

**Meeting Minutes  
of  
Inclusion/Mentoring/Fellowships Committee**

**Year-End Meeting Held on Thursday, June 25, 2015 @ 1:30 p.m.  
Boca Raton Resort & Club, Santa Margherita Room**

**Leyza Blanco, Chair**

**Hon. Gill Freeman, Judicial Co-Chair**

**Hon. John K. Olson, Judicial Co-Chair (not present)**

**Hon. Michael Williamson, Judicial Co-Chair (not present)**

**NEW COMMITTEE LEADERSHIP 2015-2016**

**Carlos E. Sardi, Chair**

**James Moon, Co-Chair**

- Chair Blanco called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m.
- Chairs' Report –

A. Introduction of BLS Fellows

Chair Blanco introduced the 2015 Fellows in attendance.

Chair Blanco advice that we have gone from a three to six fellow program.

Chair Blanco suggested for the Committee to be more active in monitoring fellows and fellow related activities. Incoming Co-Chair, Jim Moon, asked whether fellows should prepare or present a summary of their experience to the Committee. Chair Blanco advised that this is currently been done at the Executive Council level, but have not been done at the IMF Committee level. Co-Chair Moon suggested creating a feedback mechanism about the fellowship experience, and Chair Blanco, expanded on the idea to have the same feedback mechanism for and with mentors. Exit interviews or memos were also considered as part of the monitoring effort.

Fellow Elijah backed up the idea of an exit memo and suggested having other mechanism to also help fellows navigate the committees to source projects for fellows. Fellow Peters also suggested having periodic methods of feedback. Mariane Doris suggested checking quarterly with the fellows to see how they are doing.

Chair Blanco also suggested the expansion of fellowship program to include more experienced fellows that do not meet the current criteria. It was also

suggested to expand the program to law students since there is the budget for such expansion (see below).

Zach Hyman, representative from the Membership Committee, highlighted the welcoming social event hosted by his committee and suggested fellows not only attend it, but also go to other BLS social activities to mingle and develop relationships within the Section.

Chair Blanco explained that Membership also has a mentoring handbook. IMF does not have the same for the fellows. Chair Blanco suggested to the new Committee leadership to take a look at the handbook and see how it may help the fellows program as well as undertake the “real” mentoring program under the umbrella of the Committee. Hyman suggested setting up a telephone conference with the new Committee leadership and Membership to further discuss the overlaps and see how to best work the wrinkles on the mentoring program.

Lastly, Chair Blanco reported that some of the exiting fellows have had problems in getting projects completed, and suggested using these fellows as a resource for the new Committee leadership to tap and help out with its efforts.

B. Report on Recent Diversity Committee Sponsored Events:

- i. Business Law in the Courtroom – Trial Skills for Minority Business Lawyers; Trial Skills Workshop in Miami-Dade

New Chair Carlos Sardi reported about the event, and described how instructive the workshop was for those who had signed up for it. Sardi only expressed concerns about not having sufficient time to promote the workshop to try to fill all the available slots for it.

Chair Blanco suggested skipping the program in South Florida for a year and have it every other year. Blanco explained that it has been difficult to partner with minority bars to get the word out, and suggested reaching out to Arnell Bryant, Diversity Initiatives Manager for the Florida Bar, to provide current contact information for minority bars to start that task. Sardi agreed to follow up.

Chair Blanco also suggested partnering with other Section Committees (CLE or Business Litigation) to have more exposure for the program. Chair Blanco also commented that The Florida Bar grant limits minority bars, and their interest to participate in these types of events may be cold for more organized bars since they would not want to lose the grant money for their own sponsored programs.

Chair Blanco finally advised that the Hon. Gill Freeman will be retiring in a year, and the Committee would need to plan accordingly to find another local judge in South Florida to help out locally with this workshop. Judge Freeman agreed to continue to assist the Committee in identifying a new judge for future trial skills workshops in Miami-Dade.

Finally, there was a suggestion to change the name of the workshop to be more inclusive, but no name suggestions were made.

ii. **REPORT ON NEW ORLANDO TRIAL SKILLS WORKSHOP:**

Program will be held on October 1-2, 2015, spearheaded by J. Blackwell.

