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May 2, 2011

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MEMORANDUM 11-01

TO: Deans of Member and Fee-Paid Schools

FROM: Susan Westerberg Prager 

SUBJECT: Women and Minority Deans' Databanks

Diversity in the law school community and legal profession is a Core Value of the Association. The AALS' Women and Minority Deans' Databanks have proven useful in furthering the realization of this important goal. I want to call your attention to this service of the AALS and ask for your help.

The Women and Minority Deans' Databanks are composed of women and minority law school educators who have expressed an interest in being considered for decanal positions either directly through self-nomination or nomination by deans or senior faculty at law institutions. The lists of nominated candidates are made available upon request to dean search committees that are interested in considering a diverse pool of candidates.

The AALS is in its tenth year of administering the Women Deans' Databank, which was maintained by the Georgetown University Law Center until 2001. The AALS is in its eighth year of administering the Minority Deans' Databank, which we established in 2003. Since that time, the AALS has made annual solicitations for the names of experienced women and minority faculty members who possess the qualifications to be considered for deanship positions.

When a faculty member is nominated for the databank, we contact the nominee requesting authorization to include their name in our database. We release the names of potential candidates to dean search committees upon request. In 2006, the Association set up an Advisory Board made up of current women and minority deans and an Advisory Council made up of past women and minority deans to monitor the progress of the databanks. In 2008, the AALS added to its website a bibliography of articles about being a law school dean; the bibliography is accessible at <http://www.aals.org/bibliography.php> and is updated each summer. Please feel free to send updated information for this bibliography to deandatabanks@aals.org.

The Association requests you provide the names of women and minority faculty members and administrators who you think should be included on one or both of these lists. Once we receive your nominations we will proceed to obtain the permission of the nominees to allow their names to be placed on lists that will be made available to dean search committees. You may send your list of nominees, or any questions regarding the databanks, to deandatabanks@aals.org.

We also encourage you to use this service whenever a dean search committee is formed. Last year the AALS received numerous requests from law school dean search committees; with your help the databanks will be used by an increasing number of search committees in the years to come.

The Association would like to thank you in advance for your participation in this important initiative to increase access to leadership opportunities for all qualified persons in the law school community. If you have suggestions on how our efforts can be improved, please contact Ashley Bethel. You may email her about the databanks at deandatabanks@aals.org, Ashley will ensure that questions or concerns are brought to my attention.

I personally thank you for submitting candidates to the databank and appreciate your support of this important aspect of the AALS Core Values.