

BB Interns

[00:00:00] **Intro Outro Voiceover:** Welcome to Building Belonging, a podcast of the New York City Bar Association and its Office for Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging. In this very special episode, the next generation of DEIB, Tanya, Angie, and Mary Ellen speak with their four 2023 summer interns, Eliana Cortez, Deynna Ray Tovar, Valentina Raghieb Charry, and Arantxa Galvan.

[00:00:26] The interns talked about how ODIB walked the talk and made an empowering home to bring them into the profession.

[00:00:31] **Eliana Cortez:** seeing someone in a position of power who looks like you and comes from some similar experiences really makes you feel like. You can do the same thing.

[00:00:41] I feel like doing this internship really empowered me to be more disruptive

[00:00:46] **Intro Outro Voiceover:** Our interns inspired us with their clear eyed vision of the future.

[00:00:50] **Valentina Raghieb Charry:** So we open up these resources equitably

[00:00:52] realizing how many schools are interested in this really showcases a need for legal institutions that have the power to be paying attention because they have the resources to do it.

[00:01:05] **Intro Outro Voiceover:** It is with a lot of hope in our hearts that we share with you this glimpse into the next generation of D E I B.

[00:01:10] **Deynna Rey Tovar:** Despite all the challenges and everything, we're making a change. We're ringing a bell. We're creating awareness of things that people don't wanna create awareness of

[00:01:19] **Intro Outro Voiceover:** Opinions expressed are those of the speakers and not necessarily of the city bar.

[00:01:24] Here's Tanya Martinez Galanucci.

[00:01:26] **Tanya Martinez-Gallinucci:** Welcome back to Building Belonging. Today is a really special episode because we're going to take a look inward and we have really special guests. For those of you who don't know, we've had an amazing cohort of Yale, Latinas helping us this summer, and it has been a dream come true for ODEIB.

[00:01:51] And so today we're gonna be talking to our interns and learning what they've learned and learning from them as well. So with that, I am Tanya Martinez, Gallinucci. I'm the executive director of the office and I'm handing it over to my crew.

[00:02:06] **Angie Avila-Lanciotti:** Hello. I am Angie Avila-Lanciotti. I am the manager of development and communications at the office.

[00:02:13] **Mary Ellen La Rosa:** And I'm Mary Ellen la Rosa and I'm the Senior diversity coordinator for ODEIB. I'm gonna hand it over to our guests today. If you could introduce yourselves and tell us what does belonging mean to you.

[00:02:24] **Eliana Cortez:** My name is Eliana. I use she her pronouns. I am originally from Elmhurst, Queens, New York, and I'm currently a rising junior at Yale, and I'm studying global affairs. What belonging means to me, I think I would say, feeling accepted and celebrated for sharing a part or parts of your authentic self in a space.

[00:02:47] **Deynna Rey Tovar:** Hi, my name is Deynna. I'm originally from Venezuela. I am a rising senior at Yale. I transferred from a community college last year, and I'm majoring in political science. What belonging means to me comes back to my experience immigrating from my country. So basically I think it, for me, belonging means having a space where I feel comfortable, safe, and welcomed.

[00:03:12] And it's basically feeling that I can be part of the community and contribute to it without having. A lot of pushback just because of who I am, and that can be applied in academic setting or again, in the community where I live in.

[00:03:30] **Valentina Raghieb Charry:** My name is Valentina. I'm a rising sophomore at Yale, planning to double major in economics and global affairs, and yeah, really excited to be here.

[00:03:39] **Arantxa Galvan:** Hi, my name is Arantxa, similar to Valentina. I'm a rising junior at Yale double majoring in English and East Asian studies.

[00:03:47] **Angie Avila-Lanciotti:** I've only been in the workforce for a little over 10 years, maybe less than and I have never worked for or under someone that looks like me. Tanya is actually the first Latina that I have seen in a position of power. So my question to you ladies is what is it like to have someone that looks like you, someone who is representative of you and your culture that you are reporting to?

[00:04:15] **Eliana Cortez:** I think it's so incredible, and I would say that there's two reasons why. I think first of all, seeing someone in a position of power who looks like you and comes from some similar experiences really makes you feel like. You can do the same thing. Like it makes you really consider that kind of future for yourself.

[00:04:34] And I think that's really important 'cause I feel like we can only dream so far beyond what the world tells us and shows us that we can do. And then second of all, I think it's just really great to have someone in leadership who can relate to you in some way. I think just having that kind of like synergy and connection, like I feel like that is very important and can make for a very warm and safe work space, which is what this internship has really been for me this summer, so I really appreciate that.

[00:05:01] **Deynna Rey Tovar:** So I think for me having a person who looks like me and again share similar experiences in a leadership position, it's seeing the possibility of things happening. I think during my time in this internship, I felt like several times very amazed by Tanya and very inspired and it's just even without doing it, I think there's a lot of empowerment to us, like seeing, like looking up to women, to Latinas in leadership positions.

[00:05:33] And it's those moments when you're like, wow, I can be like her. I wanna be like her and this can happen. So I like seeing it is different than dreaming like Eliana said. So yeah, it's pretty much empowerment and for me again, like I think my responses are gonna come from my experience being an immigrant in this country. But it's just amazing.

[00:05:58] **Valentina Raghieb Charry:** I came to the States originally from Colombia when I was eight, and I really struggled with English. I didn't know a lot of the language when I came. So growing up in elementary, middle, even through high school, I had quite a strong accent and that was always a hitting point with my teachers or just having to repeat myself sometimes. Could be a

challenge. So I think obviously I don't struggle with that challenge as much now, but I think knowing that someone is in that position of power that has that same experience is really powerful. Because I think at one point, especially in the legal career where a lot of your work is your presentation and how well you can present, I always thought that, wow, what if I can never accomplish this dream that I have just because of the way that my voice sounds? So I think hearing someone that has the same experience has always just been incredibly powerful to me because it means that I'm not alone in that struggle.

