

SUMMARY ON CREATION OF COUNCIL ON ACCESS & FAIRNESS

The State Bar Board of Governors met Friday, November 17, 2006 to consider the proposal to create an Access & Fairness Council to address diversity in the State Bar and to sunset the five Access & Fairness Committees.

The Board Stakeholders Committee and full Board heard presentations from representatives of the Access & Fairness Committees, which included requests that the decision be postponed to allow for further dialogue with the committees and other stakeholders, that the committees be allowed to continue in the interim, that their respective issues not be lost with the transition, and that the committees have input into shaping the new Council.

Following discussion at the Stakeholders Committee and full Board, the Board adopted the following resolution regarding the Council and the committees:

- 1) To create the new **Council on Access & Fairness** with the goal of appointing members of the new Council at the Board's March 2007 meeting.
- 2) To sunset the five Access & Fairness Committees effective March 1, 2007.
- 3) To provide the committees with the opportunity to complete ongoing projects. The Committees were "*directed to file with the Executive Director by December 1, 2006, a list of ongoing projects that can be completed by the volunteers with minimal staff assistance by March 1, 2007. The volunteers may continue to work on the completion of such identified projects subject to funding and staffing constraints, as determined by the Executive Director.*"
- 4) Once appointed in March 2007, the new Council also was directed to "*regularly convene stakeholder forums to solicit input from all interested parties as to the priorities and the future work of the Council.*"

Stakeholder forums will be held to solicit input and answer questions regarding the priorities and the future work of the Council.

Applications are being accepted for appointment to the new Council on Access & Fairness. **Deadline is February 1, 2007.**

For additional information, contact Pat Lee, 415-538-2240.

COUNCIL ON ACCESS & FAIRNESS MISSION STATEMENT

The Council on Access & Fairness shall be appointed by the Board of Governors to advise the Board on strategies to enhance diversity opportunities and advancement in the legal profession within legal standards. “Opportunities” encompasses leadership development and appointments to State Bar entities, as well as initiatives to educate students about the law and career opportunities in the law, referred to as education “pipeline” initiatives. “Advancement” encompasses recruitment, employment, retention and advancement in the legal profession. The Council will also screen candidates for the Annual Diversity Awards.

The Council will be composed of 25 attorney and public members appointed by the Board of Governors. Its membership consists of individuals representing a wide range of stakeholders and constituencies engaged in programs and initiatives focusing on increasing diversity in the legal profession. Members from the Council will be drawn from diverse constituencies, including but not limited to: race, ethnic and national origin constituencies; gender constituencies; age constituencies; sexual orientation and transgender constituencies; disability constituencies; large, small and solo firms; government and public sector practice; domestic corporate and private firm practice; law schools; educational system constituencies (P-12, colleges and universities); and the judiciary; consistent with State Bar appointments policies and diversity criteria. The Council will report to the Board of Governors Committee on Stakeholder Relations.

The Council, as with the State Bar’s diversity program, is funded by voluntary contributions. No mandatory State Bar licensing fees are used to fund these activities.

COUNCIL ON ACCESS & FAIRNESS CHARGE

The charge of the Council on Access & Fairness is to:

- A. Advise the Board on strategies to develop collaborative activities and efforts along the diversity pipeline to raise interest in the legal profession
- B. Serve as liaison between the State Bar and the diverse stakeholders and constituencies in the legal profession
- C. Identify and encourage individuals from diverse backgrounds to enter the legal profession.
- D. Encourage full and equal opportunity for individuals from diverse backgrounds to remain and advance in the legal profession.
- E. 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.
- F. Promote and ensure collaborative efforts to generate and provide support and to increase the numbers of attorneys from diverse backgrounds entering and advancing in the legal profession.
- G. Study and report on the status of attorneys from diverse backgrounds in the legal profession and in State Bar activities.
- H. Produce on an ongoing basis programs and materials designed to maximize opportunities for individuals from diverse backgrounds in the legal profession and in the administration and governance of the State Bar's programs and activities.
- I. Comment, when requested by the Board of Governors or the Executive Director, on barriers directly related to access opportunities within the profession for attorneys from diverse backgrounds
- J. Screen applicants and make recommendations to the Board of Governors for recipients of the Annual Diversity Awards.
- K. Educate all attorneys of State Bar policy within the authority of this charge.