



## **ACC Southern California Diversity Internship Program**

### **I. Program Description & Purpose**

ACC Southern California has recently launched an Internship Committee whose sole purpose is to create and implement a Diversity Internship Program (the “Program”) in the Southern California chapter region.

The Program is a diversity pipeline initiative intended to provide law students in Orange and Los Angeles Counties that may lack access to and/or knowledge of in-house legal practice, exposure to such practice. The focus students would emanate from family backgrounds that have a low incidence of professional careers, college degrees or exposure to the law. Diversity for this Program is used in its broadest sense, not simply to convey ideas about race and ethnicity, gender identity and LGBTQ identification, but also concepts of socio-economic background and the student’s individual educational and career path. Further, diversity means obtaining applicants who are reflective of the workforce in general and the communities that lawyers serve.

The Program will assist Orange and Los Angeles County corporate legal departments in their efforts to recruit diverse attorneys by introducing them to qualified, diverse law students who may not have been identified by the firm or legal department through traditional summer programs. Helping to facilitate the development of practice skills in our diverse law students helps law firms, corporations and our community.

The pandemic has greatly reduced the availability of paid internships as well as post-graduation employment opportunities for all law students but for law students of color in particular. This includes those who do not attend top ranked law schools or those who have had difficulties in their first semester of their 1L year due to lack of resources, impact of COVID on their families and other unique challenges seen this year, but who are nonetheless exceptionally qualified and would make phenomenal interns with host companies.

### **II. Programming Components, Marketing and Outreach**

#### **1. Law Student Outreach, Mentorship & Training**

- Informational webinars to introduce students to the role of in-house counsel
- Networking opportunities between ACC SoCal members and participating law students
- Coaching for law students on application processes for in-house counsel internships
- Mentorship throughout course of internship and building of long-term a mentorship relationships

#### **2. Corporate Legal Department Internship**

- 8-10 week Summer In-House Legal Department Internship for Eligible students; length and timing of program to be determined by host organization
- The minimum compensation for the law student intern is \$20/hour which should translate to a total of \$7500 - \$10,000 stipend depending on the length of the program. Funding support may be provided to a host company, on a case by case basis, based on ACCSoCal internship budget, but it is expected that host companies will either fully fund the internship or contribute towards the law student intern compensation.
- Once the student and host matches are finalized ACC may manage payment of the stipend to the law student intern or the host may take the steps necessary to employ the student for the 8-10-week internship period. The host organization will then pay the student over the course of the 8-10 weeks per the organization's usual payroll practices and timetables.

### **3. Law Student Outreach & Marketing**

- Local law school office of career services
- Local minority bar associations
- LinkedIn and other ACC SoCal social media platforms

## **III. Timeline for Program Implementation**

### **1. Proposed 2021 Timeline:**

- Identify and obtain commitment of Host Companies, January 2021
- Student Outreach, February 2021
- Application & Selection Timeline: February 15<sup>th</sup> through April 30<sup>th</sup> with application deadline of March 15<sup>th</sup> and interviews March 15<sup>th</sup> through April 2<sup>nd</sup>.
- Law Student Programming: Schedule a minimum of one webinar February 2021 with ACC SoCal members on "The Practice of In-House Corporate Counsel and Paths to In-House"
- Intern Coaching and Preliminary Mentorship Meetings – May 2021
- Internship: June – August 2021 as coordinated by host organization

### **2. Application Materials & Selection Process**

- Applicants must submit a completed Application Form, Resume, Personal Statement, Confirmation of Good Academic Standing by the Law School and participate in an in-person/virtual interview. Letters of recommendation from previous employers (can be non-legal) and professors (college, law school, clinic advisors) are encouraged but not required.
- Focus is centered on the strength of the Personal Statement, commitment to diversity in the legal profession, and interview skills, rather than grades or law student or law school rank. This is based on the idea that after completing one

semester of law school, candidate grades are not available and not the best indicator of a candidate's potential for success.

- Selection preferences and criteria from a host organization will be considered and an ACC SoCal member from the host company may participate in the selection process.
- **Law Student Eligibility Criteria:** Rising 2L or part-time rising 3L law students enrolled in ABA-accredited law school located in the counties of Los Angeles or Orange, in good academic standing from a diverse background (ethnicity, physical disability, Veteran service, family and socioeconomic background and LGBTQ identification)

#### IV. FAQs

##### **What does ACC SoCal provide to the host company?**

- ACC SoCal will source eligible candidates from regional law schools career center department, through local minority bar associations and law school affinity groups
- ACC SoCal will manage application and candidate selection process as agreed with the host organization
- For host companies that do not have an established internship program, ACC SoCal will provide a program format
- ACC SoCal will provide ongoing mentorship of interns to support their success with the host organization

##### **What is required of the host company?**

- Assignment of a managing attorney/attorneys/paralegal, as available, to oversee the intern throughout the course of the program. Such individual(s) will also coordinate with ACC SoCal as needed to enable intern to have a fruitful internship experience and provide feedback to ACC SoCal that can help improve the internship program.
- Exposure to substantive legal work and the ability for the intern to gain experience that will assist them in obtaining 2L summer positions and post-graduation employment
- Provide constructive feedback loop to intern regarding their performance upon completion of internship and provide references and/or recommendation letters as applicable.

#### VIII. Program Contacts

##### Internship Committee

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Co-Chair: Njeri Mutura, Senior Corporate Counsel, Microsoft Corporation ([nolweny@live.com](mailto:nolweny@live.com)); (949) 981-4754