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Institute for Inclusion in the Legal Profession Launches Initiative to Gauge State of Business Case for Diversity

New organization measuring business related to lawyer and law firm diversity

CHICAGO, July 22, 2010 -- The [Institute for Inclusion in the Legal Profession](#) (“IILP”), a new organization dedicated to increasing diversity and inclusion within the legal profession, today announced an initiative to assess whether the business case for diversity is having its intended impact, and if it is not, why not. The Business Case for Diversity study, which will begin July 30, 2010, will survey the attitudes and practices of hundreds of general counsels, law firm management and partners at U.S. law firms.

“We launched the Institute in June 2010 to address the serious issue of uniformity in the legal profession, which is in harsh contrast to the increasingly diverse society in which we live and work,” said Sandra Yamate, its CEO. “Our study will play a crucial role in gathering important diversity data that, for the first time, will inform an enhanced and renewed effort to make the business case for diversity in our field. For twenty years the legal profession has been touting a business case for diversity without any clear idea whether, in its current form, it has been working.”

While some progress has been made in the past two decades to improve diversity within the profession, success has been inhibited by a lack of accountability, the IILP maintains.

“Corporations and law firms don’t yet have a shared commitment to diversity. Sometimes the clients put too much of the burden on the firms and sometimes the firms question the sincerity of their clients. And it’s far from clear that both see eye-to-eye on the mutual business benefits from inclusiveness,” said Marc Firestone, general counsel of Kraft Foods and Chairman of the IILP Board of Directors. “This study should provide deeper, and perhaps novel, insights into these and other critical aspects of the effort to increase diversity in the profession.”

The Business Case for Diversity study has three sections, the first of which will examine how corporations choose to allocate budget for diverse outside counsel. The second part will analyze data from law firm management to determine whether there is any correlation between a firm’s diversity efforts and business generation. The final part will consist of a detailed online survey of partners who are women; racial or ethnic minorities; lesbians, gays, bisexuals or transsexuals; or who have disabilities. It will explore the revenues that these partners generate from corporate clients that claim to value diversity among outside counsel. All aspects of the survey offer confidential functionalities, if required.

“IILP is focused on transcending the usual anecdotes and diversity myths by driving progress through comprehensive outreach and original programming,” said Yamate. “This research will provide a fresh look at and a new understanding of the state of diversity within the profession and the factors that inhibit it. Our end goal is to use this information to build more-effective strategies to establish a more-inclusive legal profession.”

The three parts of the survey are available online through December 31, 2010:

- [For corporations](#)
- [For law firm management](#)
- [For law firm partners who are women, racial/ethnic minorities, LGBT or disabled](#)

The IILP anticipates that it will release the results and analysis of this study in fall, 2011.

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About the Institute for Inclusion in the Legal Profession

The Institute for Inclusion in the Legal Profession is an organization dedicated to improving diversity and promoting inclusion in the legal profession through comprehensive outreach and original programming. Working with legal, judicial, professional, educational and governmental institutions, the IILP provides programs and tools to eliminate bias in the legal field. For more information, please visit the IILP at www.theiilp.com.