

Call to Action Initiative Introduces Job Shadowing Program

Call to Action

The Call to Action Initiative is a network of firms and corporations that have agreed to work collaboratively and innovatively to promote diversity in the legal profession. One of the goals of the initiative is to expand the pipeline of diverse law school applicants. This spring, the Initiative established a job shadowing program.



Students from Blackburn tour Spencer Fane Britt and Browne, LLP with attorneys Kelly Brandon (far left) and Aimee Bataillon (far right).

Job Shadowing Program

The job shadowing program provides high school students with information about different careers in the law and the steps to take to become an attorney. The program is hosted by volunteer law firms which facilitate a power point presentation entitled "How to Become a Lawyer" developed by



Ken Wentz of Jackson Lewis LLP, answers questions of students from Northwest High School.

"The students involved in the job shadowing program are consistently outstanding. They come prepared with well-thought out questions and it is exciting to see the quality of student interested in law in our Nebraska high schools. Our hope is that by participating in the program, upon receiving their law degree they will choose to practice in Nebraska and bring additional experiences and backgrounds to the legal profession." -Ken Wentz, Jackson Lewis, LLP

Creighton Street Law Program

Several Omaha Public High Schools have been involved with learning more about the law through Creighton's Street Law Program. Street Law is an initiative in which law students go out to local schools, usually high schools, and teach students law basics-practical, participatory education about law, democracy, and human rights. Street Law uses techniques that promote cooperative learning, critical thinking, and the ability to participate in a democratic society. Creighton's program focuses on community-based topics of timely and particular interest to the student communities. The Street law Program is supported by the Omaha Public School Foundation and five schools currently participate: Benson, Blackburn, Edwin Parrish Expelled Student Program, Northwest, and Sacred Heart.



Michael Mollner and Kate McCoy of Kutak Rock discuss careers in the legal profession with students from Northwest High School.

Ken Wentz (Jackson Lewis, LLP) and Sherman Willis (Fraser Stryker PC, LLO). The experience provides an inside look at the work of attorneys in law firms and organizations. Firms often give tours of their facilities or local courthouse and have lunch with the students. Four firms participated in the job shadowing program this spring: Koley Jessen P.C., L.L.O; Kutak Rock, LLP; Jackson Lewis, LLP; and Spencer Fane Britt & Browne, LLP. The participating high schools were Blackburn, Benson and Northwest.



Students from Blackburn tour the Douglas County Courthouse and talk with Douglas County District Court Judge Thomas Otepka.

The job shadowing program hopes to continue its partnership with OPS and the Creighton Street Law Program and plans to extend the job shadowing program across the state. If your firm or organization is interested in hosting a group of students for a job shadowing event, please contact Liz Neeley at 402-475-7091 or via email at Lneeley@nebar.com.

"The energy and curiosity of the students were inspiring during our brief presentation. It is encouraging to see the Omaha legal community come together to help motivate and encourage these students as many of them face daily challenges. We hope that these efforts will continue and expand so that the process of sharing and learning can be sustained over a long haul." -Daphne Hyun-Jin Aronson, Kutak Rock, LLP

"The Job Shadowing Program was a great opportunity for our law firm to encourage high school minority students to pursue law-related careers. Over an extended lunch hour, the students toured our law firm and visited with attorneys E. Karine Sokpoh and Leilani Harbeck about the type of skills needed for a career in law, what it takes to prepare for and do well in law school, and where to find mentoring and scholarship assistance. I think they left with a very good sense of the opportunities available to them, and we were very proud to have a chance to be part of that process. I hope this experience will strengthen the students' desire to pursue a career in the legal field. Hopefully, other law firms will jump on the band wagon." -Karla Rupiper, Koley Jessen P.C. L.L.O.



Students from Benson tour Koley Jessen P.C. L.L.O

"The Job Shadowing Program was just as educational for myself and other members of our firm as it was for the students participating from Blackburn High School. To hear the students' perspective of the practice of law and the legal system was very enlightening. That is why Spencer, Fane is committed to the Minority in Justice Committee's goal of diversifying the legal profession. Different perspectives always lead to better solutions. Aimee Bataillon and I truly enjoyed our afternoon with the students and would encourage other Call to Action signatories to host students in the future." -Kelly Brandon, Spencer Fane Britt & Browne, LLP