

LOUISIANA STATE BAR ASSOCIATION
DIVERSITY COMMITTEE MEETING

MINUTES

**11:30 a.m. • October 18, 2011
Louisiana Bar Center, New Orleans**

Participants

Paul S.T. Balanon	Chantell M. Smith (phone)
Jeremy M. Bolton	Scott J. Spivey
Lauren E. Godshall	Bradley J. Tate (phone)
Chauntis T. Jenkins	Hon. Max N. Tobias (phone)
Kelly McNeil Legier	Prof. Sandra Varnado
Luis A. Leitzelar (phone)	Angela White-Bazile
Dean Maria Pabón López	Sheila M. Wilkinson (phone)
Yolanda D. Montgomery (phone)	Sharonda R. Williams (phone)
Barbara Bourgeois Ormsby (phone)	

The meeting was called to order at 11:05 a.m., with Co-chair Chauntis Jenkins presiding over the orientation and meeting. Co-Chairs Judge Max Tobias and Jeremy Bolton were present.

I. HOUSEKEEPING

A. Minutes. Brad Axelrod moved and Lawanda Gibson seconded to adopt the minutes of the August 30, 2011 meeting. The motion passed without objection.

B. Remaining Meetings for the 2011-2012 Year. Ms. Jenkins reminded the Committee about the future meetings: January 17, March 20, and May 1.

II. OLD BUSINESS

Diversity Survey. Ms. Jenkins reported on the survey that Prof. Do Kyun Kim prepared for the LSBA. The survey was disseminated on October 3rd to about 16,000 members. After receiving communications regarding problems with the survey, LSBA Executive Director Loretta Larsen requested that the committee close the survey and evaluate the responses received. Prof. Kim sent preliminary results and will send his report by the end of October. The group discussed problems identified with the survey and issues/concerns surrounding its closure.

III. DIVERSITY SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

A. Conclave. Ms. Ormsby reported for the subcommittee regarding the status of the Fifth Annual Conclave on Diversity on the Legal profession, which is scheduled for March 2, 2012, at the New Orleans Marriott (on Canal Street). Judge Wendell Griffen and Manny Brandt will facilitate the workshop this year. The times of the program sessions will be adjusted to keep the Conclave “fresh.” The subcommittee has decided on two panels: (1) How to include the minority without excluding the

majority; and (2) Mouth over Matter. Several speakers have agreed to participate on the panels. Scott Spivey commented that the moderators in past Conclaves have made a few inappropriate statements. He suggested that additional training may be needed for the moderators because an off-the-cuff presentation may allow an offensive term to slip into the questioning and comments. Ms. Jenkins commended Conclave co-chairs on their efforts thus far.

B. Disability Summit. Judge Tobias, Jeremy Bolton, and Kelly Legier reported on the status of the Disabilities Summit. The program is scheduled for October 20, 2011, from 8:00 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. in the United States federal building. The focus of the program is identifying challenges and solutions for attorneys and judges with disabilities. The program, which is approved for 4.0 CLE hours, is \$50 before October 7th and \$75 after. The group discussed final details requiring assistance, such as a coffee service and a sign language interpreter.

C. Awards. Ms. Jenkins reported for the subcommittee. She reminded committee members that the deadlines for the 2012 award were approved at the last meeting:

- a. Appointment of the Nominations Committee – August 1, 2011 – September 30, 2011
- b. Solicitation of Nominations Period – November 1, 2011 – January 27, 2012
- c. Nomination Submission Deadline -- January 27, 2012
- d. Nominations Committee Selection Deadline – February 24, 2011
- e. Diversity Awards Subcommittee Approval of Recommended Recipient Deadline – March 2, 2012
- f. Diversity Committee Selection Deadline – March 31, 2012

The letters for the nomination committee were disseminated in August.

D. Diversity Communications. Ms. Jenkins reported on the subcommittee's efforts.

1. Diversity Video: Ms. Jenkins reported that no submissions were received. The subcommittee will meet to decide alternative ways to develop a diversity video.
2. Brochures/Bookmarks: Ms. Jenkins reported that the "Creating a Culture of Inclusion" and "Commitment to Diversity" diversity bookmarks were printed and disseminated. The Generational Differences bookmark is being printed soon. The content for the disabilities bookmarks is being developed.
3. Newsletter: The next newsletter will appear in the September Bar Briefs.

Diversity Commitment Statement. Tabled.

E. Diversity Integration. Ms. Jenkins reported for the subcommittee. She explained the need to establish liaisons for the standing committees of the LSBA. This would open communications and ideas, such as identifying the need for speakers with diverse backgrounds and also creating diversity accountability regarding how well the committees are promoting diversity within their committees. Brad Axelrod agreed to chair the subcommittee, and Lauren Godshall agreed to serve on the committee.

F. Outreach to Firms and Courts. Judge Tobias explained the status of his letter to the Louisiana Supreme Court asking the Court to execute the Statement of Diversity Principles.

G. Diversity Pipeline. Ms. Jenkins and Ms. Legier reported on the subcommittee's efforts.

1. "Suit Up For the Future" High School Legal Internship Program: The pipeline subcommittee will meet at the beginning of November to begin planning the 2012 program. Additionally, the LSBA submitted a nomination for the program for the ABA diversity pipeline award. The award will be presented during the 2012 ABA midyear meeting, which will occur in February 2012 in New Orleans.
2. College Outreach: Tabled.
3. Student Ambassador Outreach Database: Ms. Legier reported on the database. The database has been used to identify attorney volunteers for the Young Leadership Council's Power Ties program and the Teen Court program. Scott Spivey suggested requesting CLE credit for the attorneys who volunteer to speak at schools. He suggested that the presentation might be more substantive than other hours attended as a participant.
4. Professionalism Scenarios: Tabled.

