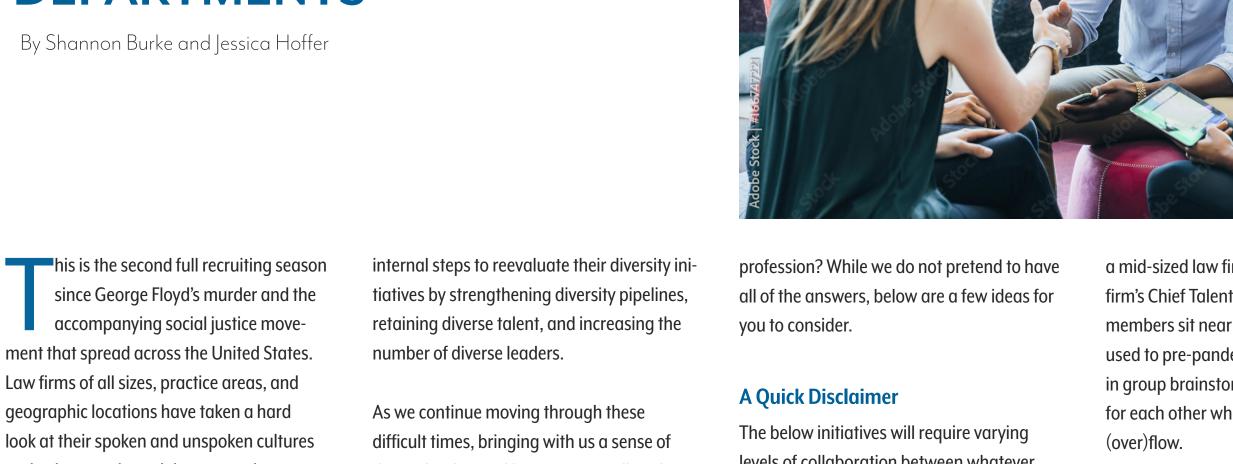
HOW TO INCREASE COLLABORATION BETWEEN RECRUITING AND DEI DEPARTMENTS



and values, evaluated deep-rooted systems within the firms, and wondered how they can improve. Some law firms or firm management representatives released public statements voicing their support for the Black Lives Matter movement, while others took

determination and hope, we - as diversity, equity, and inclusion and recruiting professionals — are likely asking ourselves what we can do. What new initiatives or programs can we collaborate on together to help move the needle toward a more diverse legal

levels of collaboration between whatever versions of DEI and recruiting departments exist at your firm. We recognize that we are exceptionally fortunate to not only genuinely enjoy working with one another, but our team members do as well. We work in

a mid-sized law firm and both report to our firm's Chief Talent Officer. We and our team members sit near each other (or at least we used to pre-pandemic), regularly participate in group brainstorming sessions, and cover for each other when our workloads ebb and

We know, however, that is not the case at every firm. Perhaps your departments are on different floors and never have an

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SEPTEMBER 2021 NALPBULLETIN

The first step is to take an honest assessment of where you are and where you want to be. opportunity to interact with one another, or maybe your departments are siloed and managed by different leaders with limited opportunities for collaboration. Whatever the situation, consider making a concerted effort to find collaborative opportunities and invest in growing the relationship such that you will be able to find common ground and work toward your shared goals.

Do Some Soul Searching

How many DEI and recruiting departments have as one of their goals for 2021 to increase the number of diverse attorneys at their firm? We are assuming nearly everyone. The first step is to take an honest assessment of where you are and where you want to be, and view this as an opportunity to work together toward a common goal.

 Get your departments on the same page about how your firm defines diversity for recruiting purposes. Does it include gender, racial or ethnic diversity, religious diversity, sexual orientation and identity, first generation status, different abilities, veteran status, or other demographics?

- Once you know how your firm defines diversity for recruiting purposes, get a true baseline of what diversity at your firm currently looks like. If you don't know the statistics at your firm already, create and release a survey through which the attorneys can self-identify. (Tip: When creating your survey, think about whether you want to use terms that can easily translate into other diversity reports, surveys, etc. for which you may also be responsible.)
- Review the metrics together. Are
 there diversity groups that are not represented or are underrepresented at
 the firm? Is there currently representation of a particular group, but perhaps
 it is concentrated at one experience
 level and will likely be reduced significantly in a few years as people retire?
- Develop a plan to track this data on a continuing basis, as diversity statistics are likely to change. Keep in mind that attorneys may be included in a demographic one year and not included in the next. For example, someone who did not previously identify as disabled may become disabled as a result

- of an injury or new condition. Consider whether your internal surveys should be redistributed on an annual basis to capture any changes in statuses.
- Now that you have a baseline of information from which to work, develop a plan together on how you will bridge that gap.

Reach Out to Law Schools and Student Affinity Groups

Law firm recruiting departments and law school career services offices are in constant contact throughout the on-campus interview (OCI) season. But what about the rest of the year? And are you reaching out to the law students that are from the diverse demographics that you identified through the process above? Reach out together to the law school's career services office and the diversity office.

