

THE STATE BAR
OF CALIFORNIA

Council on Access & Fairness

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TO: Members, Stakeholder Relations Committee

FROM: Audrea J. Golding, Chair, Council on Access & Fairness (COAF)
Thuy Thi Nguyen, Chair, COAF College and Law School Committee
Patricia Lee, Special Assistant for Diversity & Bar Relations

DATE: April 19, 2013

RE: Community College Articulation Agreements

BACKGROUND:

The Council on Access & Fairness (COAF) continues its efforts to expand the diversity pipeline by educating students about the judicial system and promoting interest in careers in the law. As part of this pipeline effort, the COAF College and Law School Committee has created the Community College Articulation Agreement Initiative.

This is a project designed to establish four agreements between community colleges, 4-year universities, and law schools that guarantee admission or give priority enrollment to students who meet all requirements in the agreements. COAF hopes to establish partnerships with two teams from public law schools and undergraduate institutions and two teams from private law schools and undergraduate institutions. Meetings have been held at UC Davis, UC Irvine and USC. A future meeting will be scheduled with Santa Clara University.

The project is an innovative model, new to the legal profession, that would provide a clear pathway from community college to law school. COAF received a grant from the California Bar Foundation to contract with a consultant to help draft the various articulation agreements. We anticipate the agreements for the participating schools will be finalized by the end of the year. See Attachment A for more details about the project.

Thuy Thi Nguyen, Chair, COAF College and Law School Committee and General Counsel for the Peralta Community College District will present a status report on COAF's efforts to implement this initiative.

ATTACHMENT A
Community College Articulation Agreements

“2+2+3” Articulation Agreements
Creating a Pipeline from Community College (“2”) to University (“2”) to Law School (“3”)
Project Description

This is a project by the California State Bar’s Council on Access and Fairness to establish four agreements with community colleges, 4-year universities, and law schools that guarantee admission or give priority enrollment to students who meet all requirements in agreements. The project is an innovative model, new to the legal profession, that would provide a clear pathway from community college to law school. This project is modeled on successful practices used in the health care professions, which mentor and support motivated high-achieving minority students from K-12 into medical school.

The proposal would require the development of articulation/admissions agreements among the three institutions in this part of the pipeline – community colleges, four-year colleges, and law schools – which would agree to support and mentor students along the pipeline into law school. The selected students would be admitted to the four-year college from the community college if they achieve specific criteria, e.g., grade point average in particular subjects, and then would be admitted or given priority enrollment to the law school if they graduate from the four-year college with specified grade point averages and other key performance indicators. Support for the students, including mentoring, counseling and scholarships, would be developed as part of the program in order to provide students with the best possible chance for success.

The Council on Access & Fairness was created by the State Bar in 2006 to serve as the State Bar diversity “think tank” and to advise the State Bar Board of Governors on appropriate strategies, consistent with State Bar policies and procedures, that enhance opportunities and advancement in the legal profession for diverse populations, particularly those who have been historically underrepresented. COAF is the only State Bar entity charged with implementing the State Bar’s diversity goals.

COAF is in the process of conducting initial outreach in Orange County, Davis/Sacramento, Santa Clara County, and Los Angeles. The program will be open to community college students at selected community college districts and will result in increased diversity pipeline and entry into the legal profession.

Community Colleges as Part of Diversity Pipeline

The State of California is a majority-minority state with at least 60 percent of its population made up of persons from racial-ethnic minority groups. The California bar is only 20 percent minority lawyers, and this number has not been increasing at a pace that is rapid enough to catch up with the general population. The legal profession has lagged almost every other profession in the country in bringing people of color into its ranks. The imbalance in the proportion of minority lawyers and judges compared to the general population is one of the primary causes of a lack of confidence and trust in the courts and the legal system.

The leaks in the education pipeline that have led to this current state start early. One of the most critical leaks in the pipeline occurs as students transition into college and launch their baccalaureate-level education. California's public community college system is the largest in the country, preparing students to transfer to four-year universities, providing workforce development and training, and providing basic skills and remedial education. Our community colleges educate nearly two and a half million students a year, more than 60 percent of who are students of color.

Twenty-eight percent of University of California and 55 percent of California State University graduates started at a California community college. The system enrolls almost one-fourth of all 20 to 24-year olds in California. In 2009-2010, the system transferred nearly 93,000 students to four-year institutions (public, private, in-state, and out-of-state). Nearly 15,000 community college students enrolled in the University of California (UC) system. Studies continue to show a four-year trend of increasing transfers to the UC systems. The participation rates show that community colleges provide access to higher education for all segments of the state's population. The participants include substantial numbers from all categories of age, gender, and race/ethnicity.

<http://extranet.cccco.edu/Portals/1/TRIS/Research/Accountability/ARCC/ARCC%202011.pdf>

Our community college system has the most diverse student population of the three public systems in California, providing opportunity for everyone who aspires to a college education, including students from the poorest communities in California, first-generation Americans and recent immigrants, and those who have work and family responsibilities. Thousands of talented young people leak out of the education pipeline from community college to law school every year because of a lack of support, mentoring, financial resources, and information about what is needed to gain admission to and succeed in law school.

The State Bar of California's Council on Access & Fairness, with these 2+2+3 articulation agreements, hopes to create a clear pathway for students from diverse backgrounds to attend law schools.