



## Burr Hosts “Diversity & Inclusion in Today’s Business World” Panel at the University of Alabama School of Law

Firm News  
11.12.2019

Burr recently hosted a “Diversity & Inclusion in Today’s Business World” panel at the University of Alabama School of Law alongside attorneys from Honda Manufacturing and Mercedes-Benz U.S. International, Inc.

The panel, in which over 50 students attended, included two Burr Birmingham attorneys, James Roberts and Caroline Page, alongside two in-house counsel; Erica Sheffield from Honda Manufacturing and Steven Nichols from Mercedes-Benz U.S. International, Inc.

The panel, moderated by University of Alabama School of Law professor and director of diversity, Bryan Fair, discussed what’s it’s like in the different legal roles and how in-house and outside counsel work together. The discussion then lead to a two-part focus; the rising importance of diversity and inclusion in the legal industry and the action that law firms and corporations are taking internally to create programs and initiatives that promote diversity and inclusion.

The discussion also touched on what the terms “diversity” and “inclusion” actually mean. Roberts said “Diversity is a number and inclusion is a choice,” while Sheffield referenced the Verna Myer’s quote “Diversity is getting asked to the party, inclusion is getting asked to dance at the party.”

The conversation continued on how creating “diverse” teams means considering those that come from different backgrounds, upbringing, geography, socio-economic classes and more. There is

### RELATED PROFESSIONALS

James P. Roberts

# Burr Hosts “Diversity & Inclusion in Today’s Business World” Panel at the University of Alabama School of Law

an increasing importance to clients to work with legal teams that represent their leadership and customer base to better understand their legal issues as they arise.

The attorneys concluded the panel by providing suggestions to students in the room on what they can do now as a student to promote diversity and inclusion. Page suggested “surround yourself with good people and a support group,” while Nichols encouraged students to “get to know people in your class while getting involved in student organizations that take you a step out of your comfort zone.” In addition, Sheffield told students to “look at what you are involved in and change things up to meet new people – look for people who can bring a different perspective.”

The panel is part of a series that Burr’s diversity committee plans to expand to other law schools across its southeastern footprint. If you are interested in having Burr conduct this program at your law school, please email Danielle Smith, [dsmith@burr.com](mailto:dsmith@burr.com) for more information.