

# ***Georgia Bar Association Labor & Employment Section***

## ***MENTORSHIP ACADEMY***

***2016-2017***

*Co-Sponsored by the Georgia Chapter of the  
National Employment Lawyers Association*



## **GA L&E SECTION MENTORSHIP ACADEMY**

Co-Sponsored by NELA-GA

Administration Committee: Robert Lewis  
Tamika Sykes  
Jay Rollins

Advisory Board:

Gary Kessler  
Ottrell Edwards  
Brent Wilson  
Bert Brannen  
Tessa Warren

### GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The Mentorship Committee was tasked with developing a proposed GA L&E Section-wide mentoring program, in cooperation with the GA Chapter of the National Employment Lawyers Association (NELA-GA). The L&E Section Committee approved in principle the formation of a Program Committee, and this proposal is submitted to as a Program Description and for approval to move forward.

A formal Mentorship program for all L&E Section members has been developed as a means by which Mentees gain insight and knowledge from the Mentors by becoming involved in a one-on-one relationship that can help to provide advice, support, and perspective on a wide array of career-related topics, providing a mentoring platform for all L&E Section members and resources on a number of topics. The program is being called the Mentorship Academy. While the Academy is completely voluntary, more

seasoned members and particularly member firms are requested to encourage broad participation by all L&E members. Participation in the program should be assessed on an annual basis to see if additional efforts are needed to encourage a broader and/or more diverse pool of both Mentors and Mentees.

## PROGRAM FUNDAMENTALS

*Definition* - "Mentoring" is most commonly defined as a partnership between two people which supports a personal and professional development strategy. Mentoring is a term generally used to describe a relationship between a less experienced individual - called a "Mentee"-and a more experienced individual known as a "Mentor."

The Mentorship Academy should not be viewed as a pathway to job opportunities, promotion or career advancement. What the Mentee takes away from participation in the Academy may, however, provide the Mentee with insights and strategies for career growth. The effective Mentoring relationship:

- Encourages the exploration of ideas and risk taking in learning
- Provides appropriate and timely advice
- Assists the Mentee to obtain a more positive work experience
- Offers advice and guidance on how to deal with work-related issues
- Suggests opportunities for appropriate skills training
- Serves as a source of information and resources
- Provides professional and ethical guidance
- Provides guidance on marketing and career advancement

## START-UP

The Mentorship Academy Committee will have the ongoing task of establishing a means of marketing the Academy so that potential Mentees become aware of the

availability of the program, its goals and benefits, and the program's structure (e.g., time commitment, expectations, length of program, etc.). The program will be open to all L&E Section members. The marketing should include an informational solicitation explaining the Academy disseminated via email. In addition, current/former Mentors and eventually Mentees would be encouraged to share their experiences in the program as a means of recruiting new Mentors and Mentees. The Mentorship Academy Administration Committee shall be comprised of three members: a member of the L&E Section Board, a member of the NELA-GA Board of Directors, and an at-large member chosen by the L&E Section Committee.

#### MENTORSHIP ADVISORY BOARD

A Mentorship Advisory Board will be created to implement, oversee, and evaluate the Academy. Initially, the Board will be comprised of former L&E Committee members and prominent L&E Section members. Thereafter, the Board will consist of five members from previous years' groups of Mentor Program participants. Service as a Board member will be for a one or two-year appointment, with the Administration Committee determining the members and appointment length, but at no time shall more than three members rotate off of the committee in any given year.

Board members will be tasked with identifying Academy goals, developing and implementing the Academy calendar and milestones, drafting policies and rules, coordinating Mentor/Mentee recruitment, Mentor/Mentee matching, annual kickoff orientation, handling of any problems or issues as they arise, and end of the year evaluations and reporting. All actions of the Board shall be by consensus, or, in the event of a disagreement, by majority vote.

#### MENTORS

The effective Mentor is a successful individual with real world experience and breadth of knowledge that the Mentee has not yet attained. The Mentor will

provide information, advice, support and encouragement through one-on-one interactions. Mentors are advisors, although not in a supervisory sense. Mentors must be available for both scheduled meetings as well as on an as-needed basis for day-to-day issues encountered on the job. The Mentor should be able to provide guidance by identifying issues/problems and offering alternatives for how to address these matters. An effective Mentor provides a brain to pick, an ear to listen, and a push in the right direction. Mentors should have at least fifteen (15) years practicing in the area of Labor & Employment Law.

The pool of Mentors for each year should represent a cross-section of the L&E Section, including management side, plaintiff's side, government, and union lawyers. The Advisory Board shall recruit and select the Mentors for participation in each year's Academy. The Mentor selection process will allow an appropriate consideration of the potential Mentor's length of practice, and breadth of experience.

## MENTEES

Mentees should be aware that participation in the Mentorship Academy should not be construed as a gateway to a job or promotion. The Mentee should take responsibility for his/her own professional growth and development. The Mentee learns from the knowledge and experience of the Mentor. The Mentee and Mentor identify career goals and discuss and plan how to get there. The Mentee must commit to being an active and open participant in the one-year program. The Mentee must be open to self-evaluation, assume responsibility for acquiring or improving skills and knowledge, acknowledge the need to commit the necessary time and resources, be open to constructive feedback, and be honest and open about goals, challenges, and expectations.