Chair Blanco reported that all appears to be going according to plan.

iii. **NEW PROPOSAL FOR NEW TRIAL SKILLS WORKSHOP FOR MINORITIES IN THE NORTHERN DISTRICT.**

Fellow Elijah suggested having a Trial Skills Workshop for minorities in the Northern District, and suggested Tallahassee as a base.

Hyman proposed J. Specie to assist in spearheading the effort.

J. Freeman also agreed to contact judges up north to develop interest during her upcoming meeting in August 2015, and report back to the Committee.

J. Freeman also suggested identifying trial attorneys in Tallahassee to tap for their assistance.

Co-Chair Moon suggested bringing one or two attorneys to the BLS annual retreat to gain their interest in a new workshop. Chair Blanco asked for motion. Co-Chair Moon made the motion, and Chair Sardi seconded it. Matter was voted, and passed with no opposition. Chair Blanco was going to bring the matter up at the Executive Council Meeting to seek approval, if needed.

iv. **Hosting of Receivership Applications through BLS link**

Chair Blanco provided an update on the program, and advised that it is ready to launch, and should go live soon.

Chair Blanco explained that the program is a pilot program for the Eleventh Circuit designed to assist judges in selecting receivers.

Blanco explained that their system would assist in giving a fair shot to minority receivers in being appointed in future cases within their specialty.

Chair Blanco further explained that the idea is that if it works, the program will be expanded throughout the State.

Chair Blanco, however, made the disclaimer that the Section, by providing this service, is not endorsing any particular individual as a receiver within the database.

- v. Spotlight on 2014 BLS fellows published in Florida Bar News in May 1, 2015 issue

Chair Blanco explained how the article stirred interest and exposure to the fellowship program and has already drawn an interest by potential future fellows.

- HCBA Social – Chris Broussard

Broussard reported that the Diversity/Mentoring Social had a great response. BLS had a booth at a great location, and obtained good traffic resulting into students signing up.

Broussard also explained that certain law students had concerns about being able to attend BLS events, i.e., summer jobs, expense, and other issues.

Broussard suggested trying to streamline the expense reimbursement process for the winners of the \$500 stipend. Comments were made on how law students must understand the importance of coming to the Section meeting as part of their professional growth and networking opportunities.

Broussard volunteered to create an information flyer to be used for future events to better describe the reimbursement process. Chair Sardi agreed to send Broussard a reimbursement request form as a starting point for the flyer. Broussard to report at the next meeting

- Upcoming Events

- A. Volunteers Needed for - Kozyak Minority Mentoring Picnic on October 31, 2015 at Amelia Earhart Park from 12 p.m.-4 p.m.

Chair Blanco called for volunteers, and agreed to send to Sardi the contact information of regular volunteer to call on them to man the booth.

Sign up sheet was circulated within the Committee.

- B. Business Law in the Courtroom – Trial Skills for Minority Business Lawyers; Trial Skills Workshop in Orlando (Mariane Doris, Roy Kobert)

See report above. Marian Doris to provide more information at the Labor Day Annual Retreat in Naples.

- New Business

A. Law Student Fellows Program

Chair Blanco proposed also expanding the fellows program for law students and/or other professionals with more experience, but maybe with a shorter service period.

New Chair Sardi took idea under advice and will report back at next meeting.

B. Outreach to leadership of existing minority voluntary bars

(See above Trial Skills Workshop discussion).

C. New Programs

None

D. Others

None.

Executive Council Committee Visit to Meeting

The EC greeted our Committee member and leadership, and made the following announcements:

- Upcoming Labor Day Retreat – make reservation
- Upcoming Mid-Year Meeting on January 27, 2016
- Gave Report of Committee's use of its current \$25K budget, and advised that:
  - Committee has only spent \$10K for the year
  - Need to spend it, or budget may be slashed
- Chair Blanco advised the EC to encourage substantive committee liaisons to regularly attend IMF Committee Meetings

Co-Chair Moon thanked outgoing Chair Blanco for her outstanding service to the Committee, and soon after, the meeting was adjourned.