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**Meera E. Deo Appointed 2020-21 William H. Neukom
Fellows Research Chair in Diversity and Law**

CHICAGO, May 11, 2020 – [Meera E. Deo](#) has been named the American Bar Foundation (ABF) 2020-21 William H. Neukom Fellows Research Chair in Diversity and Law. Deo is Director of the Law School Survey of Student Engagement (LSSSE) based at Indiana University and is a law professor at Thomas Jefferson School of Law. She is also a visiting professor at the University of California, Davis School of Law. Deo’s research merges jurisprudence with empirical methods to interrogate institutional diversity, affirmative action, and racial representation.

The William H. Neukom Fellows Research Chair in Diversity and Law was established in 2014. Since 2015, the Chair has been held annually by a leading international legal scholar who spends the academic year as a Visiting Research Professor at the ABF and whose scholarship focuses on diversity and inclusion. The Chair leads empirical and interdisciplinary research at the ABF on law and legal processes related to issues of diversity and inequality experienced by women, people of color, people with disabilities, and persons from the LGBTQ community. The projects undertaken by each Neukom Fellows Research Chair vary in nature, yet they all converge on the fundamental theme of eliminating bias and promoting a more just society. The work of the Chair builds on the ABF’s robust law and diversity research program and fosters collaboration among the community of scholars and legal practitioners concerned with these issues.

“As this program enters into its sixth year, it continues to further the mission of pursuing full inclusion in the legal profession and equal justice under the law through cutting-edge empirical research,” said William H. Neukom, ABF Philanthropist Fellow and the primary benefactor of the Research Chair in Diversity and Law. “The Chair was designed to support innovative and pathbreaking scholarship, exploring diversity and inclusion with authenticity. With her exceptional leadership and scholarly record, Professor Deo will surely continue to build on the principles and values upon which it was founded.”



Throughout her tenure as Neukom Chair, Deo will be expanding on research from her book, *Unequal Profession: Race and Gender in Legal Academia*. The book reveals the barriers women of color face as law professors and outlines individual strategies and structural solutions to these challenges. Deo will broaden her research to explore how to improve law faculty recruitment and retention. She will further investigate hiring trends to increase the understanding of the pathway to academia, which is critical for ensuring greater diversity in teaching. Finally, she will also examine the impact of the current COVID-19 pandemic in exacerbating existing structural inequalities.

“During my time as the Neukom Chair, I look forward to participating in the collaborative academic environment of the ABF, sharing ideas and trading advice to produce more innovative and comprehensive scholarship,” said Deo. “I am especially excited to engage with other interdisciplinary scholars working to improve diversity and inclusion in legal education and the legal profession.”

Deo was previously a visiting professor at the University of California, Irvine, the University of California, Los Angeles, and the University of California, Berkeley. Deo has served as a Senate-appointed member of the California Commission on Access to Justice, an empirical research consultant to the ACLU of Southern California, and Chair of the AALS Section on Law and the Social Sciences. She also recently collaborated with ABF Research Professor Elizabeth Mertz and former ABF Visiting Scholar Mindie Lazarus-Black in editing the book *Power, Legal Education, and Law School Cultures*.

Deo received her Ph.D. from the University of California, Los Angeles, J.D. from the University of Michigan Law School, and B.A. from the University of California, Berkeley.

About the American Bar Foundation

The [American Bar Foundation](#) (ABF) is among the world’s leading research institutes for the empirical and interdisciplinary study of law. The ABF seeks to expand knowledge and advance justice through innovative, interdisciplinary, and rigorous empirical research on law, legal processes, and legal institutions. To further this mission the ABF will produce timely, cutting-edge research of the highest quality to inform and guide the legal profession, the academy, and society in the United States and internationally. The ABF’s primary funding is provided by the [American Bar Endowment](#) and the [Fellows of The American Bar Foundation](#).

About the William H. Neukom Fellows Research Chair in Diversity and Law

The [William H. Neukom Fellows Research Chair in Diversity and Law](#), established in 2014, is dedicated to the values of diversity in the legal profession, the creation of communities of equity and opportunity, and the provision of equal justice through law. The Neukom Fellows Research Chair was made possible through generous gifts from William H. Neukom; Walmart; The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation; Microsoft Corporation; the Sidley Austin Foundation; Northrop Grumman Corporation; Kirkland and Ellis LLP; and The Fellows of the American Bar Foundation.