If you haven't already forged a relationship with the school's career service and diversity offices, set up a videoconference to introduce yourselves and talk about your commitment to recruiting diverse students at the firm.

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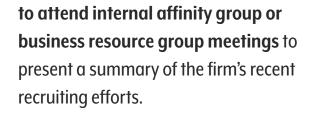
- Offer to host "meet the employer"
 events where diverse students can
 learn about the firm, its practice areas,
 and its culture.
- Create opportunities for diverse attorneys to mentor and share their experiences with diverse law students.
- Reach out to student affinity groups
 to introduce yourself and your team,
 and offer to set up an event, presentation, or mentoring program with firm
 attorneys.
- Arrange mock interviews so that diverse law students can hone their interview skills and receive

encouragement and constructive feedback from diverse attorneys.

Seek Out Opinions and Resources

Your firm likely relies on diverse attorneys for assistance with recruiting diverse law students, but when was the last time you sat down with this group to seek their opinions and feedback? A candid conversation about the outcome of the most recent recruiting season and the firm's ongoing initiatives can spark a dialogue on ways to improve diverse student recruiting.

 Invite the recruiting team and chair of the firm's recruiting initiatives



- Solicit feedback from the group do they feel existing initiatives would have worked to recruit them? Do they recommend making any changes?
- Prompt the group to ask
 questions both in advance and during
 the meeting.
- Listen to feedback if your diverse attorneys have concerns about existing diverse recruiting initiatives (or lack thereof).
- volunteers for additional recruiting efforts. If the group is particularly interested in targeting a specific school or student affinity group, offer to set up an event, presentation, or mentoring program with firm attorneys.

Pool Your Financial Resources

Aligning goals and financial resources can be a cost-saving measure for both the recruiting and DEI teams, especially during the ongoing pandemic and any cost-cutting measures your firm has implemented as a result. By

sharing resources, the recruiting and DEI teams can continue to work toward their shared goals.

- **Identify law student affinity groups you can support** with a financial or
 in-kind sponsorship.
- If your firm does not usually have a 1L summer associate position, create a position for a diverse 1L student who is interested in gaining experience at a law firm.
- Sponsor a law student to work for a social justice non-profit over the summer.
- Create a scholarship for diverse law students.
- When the recruiting department is making a purchase for swag or other items, use diverse suppliers.

Build in DEI Training

In preparation for recruiting season, many law firm recruiting departments offer training for interviewers that reviews how to ask effective questions and actively listen to what is (or isn't) stated in a response while

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Develop a plan to track diversity data on a continuing basis.

highlighting the firm's positive attributes. The departments can work together to incorporate diversity, equity, and inclusion training into these existing programs.

- Explain blind recruitment and why the firm may want to consider removing personally identifiable information from applicants' resumes.
- Talk about implicit bias and how it can appear throughout the interview process.
- Teach interviewers to be mindful of others' personal experiences, economic demands, and other factors that may affect why a candidate has a comparably lower GPA than other candidates or why a candidate may have needed to take a paid non-legal job rather than having an unpaid legal experience.
- Consider removing the transcript and GPA from candidate materials when conducting callback interviews.

- Identify common cultural pitfalls that occur during interviews and how to avoid them.
- Track evaluations. If interviewers
 routinely recommend not pursuing
 diverse candidates, consider if their
 recommendations are the result of
 conscious or unconscious biases and,
 if so, whether they could benefit from
 additional implicit bias training or
 should no longer interview on behalf
 of the firm.
- Invite your DEI colleagues to present at the training and give a primer on the diversity initiatives at the firm.

Put Your Best Foot Forward

Many law firm recruiting departments invest substantial time and financial resources into their marketing materials such as website content, advertisements, brochures, swag, and other items. Although they carefully craft messages to highlight the firm's positive attributes, by consulting the DEI department and the firm's diverse attorneys, they reduce the

likelihood of inadvertently sending a message they did not intend. For example, a picture of four colleagues smiling and working on a project together may intend to send a message of collaboration. However, a picture of four white, non-disabled, male-presenting colleagues may inadvertently send the message that ethnically diverse, disabled, or female-presenting applicants need not apply.

- Share the draft marketing materials with a variety of attorneys at the firm and seek their impressions, input, and recommendations.
- If someone indicates that they are offended or upset by your marketing materials, listen to them, learn from the mistake, and adjust the behavior going forward.
- Verify that any diversity statistics or other related information is accurate and current.
- Consider including in the marketing materials the firm's diversity initiatives, programs, trainings, and other events. Cross-department collaboration to provide the most up-to-date information serves the dual purpose of educating potential applicants and

your attorneys about all of the diversity initiatives at your firm.

We readily recognize that not all of these suggestions will land well at every firm, for a variety of reasons. But hopefully there is at least one nugget in here that you can use to help bring positive change within your sphere of influence. Here's to wishing you and yours well in the upcoming OCI season and through the rest of the year. •



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