Each year-long Academy will be a full calendar year (365 days) from the designated start date of the mentoring year (projected to be July 1 through June 30). The number of Mentees accepted into each year's program will be

dependent upon the number of Mentors available, with a goal of 10 to fifteen Mentor/Mentee pairings each Academy year. If there are too many Mentors or Mentees, the Advisory Board will establish guidelines regarding how to select applicants for participation in the Academy. Any Mentee or Mentor who cannot complete his/her participation in the Mentorship Academy should notify the Advisory Board as soon as he/she becomes aware of the inability. However, it will be left to the discretion of the Advisory Board as to the impact that the early departure will have should the potential Mentee or Mentor desire to participate in the Program at a later date including the need to submit a new application.

## MENTORING AGREEMENT

Both Mentors and Mentees are expected to keep commitments which they agree upon. Most mentoring relationships are ultimately successful in some sense. However, the most common cause of an unsuccessful Mentoring relationship is the failure of one or both parties to invest the necessary time to make the relationship a success. Mentors and Mentees must develop mutual respect and rapport.

In addition, a successful Mentoring relationship is premised upon trust. Communication between the Mentor and Mentee must be open and forthright. Towards that end, both parties must acknowledge the need for confidentiality. Information gained from the Mentoring relationship should not be disclosed to any other individual, including the Mentor's law partners or firm. Participation in the Mentorship Academy is voluntary and is not intended to be used in any evaluation of the Mentee. Therefore, the following "Confidentiality Statement" is included in the Mentoring Agreement Template as shown in Appendix B:

It is understood by the participants that it is critical that the mentoring relationship be one that is conducive to learning and exchanging information. The most successful mentoring relationships are based upon trust and the free exchange of ideas and information. Therefore, the parties commit to developing a relationship

of mutual respect and trust. As such, all information shared during mentoring sessions will remain confidential, unless the participant is legally or ethically required to disclose such information or the participants have agreed to disclose certain information (for example to facilitate connecting a Mentee with additional resources or to allow a Mentee to share lessons learned with peers or other advisors).

Participants will be required to sign the Mentoring Agreement at the orientation prior to starting the Program.

#### MENTORING ORIENTATION

At the beginning of each Academy year, an orientation session will be conducted for both Mentors and Mentees. The Advisory Board will develop the contents of the orientation session. The session will occur after the Mentor/Mentee pairing have been made.

Matters to be covered in the orientation include:

1. The program requires a one-year commitment by both the Mentor and the Mentee.
2. The Mentors and Mentees are expected to meet or communicate regularly with a monthly expectation of 1 to 4 hours per month.
3. Matters covered during the mentoring process could include but not be limited to: Managing conflict within the office or unit; Career progression; Networking; Influencing others; Managing politics in the office and organization; Newest trends in technology; Time management; Work/life balance; and Leadership development.
4. The Mentoring Agreement that outlines the expectations for the relationship will

be discussed during orientation. A sample agreement will be circulated to the participants.

5. How to change either Mentors or Mentees.

6. Confidentiality: Matters discussed in the mentoring relationship should be kept confidential to the extent practicable. See the discussion on confidentiality on the previous page.

7. Conflicts of Interest, and how to identify and handle conflicts as quickly and efficiently as possible.

8. Who should be contacted in case of questions or issues and the procedure for resolving issues.

9. Expectations upon completion - Enhancement in the employee's work/life.

10. The need and importance to participate in surveys evaluating each mentoring relationship.

11. The dates of and topics for general quarterly educational seminars.

12. Reference any provided or recommended materials for the Mentors/Mentees to read as part of the mentoring process.

13. Conclude with a social event if possible and appropriate.

#### QUARTERLY EDUCATIONAL SEMINARS

In addition to the Orientation, three quarterly "training" sessions will occur. These training sessions will be 2-3 hours in length on topics specifically geared to the goals of the Mentoring Program. The Administration Committee and Advisory Board will set the

schedule and topic for the quarterly sessions, and assign topics to the Mentors participating in the year's Program. Sessions to be held at the State Bar offices, or some other location chosen by the Administration Committee and Advisory Board, to be followed by a networking reception. The Administration Committee and Advisory Board will seek CLE credit for quarterly session attendees.

#### ANNUAL PARTICIPANT EVALUATION

The Mentorship Academy should be considered a work in progress. As such, it is recommended that at the conclusion of each Academy year, both Mentors and Mentees complete an evaluation and submit their conclusions to the Advisory Board. The Board can then assess the feedback and make adjustments to the Program as deemed necessary. The Evaluation and subsequent review of the Academy should look at both what is working and what is not working in the current program. Analysis should also look at the pools of both Mentors and Mentees to assure that a diverse mix of participants are using and benefiting from the Program.