

American Bar Association Colloquium on Diversity in the Legal Profession, October 1999

MISSION *mission*

To increase racial and ethnic diversity at all levels of the legal profession.

GOALS *goals*

Goal 1: Create awareness in the legal profession about the value of diversity.

- Influence and increase the demand for diversity among all legal employers.
- Address affirmative action “backlash”.
- Conduct research that generates support for the mission and goals (e.g., demographics, employment statistics).
- Monitor and evaluate progress to achieve objectives.
- Create a centralized clearinghouse of programs that work.
- Encourage bar associations to implement programs supported by law firms and corporations.

Goal 2: Ensure that minority students are adequately prepared to pursue a legal career.

- Create a developmental model that defines the criteria for successful lawyers and design school programs to match that model.
- Determine academic skills necessary to succeed in law school.
- Assess the opportunities that pre-K, elementary, and secondary school minority students have to obtain those academic skills.
- Determine what, if any, barriers preclude pre-K, elementary, and secondary school minority students from obtaining those academic skills.
- Develop programs to assist minority students in obtaining those academic skills.
- Increase awareness in communities of color concerning the advantages of a career in law.

Goal 3: Increase the number of minority students who attend and graduate from law school.

- Develop alternative admission criteria and de-emphasize reliance on LSAT scores.
- Match pedagogical models to the developmental model for the successful lawyer.
- Research effectiveness of outreach/public relations campaigns designed to attract minority students to attend law schools.
- Provide financial support to minority law students.
- Design intervention programs for at-risk minority law students during the first year of law school.
- Hire more faculty of color.
- Develop programs to better manage and enhance diversity.

GOALS *goals*

Goal 4: Increase the number of minority students who pass the bar exam.

- Conduct research on minority student bar passage rate.
- Encourage bar associations and legal employers to work with law schools in preparing students for the bar exam.
- Provide skill building workshops for preparation of bar exam in addition to the bar review.
- Provide scholarships to minority students for bar review programs.
- Encourage state bar examiners to research the validity and fairness of the bar exam as an appropriate measure of minimum competence for admission to the bar.
- Encourage bar examiners to maintain data on the bar passage rate of minority students.
- Ensure that bar exam questions minimize the effects of culture and race.

Goal 5: Increase the recruitment of minority lawyers.

- Create sound and fair interviewing model (e.g., discourage reliance on LSAT scores in the interview process).
- Encourage law schools to demand that legal employer interviews conform to sound and fair interviewing practices.
- Create intern programs for minority lawyers.
- Establish diversity committees in corporate legal departments and law firms.

Goal 6: Increase the retention and advancement of minority lawyers.

- Define the role of corporations, law firms and other legal employers in creating meaningful opportunities for the advancement of minority lawyers.
- Provide mentors for minority lawyers.
- Enhance hiring and retention of minority lawyers.
- Establish diversity committees in corporate legal departments and law firms.

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I refuse to accept the idea that the “isness”
of man’s present nature makes him morally
incapable of reaching up for the eternal
“oughtness” that forever confronts him.”

— Martin Luther King, Jr.,