Council for Racial and Ethnic Diversity in the Educational Pipeline and Associate Dean for Outreach and Planning and the Director of Diversity Affairs at the John Marshall Law School in Chicago.**

*For more information, please visit the Pipeline Council’s website at: http://www.americanbar.org/groups/diversity/diversity_pipeline.html where you may find links to the studies mentioned here and to other resources on Pipeline Diversity
Q1: The Section has conducted its Business Law Ambassadors Program for several years now. It’s designed to facilitate the full participation of lawyers of color in Section activities and to develop future leaders of the Section. The program also aims to increase familiarity with the Section among members of bar associations and organizations for lawyers of color. Describe a few notable successes of the Program.

A1: The Ambassadors Program is part of our FAD [Fellows, Ambassadors, and Diplomats] Program, which includes not only the Ambassadors, but the Fellows—who are selected out of leadership positions in YLD when no longer meeting the YLD criteria—and our Diplomats, who are lawyers with disabilities. We are extremely proud of the success of our FAD Program. Sixty percent of the participants in the Ambassadors Program have remained active in the work of the Section. There are currently 15 members (28% of all Ambassador alumni) involved in leadership positions in the Section. One of our current Council Members is a former Section Ambassador.

Q2: What has been one of the unexpected challenges of conducting the Business Law Ambassadors Program, and how has the Section addressed that challenge?

A2: When initially implemented, the Business Law Ambassadors program included a requirement that the Ambassadors be involved in a leadership position in a national minority bar association. Over time, we recognized that this requirement was impacting our applicant pool, a resource issue that often exists between the ABA and national minority bar associations. As a result, we opened the program to applicants with any type of involvement in a local bar association for lawyers of color or involvement in their law firm diversity initiatives. The pool of candidates we have seen for the Ambassadors program since making that change has dramatically increased, and is a robust pool.

Q3: The Section’s Diversity Committee has an impressive group of General Counsel slated for its 2012 Annual Meeting program, “Lessons from the Top: How Diverse GCs Influence the Legal Landscape.” It is not unusual for your Section’s programs to feature premier diverse panels. Please share a few tips for securing high-level diverse speakers and program moderators.

A3: As you may know, the Section requires diverse panels for CLE programs, and encourages diversity in other presentations. Having tone at the top committed to diversity, and having that tone for years only helps in panel selection. From there, speaking for the Diversity Committee of the Section, it’s a matter of individual contacts and using your networks. For this particular Annual Meeting program panel, all but one of the panelists was in one of the Program Committee members’ circle of friends and professional acquaintances. While we are rarely called on to help, the Section’s Diversity Committee would be able to find a diverse speaker in any given area. In actuality, our Meetings Committee makes the diversity reviews early in the process and offers help as needed.

Q4: The Section has a broad range of diversity and inclusion initiatives. One that may not be familiar to our readers is the Section’s Diversity Clerkship. Describe the initiative and a few of its recent accomplishments.

A4: This year nine clerks participated in this program. This is a summer program providing business law clerkship placements for diverse candidates who are first- or second-year law students. The program provides support and mentoring to the student participants in order to give them exposure to business practices that many of them lack. In considering a student’s diversity, the Section gives special consideration to individuals who have overcome social or economic disadvantages, such as physical disability, financial constraints, or cultural impediments to becoming a law student. The program has been a huge success, both in the impact on the participating law students, and with the quality and quantity of applications we receive. We are currently looking at ways to expand the program beyond nine students.

Q5: The Business Law Section was one of the first ABA groups to adopt its own diversity plan. How has the Section effectively utilized its diversity plan to govern the Section’s diversity activities?

A5: While the Section’s Diversity Plan has not been updated in quite some time, and is currently under review, the underlying mission statements and goals remain viable. And the Section continues to back that mission statement and goals. What is being reviewed is the necessity of continuing some of the objective measurements/requirements that were specifically included to involve each level of leadership in implementation. There are many objectives (such as the requirement for diverse panelists on all CLE programs) that are now ingrained in the Section’s processes and may not need to be continued in a written Diversity Plan. The Section Leadership never loses sight of the fact that diversity drives everything we do.

Q6: What do you do to reach your members who do not or cannot attend meetings?

A6: Lots of things! The Section recognizes that only a small percentage of our members are able to regularly attend meetings. The FAD Program brings in potential leadership that is diverse. We produce a scholarly journal, and an e-mag. CLE Programs are recorded, and audio recordings are available free of charge to Section Members. We do webinars. There are Committee newsletters (ours is The Business of Diversity and is a quarterly publication, with responsibility for content rotating among the Diversity subcommittees) and listserves. We’re on social media. While we would love to see all of our members, as long as we can reach them, we are providing a service.

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