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ACC Southern California Diversity Internship Program 2021 Lessons Learned and Program Feedback

The ACC SoCal Chapter Internship Committee is pleased to report the outcome of the inaugural year of the Diversity Internship Program (the "Program"). Thank you ACC National for your support and recognition!

The Program's purpose was to provide underrepresented law students exposure to in-house legal practice and to provide ACC Members the opportunity to recruit diverse attorneys and support their corporate diversity initiatives. Overall, the mission is to support the pipeline to build a more diverse and inclusive legal profession.

Feedback from student interns (further detailed below), host companies, and sponsor firms was overwhelmingly positive with most of the companies returning as hosts in 2022.

A. Program Outcomes by the Numbers

- **Applicants:** 40; **Finalists Interviewed:** 21; **Students Placed:** 12
- **Participating Host Companies:** The Habit Burger, Wells Fargo, Pacific Life, Aerospace Corp., Edward Lifesciences, Taco Bell, Pharmavite, Confie, FloQast, Farmers Inc., Age of Learning, Rocket Lab
- **Participating Schools:** Loyola, Chapman, USC, UCI, Southwestern, UCLA
- **Supporting Law Firms:** Seyfarth Shaw, Ogletree Deakins, Bryan Cave, Greenburg Glusker (Premier Programming Sponsor) and Mintz

B. Lessons Learned

- *ACC SoCal Companies are committed to supporting the Program's mission; There is a need and interest*
 - The interest from ACC SoCal member companies was incredible. Overall, there were inquiries from approximately 20 companies within a short time frame as the call for sponsors was only open from November – January. There was also an outpouring of support from members who reached out to say they were thrilled that ACC SoCal was launching the Program.
- *Existing Programs through other ACC Chapters were a necessary resource*
 - San Diego Program and program director, Bhashini Weerasinghe
 - Chicago Program and former committee chair, Krystin Hernandez
 - St. Louis Program, Susan Wagner, Chapter Administrator

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- *A large working committee is essential*
 - As the Program grows, additional support from ACC SoCal member volunteers will be crucial. Student outreach, review of applications, interviews, mentorship and programming all require a lot from the ACC SoCal volunteers. A strong working committee is essential. The Chicago chapter, has a long-established program, has selection criteria for its committee members and I believe all members have to be host companies.
- *Executive Director Management and Program Support was invaluable*
 - A large part of the Program's success can be attributed to the strong reputation of Betty St. Marie, ACC SoCal Executive Director. Host companies replied to Betty's call for hosts almost immediately and her involvement gave the Program credibility with the largest national corporations that participated. The hours devoted to the Program by Betty made the Program possible.
- *Student outreach can continue to be improved*
 - In order to reach the target demographic and ensure a diverse applicant pool a concerted effort has to be made to reach out to all diverse student populations. For the 2022 Program, additional outreach channels have been identified, including national minority law student organizations and student life services that can reach out to minority law student associations at each individual school.
 - 1L year is challenging for all students but in particular for those students who are first generation college and law students, many are not familiar with the in-house path.
Having had a very successful inaugural year that contributed greatly to the profile and experience of our interns, we have many intern alumni that are willing to give back and help the program continue to thrive. We can tap into this pool of law students to get the word out in their schools and networks, so we reach a deeper and wider range of quality candidates.
- *Opportunity for cross-regional programming and creation of national network of student interns*
 - Other ACC Chapters were more than happy to invite the ACC SoCal interns to their programming and connect the interns to expand their network. We believe that there is a lot of opportunity for cross-chapter programming and support.
 - Additionally, we tapped into partnerships with law firms and companies. The willingness of Greenberg Glusker to work with us for enriching programming for our interns added a great deal to the quality of the experience of our interns. Leveraging relationships with others in the legal fraternity should be a continual focus point. Our interns were able to hear more about legal practice from practicing attorneys through forums with robust content. There was also an opportunity to grow networks and establish mentoring relationships with seasoned legal professionals. Feedback from host companies was positive to have this additional programming support for their assigned interns but asked that we ensure to notify them early about events so they can attend, support and calendar them among their learning plan for their interns.

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C. Plans for 2022

- Target Applicants: 60; Target Student Placements: 15 to 20.
- 2022 Returning Host Companies Confirmed: Wells Fargo, Edward Lifesciences, Confie, Pharmavite, Edwards Lifesciences, Aerospace Corporation, FloQast – with additional companies pending confirmation.
- New Companies: Internet Brands, Mannkind, Los Angeles Capital, Rexford Industrial, Varda, Molina Health Care, Hines and SoCal Gas
- Focus on Student Outreach will be to connect directly with minority student organizations of regional law schools and minority bar associations
- Continue Programming Partnership with Law Firms: Greenburg Glusker (Premier Programming Sponsor)
- Continue to collaborate with other ACC Chapters

D. Student Intern Feedback



The Program was a huge lift for the committee and our tireless Executive Director, Betty St. Marie, who made the program possible. The below feedback validated the need and impact of this Program and ACC SoCal is excited to continue to expand the Program as more resources become available.

