

State Bar of Arizona Diversity Task Force

Committee Report
November 20, 2006

Committee Name: Corporate Support Committee

Members:

Booker T. Evans, Co-Chair, Greenberg Traurig LLP
Lisa Loo, Co-Chair, ASU Office of General Counsel
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Teresita Mercado, Squire Sanders & Dempsey LLP
Susan Navran, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Arizona
Carrie Sherman, State Bar of Arizona
Nancy White, Steptoe & Johnson LLP
Marian Yim, Board of Executive Clemency

Assigned Tasks or Charges:

Identify businesses that would likely support diversity initiatives and develop a plan to involve their support and participation.

Executive Summary:

The business community is driving diversity. They have done so within the ranks of their organizations and they have positively influenced diversity through dealings with vendors, suppliers and other third parties with whom they do business. Therefore, the business community is a prime resource and ally that is available on a number of levels to support the Bar's recommitment to diversity. Businesses are also valuable to the Bar's diversity effort as models. Studying how they have achieved diversity may enable the Bar to better achieve the aspirations of its Statement of Goals using tried, successful strategies. Business leaders in the area of diversity should be consulted with to afford the Bar the benefit of their experiences that led to their success. Moreover, businesses may lend their influence to effect needed change in the educational pipeline such that greater diversity is achieved in the hiring pool. Finally, business that are committed to diversity should be actively invited to participate visibility in the Bar's efforts, including, for instance, the Arizona Leadership Institute Project.

Discussion:

The Committee discussed how clients are currently driving the diversity movement within the legal profession. While the State Bar of Arizona (the “SBA”) can articulate the value of diversity, we are aware that the bottom line may truly drive decisions to hire and retain diverse lawyers. Using this assumption, what kind of corporate support should we request, how can we receive it and how do we measure it?

The current task of this Committee is to make recommendations and to provide a road map for the future work of this Committee in fostering and engaging corporate support for diversity in the legal profession. To date, this Committee has begun considering a number of issues, including the following.

- Sara Lee’s “Call to Action” Statement, to which Wal-Mart and other major world-wide corporations are signatories, is a great example of corporate support that may be a model to tap into or emulate here in Arizona. The Call to Action is attached to this Report.
- If corporations are requiring diversity of their law firms, how do the in-house attorney staff of these corporations compare? What is the composition of the corporate law departments for the signatories to the “Call to Action” Statement? What is the composition of the law departments of the (a) corporate signatories to the SBA’s Statement of Goals and (b) other leading local corporations? If clients are going to talk the talk they also need to walk the walk. How did they achieve the level of success that means they are walking the walk?
- How do we convince local legal employers that they must actively recruit from schools that educate a high number of diverse students (e.g., Howard)? What business trends are foreseeable that suggest the need to diversify?
- What tools are available to legal employers to retain and promote a diverse group of attorneys?
- Pipeline and Pool issues. The pool of law school graduates must be diverse if diversity is to be achieved. Law schools must recruit, admit and enroll a diverse body of students. What are the law schools doing to foster diversity? Are there specific Arizona demographic factors that are hindering diverse students from enrolling in Arizona law schools once they have been admitted or diverse graduates from accepting employment in Arizona? Likewise, what needs to be done earlier in the educational cycle to incent or interest diverse students in a legal career? How early in the educational process can and should this be started?

- **Corporate Influence and Financial Support.** Corporations and individuals with major resources can be enlisted as partners or allies in development of a truly diversified pipeline and hiring pool. Accordingly they can drive law school programs and actions with their financial contributions and relationships with the educational community which they themselves service or from which they themselves draw their workforces. Example: Jim Rogers of Nevada and his substantial financial gift to the U of A Law School. How do we obtain and target financial support so law schools will be required as a condition of the financial contributions to more actively run programs and promote initiatives that promote a diverse pool of law school graduates?

In passing it is noted that an integral part of this effort will be the Diversity Director who is recommended by the Bar Staffing Committee of the SBA Diversity Task Force. His/her participation as a focal point in the Bar's diversity effort will provide sustained power to this undertaking.

Recommendations:

We recommend that the SBA Diversity Task Force, through this Corporate Support Committee, pursue the following opportunities and report to the Board of Governors in 2007 on progress and further recommendations:

- 1) Examine diversity practices of corporate in-house counsel departments.
- 2) Examine pipeline and hiring pool issues in both Arizona law schools and employers.
- 3) Develop a list of both national and local corporate supporters.
- 4) Identify support, other than or in addition to cash, from corporations.
- 5) Identify corporate leaders in diversity whose models may be borrowed or applied to support of guide the Bar's recommitment to diversity and invite their participation as consultants in support of the Statement of Goals.

Funding Resources Identified:

The following businesses have offered to host one of the Bar Leadership Institute's 10 sessions:

- Phoenix International School of Law
- Fennemore Craig PC
- Perkins Coie Brown & Bain PA.
- Arizona Public Service Company

Additional support is presently being sought from other businesses, as well.

Suggested Timeline for Implementation of Recommendations:

The Committee plans to provide a status report and further recommendations to the Board of Governors by June 30, 2007.

Resources Required:

- 1) Current updated list of signatories to Arizona's "Call to Action".
- 2) List of local leaders who can lend their support to the "Call to Action".
- 3) Financial and in-kind support for special events and programs (in addition to the Leadership Institute and a full-time "Diversity Director" staff position) that the State Bar of Arizona is unable to fund.
- 4) Corporate leaders in diversity who are willing to lend their knowledge and experience in successful diversification efforts.

Attachments:

- Mission Statement
- Sara Lee Call to Action (Separate .pdf)

STATE BAR OF ARIZONA

Diversity Task Force

Corporate Support Committee

MISSION STATEMENT

The Corporate Support Committee serves the public and enhances the legal profession by identifying organizations that support diversity and by developing plans to involve these organizations in participation with the State Bar diversity initiatives.