



**THE STATE BAR
OF CALIFORNIA**

Council on Access & Fairness

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DATE: October 17, 2014

TO: Members, Stakeholders and Access to Justice Committee

FROM: Hon. Karen Clopton, Chair, Council on Access & Fairness
Patricia Lee, Special Assistant for Diversity & Bar Relations

SUBJECT: Council on Access & Fairness (COAF) Status Report

BACKGROUND

In 2013, the Council on Access & Fairness (COAF) first official Long Range Strategic Plan was created under the guidance of the COAF Vice Chair, Hon. Karen Clopton, who is now COAF Chair. The Long Range Plan was approved by the Board of Trustees on May 9, 2014. The plan aligns with COAF's mission, which is to provide leadership and guidance for the State Bar of California to ensure the legal profession reflects the rich diversity of the people of California in a way that is equally accessible and free of bias.

The plan was designed to implement the COAF Strategic Goals including:

1. Produce Institutional and Attitudinal Changes
2. Communicate to Inspire and Engage Diversity
3. Partner, Collaborate and Coordinate to Achieve Diversity, and
4. Measure Change.

This report provides highlights from COAF's long range plan initiatives.

DISCUSSION

COAF activities furthering its strategic goals along the diversity pipeline include high school law academies, community college pathways to law school, legal employer focus groups, judicial appointments, educational programs, and leadership development. These activities are described below.

California Partnership High School Law Academies: The Law Academy partnership between the California Department of Education and the State Bar, through its Council on Access & Fairness, resulted in the creation of 6 California Partnership Law Academies (CPA's). The program is in its fourth year of operation, with a current total of 11 law academies. After three years of operation, the CPA's graduated their first senior class in June 2014. There were an average of 40-50 graduates among the 11 academies. Future plans are to link the High School

Law Academies with the 2+2=3 initiative below, resulting in an extended pipeline running from high school, to community college, to an undergraduate institution and ultimately to law school.

2+2+3 Community College Pathways to Law School: COAF's "2+2+3" initiative was created in 2013 with an MOU among 24 community colleges, 6 law schools (UC Davis, UC Irvine, USF, USC, Loyola and Santa Clara) and their respective undergraduate institutions. The initiative was implemented starting the current Fall 2014 semester. Community colleges report an average of 50-75 students enrolled in their respective programs. With ongoing coordination through COAF's College/Law School Committee, the initiative planning group is seeking outside funding for ongoing program implementation and administration, and the creation of an independent structure to provide ongoing support for the statewide initiative.

Legal Employer Focus Group Report and Recommendations on Diversifying Legal Talent: COAF has released its Report and Recommendations for Legal Employers to Succeed in Diversifying Talent Within the Legal Profession. The report summarizes feedback from a series of legal employer focus groups convened by the Legal Profession Committee to identify diversity best practices and model programs, and to develop recommendations for legal employers to increase diversity in the legal profession.

Judicial Appointments: COAF's judicial committee continues to present workshops to provide information about the judicial appointments process and to encourage attorneys from diverse backgrounds to submit applications. Workshops have been presented in Alameda County, Riverside County, San Diego County, and Santa Clara County. COAF also distributes resource materials covering "tips" for the completion of the judicial application, a commentary on Government Code section 12011.5(d) which focuses on the requirement that JNE consider a broad range of legal experiences, and a power point slide showing the status of diversity on the bench. COAF also assists JNE with elimination of bias training each year, consistent with the requirements in Government Code section 12011.5(b).

Educational Programs and Events: COAF presented four MCLE programs during this year's State Bar Annual Meeting. Programs included: COAF's Annual Stakeholder Forum -- "The 50th Anniversary of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Where are We Now?"; and other programs including "Diversifying Legal Talent in a Down Economy," "Neuroscience and Psychology of Bias in the Courtroom and Legal Practice;" and "What Should We Do About Implicit Bias in the Courtroom?" COAF also presented the annual Diversity Awards Reception featuring keynote Dolores Huerta and the presentation of the annual diversity and education pipeline awards.

Leadership Development: On October 30-31, 2014 COAF convened a Leadership Summit "creating leaders for the 21st century." Featured speakers included Chief Justice Tani Cantil-Sakauye, Congresswoman Jackie Speier and State Bar President Craig Holden. An all-star group of speakers provided personal insight, guidance and practical skills to assist bar leaders, judges, academics, community leaders, partners, general counsel, young lawyers on sharpening leadership skills and advancement strategies for business, career, community and personal development in a variety of traditional and non-traditional leadership settings.