[00:06:53] **Arantxa Galvan:** Yeah, oddly enough, I have sort of a similar story I guess. I grew up in predominantly Latina community, but I went to a predominantly white school and at home in like in the community centers in my neighborhood we all spoke Spanish, and so that was my first language. I didn't speak English until I started going to kindergarten and first grade and I started picking it up there and it was really difficult to make friends or to even be academically noticed. I'd have to like step outside, do the ESL class instead of doing the class with everyone else. And even later on in high school and now in college when I have. Or when I have on campus jobs or internships or anything outside, I always. Tend to see myself as the only, or one of the few people of color in the room. And while now I find that people tend to be very welcoming of diversity, at least in the circles I'm privileged to be in. I still feel like it's hard to feel as though you belong when you only see yourself. Like when you look in the mirror and there's no one else around you that looks like you. And so I feel like. It's really nice. When I first joined the Zoom for my little sort of interview, I felt so surprised and then I was sad that I was surprised that so many people look like me on the Zoom call and like the person that was asking me questions also looked like me. And then now that when we have our daily meetings, it's just so great to be surrounded by people that I know have gone through similar things that I have and people that I know who see me as I am as a person and not just, as a sort of token of diversity in some sort of way.

[00:08:33] **Tanya Martinez-Gallinucci:** Excuse me while I drown in my own tears. Thank you guys. And I really appreciate you're really kind thoughts that's really sweet. And I think I'm up next for a question and of course I'm like flustered now. I'm like struggling.

[00:08:47] **Angie Avila-Lanciotti:** Both of you just sparked a core memory for me. I was in speech when I was younger. My first language was Spanish. It's actually very, it's it's a very common story. And for people who were born in this country, Spanish was my first language. So I was in speech when I started pre-k I was actually in special ed, pre-K because I spoke Spanish.

[00:09:13] And then my mom was like dedicated to learning English, so we only spoke English in the house and then I forgot my Spanish and in my teens had to relearn it.

[00:09:23] **Valentina Raghieb Charry:** That's such an experience. I was in speech therapy in Columbia for Spanish because I couldn't roll my Rs. And so then I, when I finally was like good enough at Spanish, my parents were like, actually, we're moving to the states. Hate to break it to you. Restart.

[00:09:41] **Tanya Martinez-Gallinucci:** I think it's really important for us to talk about how you guys even heard about us and what it was that you heard and what made you want to even work with us. I think it would be really cool to understand that part.

[00:09:53] **Eliana Cortez:** Okay, so something about me is like starting in my sophomore year of college, I became like a really big newsletter girl. Like I will read every newsletter, like every single line, like multiple times going through it. And I feel like that has made me really aware of what is happening in my university, in my community?

[00:10:17] 'Cause I'm also on some different newsletters for like New Haven. And yeah, I feel like I have just become so much more aware of the different resources and the different events and different people. That are doing great things in my community. And so one of the newsletters I'm on is the LA newsletter, Latino Women at Yale.

[00:10:37] And I just saw a little posting on there for this opportunity and yeah. The second part of your question was about why we wanted to work here. I've been interested in nonprofit administrative work since high school, I did a pipeline program called the Judicial Internship Program in high school, and it was judicial internship program, but part of it was we had a bunch of like panels with lawyers working in a bunch of different fields and we had one with lawyers working at nonprofits, and I just thought their work sounded so interesting. And I love managing things. Like I love administrative work. And I've always known that with my career I wanna do something that creates opportunity for disadvantaged populations. And so I love the work that this office does.

[00:11:30] When it comes to pipeline programming TMSLIP, ALI like things like that. I feel like that's the kind of work that I would like to commit myself to in the future. And then obviously just the work of racial justice. I've always

known I wanted to go into public interest work and I've always known I'm interested in social justice

[00:11:48] I think this is also part of entering a space that's like very white and like very wealthy is like I have just found myself just more drawn to work in the realm of racial justice and so that was another reason why I really wanted to work with ODEIB even why I'm really interested in doing work in diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging in the future.

[00:12:09] **Valentina Raghieb Charry:** Like Eliana, I'm part of the Latino woman at Yale Newsletter and usually I don't check my newsletters, but that morning I was like I'm gonna read through it. I feel like I should. There's definitely some events and I saw that there was a posting for a New York City bar internship and of course already being interested in like, legal careers.

[00:12:28] I do a lot of legal out school activities at Yale. I do moot court, I do the undergraduate legal association. So that immediately caught my eye and so then I saw Tanya's email. I decided to reach out and then I had my interview process and I think while I was looking for a straight legal internship at first when I was starting to do when I was basically starting to plan what I wanted to do for the summer, Tanya was very clear from the beginning. That this is not strictly a legal internship. This is DEI internship, and I was like, you know what? I feel like if I want to be a Latina lawyer, I should probably know a little bit better how I'm actually going to navigate that space. And I am so glad I did because I think this internship has solidified that I wanna go to law school.

[00:13:15] Despite all the challenges that are in the way, I think it's made it very clear. Obstacles that I'm still gonna have to face, and I'm endlessly grateful for that, so I don't go in completely blind. And yeah, that's why I ultimately decided to join the team.

[00:13:31] **Arantxa Galvan:** I'm also like Eliana and Valentina part of this newsletter, and I feel like Valentina knows this we get tons of emails, like from a lot of different stuff, at the beginning of the year signed up for 30 clubs and you only really actively do 10, but you get these newsletters from everything you signed up for.

[00:13:47] I never unsubscribe. I don't know why. So I just, sometimes I just, select all and delete or archive. But I also decided to read it like that month I was like, you know what I should start reading these newsletters. 'Cause I signed up for these clubs and I scrolled to the bottom for the first time in like probably the ever in the history of me being signed up for this newsletter.

[00:14:05] And I saw this posting and so I emailed and I reached out, went through everything. I'm also interested in a potential law career. At school I mostly do work with helping new Haven students stay on top of their homework, especially students that have just immigrated. And I do a lot of sort of work with Yale and the Provost Center with like new education initiatives. And so I feel like for me the DEI aspect of law really appealed to me. And also because I like similar to everyone on this call have also, grown up as being a Latina in the United States, which isn't necessarily the easiest thing ever. And so I was really happy when I was able to join and I'm really grateful to be here now.

