

NALP Launches Diversity Pipeline Initiative

After more than a year of study by the Diversity Section's Pipeline Initiatives Work Group, under the leadership of Susan Robinson, the Associate Dean for Career Services at Stanford Law School, NALP is pleased to announce the launch of the NALP/Street Law Legal Diversity Pipeline Program. The program will pair NALP member law firms with local high schools, and will commit practicing lawyers and other legal professionals to teaching law-related topics in high school classrooms, and to hosting high school students at events that expose students to legal career pathways. NALP member law schools will also have an opportunity to become involved in this exciting new program.

"We have been looking for an organization to team up with on a national legal diversity pipeline program for several years," says James Leipold, NALP's Executive Director. "Susan Robinson's leadership and the work of her Work Group last year led us to Street Law, an organization that was founded right here in Washington, DC, and came into existence at about the same time as NALP. We are delighted to be partnering with an organization that has such a strong track record in high schools across the country."

In November of last year, the NALP Board of Directors approved the plan to go forward with the new diversity pipeline initiative. The project is based on the very successful

Corporate Legal Diversity Pipeline Program that has been run by the Association for Corporate Counsel and Street Law since 2001. In that program, attorneys who work in house are paired with local high school classes.

During the 2008-2009 academic year, five NALP member law firms will be paired with local high

schools to teach diverse and disadvantaged students about substantive areas of the law and about the legal profession and legal career pathways. Participation in the program requires a financial commitment as well as a commitment to staff at least two visits to each participating class, host an on-site one-day program for students at the law firm, and offer some enhancement activity for a smaller number of students.

Street Law staff will offer complete support for participating law firms, including training, curriculum development assistance including a written manual and curriculum guide, and matching with an appropriate high school. NALP member law schools will also be engaged to support this program and contribute to the overall success of this pipeline initiative. Participating law firms are encouraged to work with their local law schools and to involve diverse law students in the program.

Street Law, Inc., is a nonprofit organization that has been educating the public about law and democracy for more than 35 years. Street Law writes the best-selling high school law text, *Street Law: A Course in Practical Law*, and has created a variety of programs that utilize the organization's expertise in curriculum writing, professional development, customized technical support, and interactive educational methods. Most recently,

Street Law has engaged in the development of diversity pipeline initiatives for the legal industry. In cooperation with the Supreme Court Historical Society, Street Law has also conducted professional development programs for more than 900 high school teachers from 49 states and the District of Columbia. These programs have helped teachers expand and improve instruction about the Supreme Court. More than half of the current jus-

tices on the Court have participated directly in this program.

Strategies for Diversifying the Legal Profession

In the past six years, Street Law has begun to create programs to help address the lack of diversity in the legal profession. As many law schools, law firms, and corporations strive to find ways to diversify their staff or student bodies, Street Law's diversity efforts have focused on "diversity pipeline" programs. The strategy is to help diversify the profession by increasing the number of young people of color who decide to pursue legal careers. There are many legal diversity pipeline initiatives in place throughout the country that seek to intervene at different points along the pipeline; Street Law's programs focus on high school students.

Research in career choice and counseling psychology has suggested that in order to encourage young people to pursue a particular career, you must provide them with several things: career pathway education, career role models, social support and persuasion, and a chance to experience and enjoy career-related tasks. Street Law has designed its Legal Diversity Pipeline Programs to address those research-based factors.

"One of the things that attracted us to this program," says Susan Robinson, "is that it is research based. There is a body of research that supports intervention of this sort. In addition, Street Law has many years of experience implementing a very similar program with the Association of Corporate Counsel. The outcomes from that program demonstrate that the level of student engagement with the law, and with legal careers in general, increases after participation in the program."

In 2001, Street Law piloted the Corporate Legal Diversity Pipeline program with the Association of Corporate Counsel. The corporate program pairs in-house legal department volunteers with nearby, diverse high schools that offer law-related courses. The department volunteers are trained to

develop and teach interactive lessons and visit their partner classes a few times to teach about civil law and legal careers. The corporation then hosts a one-day conference where the students participate in exciting, interactive workshops and simulations of legal activities and attend a career fair. This model has proven successful and the program has expanded to more than 30 companies at sites across the country. Many companies have established "enhancement" activities for a few of the most interested students: internships, job shadow days, mentoring programs, or scholarships.

Internal outcomes-based evaluations of the program have shown that most students who participate in the program are more interested in legal careers afterward, feel inspired and encouraged by the legal professionals, and report learning from the lawyers and knowing more about legal careers and legal career pathways after participation. These are all factors that recent research in counseling psychology suggests are indicative of future career choices. Evaluation also shows that the students who view the participating lawyers as "role models" and receive encouragement and inspiration from them are more likely to have an increased interest in legal careers and the legal profession. The number of hours spent with the students has a positive relationship with the extent to which the students see the lawyers as role models. The most successful programs spend approximately eight hours with the students – three to four classroom visits and a 4.5 hour conference.

