



Leadership Council on Legal Diversity Reaches Five-Year Milestone

Research Reveals Early Successes From Ambitious LCLD Programs One Finding: 100% of 2011 LCLD 1L Law Students Were Hired for Jobs That Require Bar Passage

September 18, 2014 01:30 PM Eastern Daylight Time

PHOENIX--([BUSINESS WIRE](#))--An organization created in 2009 to expand leadership opportunities for attorneys from diverse backgrounds observed its fifth-year anniversary this week.

“After the JD: The First Twelve Years.” “We have seen some early successes in our first five years”

At its annual meeting in Phoenix, Sept. 18, Members of the Leadership Council on Legal Diversity (LCLD) heard researcher Dr. Robert Nelson, director of the American Bar Foundation (ABF), report on early progress that LCLD programs have made in advancing the careers of minority and women attorneys.

“We have seen some early successes in our first five years,” said LCLD Founder and Chair-Emeritus Rick Palmore, General Counsel for General Mills, in a special video presentation to Members. “But we are even more ambitious for the next five years.”

LCLD is a unique organization, comprised solely of the general counsel of Fortune 500 corporations and the managing partners of leading law firms across the nation. Its membership currently numbers 221.

“Each Member has made not just a commitment of his or her organization to this critical effort, but a personal commitment to see diverse talent rise to leadership roles throughout the profession,” said LCLD Chair Brad Smith, General Counsel for Microsoft. That commitment is evidenced this year by a 90% membership renewal rate and by a 90% participation rate in LCLD’s set of initiatives.

LCLD has created three “signature” programs designed to have impact at critical points in a legal career. The LCLD Success in Law School Mentorship program has created 2,292 pairs of lawyer mentors and law student mentees since 2012. The 1L LCLD Scholars program, with 536 participants, provides rare opportunities to first-year law students for summer employment at LCLD Member corporations and law firms. The Fellows

program, generally seen as LCLD's "flagship" initiative, provides 603 attorneys, generally with eight to 10 years of experience, with a year of professional development and relationship building and a strong organization for subsequent "alumni" networking.

ABF Director Dr. Robert Nelson reported at the LCLD meeting that LCLD, with ABF guidance, surveyed LCLD Mentors, LCLD Mentees, 1L LCLD Scholars, and LCLD Fellows during 2014 in what he described as "exploratory...and encouraging" research.

One area of exploration is the career effect of "social isolation" in law firms on women and minorities, especially African-American women, a phenomenon that Nelson has documented in a landmark study, "After the JD: The First Twelve Years."

"Social isolation is associated with higher rates of attrition from law firms for diverse attorneys," Nelson said. "LCLD Fellows, by contrast, are overwhelmingly (84%) still employed with the firm or corporation that nominated them to become a Fellow, and 78% of those who left did so for a better job opportunity rather than dissatisfaction with their current job."

One third of Fellows have referred work to other Fellows, the survey revealed, showing the power of Fellows' networking, said Nelson. "The fact that they are referring is an indicator that a level of trust is being built among the members of this unique community."

"Fellows are not isolated," said Nelson.

Other findings related to Fellows that Nelson found important: "Last year, 22% of Fellows were promoted in their organizations; 35% were elected or invited to leadership positions in their organizations; and 31% were elected or invited to leadership positions in their community."

In regard to LCLD 1Ls, Nelson noted, "...while the numbers measured for the 2011 class of 1Ls are small, the employment results look impressive. 100% of 1L Scholars who had graduated from law school received full-time jobs requiring bar passage. According to the National Association for Law Placement (NALP), for the graduating law class of 2013, only 64% of graduates achieved full time jobs requiring bar passage."

The ABF also found that 100% of LCLD participants who landed 1L jobs also got 2L jobs.

"LCLD is five years old, which is a milestone. We're proud of that, and encouraged by these early metrics," said Robert J. Grey, Jr., LCLD Executive Director. "But this is a commitment for the long haul...for the next five years, and beyond."

"The Members of LCLD are extraordinarily ambitious and are working to implement dramatic and sustained differences in the profession."

"I don't think we realized five years ago how much would get accomplished in these first five years," said Grey. "The personal commitment of LCLD's Members is very real, and we are starting to see some exciting results."

Contacts

for Leadership Council on Legal Diversity

Joe Slay, 804-350-7089

joe.slay@slaycommunications.com