[00:14:47] **Deynna Rey Tovar:** I wasn't eligible to apply to regular internships. So being at Yale my first year as a transfer and my first summer at Yale everyone was like, yeah, I'm doing an internship, I'm doing this, I'm studying a abroad. It was really overwhelming and really hard for me to navigate because I didn't have the same opportunities.

[00:15:07] So I was out one night and I ended up with some friends in her apartment and we were just talking, it was like past midnight. And the conversation about what you were doing in the summer came up and. I, I was, at this point I was like really frustrated.

[00:15:26] I was like, don't ask me this about this. And she asked me why I couldn't, and I told her, I explained my situation and she said I have this Tanya reached out to me. She my friend, she's the president of the, she was the president for Latino women at Yale, and she was like, yeah, Tanya, reach out to me.

[00:15:44] We have this opportunity. I'll send you the information. It's just funny because I feel like in my life I've had people that have come. And it's just like when you, people say things happen for a reason. So it felt like that. And several moments in my life I felt like that. And that's how I found about the office.

[00:16:04] In the beginning, I was a little confused about what we were gonna do but in our first meeting, in the interview, I learned about what the office does and it really moved me because again, I come from a community college and I see the disparity in resource availability for different communities and different students.

[00:16:25] And like coming to Yale, I see like, all these people are prepared to go, let's say, law school, right? They have had the resources and coming from a

community college. And there no one talks about grad school. Everyone barely talks about transferring. I. So even within community colleges you can see the difference.

[00:16:46] Some colleges are just focused on just getting people their associate's degree so they can work as soon as possible. But there are other colleges that they have the pipeline programs and I've seen it within the transfer community at Yale. Learning about the pipeline initiatives that the office has and just a representation and help for the underrepresented students.

[00:17:13] I know how important it is to have just one person to have one program one office to push you to tell you the possibilities to tell you that things can happen.

[00:17:23] So this is why I was really interested in doing this internship and working with you in the office because. It is really important to have that. It is really important because I always say, and there's a meme in Spanish that's just like there, there's talent. What we need is support. I don't know if you've ever seen it, but there is so much talent in these places, in community colleges and in high schools the way that have high populations of underrepresented students.

[00:17:52] And they just need that. They just need that little push to do great things because we're all meant to do great things in life.

[00:17:58] **Mary Ellen La Rosa:** I'm wondering have you encountered any unexpected challenges or has anything surprised you throughout your internship?

[00:18:08] **Eliana Cortez:** I don't know if I can say that I've encountered unexpected challenges in this. I think that it's more like unexpected challenges faced by the entire office that have really surprised me. I'd never worked in a space for diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging.

[00:18:28] Like, I expected the people and the institutions that are wanting to be partners that are claiming to be partners to, be a bit more like receptive, a bit more educated about these issues.

[00:18:44] And yeah, it's just very difficult. It's very difficult work, unfortunately. But it's really important obviously.

[00:18:52] **Valentina Raghieb Charry:** I think sitting in at meetings has been particularly interesting. Because obviously we're a very small team, and we

have a very conjoined mission and we're very deliberate in how we carry it out. I don't think that is sometimes carried through when you're in a large meeting, so observing and trying to manage how to consolidate that one mission. Just because the bar is an incredibly large organization, it's evident that there's gonna be other priorities. But for example, when the affirmative action decision came out in late June, I remember those first couple weeks, I the weeks that followed were just swamped with work.

[00:19:28] And I think we knew that the decision was coming. But I think personally for me, the affirmative action decision, I've been lucky enough to be able to attend private schools for most of the time I've spent in the states, and I am very aware that is not a lot of privilege that other Latina kids have. When I went to private school in DC there were what three? Latinos in a grade of 120, and then I went to boarding school and it was a little bit more diverse, but not representative of the whole American population. And for me, attending those schools have been extremely valuable just because one, not only have they helped me assimilate, which at the end of the day has contributed to my success, whether we want to admit that or not. But two, it's because these schools are specialized to give kids as much attention as possible. I know that's why I have been allowed to pursue my passions and ultimately have the, have as strong skills I have. And the fact that a lot of people, especially minorities, don't have that opportunity and that are gonna have less of that opportunity, open them for the decision, hit particularly close to home just because I acknowledge how much of an impact it's made in my own trajectory being at Yale. So when we came back from affirmative action, it was more of me trying to cope with the decision and how. It would affect me, my friends, and just people that I know overall and trying to be like, okay, what projects can we implement to change that?

[00:21:02] I've done policy memos that I've sent over to Tanya. Looking at what other city bars have been doing. In the case of the I work and in our Greta series in October, I've gotten to create in collaboration with the Eliana a rubric for what schools we want to invite to this pipeline. So we open up these resources equitably and that has just been incredibly meaningful for me.

[00:21:25] **Arantxa Galvan:** Yeah. I don't know if this is necessarily an unexpected challenge for me, but just a realization. I came to, for some reason, I've always had this idea of law as I. Like a hard bringer of equality and a place where, you know, not only does this section of the United States fight for justice, but also within the law system itself, there must be some sort of equal, equal opportunity, this idea of everyone being the same, everyone being held to the same standard.

[00:21:58] I always saw laws as. As this very fair, very equitable area. And even though necessarily I, I knew in some part of, unconsciously that wasn't the case. And I think what really made me realize that this wasn't a case is throughout my time here during our morning meetings, everyone, Danya is always talking about. How difficult it is to implement od policies even within the city bar itself, even within the parent organization that supposedly is, implemented this office in order to bring more diversity, more inclusion, more equitable practices. And so I think for me, the challenge of accepting that law, It's a place that also needs a lot of work. And this also being highlighted by affirmative action, was talking about, is was just a startling realization that I feel, although I feel very lucky to have been able to, come to this realization so early on and, be able to face my trajectory in a way that will help change the law system hopefully in the future.

