

AGENDA ITEM

November 165

**Education Pipeline Award
(Council on Access & Fairness)
Proposed Approval**

**To: Members, Board of Governors
Members, Board Committee on Stakeholder Relations**

**From: Luis Rodriguez, Chair, Council on Access and Fairness
Patricia Lee, Director, Office of Legal Services,
Access & Fairness Programs**

Date: October 22, 2008

**RE: Education Pipeline Award – Proposed Approval
(Council on Access & Fairness)**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The State Bar currently presents Awards recognizing the exemplary efforts of an individual attorney, law firm and bar association in promoting and achieving increased diversity in the legal profession. The Council on Access & Fairness screens the award nominations and forwards recommendations for review and approval by the Board of Governors.

Included in the charge for the Council on Access & Fairness is the focus on initiatives along the entire educational pipeline (e.g. student programs which raise awareness about the justice system and opportunities in the legal profession.). This proposed award will recognize innovative and successful efforts of education programs to train and support students of all backgrounds to become interested in the judicial system and eventually aspire to productive careers in the law.

Background

In April 2001, the Board of Governors adopted a resolution to improve diversity in the legal profession and in the governance of the State Bar. (APRIL 702) The resolution included various policies to achieve these goals, including the “recognition of outstanding efforts on diversity issues, similar to the President’s Pro Bono Service Awards” and requiring the development of standards and procedures for Board of Governors approval.

In January 2002 the Board of Governors approved the creation of the State Bar Diversity Awards, recognizing an individual attorney and bar association, along with the selection criteria and procedures for the awards. In 2007, the Board of Governors approved the addition of a law firm category for recognition.

Each year representatives of the Council on Access & Fairness review the nominations and develop recommendations for consideration by VIC and the full Board of Governors. The Diversity Awards are presented at the Diversity Awards Reception during the State Bar Annual Meeting.

As a result of the work of the former Diversity Pipeline Task Force, the State Bar diversity pipeline work expanded to encompass the education pipeline (preschool through law school), as well as the legal profession and the judiciary. During its review and extensive discussions re: the recommendations for the 2008 Diversity Pipeline Awards, the Council noted that the current awards do not allow the State Bar to recognize education pipeline programs that promote the law as a career. It was further recognized that without a robust early education pipeline, the ultimate ability to achieve diversity in the legal profession would be minimal at best. This proposal is for a new Education Pipeline Award to acknowledge and promote exemplary programs in this area.

Fiscal Impact: This activity will be supported through voluntary contributions to the Elimination of Bias/Bar Relations Fund.

Personnel Impact: No additional staff is required. Support will be provided by existing staff funded through the Elimination of Bias/Bar Relations Fund.

Board Book/ Administrative Manual Impact: None

Rules Amendments Impact: None

Alignment with Strategic Plan: The project promotes interest in the legal profession through the building of the pipeline, consistent with the Vision and Goals of the State Bar Strategic Plan.

RECOMMENDATION

Proposed Resolution of the Committee on Stakeholder Relations:

Should the Board Committee on Stakeholder Relations concur with the recommendations of the Council on Access & Fairness, the following resolution would be in order:

RESOLVED, that the Board Committee on Stakeholder Relations recommends that the Board of Governors approves the creation of an Education Pipeline Award, pursuant to the attached guidelines.

Proposed Board Resolution:

Should the Board of Governors concur with the recommendation of the board committee, the following resolution would be in order:

RESOLVED, upon recommendation of the Board Committee on Stakeholder Relations, that the Board of Governors approves the creation of an Education Pipeline Award, pursuant to the attached guidelines.