ABA Section of Labor and Employment Law

Diversity Plan*

PREFACE

The American Bar Association Section of Labor and Employment Law enthusiastically embraces the concept of diversity as a strength for the Section. Diversity in our membership brings a variety of unique and valuable skills and perspectives to the Section. We recognize that to make great strides in achieving diversity, we must focus on our leadership as well as our membership.

Our diversity goals are not temporary goals. These concerns are vital to the future of the Section; much needs to be done to address them fully. We must do more to recruit a diverse group of lawyers and to foster a spirit of inclusiveness in all of the Section's activities. We must do more to recruit newer lawyers and lawyers across the spectrum of race, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, and disability status, and to foster the spirit of inclusiveness in all of the Section's activities. This will help to ensure that the Section will remain a growing and integral contributor to the legal profession.

Diversity can only be achieved with the unequivocal support and participation of the Section's leadership and its Committees, as well as with the individual commitment of each active Section member. In order to achieve our goals, the Section leadership, committees, and active members would all benefit from guidance, encouragement, and training to:

- actively recruit minority lawyers, women lawyers, lawyers with disabilities, lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender ["LGBT"] lawyers, and newer lawyers;
- foster an atmosphere of inclusion to assist in retaining minority lawyers, women lawyers, lawyers with disabilities, LGBT lawyers, and newer lawyers once they have become members;
- seek the participation of minority lawyers, women lawyers, lawyers with disabilities, LGBT lawyers, and newer lawyers on panels, task forces, and working groups; and
- provide minority lawyers, women lawyers, lawyers with disabilities, LGBT lawyers, and newer lawyers with opportunities and training to take on leadership roles at both the Committee and Section levels.

It is with these goals in mind that the Section has adopted this 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 minority lawyers, women lawyers, lawyers with disabilities and newer lawyers as we enter a new century.

LONG RANGE GOALS AND ACTION PLAN

I. Obtain unequivocal support and participation of Section officers, Council members and committee co-chairs in implementing the Diversity Plan.

   A. The Section Chair will ensure that all Section leaders are familiar with and committed to the Diversity Plan.

      • Provide a copy of the Diversity Plan to each existing and incoming Section officer and Council member.

      • Provide a copy of the Diversity Plan to each existing and incoming committee co-chair, together with a letter from the Section Chair and Chair-Elect, stressing the
importance of the Plan and the active participation of each committee in implementing the Plan.

B. The Committee on Equal Opportunity in Legal Profession will provide guidance to the committee and subcommittee co-chairs with respect to diversity issues.

- Include diversity materials in the committee co-chairs’ orientation manual/handbook, including, among other things, the Section’s policies and guidelines relating to diversity, a copy of the Section’s Diversity Report Card, a list of resources providing technical assistance and information for diversity on panels and publications, such as the Minority Speakers Clearinghouse.
- Periodically update diversity resource materials.

C. The Chair and Chair-Elect will ensure in making appointments to Section and committees leadership positions that diversity shall be considered.

D. The Chair and Chair-Elect will ensure implementation of the Diversity Plan by assigning responsibility for monitoring each of its goals and initiatives to a specific Section officer or committee.

II. Expand and redefine the responsibilities of the Committee on Equal Opportunity in Legal Profession to develop mechanisms for implementing the Diversity Plan, and monitoring its progress.

A. The Section Chair will ensure that every Section committee has appointed a liaison who will become a member of the Committee on Equal Opportunity in Legal Profession, and will regularly circulate the list of liaison duties, which includes reporting back to their respective committees on diversity initiatives.

B. The Committee on Equal Opportunity in the Legal Profession will establish and regularly update a description of the Committee and its activities for inclusion on the Section web site, and will attempt to create links with the web sites of other ABA entities involved in initiatives related to the Committee’s goals.

C. The Committee will promote accountability by developing a Diversity Report Card to reflect the efforts and progress of the Section’s committees:

- Establish a base line to monitor individual committee efforts.
- Report findings as a Council meeting agenda item.
- Establish a Chair’s List for exceptional efforts to diversify at the committee level.
- Provide all incoming committee co-chairs the results from the last Diversity Report Card for their committee so that they can follow up.
- Circulate the Diversity Report Card and gather results on an annual basis.

D. The Committee will develop a proposal for providing diversity training for current and future Section leaders, including Section committee co-chairs.

E. The Committee will evaluate annually (after the Annual Meeting each year) the Section’s Diversity Plan.

- 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.
- Circulate this Diversity Plan to the ABA Commission on Women in the Profession, the
ABA Commission on Mental and Physical Disability Law, and the ABA Commission on Racial and Ethnic Diversity in the Profession for their input and assistance in implementation.

- Periodically assess the diversity plans of other ABA entities to obtain new ideas.
- Report recommended changes to the Plan to, and seek approval from, the Council each year at the Annual Meeting.