[00:23:01] **Valentina Raghieb Charry:** Starting on to that quickly. Aa, I think something that I've realized not only in this internship, but I think attending elite institutions Yale, Boarding school, et cetera. Sometimes minorities are pushed to this. This was brought up in one of the previous podcasts and it really resonated to me.

[00:23:19] It's episode two if you wanna go listen to it, but we're told to play the game. We're told to sometimes just look out for ourselves. And I think coming from an immigrant family, being an immigrant myself I'm guilty of that. I'm like, I got the opportunity to immigrate to this country.

[00:23:34] I'm gonna make it as prosperous as I can for me and my family. And I don't think people can necessarily be judged for that. But when I think of it, the greater impact that it has on a community, I think it separates us in a sense. Because if you see another person struggling with the same background as you, you're told that it's. Not your problem and that they can figure it out because you have enough challenges to face. You have enough in your way to figure out how to make it through these type, these types of spaces. So I totally agree with what you said.

[00:24:06] **Arantxa Galvan:** No and adding onto that, it's so easy to let yourself be tokenized and to be able to succeed because you let yourself be tokenized. And I don't know if that makes any sense, but Totally like it's so easy.

[00:24:17] Like I also went to a boarding school and it was. Just her to be like, yep, I'll be in the photo. I'll stand there. Yep. That's me. The cafe of this institution. I'm one of 10 people and the whole school. And it's really easy to succeed in that way and it's really tempting especially when you do try to speak

out. Or say, Hey, this isn't fair. This shouldn't be this way. Immediately you're, it's like they turn the other face and it's not how you were treated before. It's not the same sort of respect that you used to get. Oh, how did you get here? That must have been such a hard journey for you. So I totally agree. Suddenly you're radical. Exactly. Yeah, exactly. When it was the same, you were the same person.

[00:24:55] **Angie Avila-Lanciotti:** I mean, I just wanna jump in and one Thank you because I'm sure I was probably intimidating to be like, all right, lemme just say it, but coming from nonprofit, all I've ever done is work in nonprofits. I graduated from college and went right into nonprofits, and I'll be the first one to say, nonprofits are not for the faint of heart.

[00:25:13] It is. You go into it knowing that you're. Working for a mission, you're working for a cause. You're not working for a bonus, you're not working for commission. And the hours are tough a lot of the times. And there's roadblocks that any outsider doesn't see. I. Because the organization's so good at not showing the roadblocks, right?

[00:25:35] But now you're coming into an organization and you're seeing all the roadblocks. You're seeing all the hurdles, and that's just the truth of it. And I appreciate your honest answer. 'cause it's across the board just with every nonprofit, whenever you are fighting for a mission, whenever you're fighting for a cause, you will always, Be faced with challenges, and it's just it takes your steam.

[00:25:59] It really, it takes a lot out of you, so I appreciate your honest answer.

[00:26:04] **Tanya Martinez-Gallinucci:** Same. I echo all of that and I think Angie's right, that nonprofit work and cause work is hard for all these things. And I think that there's an added level of difficulty with what we are doing and countering bias and racism and all those things. And look, we are not the kind of d e I folks that shy away.

[00:26:27] From the issues, right? I don't have it , in me to see something and not say something. Thank you m t a for that good one. But, if you're gonna be, if you're gonna do something or say something problematic to me or my office, You best bet we're gonna say something back and think about it and raise it.

[00:26:44] And I think for far too long, especially in this industry, the legal industry, there's almost like an expectation that it's pro, it's more professional. I. To not raise those things. And I think that's part of the reason why we get so

much resistance and I'm so glad that you guys have seen it as hard as it is and like it may have been maybe even jarring or surprising because I know it was for me, but like it's better to know the truth.

[00:27:15] It's better to know the truth so that you can prepare yourself and get ready. At least that's my take.

[00:27:20] **Eliana Cortez:** Yeah. I also wanted to add that my, like other experience working in a nonprofit is in New Haven. I work at Dixville Q House and I worked there through a fellowship from Yale called Urban Fellows. It's through White Hall. I'm in the leadership of the organization because I'm like intern on the advisory board and so I run the youth council and just support other departments with communications matters.

[00:27:44] But what I was gonna say was like, being a part of that nonprofit is very different because. The advisory board, like the staff is basically all people of color, specifically black people. I feel like whenever I. There's like a need expressed in the community and whenever I'm like, I feel like we should do this kind of programming for youth, I feel like everyone's like arms open wide and like they're ready to help and they wanna know and they wanna learn and it's just like very overwhelming.

[00:28:13] And I've spoken to all my friends about this. Like whenever I have meetings, like I just am always so filled with joy at the end because I just feel like everyone is so wanting and willing to learn and to help. And. To give support in any way that they can. And so I'd never been in like this kind of like legal nonprofit space and I think, I don't know this space, like being.

[00:28:35] I think that's why it's really important to have more diversity in these spaces. More diversity in leadership because I feel like that can make just like a tremendous difference in the way that people are treated in these organizations and like ultimately the effectiveness of these organizations.

[00:28:50] Because, like I said, I feel any idea that, the youth council thinks of anything that we wanna put into action. Like we have all these community leaders that are just like throwing themselves at us, like wanting to help so badly. And yeah I just wish that there was like more of that in the world and in the nonprofit world and in the legal nonprofit world in particular.

[00:29:09] **Tanya Martinez-Gallinucci:** , that really resonates with me. 'cause I think, like you, in a lot of the other work I've done in other spaces where there have been more folks of color or more folks of marginalized groups, there's a

sense of community and a sense of loyalty and a sense of. We're in this together, and not only in the non-for-profit space, but in the private sector as well.

[00:29:30] When I have found myself in more elite white spaces, I. There isn't that sense of community and that sense of like communal value. And it's American society, right? Like American society is very individualistic, like dog eat, dog, save yourself, promote yourself. And I feel like a lot of our ancestral communities and heritages are more communal facing and we think about each other and our ecosystems, be that what it is as a whole.

[00:29:59] And I really appreciate. We didn't, just so everyone knows, we didn't plan this conversation at all. We're ki we jumped in and we're surprising the girls with questions, but truth speaks for itself. So thank you for that, Eliana. All right, Dana, we're gonna hand it over to you.