Street Law and NALP have agreed to expand this demonstrated program model to focus on law firm participation. The NALP/Street Law Legal Diversity Pipeline program will build on the lessons learned from the corporate experience to create a program that will address the unique challenges and opportunities available at law firms. The core activities will include a training session for law firm volunteers and participating teachers, classroom visits to a diverse high school class, a one-day event at the law firm for the students, and an enhancement activity for the most interested high school students. The program will also involve law schools through legal career pathway

lessons delivered by office of career services staff, a field trip to the law school, or participation in the one-day event at the law firm.

The one-day event at the law firm will include several interactive workshops for the students (such as a mock trial, an arbitration or contract negotiation exercise, or a simulated deposition), a tour of the firm, and a career panel and/or career fair to explore different practice areas or jobs in the profession. The classroom visits that precede the conference will cover legal topics that pertain to the workshops at the one-day event. Lessons will also introduce the students to legal careers and pathways to the legal profession.

During the pilot year of the program (the 2008-2009 school year), the program will be piloted at five sites across the country. In each of the subsequent four years, five law firms and five high schools will be added to the program. "Over time, as we continue to build this program, adding law firms and law schools, we hope to be able to make a significant difference," says Leipold. "This is an opportunity for NALP employer members that do not now have a pipeline initiative of their own to become involved in diversity pipeline work in a very meaningful way."

Street Law will find up to three partner high school classes for each pilot law firm, based on the number of volunteers each firm has. Each firm will need to provide at least a dozen volunteers, and the group can include paralegals, recruiting professionals, and professional development staff as well as lawyers. Street Law will train the volunteers in program implementation, teaching strategies, and lesson use at the start of each school year. Street Law will then be available by phone and e-mail for technical assistance as the programs get underway. In addition, Street Law will provide each participating law firm with a program guide that includes a clear description of program components, research-based best practices, a selection of ready-to-use classroom lessons, a selection of ready-to-use, one-day event workshops, sample agendas for the one-day event,

and templates for all documents the law firm might use related to the program.

Funding for the program will be provided by participating firms. Each firm will be asked to contribute \$20,000 annually to cover program costs, including Street Law staff time, materials, travel, training, and technical assistance. NALP will also make an annual financial contribution to this program.

There is a great deal of enthusiasm and excitement among the firms that have signed on for the coming year. According to Elizabeth L. Deeley, a partner at the San Francisco office of Kirkland & Ellis LLP, and a member of their firmwide diversity committee, the lawyers at Kirkland "were eager to get involved on the ground floor of this innovative and important community initiative. The Street Law program fits squarely within our goals of opening doors and enhancing opportunities for students who may not otherwise be exposed to the exciting legal career possibilities within their reach."

There is similar enthusiasm at the Richmond office of Hunton & Williams LLP. Hunton will partner with the William & Mary School of Law in the program. According to Ameer McKim, Hunton's Legal Recruiting Director, "Hunton is thrilled to be an inaugural participant in the Street Law/NALP diversity pipeline project. The goals of this innovative program align with Hunton & Williams' diversity and lawyer development goals, and our interest in working to develop diverse talent. In joining forces with William & Mary School of Law, our lawyers are looking forward to the opportunity to work with both law students and high school students."

"Hunton & Williams has a long tradition of supporting pro bono service," said Lynda Butler, interim Dean of William & Mary School of Law. "We are delighted that our students will have the opportunity to partner with the firm's lawyers in this unique project cosponsored by NALP and Street Law." Robert Kaplan, Associate Dean for Career Services and Public Service Initiatives and

Director of Externships at William & Mary, noted that the NALP Street Law initiative is “an exciting way for our students to give back to the community in William & Mary’s citizen-lawyer tradition.”

Five NALP Firms Make Pipeline Commitment

NALP is pleased to announce the five law firm members that will participate in the pilot year program. They are the San Francisco office of **Kirkland & Ellis LLP**, the Atlanta office of **Troutman Sanders LLP**, the New York office of **Wachtell, Lipton, Rosen & Katz**, the Washington, DC office of **Holland & Knight LLP**, and the Richmond office of **Hunton & Williams LLP**. Hunton & Williams will be partnering with the **William & Mary School of Law** and will involve both law students and lawyers in a teaching role in their partner high school.

NALP is now actively seeking the participation of interested firms for the 2009-2010 school year and invites inquiries and letters of interest from member law firms that would like to learn more about the program. Participation in the program will be dependent upon the availability of an appropriate matching high school in the local community and the law firm’s ability to make the necessary commitment of resources.

Questions about the program, inquiry, or letters of interest should be directed to NALP’s Executive Director, James Leipold, at