

# PUBLICATION

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## Two Perspectives on the Leadership Council on Legal Diversity

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### 1. Expanding Networks Through the Fellows Program

By Camalla Kimbrough Guyton

The Leadership Council on Legal Diversity (LCLD) consists of over 300 corporate chief legal officers and law firm managing partners who strive "to build a diverse and more open legal profession." The LCLD seeks to promote diversity and inclusion in the legal profession through initiatives aimed at advancing the next generation of leaders. I am honored to have been selected as Baker Donelson's 2020 LCLD Fellow, and to be part of a class of more than 350 who represent hundreds of corporations and law firms across the country.

The fellowship program, which requires a one-year commitment, consists of three in-person meetings, the first of which was held on February 21 – 23, 2020 in Miami, Florida. The program content addressed topics that I found to be particularly insightful, including tools for combating imposter syndrome and managing generational differences in the workplace. A key focus of LCLD is helping diverse attorneys connect with each other and create lasting networks that can prove invaluable to the continued progression of diverse attorneys. The meeting provided multiple opportunities outside of formal programming to connect with current Fellows and alumni, including the Fellows reception and program-related exercises with my assigned accountability partners.

Although the second in-person meeting is not until October 2020 in Washington, D.C., I have found it incredibly easy to remain engaged in order to develop and strengthen connections. The LCLD has done an exceptional job of keeping the Fellows apprised of relevant news, developments, and upcoming events. I look forward to participating in webinars of interest; one-day interactive "Learning Experiences" with member corporations; and virtual happy hours. In the meantime, I continue to engage with my in-house accountability partners and other colleagues I met at the first meeting. I am thrilled to join the Fellows LCLD network and excited to cultivate professional relationships with individuals who will no doubt be future leaders in the legal profession.

### 2. Increasing Opportunities for Law Students

By Sarah Carrier

This year, Baker Donelson is again participating in the LCLD 1L Scholars program. The program is unique because it focuses on diverse individuals at the earliest, often most uncertain phase of their careers. As a former LCLD 1L Scholar, I am proud that Baker Donelson continues to support this program and its initial investment in diverse attorneys, as I have personally seen the long-term benefits participation has had on the Scholar participants, the Firm, and ultimately, the clients we serve.

The 1L Scholars program does a great job of throwing first-year law students into the deep end of the networking pool. More specifically, during the 1L Leadership Summit, Scholars participate in mock interviews, workshops, and social activities alongside seasoned corporate counsel and senior attorneys. Interactions like these are always invaluable, but especially for communities where knowing a single attorney of your background is not the norm. In fact, I still remember the excitement of meeting my first two fellow Filipino attorneys at my 1L Summit.

While not everyone may understand being diverse based on their race, ethnic background, or sexual orientation, *everyone* can understand the uncomfortable feeling of walking into a large room knowing absolutely no one. Everyone can also appreciate the relief of finally finding a familiar face in that room. Throughout my legal career, I've been lucky to attend numerous networking conferences throughout the country. I have yet to attend a conference where I did not recognize someone from the LCLD community. That is how ubiquitous this program is and why it continues to be a wonderful conduit for the development, inclusion, retention, and ultimate success of diverse attorneys.

As leaders in our profession increasingly discuss the importance of not only diversity, but also *inclusion* in legal offices, the 1L Scholars program and its supporters continue to walk this walk by offering the first avenue for inclusion of diverse attorneys in a notoriously less-than-inclusive (but improving!) industry.