[00:30:15] **Deynna Rey Tovar:** Okay. I don't have like previous experience of working with nonprofits but coming into the office I wasn't familiar with d e I work, I wasn't familiar with the work and things that this initiatives entail. So it was new to me like learning about all the challenges and all the pushback that this kind of work gets.

[00:30:37] And yeah, it is hard to see the great work that the office wants to do, but I don't know if I can say this, all the pushback that we keep getting. So it's really. Sad to see, and I didn't know that it was, again, I'm not very familiar with still with the way things work here in, in the us but seeing that in, in a, in the non, in a nonprofit area, it was really difficult.

[00:31:05] It was sad because that only makes me think and reflect like maybe other organizations wanna change things too, because I'm sure we're not the only one. But there's people. That don't want things to change. That's really unfortunate and I don't know if for how long that's gonna keep happening and that's gonna still keeps us, with this barrier of not moving forward.

[00:31:32] Also going back to what you said about Tanya, about raising awareness, I. I don't know, 10, 20 years ago, there was a culture of not calling out people. And I realized, because I've been watching like old movies and there were some things that were really problematic, really racist and.

[00:31:52] I was watching them and thinking to myself like, this is not correct. And I think if these movies would've come out today, they would be really problematic . So I feel like now, today, like even with the problematic thing, I. I

think there, there's more of a culture of calling out things that are wrong, things that are racist, things that are, that cause harm to communities.

[00:32:13] So I think, I hope there's gonna be a change in the upcoming years because I hope this culture of calling out things that are wrong keeps snowballing and growing. Because at the end that's gonna, that's what's gonna cause change, last thing that really impacted me and surprised me was the research done.

[00:32:34] Diversity gap in the legal profession. Listening to the podcast and listening to the disparities in representation and in the demographics of black and Latinx students in the legal profession. It was mind blowing. I. I wasn't familiar with it. And I think it, for me, it was just really hard to believe, it was like this cannot be true.

[00:32:58] But at the end it is true. It is what that the world that we are living in

[00:33:02] **Angie Avila-Lanciotti:** So going off of work that you've done could you describe a project or task that you were involved in that challenged you in a positive way and helped you grow?

[00:33:13] **Deynna Rey Tovar:** So for me, I don't think it's a project in specific, I think it's just the work in general. It's been a process of. Learning and unlearning for me because I come from a country where things are different and and I, again, I wasn't familiar with the way the system segregates and discriminate people.

[00:33:37] It's been a process of learning and unlearning.

[00:33:39] 'cause I came with this biases and it's not that, that I wanted to have those biases, it's just that it's just what I had. It's just what I was, the information I was presented with. So coming here, living all the things that I've lived, community college transferring, coming to Yale, which is a.

[00:34:01] Pretty white and wealthy institution. And now in this internship, like learning about how all these things like all the resources, like the availability for resources

[00:34:13] I think something that's been challenging to me, in a personal level explaining things to my family. Yeah. That, that has been challenging and that has I feel like that's made me grow a lot because there are things like, I think it's, different.

[00:34:31] Every country has its things, its problems its social problems, but it's been hard for me to explain to my family that the way things work back home, it's not the way things work here.

[00:34:45] And so trying to make them understand the impact certain things have in communities, especially like ours. The impact that they have and then harm that certain things, decisions, policy laws impact us. It's been a challenge, but in a good way because now we learn together.

[00:35:05] **Valentina Raghil Charry:** So I briefly touched on this already, but I think. One of my favorite projects this summer was building the pipeline school rubric. So we base, because at the end of the day, there's a lot of schools in New York that are in need of resources, and the thing is that there's interest specifically in the legal profession.

[00:35:24] I think doing my research, there are so many schools. Have a curriculum that is centered around the law. They offer constitutional law, criminal law, other students have to participate in moot court. It's clear that there's this interest, and I think that's part of the fact because as we were talking about earlier, being a lawyer is this glorified position, not only because of the salary, but I think for. Immigrants or people from a different background. It's this like harbinger of the American dream. It's wow, you are in the system and you're fighting to change the system. And that's why personally it's appealing to me and why I imagine it's appealing for a lot of other people. For example, when it comes to immigration law, I've had experience with the immigration system and its frustrations myself.

[00:36:09] So that's why I want that's why I hopefully want to go into it in the future. So I. Realizing because I'm currently in dc I didn't attend school in New York. I think realizing how many schools are interested in this really showcases a need for legal institutions that have the power to be paying attention because they have the resources to do it. For some reason, they're choosing not to. And these are the kids, especially because the schools that have these focuses a lot of the time are primarily black and Hispanic. So that's why I think it's all the dots we're connecting, if that makes sense. So I think getting to research what schools to invite and choosing what criteria, from example, looking. At LGBTQ plus representation, immigration status, that they have parental accommodations because there's a lot of factors you need to consider if this is a school that we think would genuinely benefit. And I think also looking at the fact that we don't want only schools that have high graduation rates, that have a good Student to teacher ratio.

[00:37:16] I think we need a range of schools to invite because if we only put the pipeline for a specific type of school that defeats. The power of the pipeline in the first place because we're only opening it up to a certain group of people. So getting to do that research for me has been just super enlightening, super exciting and something, since I'm an econ major, I know there's a lot of research a, a lot of economic research related to opportunity in America. And how your race, your gender, your background, where you went to school, greatly impacts all of it and greatly impacts your future Opportunity. Insights by Raj Chetty, for example, is an economic study that I studied in one of my classes at Yale. I. And I think it just connected all aspects that I'm interested in.

[00:38:05] Just connecting that quantitative side with that, with the experiences that I've had was just a really amazing experience and definitely challenging just because there's so many schools. It was heavy research and also presenting it to people because you have to convince people that this is something that they have to invest on.

[00:38:24] So that's why I think the quantitative aspect of it is so powerful because you can be like, Hey, Here are the numbers. You can have the numbers. You can't say that we're selling some political agenda for our own means. Here is the proof that we're not giving opportunity equitably, and I think that's a really powerful selling point. So that has been my favorite project.

