**MESSAGE FROM CHAPTER PRESIDENT TAMARA JACK (CLO & CFO OF LMI)**

June 18, 2020

ACC National Capital Region (ACC NCR) stands with our colleagues at [ACC Global](https://www.acc.com/about/newsroom/news/acc-statement-death-george-floyd), [MCCA](https://www.mcca.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/MCCA-Statement-on-George-Floyd.pdf), the[National Bar Association](https://nationalbar.org/NBA/NBA_Police_Misconduct_and_Justice_Taskforce.aspx), and many others in the legal community in unequivocally stating that Black Lives Matter and our continued anger over the killing, harming, and silencing of African-American men and women, including George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and way too many others.

Of course, our words and feelings mean little without deliberate, consistent, and persistent action to (i) fight explicit racism; (ii) unlearn the habits and dismantle the structures that support and perpetuate systemic racism and all forms of discrimination, including that based on race, ethnicity, age, gender, sexual orientation, religion, national origin, immigration status, and disability within our chapter, the organizations where we work, and in our community; and (iii) build a culture of equity and inclusion.  We have not done enough, and we pledge to do more.  To be most effective, we think it is important to take stock of what we are currently doing and explicitly state what we plan to do.

**History of Action in the Legal Community and within the Chapter**

In 2002, ACC NCR volunteer leaders began working very intentionally to create a more diverse profession.  Due to the great work of those volunteer leaders and many members:

•           In 2003, the chapter launched the ACC NCR Corporate Scholars program to increase diversity in the legal profession by placing law students at paid internships at local legal departments.  Over 17 years, we have recruited, interviewed, and placed 179 Scholars and contributed more than $1.85 million to the program.  This year, we expanded the program to include educational and networking programs.

•           Since 2002, the chapter has hosted a number of programs for members and sponsors.  Most recently, our Diversity & Inclusion Forum has hosted four programs in each of 2018 and 2019.

•           In 2017, we launched the Leadership Academy with the mandate that faculty and fellows represent the diverse communities where we live and work.

•           In 2018, we started tracking the diversity of our speakers and our leadership.  Based on what we found, we have implemented requirements for diverse voices to be represented on all panels.  We also started the process of making our recruitment and promotion of volunteers more transparent and intentional and less dependent on personal connections.

•           In 2019, we added taking actions in support of diversity and inclusion to the criteria for all Corporate Counsel Awards, both individuals and departments.

**2020 and Going Forward**

As announced in January, improving diversity and inclusion has been among our top three priorities for 2020, particularly within the chapter.  We have taken a number of actions and have more planned:

1. **Advocate and Convener** – ACC NCR sits at the intersection of law, business, policy, and community.  Our members and sponsors include fierce advocates for diversity and inclusion, and we will bring those voices together for shared learning and action.
2. **Board Level** – We now have a board member dedicated to diversity and inclusion, who not only is tasked with reporting out on our progress at each board meeting but developing more robust measurements and metrics for evaluating that progress.
3. **Training for Leaders & Staff** – While we will continue to host programs for our members and leverage our position to advocate for broader change, we believe it is critical for the chapter as an organization to examine the ways in which we perpetuate systemic racism.  Earlier this month, we hosted implicit bias training for our board, staff, and select leaders - the first of what we plan to be an ongoing series of trainings for those who lead our organization.
4. **Diversity & Inclusion Forum** – We are expanding our forum to include a broader range of voices and to expand on our previous commitment to host four programs a year.
5. **Community** – We aim to collaborate more with and amplify the work of the many affinity bars and to host programs to inform and empower our members to effect policy change.

These steps are a start, but we know they are not enough as racism is deeply embedded in our history and the ways in which we operate.  As [Juneteenth](https://nmaahc.si.edu/blog-post/celebrating-juneteenth) approaches, we look forward to working together to truly end racism and social injustice and achieve not only freedom from fear and exclusion, but to bring about true inclusion.  To join us in this work or to send us suggestions, please email diversityandinclusion@accnationalcapitalregion.com.

Tamara Jack

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