



PRESIDENT'S PAGE

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How to Become a Leader in the OCBA

Over the years, people have asked how to become involved in OCBA leadership, including becoming an OCBA board member. There are a variety of paths leaders have taken to develop their leadership skills and to add to their legal network that enabled them to achieve their goals. Their paths involved joining and becoming active in the OCBA's committees, task forces, sections, and divisions.

Committees

One path is by getting involved with committee work. OCBA committees were created to do the work of the Bar; some are open to everyone and some are blue ribbon committees (which means the members are appointed by the bar president and there may be limits on the number of people on the committee). All committee chairs and co-chairs are appointed each year by the bar president. There are twenty-three OCBA committees.

The Legislative Resolutions Committee, for example, is currently looking for members. "Res Com," as it is affectionately known, is an open committee that identifies changes that need to be made to certain laws, drafts proposed changes, meets with other bar associations through participation in the Conference of California Bar Association's (CCBA) annual meeting to discuss those proposed changes. The CCBA then works with a lobbyist to try to get those changes made into law through the legislative process.

The Pro Bono Committee is another example of an open committee that works on developing pro bono opportunities for OCBA members. The Community Outreach Committee is another open committee that puts on community service events such as beach cleanup, pet adoption day, holiday toy drive, visits to Orangewood Children's Home, and more. The Diversity & Inclusion Committee works on developing and implementing strategic initiatives to increase diversity, inclusion and belonging, and to provide access to justice in the Orange County legal community. The Judiciary Committee, which is a blue ribbon committee, evaluates potential judicial candidates. The Editorial Advisory Committee provides feedback to the editor of *Orange County Lawyer* magazine. The Education Committee puts on MCLE programs in addition to those handled by the Sections. The Administration of Justice Committee responds to requests for comments on proposed changes in the law. Bridging the Gap puts on an annual program for new attorneys who have just passed the bar exam. The Mentoring Committee runs a mentoring program for newer lawyers to meet more seasoned attorneys. The Leadership Development Committee works to identify and develop future leaders. And there are many more committees that offer opportunities for you to become more involved.

Task Forces

Becoming involved in a task force is another way to help the bar and meet people. Task forces are usually established for a year to deal with a short term issue facing the OCBA. Some task forces are open

to all members, while others are restricted based on the needs of the task force. This year's task forces include the State Bar Task Force, led by past president Nikki Miliband; the Court Funding Task Force, led by past president Ashleigh Aitken; the Lawyer Well Being Task Force, led by Kelly Ernby; the Membership Task Force, led by OCBA board member, Christina Zabat-Fran; and the Law School Task Force and Strategic Planning Task Force, led by me.

Sections

Another route to leadership is by becoming involved in one of OCBA's twenty-seven sections. Sections are organized by practice areas including business litigation, criminal law, family law, environmental law, immigration law, insurance law, real estate law, international law, health care law, solo/small firm, tax law, worker's compensation law, trusts & estates law, appellate law, etc. The path to leadership within the sections is very short. Elections are held every year in the fall for Secretary/Treasurer. The person elected then moves up the ladder the next year to Chair-Elect, and then Chair the following year. This is a fantastic opportunity in a relatively short period of time to become a leader in your practice area, network with other members of the section, and help the OCBA.

Divisions

There are also two divisions in the OCBA: the Young Lawyers Division (for new lawyers in practice five years or fewer) and the Masters Division (open to those in practice twenty-five years or more). YLD, led by Kristin Gomez and highlighted in this issue's cover story, puts on educational, social, philanthropic, and sports events for its members. It also coordinates an annual event with the Masters Division so that newer attorneys can mix and mingle with more experienced practitioners. The Masters Division, led by Mark Minyard, puts on several events a year, including their Spring Reception & Legends of the Law Presentation honoring successful lawyers in the community, an Evening at Angels Stadium, Trivia Night at Muldoon's with YLD, and MCLE seminars.

Conclusion

To put it simply, we look for people who have been actively involved in, supported, and have held leadership positions in the OCBA through its committees, task forces, sections, and divisions. Involvement in affiliate bars is highly valued, as well. In fact, I was President of Orange County Women Lawyers Association in 2015, and many other board members have been president of an affiliate. But, being solely involved with an affiliate organization, without additional OCBA involvement, is not enough to get on the OCBA board. To learn more about leadership opportunities, please attend the upcoming event, "How to Become an OCBA Leader" on October 7, 2019.



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