[00:38:49] **Arantxa Galvan:** I was gonna talk about the memo. I. Did for the email that we got in response. Like the racist email we got in response to one of the newsletters that was sent out via email. And I did some research into the ethical violations under the attorney oath and, under any sort of anything that sort of the city bar could do as like a disciplinary action.

[00:39:12] Because of this email and I. Well, what challenge me first is I had never done a memo before, so that was new territory. Figuring out how to search things legally was new territory. And so all that was completely new to me. And so it actually took me like an embarrassingly long time to do anything because I was like, oh, okay.

[00:39:30] That's how I searched that up. Okay. Okay. And then I had to move to the next thing. I'm like, oh, okay. That's how I do that. But eventually, I figured it out and as I was Researching what also really, disturbed me a little was the lack of language about racism in like the New York City at least.

[00:39:45] Sort of code of ethics or professional conduct, I think is what it's called. Like there isn't really anything, any specific language against an attorney

being like any sort of disciplinary action. Against an attorney that is being racist outside of the legal profession. So like in their regular life, like if they , mistreat people or say racist things, there isn't actually any language in the code that is against this. The only sort of language that includes racism is within like the legal sphere. So like in a court or. Client or something of that nature. And so I found that really surprising considering there was a lot of like language about honesty and like being a moral person, but there wasn't anything specific about racism. And that kind of went against a lot of the preamble or the introduction of the code itself. And so a lot of that I felt was a little surprising considering also that New York City is such a diverse place and that, this should be a more. Emphasize point of, the attorney code of the people who fight for the system within New York City or New York State. So for me, that was something that I think I was able to learn a lot from both logistically and, technically, but also about how the legal world operates within itself in New York City.

[00:41:01] **Valentina Raghieb Charry:** That's a really interesting point because I think the legal world is nitpicky about language specifically, like all like that is what the legal wor world is built on. Footnotes, case footnotes. So when I was writing a policy memo after the affirmative decision came out, I was really surprised to see that all of these legal institutions just had such incredibly vague language. Relating to D E I in affirmative action because if anyone is known for being super precise with how they say things, it's lawyers because sometimes it can change the outcome of a case. So I think when you see the very vague d e I statement, we are astonished by this decision, but we are dedicate, I can recite it. It's like a, it's like a little tat template. I hate to say it. Sorry, but that just struck me. I think just because it's such a community that prides itself specifically on the use of language. And I think that's one of the biggest pro problems surrounding d e I. And the reason that it's become so polarized is because people see it. Some people see it as more of a performative thing to do, release the statement, look like we care. But don't actually care. And I think that rubs, it rubs me the wrong way. And I think when you're trying to convince others that this is work that we need to do, it's not a great look if the work that you're doing is just being that big, yeah. Really interesting point.

[00:42:36] **Eliana Cortez:** Some people's instinct when it comes to choosing which institutions get this great opportunity. That is the power of the pipeline conference.

[00:42:45] I think some people's instinct would be you go after the most underfunded, the most low resourced the lowest achieving schools in New York City. But then there's the consideration of running a pipeline program obviously

takes a lot of time and energy and money. Do these schools have the staff, the monetary resources to be able to organize this?

[00:43:08] Other people's instinct might be like, oh, you choose the most highest achieving schools that have High minority enrollment as well. But then those high achieving schools tend to be the ones that are very well resourced and that have like the best guidance counselors and the best classes and the best teachers and I don't know, I think I.

[00:43:28] I think that I've just been thinking a lot about human error and this is it's very much like opinions. Like some people value things more than others. I think after reflecting a lot, I found myself wanting to target schools that are somewhere in between. Especially for this first cohort because we wanna choose schools that we know have the hands to.

[00:43:49] Be able to manage this program. But I think that we also wanna choose schools that that have students who are disadvantaged. Yeah. Who could just like, schools that are good. That could be great, I think was like how I was looking at it. But I'm only like, I'm only 20 years old. Like I don't have exp I don't really have like real, this is just My opinion, and I don't know, it just feels so like futile and like it, it's just very difficult because.

[00:44:19] It feels like a really massive decision. Like a program like this could change people's lives. Like I would say the pipeline program that I did as a high schooler changed my life. I don't know that I would've chosen to apply to Yale if it were not for that program. I don't know if I would've gotten into Yale if it were not for that program.

[00:44:36] 'cause that program gave me a really important professional experience that I think really just transform me as a person and as an applicant. So I don't know, I think just like choosing to give opportunities, some people over others is always gonna feel like wrong and messy and just like confusing.

[00:44:57] And so I think that's been really challenging. But Tanya, like you said before, I. I guess life will always have those kinds of decisions, especially in this work. 'cause you can't help everyone. But I, I guess the decision never gets easier. But yeah, that's a sad ending. But I.

[00:45:15] **Tanya Martinez-Gallinucci:** it's not. It's not. And I think that you're right, you're 20. Like you're still figuring this out and you're gonna learn this and you're just in phase one of this project. We haven't even discussed it yet.

And one of the things that, We're gonna discuss when we do is what are the characteristics?

[00:45:28] How can we control for them? What kind of rubric can we put in place to make sure that we're keeping ourselves accountable? And how do we replicate that in the future to make sure that we can continue reaching back to these communities and getting folks that we didn't get to this time. And there's a lot of best practices and tools out there, and we're gonna talk about that and we're gonna figure it out.

[00:45:48] One of the things that has helped me, In this work and thinking about who gets help and who doesn't. There's I forget what it's called, but there's this metaphor or, fable folks always talk about. It's like the guy who walks down the beach and is throwing the starfish back into the beach and someone goes up to him and says, there are thousands of them.

[00:46:09] You're never gonna get. Them all in you're not gonna fix this problem. And the guy says something like, I changed. I changed the problem for that one. Like for that starfish that went in, he survived. Like it matters to him. I changed, I saved his world. And you have to see it that way, right?

