

DIVERSITY Office for Diversity and Inclusion Launches Associate Leadership Institute

By Gabrielle Brown & Monica Parks

In May, the City Bar's Office for Diversity and Inclusion launched its inaugural Associate Leadership Institute, a five-part series of intensive skill and leadership development training for mid-level and senior minority and women associates. The Institute includes keynote speakers and intensive training modules, with sessions dedicated to the following focus areas: executive presence, brand-building, mentor/sponsor relationships, business development, and career planning.

The Institute was created by the Office for Diversity and Inclusion to respond to our 2015 benchmarking data, which reflected elevated attrition rates and lack of representation of minority and women attorneys in law firms' top ranks. The curriculum aims to enhance the leadership capacity of associates at a critical point in their career where business development, team management, and community leadership are elements of their career trajectory.

Faculty members for the program span a wide range of specialties and include representatives from diversity-focused initiatives like the Center for Talent Innovation and the Council of Urban Professionals, as well as in-house leadership from financial institutions, including Morgan Stanley and Prudential Financial. The faculty also includes executive coaches, who will help participants develop specific action plans to demonstrate their value to their firms and clients. Throughout the program, participants will participate in group discussions where they are paired with partners and in-house counsel to discuss the practical application of the content to their careers.

The inaugural class of participants includes 50 associates from 30 law firms

in their fourth through eighth years of practice. The associates have been nominated by their firms and are paired with partner-level liaisons, who will integrate the program's curriculum within the respective firms.

The Institute's Planning Committee is comprised of partner and associate-level attorneys from firms that are signatories to the City Bar's Statement of Diversity Principles, the City Bar, and partner organizations, and is chaired by **JP Kernisan** of Duane Morris, who said, "We are so excited to be able to offer associates top-level substantive training, invaluable skill-building, and, most significantly, a space to build lasting relationships with their cohorts, fostering a community of minority and women lawyers that will be the future of the practice."

The City Bar has partnered with Bliss Lawyers, The Center for Talent Innovation (CTI), the Council of Urban Professionals (CUP) and Practicing Attorneys for Law Students, Inc. (PALS) on this effort in the hopes of serving as a model to increase collaboration between field-specific leadership programs.

At this pivotal moment for diversity in the legal profession, the City Bar is most grateful to the signatories and sponsors of the Office for Diversity and Inclusion for their support of this initiative. See the sponsors here: bit.ly/2rN9Ls5

For more information on the Associate Leadership Institute, please visit: www.nybar.org/ALI ■

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Michele C. Meyer-Shipp of Prudential Financial, Inc. facilitates a workshop on executive presence and effective communication at the inaugural Associate Leadership Institute on May 19. *Photo: J. McClinton.*

LAWYER ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Judges Are People Too

By Eileen Travis

When we think of judges, we tend to picture them in their robes, gavel in hand, high up on the bench, above the fray. We see judges as the ultimate problem solvers, not necessarily as people with problems like the rest of us.

But think about what many judges deal with as they bear the inherently stressful responsibility of resolving cases in which a human being, a family, or a community's future is at stake. Judges are regularly exposed to disturbing accounts of abuse, neglect, and violence. They frequently deal with hostility from the lawyers and litigants who appear before them. Their lives may become an open book during a high-profile case. And they may be exposed to verbal abuse and even death threats in response to their decisions.

And, of course, on a day-to-day basis, judges also deal with life events like the rest of us, including health and mental health conditions, work and family-life

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