

Diversity Matters: Note from the Editor - Winter 2018

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This issue of *Diversity Matters* contains the first of a two-part series discussing the recent research report by the American Bar Association's Commission on Women in the Profession and the Minority Corporate Counsel Association, in partnership with the University of California, Hastings College of Law, on the main patterns of race and gender bias in the legal profession, and ways to effectively counter this bias.

The Commission and MCCA found it prudent to undertake this research, given objective evidence that women have failed to advance in the legal profession over the past several decades. It is likely that the legal industry is not the only industry which has suffered the effects of race and gender bias.

Every person has automatic or implicit biases, based upon their experiences and exposure. However, workplace decisions such as hiring, assignments, and promotions should not be based in whole or in part on these biases. Biases persist in the workplace, legal or otherwise, and take an emotional as well as economic toll on businesses. While some of the costs to companies may seem hidden, many of them are very evident, but often overlooked.

The lack of diversity and these biases affect many facets of the legal industry, and can have the effect of impeding progress of the overall marketplace. Whatever the reasons that biases exist in our society and the business arena, the negative impact on racial and gender diversity is very evident. Reports such as these support the business and moral imperatives for the advancement of diversity and provide actionable steps companies and law firms can take to combat these implicit biases.