

## DIVERSITY INITIATIVE

**SUBMITTED BY:** Eugene Harris

TO: David A. Blaner  
Executive Director  
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SUBJECT: Diversity Initiative Status Report - 2008 Recruiting and Retention

After three successful years of experience in 2005, 2006 and 2007 the ACBA has established an effective mechanism for legal employers to be aware of a local, diverse recruiting source. The unique Summer Clerkship Program showcases fourteen first-year minority law students and a few second-year law students over the course of twelve weeks usually running from June 1 through August 10. The University of Pittsburgh School of Law, Duquesne University School of Law and the West Virginia University College of Law continue to be avid supporters of the program.

In August the American Bar Association awarded the ACBA its Partnership Award that recognized the unique and successful aspects of the Summer Clerkship Program. Applicants were from local and state bar associations across the nation.

Typical classes are comprised usually of African-American, Asian and Hispanic male and female law students reflective of current enrollment patterns in each of the respective law schools.

Seven law school graduates (50%) from the 2005 Summer Clerkship Program who have been employed locally in 2007 are as follows:

Ariel Antonio	Superior Court of Pennsylvania
Erika Groves	Buchanan Ingersoll & Rooney
Eliza Hall	K & L Gates
Andrea Kerns	Cohen & Grigsby
Krutika Sharma	Spanovich Law
Alexandria Samuel	Reed Smith
Eric Stroud	Dickie McCamey

Efforts to bolster retention among this group are underway utilizing the activities of the Diversity Collaborative as one of the strategies this fall.

Six law school graduates (43%) from the 2006 Summer Clerkship Program who have been employed in 2008 by Pittsburgh law firms are as follows:

Sandy Kunvatanagarn	Reed Smith
Nadia Lazo	Thomas A. Will & Associates
Kelly Lane	K & L Gates
Bethany Miller	Tucker Arensberg
Amol Purohit	Reed Smith
Jeynce Woodruff	Tucker Arensberg

Placement rates are exceptional in light of the status of the moderate local business climate.

## **Diversity Initiative Leadership**

The Law Firm/Corporate Law Department Task Force will be encouraged to continue its leadership role for the Diversity Initiative by scheduling meetings to update activities and to discuss possible directions. The participants have previously engaged in discussions centered on both short-term and long-term strategies, resulting in valued input, feedback and suggestions over the past year. The decision-making process has resulted in consensus from the membership on the directions or next steps under the Diversity Initiative.

## **Employment Networking and Career Counseling**

Minority and women lawyers who are working in Pittsburgh or who are targeting Pittsburgh as an employment destination continue to contact the ACBA for information, guidance and networking. This activity is sporadic but it is an important component of the diversity mission. In several cases the ACBA has been able to provide prospective employer contacts, career counseling and suggestions. As the database continues to grow, it is expected that increased activity will be focused on counseling.

## **Significant Implementation Activities**

- The co-chair of the Community Outreach Task Force has spearheaded the development of the newly formed Western Pennsylvania Diversity Initiative. A Diversity Festival was held from August 16-19, 2007. The ACBA agreed to a \$5,000 sponsorship commitment and agreed to participate. The Diversity Coordinator participated as a panelist at the Diversity Symposium.
- The Diversity Collaborative Committee has been convening quarterly. The committee is working towards its long-range plan and programs that enhance networking and works to resolve career issues among attorneys. Its first two educational and motivational programs were highly successful. The ACBA supported and co-sponsored the programs.
- A web-based newsletter was created to feature Pittsburgh's successful diverse attorneys and to attract the attention of persons interested in diversity in law in Pittsburgh.
- The Law Firm/Corporate Law Department Task Force will be advised to approve a Summer Clerkship Program for 2009, recognizing that the program serves as an effective early recruiting mechanism that encourages law students to seriously consider Pittsburgh for future employment.
- The Diversity Coordinator utilizes the database as a source of talent for referrals to prospective employers. In addition, career coaching and advice have been offered to attorneys who are seeking a new position.
- Liaison activities with the Homer S. Brown Law Association and the Hispanic Bar Committee have strengthened the administrative effectiveness of these groups. The ACBA's assistance has been extremely well received and appreciated. ACBA resources are being utilized routinely. These organizations appear to have been energized by the affiliation with the ACBA. New leaders are emerging and participating. The participation of young minority attorneys at the Bench-Bar Conference appears to be improving through these efforts.
- Although there is considerable work left to be done, there were several key appointments of minorities to the level of partner in law firms and the appointment of one federal judge that have been extremely encouraging to the diversity effort over the past year.

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