

DATE: January 30, 2012

TO: Members, Nominations and Appointments Committee

FROM: Teri Cannon, Chair, Council on Access & Fairness
Patricia Lee, Special Assistant for Diversity and Bar Relations

SUBJECT: Status Report re: Outreach and Recruitment for State Bar Appointments

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

When the Council on Access & Fairness (COAF) was created in 2007, the COAF charge included the task of *identifying and encouraging attorneys from diverse backgrounds to become active participants in the administration and governance of the State Bar and making specific recommendations to the Board of Governors for increasing that participation.* The COAF has been involved in ongoing outreach and recruitment on behalf of the State Bar to educate attorneys from diverse backgrounds about the value of serving on a State Bar entity and has encouraged and supported diverse attorneys in the submission of applications for appointment as described below.

BACKGROUND

The Council on Access & Fairness was appointed in May 2007 and held its first meeting in June 2007. During its first year, the Council focused on developing its Mission Statement, Vision, Strategies and Goals and consolidated its activities to conform to its diversity “think tank” mode. In early 2008, the Council gradually resumed the appointments activities previously performed by the former Access & Fairness Committees.

Consistent with its charge, the Council sought to “*identify and encourage attorneys from diverse backgrounds to become active participants in the administration and governance of the State Bar and make specific recommendations to the Board of Governors for increasing that participation.*” The Council appointed its Diversity Coalition Committee to initiate outreach internally among State Bar entities and externally with diversity stakeholders. The full Council also implemented an Outreach Initiative conducting additional outreach to all local, minority and specialty bar associations about the full range of COAF initiatives and the appointments process.

DISCUSSION

The following activities were recommended in the past and continue to apply:

1. Consult with Sections and Committees that appear to be making some progress toward increasing or maintaining diversity and engage in discussion to identify “best practices” that can be shared with other State Bar entities.
2. Encourage State Bar entities to initiate broad based outreach re the State Bar Appointments Process earlier in the year to provide maximum time for potential applicants to learn about the State Bar and the appointment process and to complete application packets by the February 1 submission deadline.
3. Conduct Appointments Workshops earlier in the cycle (e.g. October and November) to provide maximum time for potential applicants to learn about the State Bar opportunities, the appointments/ application process and to complete their application packets by the February 1st submission deadline and encourage representatives from State Bar entities to participate in the workshops.
4. Provide mentoring for potential applicants re State Bar appointments opportunities and provide feedback on the completion of the Appointments Application. The committees and members of the Diversity Coalition who have participated in Appointments Workshops and/or who are experienced in reviewing State Bar applications have provided direct feedback to applicants who choose to submit their draft applications for comment. This has proven to be a valuable service to potential applicants, resulting in many being appointed and expressing appreciation for the assistance received.
5. Encourage State Bar entities to partner with the COAF Diversity Coalition Committee to gather and disseminate detailed information on specific appointments and service requirements for the various entities, so that potential applicants can be in a position to meet the initial requirements and the expectations for serving on the various entities.
6. Encourage diverse attorneys serving on State Bar entities to apply for other State Bar entities upon the completion of their terms.
7. Increase outreach at all levels regarding the State Bar and the various opportunities available for member participation and about the benefits of such participation.
8. To facilitate the entire appointments process, continue to make the State Bar Application Form available early in the year and provide for online submission of applications.

During this year's appointments cycle the COAF has conducted the following activities:

1. In the San Francisco-Bay Area, an Appointments Workshop was held on January 10, 2012, hosted by the Bar Association of San Francisco and open to all attorneys in area. Speakers included: Paul Henderson, COAF Member and Chair, Diversity Coalition Committee; Ruthe Ashley, former member Board of Governors; Natalie Leonard, Director, State Bar Legal Specialization; Andrew Steckler, Chair, JNE; and Patricia Lee, State Bar Special Assistant for Diversity and Bar Relations.
2. In the Los Angeles area, Audrea Golding, COAF Vice Chair Audrea Golding and Ann Park, COAF Legal Profession Committee Chair made a formal presentation during the January 7th MultiCultural Bar Alliance Unity breakfast providing information about the appointments opportunities and seeking support from bar representatives to share information with and to encourage submission of applications by their members.
3. All COAF members were provided with hard copies of the appointments booklet and application (as well as the online link to the same information) and conducted one-on-one outreach and recruitment in their local communities.
4. Also during 2012, the COAF plans to initiate outreach earlier in the year for the 2013 appointments cycle, writing articles for inclusion in local bar newsletters and conducting workshops in October to December, to allow potential applicants more time to consider and complete their applications.