

American University

WASHINGTON COLLEGE OF LAW



OFFICE OF DIVERSITY SERVICES

The Office of Diversity Services (DS) works with all segments of WCL -- students, administration, faculty, and alumni – around issues that are important to the people of color in our community. DS tries to ensure their maximum participation in law school activities, and helps to provide a range of diverse cultural experiences that can be shared by all.

Student Advocacy

DS generates programs -- or teams with other groups or individuals -- beginning with the annual First-Year Diversity Day for incoming students of color at the start of each academic year. Other activities include heritage observances and coordination of relevant Founders' Celebration activities. The Office of Diversity Services also supports the Lambda Law Society in such activities as the annual welcome for first-year members and a yearly demonstration against the legally-mandated, on-campus recruitment of students by the military services.

Finally, the director of DS counsels students individually and through meetings of the Minority Affairs Advisory Group, which meets periodically to discuss issues related to the quality of student life as experienced by students of color. Also known as the "ALSA meeting," this group consists of representatives of the students-of-color organizations, Lambda, faculty members, and administrators.

The "ALSA's"

Asian Pacific American Law Students Association (APALSA)

Black Law Students Association (BLSA)

Hispanic Law Students Association (HLSA)

Lambda Law Society

South Asian Law Students Association (SALSA)

Legal Analysis Study Group

A major responsibility of the Office of Diversity Services is administration of the Legal Analysis Study Group (LASG), WCL's academic support program. Since it began in 1994, the goal of the LASG has been to help students develop the skills that are critical to success in law school and beyond. The mainstay of the program is the first-year

component, which consists of (a) the Summer Legal Writing Workshop, and (b) a weekend program during the academic year. Both components help participants who need to improve fundamental writing skills and build on their ability to conduct research and legal analysis.

Special Events

The Office of Diversity Services collaborates on two major conferences: the *Sylvania Woods Conference on African Americans and the Law*, and the *Hispanic Law Conference and Job Fair*. Both are established components of the spring Founders' Celebration. These conferences bring together members of the various law school constituencies, including students and alumni, as well as practitioners, jurists, and other interested individuals. Discussions focus on aspects of the law and legal education and their impact on the communities of color. Conference topics have included such issues as the criminal justice system, immigration, the political system, and legal education from the LSAT to preparation for the bar exam. In addition, both individuals and organizations are recognized for their contributions to the improvement of the African-American or Hispanic communities.

Dean's Diversity Council

The Council was founded in the fall of 2001. Its mission is to support the efforts of the Office of Diversity Services and to follow through on initiatives that may have been discussed during the spring conferences. Specifically, DDC members--individually and collectively--assist with a range of efforts designed to help ensure that students of color apply to and succeed in law school, at the bar exam, and in the profession. Thus, members volunteer for activities such as mentoring, participation in law school programs, pre-law advisement, and job-search counseling. The Council includes judges, alumni, faculty, lawyers employed in various practice areas, and friends of the law school.

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