

VSB's Katie Uston Leads the National Organization of Bar Counsel This Year

The National Organization of Bar Counsel (NOBC) works to make the legal profession better, and this year Katie Uston, assistant bar counsel for the Virginia State Bar, is president of the NOBC. With a membership of bar counsel from every state, as well as Canada, the U.K., and Australia, the NOBC provides a venue for regulatory lawyers to stay in touch about the latest developments in the field of regulation that improve the profession.

For example, members of the NOBC currently inform each other about the ever-evolving tactics used by scammers and fraudsters to target lawyers and their trust accounts so they may keep the lawyers in their state educated and alert to it.

Perhaps the biggest effort to come out of the NOBC's desire to help prevent disciplinary problems among lawyers is *The Path to Lawyer Well-Being: Practical Recommendations for Positive Change*. Chief Justice of the

Supreme Court of Virginia Donald W. Lemons partook in the task force that issued the report, as did the NOBC, the Association of Professional Responsibility Lawyers, and the ABA. Uston did a peer review of the report draft before it was finalized.

The report was spurred by a 2016 study revealing widespread levels of problem drinking and other mental health problems in the U.S. legal profession. Uston says of the study, "...it found that lawyers are disproportionately represented in the population of people who suffer from anxiety, depression, other mental issues, alcohol abuse, substance abuse, as compared to the population generally. And law students as well."

A committee in Virginia, chaired by Justice William C. Mims, is working to make specific recommendations for Virginia, and the VSB committee on lawyer discipline is developing a new rule that will allow lawyers to avoid a



mark on their record if their ethical misconduct did not harm a client and is found to be a consequence of substance abuse, alcohol abuse, depression, or another mental health issue, so long as the lawyer participates in a diversionary program to help them with their problem.

Reach
50,000 Lawyers
Across Virginia and Across the USA!

Free Design services when you advertise with us.

  | LLM Publications | Ben Oerther
503-445-2226 | beno@llmpubs.com
www.llmpubs.com