Diversity, Inclusion, and the Elimination of Bias: A Roadmap, A Mirror and A Toolkit for Legal Professionals

Seminar or Event

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Event Sponsor: *New Jersey Institute for Continuing Legal Education*

On-Demand Webinar

Emily A. Kaller, a partner in the firm's Litigation Department, was a panelist for the March 2021 webinar "Diversity, Inclusion, and the Elimination of Bias: A Roadmap, A Mirror and A Toolkit for Legal Professionals," which is now available on-demand from the New Jersey Institute for Continuing Legal Education.

Increasing representation and promoting inclusivity in our workplaces (whether virtual or physical) are starting points in building workplace cultures and employing operational structures that are rooted in empowering legal professionals rather than simply managing them. But there are more tools and opportunities to eliminate the effects of implicit and structural biases once workplaces become more diverse and inclusive.

An organization must examine its procedures and processes to identify where biased decision-making may impede professionals' development and ability to succeed in order to develop a strategic plan to counteract it. But even the most well-developed plan cannot meaningfully improve workplace culture unless the individuals who comprise that workplace have the tools to participate in creating and sustaining that change and fostering bias-free environments that promote belonging. As individuals in professional legal spaces, then, how do we become competent in the work of eliminating bias? What are our obligations? What are our individual diversity deficits? How do we own our implicit bias and develop checks to avoid implementing it? And how do our favorable assumptions in professional contexts maintain the uneven playing field, perhaps even more than unfavorable ones do?

This program, which offers Ethics/Professionalism credits and satisfies the new Diversity, Inclusion, and Elimination of Bias credit requirement, engages in the personal work of eliminating bias that is critical to dismantling organizational and structural workplace dynamics that unintentionally yet materially delay, inhibit, or even preclude authentic diversity, inclusion, and belonging in legal workspaces. The course provides a

foundational understanding of the need to eliminate bias in professional contexts; examines the individual obligations of legal professionals in the work of eliminating bias that reinforces structural and professional cultural barriers to opportunity in the legal profession; and explores strategies for identifying our individual diversity deficits, disrupting our implicit biases to minimize their impact in the workplace, and adjusting organizational dynamics to dismantle barriers to success for legal professionals.

Ms. Kaller is Immediate Past President of Trial Attorneys of New Jersey, Chair-Elect of the NJSBA Lesbian Gay Bisexual and Transgender Rights Section, Past Chair of the NJSBA Women in the Profession Section, and a former member of the New Jersey Supreme Court Committee on Women in the Courts. She focuses her practice on commercial litigation and has experience in the prosecution and defense of financing, credit and other banking matters, contract disputes, environmental matters, and complex litigation.

The on-demand webinar can be accessed on the NJICLE website.

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