[00:46:24] And it's hard. It's hard, I feel like sometimes. Also based on how we grew up, especially if you didn't grow up privileged and you've had to fight tooth and nail for what you have, you almost feel there's all kinds of things, right? There's survivor's guilt, right? Like when you go, when you're the only one, there's some guilt you feel like you wanna give back, you wanna hand off the opportunity.

[00:46:45] And again, back to that other point, like that communal mindset of making sure you lift as you rise. You don't leave anyone behind, and so it takes a toll. But thank you for sharing that with us and your process. And I really do think that. The world is in good hands every time I meet young people like you all and some of the people you all have met, like I'm thinking about a young man we met recently who's still in high school, who like blew us all away.

[00:47:13] I really, it gives me a lot of hope. All right, so I'm gonna hand it over to Mary Ellen to give us our wrap up question, but this has been really dope and thank you. Thank you for everything guys. Thank you for everything you've done today here on this. Thank you for everything you've done this summer. And you always have a home in od so make sure you.

[00:47:29] Remember that.

[00:47:30] Okay, Marilyn.

[00:47:31] **Mary Ellen La Rosa:** Okay. Hopefully, I think this is a fun one. I hope you think it's too I hope this is easy and fun for you guys. If you could sum up your internship in three words, what would they be?

[00:47:42] **Eliana Cortez:** I'll say the first one is disruptive. Like any work in diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging, I feel like it's always gonna be disruptive. And I feel like doing this internship really empowered me to be more disruptive in my like existence at Yale and my existence in the world.

[00:47:59] And Yeah, so I think disruptive. Then I, next word I thought of was doors. I never really heard the phrase like, hold the door open until, or keep the door open until this internship. And I feel like that's always been something really important to me. Like I've always been someone who has really.

[00:48:23] Love being a mentee and love being a mentor. Like at my school I was then Dana's about to be a CC counselor, which is like a orientation program for people of color. And I'm gonna be a peer liaison with Laa, which is our Latina cultural center at Yale too. And I've been involved in some mentorship at my old high school as well since graduating.

[00:48:43] And so I've spoken to a couple of students. And yeah, I think just. I don't know. I'm just very this office does a lot to open doors for people and I am obviously not in the point in my life where I can do it in a massive way, but I feel like even just in like my small way as a student of trying to take people under my wing if I can, and.

[00:49:10] Hopefully help them with something. Share with them a little bit about my experience 'cause maybe that may help them. And then my last word I think would just be family. And going back to what I said in the beginning, I've really appreciated this workspace. I feel like it's just always been so like, Warm and safe, and it's just so lovely.

[00:49:30] And I told Tanya this like my second week of being in this internship, but I really don't think I could've spent my summer any better. I'm very tremendously grateful to you all. And yeah, those are my three words.

[00:49:42] **Deynna Rey Tovar:** Eliana, those too good. But yeah. I'm gonna retweet everything Eliana said because that's so true. I don't wanna leave the office. I think I've told Anja Antonia that I don't wanna leave.

[00:49:56] Like it feels like a family. It does feel like a family. It doesn't feel like. Like a workplace that you're like, oh, I have to go to work. No it, it also the work is meaningful. It's meaningful because despite all the challenges and everything, we're making a change. We're ringing a bell.

[00:50:12] We're creating awareness of things that people don't wanna create awareness of. But my words are learning because if there's something I've learned a lot I learned that we need to speak our truth even if it's disruptive, even if it's not what people wanna hear. It is our truth and we need to How can I say this?

[00:50:33] And we need to hold onto it, hold onto our values to what we think is right and what we see is right to do that's something I learned in this office. Also, like empowerment, that's my other word. I feel really empowered by you all. By Tanya, by Angie, by Marilyn. You have no idea. When I look at you all, it's like I feel like, ugh, I wanna be them.

[00:50:58] I wanna do this work. Like I, I really wanna do this. If that's something I. Another thing I learned that I didn't know is that I really, in the future, I really wanna keep working on this. D e I because it's really important , I didn't know it before coming here, but now I know that's something I learned too, and I think people don't know the importance of these kind of initiatives and efforts.

[00:51:22] So you are really. Really empowering. I don't know if I can say that word, but Badass. Badass, yeah. But you're amazing. Yeah. The office, the work, everything is amazing. And my last word is hope. Because despite all the challenges all the pushback, I still have hope that we're gonna make a change and that this office is gonna become a leading in changing the things.

[00:51:53] That we wanna change and how things are in the industry. And you guys are making a huge change with the pipeline initiatives. And for all the students that I bet just like me, like they didn't even think they're gonna have the possibility to do the things that they're gonna do, and you're gonna be the life changers for them.

[00:52:12] So thank you for that.

[00:52:14] **Angie Avila-Lanciotti:** I'm proud of you. I think you both are so intelligent. You really shaped a lot of my thinking, so I appreciate it.

[00:52:22] **Tanya Martinez-Gallinucci:** I'm drowning in my own tears. Thank you all so much for all of that and I think Angie and Marilyn will put, will chime in as well, but it's been such. A blessing to have you all the work that you have done is phenomenal. I'm thinking about the resource and discussion sheet, just the way you approach issues and problems.

[00:52:43] I'm thinking about the social media posts you all have done the research you guys have done. You. Again, I can't say it enough. If you are the future, the future looks bright and we're so thankful for you and thank you. And this is your home. This is your home. You call me, you let me know, like you have a little tea in the New York City bar.

[00:53:01] You call me if you ever need me. We're here for you.

[00:53:03] **Angie Avila-Lanciotti:** We're gonna miss you guys so much. I'm gonna, I'm gonna miss you guys so much. The work that. We've had on our wishlist that we just can't get to, that you guys have done and knocked it outta the park.

[00:53:14] If I think I have learned so much from different perspectives, younger generation's perspective. And if one little bit of advice that I will give you from all of my wisdom, it's, take everything day by day. It's relish in your little accomplishments your minor accomplishments.

[00:53:33] All we can change is little bits, little tidbits, and that's what keeps me going. That's what wakes me up in the morning. Little victories. So fight for those little victories. If we all fight for a little victory one day, we will be able to change society.

