

00:25 Staying on the topic of  
00:27 diversity and inclusion,  
00:29 I'd like to bring to your attention  
00:32 an extraordinary program that  
00:34 reflects our commitment to a  
00:36 diverse and inclusive legal  
00:38 profession and justice system,  
00:40 a program that we are very pleased to  
00:42 resume this year after a two year hiatus,  
00:45 the New York State Legal Education  
00:48 Opportunity Program,  
00:49 also known as the Leo Program.  
00:52 Which is sponsored by our New York  
00:54 State Judicial Institute.  
00:56 Leo is an intensive six week summer  
00:58 program taught by law school professors  
01:01 that assist college graduates  
01:03 from educationally or economically  
01:06 disadvantaged backgrounds in acquiring  
01:08 the fundamental and practical skills  
01:11 necessary to succeed in law school.  
01:15 The Leo students not only receive  
01:18 classroom instruction on 1st  
01:20 year core courses in law school.  
01:22 Including legal research and writing.  
01:24 But they are also given the  
01:27 opportunity to visit courts in  
01:29 session and to meet with and  
01:31 interact with lawyers and judges.  
01:33 And, of course,  
01:34 a bonus of conducting the program  
01:36 is that it promotes diversity in  
01:38 the legal profession by improving  
01:40 the probability of law school  
01:42 success for students who come  
01:44 from groups that are traditionally  
01:46 underrepresented in the legal field.  
01:48 In the words of the Dean of  
01:51 the Judicial Institute,

01:52 Judge Kathy Davidson,  
01:53 Leo is an enriching and valuable  
01:55 learning experience that prepa  
01:58 aspiring law students from  
02:00 underrepresented communities to succeed  
02:02 in law school through education,  
02:05 exposure and mentorship.  
02:06 I look forward to welcoming this  
02:09 year's class of 30 Leo students  
02:12 when they commence their studies  
02:14 at the JI on June 5th,  
02:19 And Leo director Salihah Denman for  
02:22 their commitment and dedication  
02:25 to this excellent program.  
02:27 Hello.  
02:27 My name is Salihah Denman,  
02:29 and I am the program director for this  
02:32 year's Legal Education Opportunity Program,  
02:35 otherwis  
02:37 The Leo program is administered  
02:39 by the Honorable Kathie E Davidson,  
02:42 Dean of the New York State  
02:44 Judicial Institute,  
02:45 housed at the Elisabeth Haub School of  
02:47 Law on the campus of Pace University.  
02:51 The Leo program exposes students  
02:53 that are educationally and/or  
02:56 economically disadvantaged or from  
02:58 a group typically underrepresented  
03:00 in the legal field.  
03:02 To the experience of the first year of law,  
03:04 school,  
03:06 students must either be accepted to a  
03:09 law school or have an application pending.  
03:12 In addition to immersing students to  
03:14 the rigors of the first year of law  
03:16 school students also experience  
03:18 experiential learning opportunities,  
03:20 otherwise known as ELOs.

03:22 Students have the opportunity to visit  
03:25 places like the Court of Appeals  
03:27 and the New York State Assembly.  
03:29 The Leo program has successfully been  
03:32 preparing attorneys for practice since 2007.  
03:34 My name is Delali Madison,  
03:36 and I am a 3L at New York Law School.  
03:38 At the time,  
03:39 I didn't know this,  
03:40 but enrolling in the Leo program was the  
03:42 best decision I made as a pre law student.  
03:45 Our classes gave us the ability to  
03:47 learn black letter law and allowed  
03:49 us to develop and strengthen  
03:51 our critical thinking skills.  
03:53 We're given the opportunity  
03:54 to network with judges,  
03:55 attorneys, and recent law graduates that  
03:58 share their candidate experiences with us.  
04:01 I was able to start off law school and  
04:03 fortunate enough to have a network  
04:05 of friends that shared scholarships,  
04:07 outlines and job opportunities with me.  
04:10 I am very proud and honored  
04:12 to be a 2019 Leo graduate.  
04:14 Hi, my name is Naja Williams and  
04:17 I'm a 3L at the Elisabeth Haub  
04:19 School of Law at Pace University.  
04:22 I highly recommend enrolling  
04:23 in the New York Leo program,  
04:25 especially if you're a first  
04:28 generation law student.  
04:29 First year is one of the  
04:30 toughest years in law school,  
04:32 and you'll be doing yourself a  
04:34 huge favor getting the basics  
04:35 out of the way before you start.  
04:37 I met some amazing people in  
04:39 my 2019 cohort and I'm still

04:41 friends with them to this day.  
04:42 Enrolling in the New York Leo program  
04:44 is one of the best decisions that I ever  
04:47 made in preparing for my legal education.  
04:49 You could find Leo Fellows in places like  
04:53 the New York State Nurses Association,  
04:55 Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center,  
04:58 the New York State City Law Department,  
05:01 and the New York State Assembly.  
05:03 In fact,  
05:05 Assemblywoman Latoya Joyner,  
05:07 A Leo graduate,  
05:07 was so impacted by the program that she  
05:10 has continuously advocated for Leo funding.