H. Job Fair. Mr. Leitzelar and Ms. Legier reported for the subcommittee on the Minority Involvement Section Job Fair, which occurred September 24, 2011, at Tulane Law School. He explained issues with employer attendance that arose because of the economy, the later Fair date and Saturday event. An internship fair will be planned for the Spring at Loyola.

IV. NEW BUSINESS

A. Diversity Committee Reception. Ms. Jenkins proposed coordinating a reception during the LSBA midyear meeting. Christina Bruneau (president of the Louisiana Asian Pacific American Bar Association) is interested in working with the Diversity Committee. The group discussed the idea. The consensus was to create a subcommittee to explore the reception. Mr. Spivey moved and Angela White-Bazile seconded to create a subcommittee to plan the reception.

ACTION ITEM: (1) Mr. Axelrod will explore availability of the atrium at McGlinchey. (2) Ms. Legier will obtain the schedule from last year to identify open evenings for a reception.

B. New Name. The issue was raised regarding whether the name of the Committee should be changed. Several diversity committees across the country have changed their names from "diversity" to names such as "Access and Fairness." The group discussed the name issue. Dean Maria Lopez noted that some of the law schools are changing to "Diversity, Access, and Inclusion." Mr. Axelrod noted that "access" is a common theme resonating in the LCLD (Lawyers Council on Leadership Diversity) meetings and discussions. LCLD is a group consisting of management council and

managing partners at large firms. The consensus was to keep the name the same for now but to remain mindful of changing trends throughout the country.

C. Ideas for Next Year.

1. *Standing Committee Liaisons.* The ideas will be sent to the Integration Subcommittees. Mr. Axelrod will explore this through that committee.
2. *Community Outreach to the Public.* Ms. Jenkins proposed that exploring a community outreach project in which the Diversity Committee can serve as a partner to engage the community and help us with branding. Mr. Spivey suggested a 5K diversity run. It is quick and easy to plan and easy for law firms to get their associates to do. The group discussed the goal of the effort. Mr. Axelrod suggested broadening the diversity event by getting other professions with diversity committees to join in the effort (i.e., medical profession, accountants and teachers). The group discussed possible sponsorship interests and running clubs that would likely participate. Mr. Spivey agreed to chair the subcommittee that will explore this proposed event.
 - **ACTION ITEM:** Mr. Spivey will research and submit a proposal regarding the proposed run (i.e., what's involved to have a sanctioned run; whether any other bar associations in the area are doing runs; the time of year best for a run).
3. *Diversity Video Ideas.* Ms. Jenkins suggested having short video clips to answer frequently asked diversity questions, such as "what's in it for me". The group discussed options through social media. If we began a LSBA diversity facebook group, we can include one minute video clips on the page. Senior partners could be asked to do the video clips. These ideas will be sent to the communications subcommittee. Mr. Spivey suggested that Diversity Committee members encourage young attorneys in their offices or law students to join the communication subcommittee; subcommittee positions do not have to be appointed by the LSBA president.
4. *Diversity Directory.* This idea will be forwarded to the Outreach to Firms and Courts Subcommittee. This subcommittee needs to define the purpose of the directory (i.e., for people who consume legal services or those who need affinity groups).
5. *Disability Ideas.* Mr. Bolton suggested creating a program to expose children with disabilities to lawyers so that they realize that the legal profession is an option for them. Mr. Spivey suggested that there is a way to reach out to children with disabilities through the BESE Board. The State School for the Blind and State School for the Deaf, which are both in Baton Rouge, may be starting points. Mr. Bolton agreed to obtain information on the schools and the LSBA's ability to coordinate programming with them.

V. LSBA OUTREACH REPORT

Ms. Legier gave the report regarding various outreach efforts.

- A. *New Admittee Receptions.* The LSBA has scheduled new admittee receptions in the areas previously hosted: New Orleans (11/9), Baton Rouge (11/17), Shreveport (1/5), Lafayette (1/6), Lake Charles (1/31), and Alexandria (4/27).

- B. *Geographic Outreach.* Ms. Legier is awaiting information from LSBA President-Elect Jimmy Davidson to plan the geographic outreach.

VI. ANNOUNCEMENT

Ms. Jenkins read the announcements that were disseminated before the meeting.

1. Congratulations to Newly Appointed Judge Nannette Jolivet-Brown, who is the first African American female district court judge appointed in Louisiana. She will serve on the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Louisiana.
2. The Louisiana Association of Black Women Attorneys is hosting a Fall Event for Baton Rouge Attorneys on October 20, 2011, from 5:30pm to 7:30pm at the Baton Rouge office of Adams & Reese Law
3. On October 1, 2011, the Louisiana Association of Black Women Attorneys hosted a Jazz Brunch from 11:00am to 2:00pm at the home of LABWA Member Geri Broussard Baloney. LABWA honored and presented awards to the following recipients during its signature fall brunch: Justice Bernette Joshua Johnson, LA Supreme Court; Judge Ernestine S. Gray, New Orleans Juvenile Court Judge; Judge Yvette Mansfield Alexander, Baton Rouge First City Court Judge; and New Orleans City Attorney Nannette Jolivet-Brown (President Obama's Nominee for U.S. Eastern District Court Judge).
4. The Hispanic Lawyers Association of Louisiana hosted a FREE CLE and Social on August 4, 2011.
5. The Hispanic Lawyers Association of Louisiana and the Louisiana Chapter of the Association of Corporate Counsel (ACC) hosted a Cocktail Reception Welcoming Loyola Dean Maria Pabón López on September 28, 2011, from 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. at The Columns Hotel in New Orleans, Louisiana. Approximately 50 attorneys networked and welcomed the new dean.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned by acclamation.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 1:10 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,