[00:53:48] **Mary Ellen La Rosa:** I echo everything that Tanya and Angie have said. I really appreciate all your guys' hard work. I think you've set us up for even more success. We get to take the ball and run with it now in a way that, like Angie said, we didn't have time for everything. And now that different projects are started and we have the groundwork laid thanks to you guys we get to keep going with it.

[00:54:10] I hope that any roadblocks that you come across will just strengthen your resolve and commitment to doing what you know is right. And as Tanya said, come home anytime.

[00:54:22] **Eliana Cortez:** I will definitely be at the October conference. Like I don't care what class I need to miss, like I will definitely be there. Yeah, I'm

gonna keep an eye. I, I really wanna see it through. I really wanna see it through.

[00:54:35] **Tanya Martinez-Gallinucci:** There will always be seats for you. And definitely at the October conference and and somewhere in between. So everyone knows this. Relationship will always be here. And we plan on visiting our girlies at Yale this fall. So we'll see them. Thank you all for everything and thank you for sharing with us and I'm really excited for folks to learn about you and all the things you did 'cause you are such a big part of our work.

[00:54:57] Now I'm forever, right? So thank you.

[00:54:59] **Angie Avila-Lanciotti:** Thank you for listening to our conversation with ODEIB's Summer of 2023 interns, where we discussed their time with us and what they learned about the legal profession. And welcome back to DEIB for the People. We're here to curate a selection of literature, media, and discussions that cast a spotlight on all things DEIB for your feed.

[00:55:29] It's about embracing diverse voices, stories, and perspectives to foster an inclusive community. Tanya, why don't you start us off?

[00:55:37] **Tanya Martinez-Gallinucci:** So I cannot tell you how excited I am to talk about this book, *White Women, Everything You Already Know About Your Own Racism and How to Do Better*. You have probably already heard me talk about it during our podcasts. I bring this book up quite a bit, especially if you're a white woman who has done or said something wild to me.

[00:55:58] I'm definitely showing myself right now because when it does happen, I go, have you read *White Women*? Have you? Have you happened to have read *white women*? Um, but let me tell you why I really love this book. I love this book because of all the things it accomplishes. And the title is the big reveal. These are things that you already know.

[00:56:21] Or you should know about racism in this country and the way it shows up in our interpersonal relationships. And so let this be your on notice moment. If you can't identify for yourself, the ways that you perpetuate white supremacy in the workplace, in your relationships, in your family, with people, period, this is a great place to start.

[00:56:45] Now, is everyone ready to hear this in this way? Um, probably not, but you need to be, you absolutely need to be because the situation is dire. Okay. We are watching rights, liberty, freedom, all the things that we're

supposed to stand for in this country be taken away from the most marginalized folks in our country.

[00:57:08] And so this is a great time to step it up. Work it out. This book is amazing. I mean, there's so many passages. I probably could have written myself, frankly, so many of the examples. Not only have I been on the receiving end of it, but again, I'm not a white woman. I've perpetuated these things. We all have.

[00:57:25] We all have. And that's what we need to recognize and acknowledge. There is power in acknowledging and realizing the ways we contribute because without acknowledging it, Without saying that demon's name out loud, we can never exorcise it. This is great. Everyone should read this book.

[00:57:40] Okay. On to you.

[00:57:42] **Angie Avila-Lanciotti:** Thank you, Tanya. And staying on brand with the authors of *White Women*, I watched their documentary, or documentary based off of them rather, called *Deconstructing Karen*. Ugh, scary title, I know. Aggressive title, I know, but that's exactly what it is.

[00:58:00] So you can watch *Deconstructing Karen* on Apple TV. Well, actually, you can rent it for \$2.99. It's the best 3 dollars that you're going to spend. *Deconstructing Karen* goes into. One of their race to dinner dinners and the documentary is an hour and 15 minutes. It took me 2 hours and 30 minutes to get through it. Why? Because it is so awkward. There are so many moments where I had to press pause and breathe and take a lap because you cannot, you won't be able to comprehend what some people say and it's real.

[00:58:36] There are women that sit at these tables and these are their honest beliefs. And it's very cringy, but it's important to watch and it's important to recognize yourself in some of these women because it's real. If they feel like that, other people feel like that. There's they're not alone. Um, and you might even be able to identify yourself in 1 of them.

[00:58:57] Which is a scary thought, but it's an honest thought and it's part of the work that we do. So I highly recommend it. Rent it, press pause, give yourself some time to go through it, but it is an amazing, amazing documentary. And I'll pass it over to Mary Ellen.

[00:59:13] **Mary Ellen La Rosa:** In case you missed it. *Siren Regina CLE* recognizing the inherent bias in the legal profession and your relationship with

it. The recording will be available for both recreational viewing and to earn your diversity CLE credits in the coming weeks.

[00:59:26] This was an interactive CLE exploring the attitudes, stereotypes, and actions that uphold white supremacy. They covered things like generational wealth, macroaggressions, and saviorism. Discussions culminate in a call to action rooted in self reflection and accountability.

[00:59:41] **Angie Avila-Lanciotti:** Thanks, Mary Ellen. Alrighty. So let's hear from you. Have you come across a book that reshaped your worldview? A movie that stirred impactful conversations or documentary that unveiled new realities? Please send all submissions to buildingbelonging@nycbar.org. Together, let's make ways and propel positive change.

[01:00:05] Until next time, keep building belonging in every space.

[01:00:10] **Intro Outro Voiceover:** Thank you for listening to this episode of building belonging, a podcast of the New York City Bar Association and its office for diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging. Opinions expressed are those of the speakers and not necessarily of the city bar. Find more city bar podcasts on Apple, Spotify, Google, or at our website at [NYC bar dot org slash podcasts](http://NYCbar.org/podcasts) and be sure to check out this lawyer's life, a professional development podcast where we talk with lawyers about seizing opportunities, learning lessons the hard way and about what makes them tick.

[01:00:42] This podcast was produced and edited by Eli Cohen