



The problem: Law school graduates account for a large proportion of the nation's leaders including all of our judges, 60% of our presidents, 58% of members of the US Senate, 37% of members of the US House. These numbers emphasize the central role of law and our legal system to our democracy and its leadership. Still today, as our nation becomes increasingly diverse, law school graduates are predominantly white, with a practicing bar at just under 10% minority.

The Wingspread response: The Wingspread Consortium, begun in our nation's law schools is a strong and growing collaborative response to the problem. Law schools, like the bench and the bar, recognize that it is in their own best interest to play a significant and sustained role in increasing success of diverse students. The *Wingspread* name, drawn from Johnson Foundation Conference Center facility in Racine, Wisconsin, suggests how opportunities expand and 'take flight' through education.

The ongoing Wingspread initiative involves a consortium of P-20 teams of educators and administrators, judges, lawyers, law schools, and students, all committed to working across the educational continuum to improve participation, persistence and success of diverse students in high school and college, with the goal of enhancing their aspirations and capacity to move into positions in the legal profession and national leadership.

The strengths of law schools & the legal community: To close the achievement gap and increase the qualified applicant pool of students requires sustained involvement with rigor and relevance and with strong student/mentor relationships, well before the law school gates. Law schools are well-prepared for this work given their commitment to rigorous and project-oriented pedagogy. So, too, law schools and the legal community offer significant human and financial resources for project support for mentoring and other demonstrated and sustained intervention. And the advantage of the law's engaging subject matter and career potential is clear, certainly evidenced by the popularity of CSI and other law-oriented TV shows.

The team concept: Starting from 7 law-school centered teams meeting at Wingspread in 2004, the Consortium is now 40 law schools strong with a total of 145 organizations from 30 states, Puerto Rico, and the Canadian provinces of New Brunswick and Nova Scotia and from across the educational and legal spectrum having attended its meetings. More significantly, there is a continuing rising number of others with emerging commitments. In addition, Wingspread hosted a historic meeting of law, medical and dental professional schools in 2007, an effort that will evolve to other disciplines with a common national agenda. Wingspread focuses on collaboration and teams, with such teams coming together from all across the country and from the eastern Canadian provinces, forming an increasingly strong, credible and committed group. For example, the New Mexico team has included the UNM law school, medical school, New Mexico State, and the Enlace Latino pipeline project; the Georgetown team includes its Law Center, University, the Citizens Commission on Civil Rights, and Thurgood Marshall Academy,

a law-themed charter school. While teams and projects vary, all are committed to evaluation and efforts to define best practices and offer models that can be replicated.

The deliverables: The Wingspread P20 Leadership Consortium's true deliverables can only be measured over a long time horizon as the pipeline widens and an increasing number of diverse students are competitive for admission to law school and success on the bar and in the profession. The shorter term deliverables are increasing involvement of the nation's law schools, bar associations and legal community in this effort, measured by expanded formation of leadership teams working along the pipeline, ongoing and extended networking of these teams, multiplied programmatic output capable of replication, and evaluations showing more diverse students persisting in school with aspirations for law-related careers at each point along the pipeline. These "deliverables" are already being delivered as number of teams working on the pipeline with thoughtful and evaluative models increases and new inquiries from law-schools and other organizations continue to multiply.

The Wingspread P-20 Leadership Consortium welcomes all who are interested in working collaboratively along the educational pipeline from preschool through law school and the professions.

Wingspread VIII, Fort Worth, TX

Texas Wesleyan and the Hilton Fort Worth, October 4, 5, 6, 2007

Starting Thursday evening, ending Saturday

The Wingspread Consortium is a group of law-school centered teams that includes P-20 educators, the bench, and the bar, all committed to working collaboratively across the educational continuum to improve the participation, persistence, and success of diverse students in high school and college. The goal of the group is to enhance these students' aspirations and capacity to move into positions in the legal profession and in the leadership of the nation. The group has adopted the Wingspread name and its image of taking flight through the opportunities of education.

The 8th meeting of the group is focused on team-building and on the ground action plans for collaborative improvement in outreach along the pipeline.

Specific sessions will include Wingspread for newcomers; law themed curricula and schools including both elementary and law magnet programs ongoing in Texas; prelaw programs; pipeline programs from our sister professions; the view from the Bench and the Bar. And, of course, Texas barbecue!

January Wingspread Reception – AALS in New York – Thursday, January 3 at the Sheraton

Wingspread VIII.5 – 15th Annual Education Law Conference – week of July 21, 2008

For more information:

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