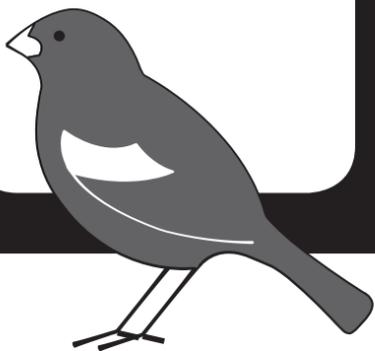


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DIVERSITY

CONTINUED FROM COVER...

debate got her interested in human rights work. She's a natural, and competing has given her a newfound confidence.

"I'm naturally argumentative and it's the one sport I can actually do," she said.

No suit, no problem

Ana Gutierrez will have a job this summer as an associate at the Denver office of global law firm Hogan Lovells. But it took a lot of hard work.

She started in 2009 at the firm through the Colorado Pledge to Diversity 1L summer associate program, where she was paired with a partner mentor and an associate mentor, and she was given a crash course in professional development and practical skills.

"I don't have any lawyers in my family. I didn't come from that kind of background," she said. "Coming to work at Hogan was huge. Everything was a learning experience for me. It invigorated me because it made me realize this was what I wanted to do."

The 1L program partners through Hogan and several other area law firms to give diverse first-year law students a summer associate opportunities. This year, Hogan Lovells will host 21 students, said Phyllis Wan, a partner at Hogan Lovells and the firm's Deputy Chief Diversity Officer.

The firm also has a practical skills program that helps its first-year and second-year law students with basic professional



Ana Gutierrez, Hogan Lovells | LAW WEEK PHOTO JAMIE COTTEN

development skills. The program is an all-day event with a panel discussion, mock interviews and critiques and Q & A sessions with associates.

"I found in my meetings that a lot of the students coming through the pledge program did not have diverse role models or had parents who weren't professionals, and that they really were not used to walking into a law firm or a professional office," Wan said. "They were quite nervous and [the program] was the first time they had a professional interview. They didn't know what to do or say or wear. We wanted to demystify it."

Gutierrez recalled not owning her own suit during her summer associate program.

Today, she's not only in the position of having a job at a major firm after law school, but she also has a head start on her own environmental regulatory practice.

But she doesn't consider her good fortune an unfair advantage.

"That critique comes up a lot among my peers, but I don't think it should be perceived in that light because it's a very competitive program," she said. "I think it might give somebody an opportunity to work at a law firm who may not have had that opportunity through on-campus interviews. These 1L programs are not a shoo-in for guaranteed for job offers. ... You really have to prove yourself." •

— Ali McNally, AMcNally@CircuitMedia.com

Question of the WEEK

Should the punitive damages cap be removed for accidents caused by impaired driving?

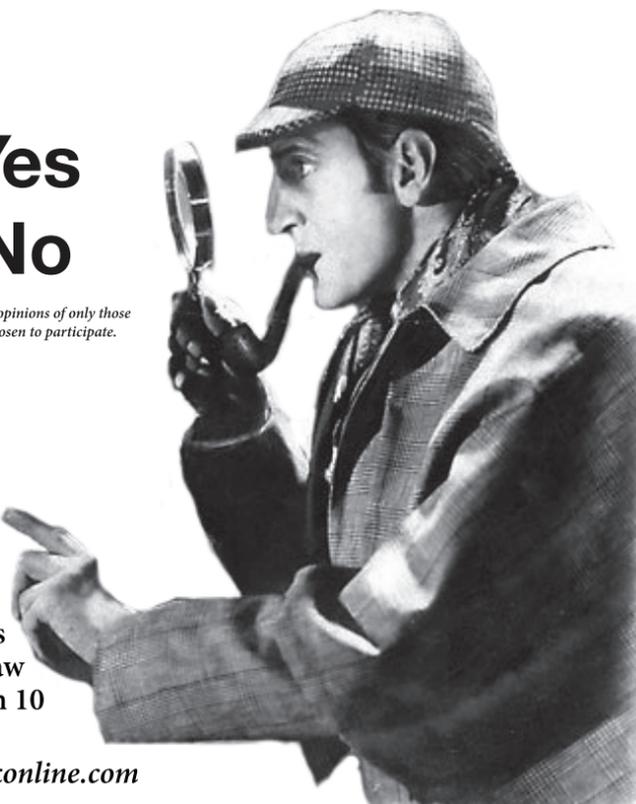
61% Yes
39% No

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This week's question:

Is it possible to incorporate a diversity and inclusiveness program in a small law office with fewer than 10 employees?

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