1. What is the Commission’s Mission?

The current mission of the ABA Commission on Racial and Ethnic Diversity in the Profession is as follows:

To promote racial and ethnic diversity and inclusion within the legal profession. The Commission addresses the lack of racial and ethnic diversity within the profession. It serves as a catalyst for change so that the legal profession may more accurately reflect the racial and ethnic diversity of society. The Commission achieves this by funneling minority lawyers into sections, divisions and forums through collaboration that draws on their expertise in their subject matter.

However, through our recent strategic planning process, there is a proposal (which hopefully will be voted on during this meeting) to change the mission statement to read as follows:

The mission of the ABA Commission on Racial and Ethnic Diversity in the Profession is to be a catalyst promoting diversity and inclusion within the legal profession and the ABA by facilitating the entry, participation and retention of diverse lawyers. The Commission achieves this by furthering the development of substantive programs and services in which diverse lawyers, law firms and law students will actively participate.

2. What are the Commission’s Historical Highlights?

The Commission was created in 1986 and is the oldest racial and ethnic diversity entity within the ABA. Please see the Commission’s Historic Timeline – separate handout.

3. What is the Commission’s Acronym?

The acronym is the unpronounceable CREDP.

4. How are Commissioners Appointed to the Commission?
To seek appointment, every Commissioner (both first-timers and those seeking reappointment) must self-nominate through an online ABA process that generally opens early in the new year and runs through the third week of February. Commissioners are generally appointed for up to a three-year term. In addition to submitting a self-nomination online, Commissioners are encouraged to seek one or two support nominations. A Commissioner should always inform the Commission Chair and staff director if he or she does not wish to seek re-nomination.

5. **How Often Does the Commission Meet? Where are the Meetings?**

The Commission meets in conjunction with the ABA Annual and Midyear meetings. In addition, there is usually a Fall orientation meeting, held in September or October in Chicago, and a Spring meeting that may be held in conjunction with a meeting of an ABA Section, Division, or Forum.

Attendance at all in person meetings is mandatory, but may be excused by the Chair.

In addition to these regular meetings, the Chair generally holds a conference call during those months when the Commission does not meet in person.

6. **How Much Time should a Commissioner Expect to Devote to Service on the Commission and What is Expected of a Commissioner?**

Excluding travel, which will vary for each person, a Commissioner should expect to devote 20-40 hours a year to service. The time commitment will also vary depending on which projects the Commissioner participates. Some projects, such as Spirit of Excellence (SOE) demand intensive work from December – early February, but no work from early February until July.

It is both an honor and a responsibility to serve as a Commissioner. Each Commissioner is expected to participate actively, to serve on at least two current projects, and to attend all meetings, both in person and by telephone.

7. **What Are the Current Projects Being Undertaken by the Commission?**

- **National Diversity Conference**: Helen B. Kim (Chair) & Cedric Ashley  
  Studying making the mid-year meeting (beginning in February 2019) a diversity summit whereby programs focused on diversity and inclusion would be used as the centerpiece.

- **Model Diversity Survey**: Gretchen Bellamy (Chair) & Kimberley Norwood
Encouraging corporations to pledge to require law firms they use to utilize the ABA model survey to report diversity data and upload it to an ABA portal where it will be analyzed.

- **Publications (The Innovator):** Chair – Open; Gretchen and Florence Johnson volunteered to assist whomever chooses to Chair that subcommittee. A semi-annual publication that focuses on ABA-wide racial and ethnic diversity and inclusion efforts within the ABA.

- **Spirit of Excellence Luncheon:** Florence Johnson (Chair), Marvin SC Dang, Jo Ann Engelhardt, Bob Furnier, Kimberley Norwood, and Karol Corbin Walker. Annual luncheon at Midyear to honor four D&I leaders. This event has been held the last 24 years and is the Commission’s main fundraiser.

- **Programs and Presidential Showcase CLEs:** Co-Chairs: Kimberley Norwood & Cedric Ashley. Two of the last three years we have had Presentational Showcase CLEs at Annual and every year there has been at least one CLE we have put on over the course of the year. Recently we had the Implicit Bias Presidential Showcase CLE co-sponsored by the Judicial Division.

- **Collaborative Bar Leadership Academy (CBLA):** Cedric Ashley volunteered to serve as our liaison to the CBLA. The CBLA is an event held over two days where current and rising leaders who are members of their respective national affinity bar associations (National Bar Association, Hispanic National bar Association, National Native American Bar Association, National Asian Pacific American Bar Association, and the National LGBT Bar Association) partner with the American Bar Association for a leadership conference summit.

- **Policy and Resolutions:** A Chair and volunteers are needed. This committee will consider opportunities to advance ABA policy in the areas of interest to us through presenting Resolutions to the House of Delegates at the Midyear and Annual meetings.

Note that each Commissioner must serve on at least one, and preferably two committees during each year of service on the Commission.

8. **How and When are Commissioners Reimbursed for Travel Expenses?**

It will come as no surprise that the ABA has a limited budget for the work of its many entities. That said, the ABA will generally reimburse Commissioners (with the exception of the ABA annual meeting) for any mandatory in person meetings as follows: a daily *per diem* of $100 (to help defray hotel and incidentals), coach advance purchase airfare, plus reasonable transportation to and from the airport. If a Commissioner is driving to the meeting, the ABA will cover mileage at the then-
current IRS mileage rate. If your employer covers these charges, you are asked not to submit a reimbursement request to the ABA.

9. Why Do We Work So Hard and So Devotedly on the Commission?

Each Commissioner has a passion to serve justice and to advance diversity and inclusion. Each of us is willing to work hard to ensure the legal profession and our society advances these goals. Each year, Commissioners can point to meaningful successes, even as we strive to do more. Finally, service on the Commission brings many rewards and often fosters lifelong friendships.