III. Utilize the Annual and Midwinter Meetings as means of fostering diversity within the Section and its committees.

A. If feasible, the Section Chair will assure that first-time meeting registrants feel welcome even prior to a meeting by:

- Mailing in advance of Midwinter Meetings to all first-time registrants a "How to Get the Most from Your ABA Meeting" booklet.
- Prior to each Midwinter Meeting, sending committee co-chairs a list of the members of their committees who will be attending the meeting for the first time and encouraging committee co-chairs to send them a welcoming letter and invitation to attend committee activities and social functions taking place at the meeting.
- Establishing a "first-timers" event at the Annual Meeting similar to those held at committee Midwinter Meetings.

B. Section committee co-chairs will foster the spirit of inclusiveness in all of the Section's activities by:

- Including "Non-members Welcome" on signs identifying committee meetings outside meeting rooms at the Annual Meetings.
- Inviting any non-members to become members at the conclusion of each of their meetings.
- Advertising in all materials for the Midwinter and Annual Meetings that non-committee members are welcome to attend committee meetings.

C. The Section will sponsor Leadership Development Initiative events at each Annual Meeting.

D. Committee co-chairs will utilize Midwinter Meetings as a means of encouraging new membership by taking the following actions:

- Including with announcements for Midwinter Meetings letters encouraging current committee members to invite their more junior colleagues to attend the Midwinter Meeting (with an emphasis on increasing overall participation and diversity).
- Considering reduced registration fees for first-time attendees to be publicized in the Section newsletter.
- Holding a welcoming event for first-time attendees.
- Following-up meetings with letters to first-time attendees, thanking them for attending, requesting feed-back on the meeting, and inviting them to participate in other committee activities.

E. The Section Chair will follow-up all Midwinter Meetings with a letter 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.

F. The Chair will arrange to have a report summarizing the responses received from the Chair's
letter prepared and circulated to the Section leadership, including committee co-chairs.

G. The Committee on Equal Opportunity in the Legal Profession will develop a proposal for enhancing attendance at Midwinter and Annual Meetings consistent with the Section’s diversity goals.

H. CLE/Institutes and Meetings Committee and program planning committee co-chairs will solicit minority lawyers, women lawyers, lawyers with disabilities, LGBT lawyers, and newer lawyers from bar associations located in the host cities to speak at and/or participate in Section meetings and CLE programs.

I. The Section Chair will personally invite members and leaders of bar associations for minority lawyers, women lawyers, LGBT lawyers, and newer lawyers in the host city to programs and social events, consider waiving any registration fees for the leaders of such associations, and appoint Section members to serve as hosts to such attendees.

J. Committee Midwinter Meetings will be held only at sites that confirm that they meet the ADA requirements of accessibility to persons with disabilities.

IV. Stress the importance of diversity through Section CLE programs and publications.

A. Strongly encourage diverse panels in all CLE and committee programming and diverse participation in all Section publications and programming.
   - CLE/Institutes and Meetings Committee will be responsible for following up with those program planning committees whose programs do not reflect diverse participation.
   - The Publications Committee will be responsible for following up with those editorial committees whose publications do not adequately reflect diverse participation.

B. The Council will adopt a policy that the Section will co-sponsor programs with other Sections or Divisions only if there are diverse panels or good faith effort to achieve same.

C. Section CLE programs will be held only at sites that confirm that they meet the ADA’s requirements of accessibility to persons with disabilities.

V. Coordinate with and use the resources of the ABA Commission on Women in the Profession, the Commission on Mental and Physical Disability Law, the Commission on Racial and Ethnic Diversity in the Profession, and other ABA entities with a similar focus.

A. The Committee on Equal Opportunity in the Legal Profession will coordinate efforts with and use the resources of the Commission on Women in the Profession, the Commission on Mental and Physical Disability Law, and the Commission on Racial and Ethnic Diversity in the Profession to assist in the recruitment efforts of the Section.

B. The Committee on Equal Opportunity in Legal Profession will explore sponsoring joint promotions and membership drives with the Commission on Women in the Profession, the Commission on Mental and Physical Disability Law, and the Commission on Racial and Ethnic Diversity in the Profession.

C. Section Liaisons to the Commission on Women in the Profession, the Commission on Mental and Physical Disability Law, and the Commission on Racial and Ethnic Diversity in the Profession will:
   - Report at each Council Meeting regarding: (1) current developments and initiatives
undertaken by those organizations and (2) steps taken by the other ABA sections to increase diversity.

- Attend the Women’s Caucus and Minority Caucus Meetings at the ABA Midyear and Annual Meetings, as appropriate.
- Explore avenues for exposing Section leadership and members to on-going Commission initiatives, including the Commission for Women in the Profession’s "Heard it on the Grapevine" program, directed at law schools, and "Fair Measure" program, directed at law offices.

