Member Spotlight - From Law Student Liaison to Business Law Fellow

In this month’s member spotlight we focused on one of our current Business Law Fellows, and previous law student liaison, Shazia Ahmed. She has been an active member of the Business Law Section since she was a law student; she has succeeded in a number of leadership roles and in her career as a business lawyer. Read more on her experience below:

Q: How did you first get involved with the ABA?

Shazia: As 1L evening division student, I balanced a full time job while attending law school in the evenings. At that time, I had developed tremendous financial and accounting experience at various companies within the media industry, including Viacom, Atronic and L’Oreal; however, my legal experience was limited to law school.

My sister, an attorney, recommended that I apply for the ABA student liaison position. This recommendation catapulted my legal experience. From 2013 to 2015, I served as the student liaison for the ABA Business Law Section. During that time, I helped develop new programs for law students and activities for lawyers to interface with young attorneys and law students.

Q: What attracted you most about the Business Law Section?

Shazia: The ABA Business Law section provides a broad spectrum of personal and career development with its numerous committees and resources.

As a young attorney, the Young Lawyer Committee (YLC), played an instrumental role in not only guiding me to the Banking Law Committee, but also provided direct involvement in ABA Business Law Section conferences. I coordinated lectures and speed networking sessions to increase student participation. These opportunities are the stepping-stone to create a vast network of fellow attorneys, who create the foundation of your career.

The ABA Business law section supplies a multitude of educational resources. For example, In the Know is a CLE webinar service developed for practice areas. In addition, ABA Business Law publications such as online newsletters and the ABA Journal ensure each future or current legal professional is abreast of current matters and events.
Q: Has your involvement with the ABA/Business Law helped your career today?

Shazia: The ABA Business Law Section afforded me the opportunity to meet with committee chairs, speak at events, organize law student Insider Insight Events and attend various meetings. The ability to spearhead programs such as the “What Rock Stars, Young Lawyers and in-House Counsel Can Teach You about Content, Social Media and Practice Development”, supplied me with the skill set of summarizing material, coordinating speakers and organizing a program. This hands-on experience is invaluable when in the workforce as a young attorney I spend numerous hours preparing presentations and drafting legal documents.

Q: What was your first job after law school?

Shazia: From March 2014 until November 2015, I was employed at JP Morgan & Chase. My legal responsibilities consisted of creating and maintaining AML/KYC policies and procedures in accordance with the USA Patriot Act, Bank Secrecy Act, OFAC guidelines and internal standards. Furthermore, I managed a global team in completing specialized due diligence associated to Corporate and Investment Bank clients. The role at JP Morgan and Chase laid the foundation to draft legal documents and improved my management skills on a global level.

Currently, I am employed as the Regional Head for Regulatory Shareholding Reporting at Credit Suisse. I not only draft internal policy and procedures, but also complete regulatory filings in compliance with regulatory requirements for the Americas with specific attention to the USA, Canada, Mexico and Brazil. In addition, I will liaise with the tax department and trading desk within Credit Suisse to ensure compliance with Foreign Investment Real Property Tax Act (FIRPTA) and outside counsel to comply with regulatory requirements implemented by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC).

Q: What type of advice would you give to current Business Law Section student member?

Shazia: The Business Law Section engages students and young lawyers with various leadership roles. Law students should become involved in the Committee Associate Program (CAP), Mendes Hershman Student Writing Contest and the Diversity Clerkship program.

The CAP program places a student on a substantive committee and gives hands-on experience with a Committee. Committee leaders will assign specific work to the Associate, which may include:

- Drafting articles and whitepapers
- Helping to coordinate materials and speakers for CLE programs
- Engaging in research for special projects

The ABA Business Law section programs will be the springboard in your legal career.