

Young Lawyer Summit: The Next Generation
2008 ABA YLD Midyear Meeting
Los Angeles, CA

1. How can Law School better prepare and train young lawyers for professional success?

- ◆ Part One: What skills, knowledge, and abilities do young lawyers need (in greater amounts than they generally get now) to be successful?

- ◆ Part Two: Look at each of the items listed and assess whether it would be appropriate and effective to provide training in any of these things during law school. Please keep in mind that many law schools may feel that “learning item XYZ should be learned after practice has begun, not as part of a legal education.” How could we persuade a law school that it would be important to change the school curriculum to include this item? How could it best be taught and learned?

- ◆ Part Three: Look at action steps. What could the YLD, ABA, and local associations do to begin the process of making change happen?

2. How can we reduce the problems and challenges of Law School Debt?

- ◆ Part One: What is a concise statement of the problems posed by these debts? These would include not only the challenge to pay them off, but how substantial debt affects the choices young lawyers have to make, including the type of practice they select (e.g. private firms vs. public sector, large firms vs. small or solo practice, and so on).

- ◆ Part Two: What steps could be taken to meet these challenges by working with law schools, bar organizations, law firms and other employers, and other entities?

3. What can be done to improve the “Quality Of Life” for young lawyers?

- ◆ Part One: Define the problems by identifying what issues cause the greatest difficulties in balancing work and personal lives and cause burnout and stress and reduced job satisfaction. Some of these will be known to most people – for example long work hours. But also try to identify ones that are less known to people unfamiliar with the perspective and experience of young lawyers. These ideas are important to record at our Summit so we can educate others.

- ◆ Part Two: Focus on what specific steps could be taken to respond to these problems. What is needed? What changes should be made in how firms, departments, and other entities operate with regard to billable hours, requirements for client development, associate evaluation, partnership tracks, and other issues? How could we persuade others to take these steps, keeping in mind their goals and interests? What could YLD, the ABA, and local bars do as first steps to improve quality of life for young lawyers?

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4. How can Law Firms, Departments, and Other Legal Employers Better Prepare and Train young lawyers for professional success?

- ◆ Part One: Needs assessment. What skills, knowledge, and abilities do you believe young lawyers need, that they are not getting enough or at all now, to help them succeed as legal professionals?

- ◆ Part Two: What could law firms, departments, or other employers do to help provide this knowledge and these skills and abilities? How would they do it most effectively? Please give a lot of thought to that last questions. What would be the best methods to provide the training? For example, if you believe mentoring is valuable, how would you improve how it is made available and done?

- ◆ Part Three: What persuasive arguments (keeping in mind the goals, interests, and perspectives of the employers) could be presented to make these changes happen?

- ◆ Part Four: Consider what steps would be needed to get your ideas implemented. What could YLD, the ABA, and local bars do to help this happen?

5. How can we young lawyers be better supported in assessing and managing the Careers?

- ◆ Part One: Focus on defining the problems, which may include: getting on partnership tracks or otherwise advancing professionally, making lateral moves to other jobs, and changing types and setting of employment, for example from a firm to in-house legal department, or large firm to small or solo practice, from firm to government, agency, or public interest employment, and from law into other careers. What are the needs of young lawyers regarding these issues?

- ◆ Part Two: Focus on solutions. What steps could be taken to assist and support young lawyers with these challenges?

6. How can we increase and communicate knowledge and awareness about the issues and needs of young lawyers and involve more young lawyers in providing solutions?

- ◆ Part One: What specific steps could be taken to learn more about the needs and challenges of young lawyers now and on an ongoing basis, particularly those lawyers who don't attend Summits like these or other bar events?

- ◆ Part Two: How can we better communicate what we learn to young lawyers, to the legal profession, and to others?

- ◆ Part Three: What steps could we take to get greater involvement by more young lawyers in working on these challenges and issues?