

MEMORANDUM
July 3, 2008

TO: Fred Thrasher, NALP Deputy Director

FROM: Dana Morris, Chair, Diversity Section

CC: Ritu Bhasin, Liaison, NALP Board

RE: First Quarter Report

I'm pleased to report on the activities of the NALP Diversity Section since the Section's first meeting at the 2008 NALP Annual Education Conference in April. More than 25 NALP members attended the Diversity Section meeting at the conference in Toronto. We had a lively and extremely productive meeting, which created a lot of momentum for tackling our 2008-2009 assignments. The following provides a summary of the Section's most significant contributions to NALP objectives, since Toronto, and our progress on Work Group assignments and other activities during this quarter.

2009 NALP Annual Education Conference Programming

At the Diversity Section meeting in Toronto, I led Section volunteers in brainstorming ideas on diversity topics for NALP's upcoming 2009 Annual Education Conference in Washington, DC. Given the short period of time between the end of the Toronto conference and the initial May 23rd deadline for submitting conference proposals, I wanted the Section to get a jump on developing the conference programming topics. By the end of our first meeting in Toronto, we generated a list of about 15 topic ideas. We assessed those ideas further during the Section's group conference call in May, and identified a short list of conference proposals to submit for the Section. I recruited volunteer teams to draft our RFPs and shared the "short list" with participants on the NALP Diversity list-serve. The feedback I received from the list-serve helped us further refine a few of the RFPs and helped identify a few potential presenters. I also discussed joint proposals with the GLBT, Public Service and LLM sections, and recommended to Diversity Section members which of the joint collaborations seemed most promising to pursue. As a result of our collective efforts, we were successful in submitting 14 RFPs on behalf of the Diversity Section and co-collaborators.

2009 Diversity Reception

We briefly discussed the Diversity Reception at our first Section meeting and it is on the agenda for our next group conference call, which will be conducted later this month. Additionally, GLBT Section Chair Andrew Chapin and I had a tele-meeting on June 27 to brainstorm on speaker ideas we can present to our Section members. We are exploring the possibility of having a speaker (local to Washington, DC) who has with a civil rights background and motivational appeal – someone such as Eric H. Holder, Jr., former Deputy Attorney General at the U.S. Department of Justice. (Yes, we know we are aiming really high but it could happen!)

2008 NALP Bulletin Proposals

We submitted two proposals for future *Bulletin* feature articles on behalf of the Diversity Section and the proposals were accepted. "Improving

Diversity at the Partnership Level” is scheduled for the December 2008 edition and “Reaching Out to Alumni to Improve Diversity Efforts” is scheduled for the February issue. Additionally, there will be a feature follow-up article on NALP’s Survey of Diversity Professionals results.

Update on Work Groups

Pipeline Initiatives

Susan Robinson serves as the Vice Chair for our Pipeline Initiatives charge and was appointed to continue the impressive work she directed during the 2007-2008 year, when the Street Law Program was launched. Since our Section’s initial group conference call in May, I have recruited additional volunteers for the group, and it is currently the largest of all our work groups. Our charge this year is to expand the Street Law Program. We will be discussing the Street Law efforts during our next Section conference call in late July.

Association of Law Firm Diversity Professionals Collaboration

I have recruited Turkessa Thompson from our Section to serve as Vice Chair and guide our outreach efforts to connect with the Association of Law Firm Diversity Professionals and help lay a foundation for future collaboration on an initiative related to the retention of diverse associates. Turkessa is also a member of ADP and, as an “insider,” we hope that she may be able to establish a working dialog with the organizations, which has been difficult in the past.

Diversity Best Practices Guide

This Guide was developed in 2004 and will be updated this year. I have recruited Karen Hester in our Section to serve as Vice Chair. Karen has a strong interest in this area. We have two other volunteers to work on this charge but may need to recruit a few more.

Survey of Diversity Professionals

This survey was conducted during the tail-end of the 2007-2008 year. Survey results have been collected and there are plans to inform NALP members about the findings via a Bulletin article in November 2008. I have recruited Rachel Simmonds-Watson in our Section to serve as Vice Chair for this year’s efforts. Rachel was very involved with the creation of the survey last year. There is some overlap with this subject matter and the outreach effort to the Association of Law Firm Diversity Professionals organization. Towards that end, I am planning a tele-meeting or conference call in the next few weeks between this work group, me and 2007-2008 Diversity Section Chair Marcy Cox brainstorm on how we might use results from the survey to reach out to ADLFP.

Environmental Trends and Diversity Section News

I have asked Section members about trends and issues they see on the diversity horizon. Some members have commented on the increasing concern about what may be a rise in incidents reported by the national media of racial stereotyping in the workplace. Some are drawing parallels to the

national presidential election and issues arising from the historic prospect of having the first woman and African American Democratic presidential candidates.

Maya Hazell had an article published in the National Law Journal this past April. The article is entitled: "Law Firm Affinity Groups: Best Practices, Benefits and Challenges." Jose Bahamonde-Gonzalez and I have both been asked to serve as faculty presenters at the 2009 MCCA Pathways to Diversity Conference in November.

I hope that this report has been helpful. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions.