



Orange County Coalition for Diversity in the Law
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January 2023

2022–2023 Executive Board

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Rutan & Tucker LLP
Sheppard Mullin
Snell & Wilmer
UCI Law
UCLA Law
Umberg Zipser LLP
USC Law
Western State Law

Dear Members and Friends of the Orange County Coalition for Diversity in the Law,

We relay our sincerest gratitude for your continued support and involvement in our growing organization. Throughout 2022, we kept our programming strong while slowly transitioning from virtual to in-person events. Through it all, we stood together in supporting the needs of and promoting the issues faced by local law school students and next generation lawyers.

2022 was a huge year for OCCDL! Thanks in large part to our member collaboration, in 2022 we significantly expanded and diversified our programming and received community recognition including:

- Being named the 2022 “Community Partner Honoree” by the Orange County Bar Association Charitable Fund at their annual “Raise Your Glass” benefit and being featured on the cover of *Orange County Lawyer* in August 2022.
- Celebrating and recognizing lawyers, organizations, and legal champions of diversity across Orange County at our inaugural DEI Awards ceremony for achievements in their legal and DEI work in the Orange County legal community:
 - In March 2022, our inaugural 2021 DEI Awards Ceremony recognized 26 attorneys and 10 firm/organization awardees, whom we carefully selected and peer reviewed in 2021. You can view the full list of the 2021 [attorney](#) and [organization](#) awardees on our website.
 - In September 2022, our 2022 DEI Awards ceremony awarded the Top 10 Young Diverse Lawyers, Top 10 Organizations, and Top 10 Legal Champions of Diversity in the Law. Our keynote speaker was attorney Camille Vasquez, of our member firm Brown Rudnick, whom we recognized for exemplifying legal excellence. You can view the full list of the 2022 [attorney](#) and [organization](#) awardees on our website. We thank our sponsors and members for the overwhelming success of this event.
- Expanding OCCDL’s pipeline efforts, reaching aspiring attorneys of diverse backgrounds at the high school, college, and law school levels:
 - OCCDL’s “Own Your Story” workshop at Western State Law, where we provided law students preparing for interviews with tools to craft personal statements incorporating their diverse backgrounds.
 - Creating a Law Student Diverse Programs Guide with scholarships, fellowships, and recruitment resources.
 - OCCDL’s “Grow Your Network” workshop for UCI’s Pre-Law Opportunity Program (POP), where we taught diverse high school students to create, develop, maintain, and nurture their professional networks.
- Becoming an official MCLE provider, with OCCDL’s Social Justice Impact Litigation speaker series, “Discussion on Housing and Systemic Challenges for the Unhoused in OC”, with Callie Rutter (Stronger Women United) and Brooke Weitzman, Esq., (Founder/Directing Attorney of Elder Law & Disabilities Rights (ELDR Center)). We heard Ms. Rutter’s personal account of formerly being an unhoused woman in Orange County. Ms. Weitzman discussed statewide and nationwide legal challenges to supporting the unhoused as a result of systemic racism. We thank our member firm Everett Dorey LLP for hosting at their office.
- Officially naming Project Youth OCBF as a new Community Partner and attending Project Youth’s Project SELF annual intern recognition ceremony.



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- Attending the Thurgood Marshall Bar Association's Juneteenth celebration in solidarity.
- Growing our online outreach efforts by 300% and welcoming new member firms.

At the end of 2022, we appointed the new board:

- President, Diana Chao
- Vice President, Mark Lezama
- Secretary, Crispin Collins
- Treasurer, Mike Olsen
- Chair, Kristin Fabella

This upcoming year, we are excited to expand on all that we created and achieved in 2022, and look forward to:

- Developing an OCCDL scholarship.
- Continuing our Professional Development series in 2023, with practical topics relating to analyzing contracts, managing cases, responding to discovery, etc.
- Creating more [Media Starters](#), and coordinating monthly Media Club sessions, to discuss relevant podcasts, movies, books, and other resources too good not to share. Recognizing [Black History Month](#), [Native American / National American Indian Heritage Month](#), [Hispanic & Latinx heritage](#), and [Asian Pacific American Heritage Month](#), commemorating [Pride 50](#), and promoting [Anti-Racism](#). All remain available on our website (under Resources).
- Continuing to partner with and provide funding for organizations that provide greater access to law schools for diverse students.
- Creating networking opportunities (both in-person and virtual) for diverse law students across Southern California
- Connecting and coordinately more closely with various Orange County affinity groups.
- Improving our website and increasing our Internet presence.
 - In the meantime, *please follow us on [LinkedIn](#) and [Instagram](#) (@occdl), invite a friend, and share our content and events!*

We continue to adapt our programming to align with current events and topics of interest, and hope our events provide an opportunity for each of our members to gain something both personally and professionally. Your input and suggestions are invaluable to our organization, so please do not hesitate to contact any of us or your organization's representative to share your ideas or feedback. We would love to collaborate and engage more with you as we work to continue OCCDL's amazing momentum and impact in 2023!

Please email us at occdlboard@occdl.org to update your office's contacts, provide constructive feedback, and help us understand your interests.

We are honored to serve as your Board. Thank you for your contributions over the past year. We look forward to another momentous year together!

				
Diana Chao President	Mark Lezama Vice President	Crispin Collins Secretary	Mike Olsen Treasurer	Kristin Fabella Chair