D. Committee on Equal Opportunity in Legal Profession will encourage joint programming with the Commission on Women in the Profession, the Commission on Mental and Physical Disability Law, and the Commission on Opportunities for Minorities in the Profession.

VI. Coordinate with the Young Lawyers Division and Law Students Division.

A. The Section Chair will strengthen and increase the flow of information and participation between the Section and the Young Lawyers Division and Law Student Division by, for example:

- Providing membership materials to law students emphasizing the opportunities in the Section for law students and new lawyers.
- Advertising to law students and labor and employment lawyers in the Young Lawyers Division the "Basics" programs available at the Annual Meetings and on a regional level.
- Expanding the responsibilities of the Young Lawyers Division and Law Student Division liaisons to act as formal conduits for new lawyers and law students to become actively involved in the Section.

B. The Section Chair will explore with the Young Lawyers Division the possibility of cosponsoring an Annual Meeting program "Climbing to the Top – Let the Labor and Employment Law Section Be Your Pathway to Success."

- Hold the Program at the host hotel for the Young Lawyers Division.
- Consider offering similar programs at every Annual Meeting.
- Utilize the program materials from "Pathways to Leadership" developed by the Commission on Women in the Profession.

C. The Section Chair will explore the possibility of Inviting the Young Lawyers Division to appoint a liaison to each section committee.

D. The CLE/Institutes and Meetings Committee and other program planning committees will encourage joint programming with the Young Lawyers Division and state minority bar affiliate groups.

E. The Young Lawyers Division Liaison will advise the Section on opportunities to publicize programs in periodicals/newsletters for the Young Lawyers Division.

VII. Create and strengthen ties with other national and local bar associations.

A. The Section Chair will explore with the national bar associations for minority lawyers and women lawyers (e.g., National Bar Association of African American Attorneys, National Association of Women Lawyers, Hispanic National Bar Association, National Asian Pacific American Bar Association, National Lesbian and Gay Law Association) and the possibility of establishing either formal or informal liaisons, establishing expectations or responsibilities for these liaisons, and funding their attendance at these meetings.
B. The CLE/Institutes and Meetings Committee and other program planning committees will involve in Section activities lawyers who are already involved in local and national bar associations for minority lawyers, women lawyers, and LGBT lawyers (an emphasis should be placed on involvement with local bar associations because the Section is not usually viewed as a competitor of these associations) by:

- Encouraging joint programming.
- Soliciting speakers from these bar associations in the host city for Section programs, and notifying the program chairs early in the process the mechanism for them to recruit local speakers.
- Advertising the Section’s programs in periodicals/newsletters directed to bar associations for minority lawyers, women lawyers, and LGBT lawyers.

C. The Committee on Equal Opportunity in Legal Profession Sending information on Section membership and benefits to meetings of national bar associations for minority lawyers, women lawyers, and LGBT lawyers.

D. The Committee on Equal Opportunity in the Legal Profession will obtain lists of bar associations for minority lawyers and women lawyers from the Commission for Opportunities for Minorities in the Profession and the Commission for Women in the Profession, and send to the persons on those lists Midwinter and Annual Meeting brochures.


VIII. Establish a Section Mentoring Program for new Section members.

A. Committee on Equal Opportunity in the Legal Profession will develop a Section Mentoring Program, for Council approval.

B. All Section members will be invited to become either mentors or mentees.

C. Committee will provide guidelines to the mentors to get the mentees active in various committee activities, publications, and programs.

IX. Strengthen ties to law schools as a means of encouraging new membership and diversity.

A. Section Chair will encourage our Section members in academia to speak to students regarding the benefits of membership in the Labor and Employment Law Section.

B. CLE/Institutes and Meetings Committee will encourage on-campus programming at law schools, particularly regional seminars.

C. CLE/Institutes and Meetings Committee will co-sponsor programs and activities with law schools in host cities that have a significant minority student body.

X. Develop other means of recruiting new members and demonstrating our commitment to diversity.

A. Committee on Equal Opportunity in Legal Profession will develop recruitment/retention materials with a focus on minority lawyers, women lawyers, lawyers with disabilities, LGBT lawyers, and newer lawyers.
B. CLE/Institutes and Meetings Committee will develop a series of "Basics" programs on videotape and make them available to newer lawyers and law students as a benefit of membership.

C. CLE/Institutes and Meetings Committee will develop specialized programming having special appeal to minority lawyers, women lawyers, LGBT lawyers, and newer lawyers.

D. Publications Committee will encourage and recognize contributions by minority lawyers, women lawyers, and LGBT lawyers in the Section’s publications:
   - Include photos of contributing authors where appropriate and within publishing guidelines.
   - Include photos acknowledging diversity of membership in membership materials.
   - Include regular reports on achievements in the diversity area in the Section Newsletter.

E. Whenever possible, the Section Chair will publicize in local and national media the efforts of the Section on its diversity initiatives.