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The networking benefit of participating in the ACC SoCal Corporate Internship Program immeasurable. Connecting with and hearing the journey of those that work as in-house counsel helped me overcome the uncertain, I felt about being able to enter into an in-house counsel career. My supervising attorney provided great insight into in-house counsel through one-on-one meetings and the opportunity to sit in on some of the weekly meetings. Jason was amazing providing feedback and ensure a clear understand of why a decision was made or why one would be better than another. There were plenty of opportunities to learn and engage with different aspects of being in-house counsel and Jason ensured I was able to participate in as many opportunities as I could. The knowledge and experience I gained from the ACC SoCal Corporate Internship Program provide the very needed steppingstone in my journey as first-generation law student as I continue on my path to becoming in-house counsel. The experience provided insight into classes and networking I should be prepared to complete moving forward. It provided a clear picture of what to expect when working in-house, and the skills I will need to hone to be successful.

I got a hands-on summer experience where I got to work on substantive legal issues in an area of law that we aren't taught in law school.

It was a really good opportunity to get early in-house experience (which is not that common especially as a 1L). This helped me not only learn about what lawyers do on a daily basis but it also helped me see corporate structures and learn about things beyond just the legal department. I also learned about the working relationship between in-house counsel/employees and outside counsel, which I feel like will give me an edge when I start working at a law firm. Additionally, I felt like I was actually helping with the work being done on our team which also made me feel like I was helping the company too. It was also a huge selling/talking point during summer OCI because many firms were impressed that I got to try in-house counsel work so early. They were not only impressed by the fact that I got the position, but they also were really interested in the work that I got to do at the Aerospace company, and I feel like I got real world experience that you just can't get elsewhere.

This internship is incredible. Amazing networking opportunities. Offers a realistic in-house experience. Great mentorship opportunities.

The entire program was great mostly because I was exposed to many legal issues from different fields, but also exposed to many networking opportunities. In fact, I've kept in close contact to a

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Judge I have met through a sponsored event. It's these intangibles that really stood out from what I believe are going to pay dividends.

Exposure to in-house work environment/responsibilities, obtained overview/ mentoring from lawyers in multiple practice areas within a large a legal department (tax, real estate, employment, cyber security, investment/securities, life insurance, annuities, etc.), gained practical skills (research and writing/drafting declarations/employee notices).

I cannot speak highly enough about this program. This internship allowed me to connect with so many attorneys in the OC/LA area, provided me with amazing insight into a wide range of legal practice areas, and gave me a taste of the day-to-day life of an in-house attorney. My law school counselor was so impressed with this unique summer job opportunity that my experience at Edwards was featured on the Loyola website:

<https://www.lls.edu/thellsdifference/facesoflls/dominiquesmith/> My ACC mentor provided me with valuable advice on how to navigate a career in law, and as someone who knew slim to nothing about the legal field, it truly helped to calm my nerves and allow me to be more confident. We were also introduced to a mentor attorney from Greenberg Glusker and were able to meet other attorneys from the firm during a happy hour, which was a great setting to network. I am truly so appreciative of this program and all of the doors it has opened for me.

Hands-on experience with real life conflicts, issues, and business tactics as it relates to the law.

My experience with ACC SoCal was truly special. First and foremost, I was fortunate to be paired with an amazing supervising attorney and mentor. They are both leaders and trailblazers in their fields and being in their space alone was empowering. Their work ethic, confidence, and drive gave me a new sense of motivation and perspective for my career. Like many first-generation Latinas, I did not have any exposure to women professionals during adolescence and most of my adulthood. But my mentorship with Andrea and Melissa taught me two important things I will carry with me: 1) growth does not stop at law school. Improving oneself does not end when you get hired. 2) Be your unapologetic self. Our life experiences can give a new perspective to issues and projects within your department. Second, the invaluable experience I received past summer set me miles ahead of my peers. I had the privilege of sitting in meetings with the executives and leaders within the various departments. I never realized how much work and collaboration is required to create a product. Also, I learned so much about the Vitamin, Mineral, and Supplement

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(VMS) industry and how highly regulated it is by the FDA and FTC. I simply cannot thank ACC SoCal enough for this amazing experience.

I was able to get incredible insight to so many jobs that I had no idea existed. I conducted various national research projects and learned new databases.

Obtained first-hand experience on the day to day of a In-house counsel attorney. I was able to sit in on an arbitration and a mediation. Being able to talk to attorneys within the profession was an invaluable experience.

One of the participating law students was highlighted by their law school:

<https://www.lls.edu/thellsdifference/facesoflls/dominiquesmith/>

Suggestions from Students:

1. Longer programs (most programs were 8-weeks long)
2. Desire for more on-site opportunities (limited due to COVID)
3. Suggestions for more structure programming on topics such as: imposter syndrome, financial responsibility, networking

Internship Committee

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