

Akin Gump

STRAUSS HAUER & FELD LLP

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Diversity Team Name: Firmwide D&I Council

Diversity Team Leader(s): Kim Koopersmith and Nimesh Patel



WHAT MAKES THIS DIVERSITY TEAM STAND OUT

In 2020, Akin Gump restructured its longstanding Firmwide D&I Council (FW Council), which is now led by Chairperson Kim Koopersmith, along with Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer Nimesh Patel, and includes several key firm leaders. This composition ensures that some of the firm's most senior leaders are engaged in leading its D&I efforts. The FW Council and the firm-wide D&I team work together closely to execute the firm's D&I strategy.

Under the leadership of the FW Council and the D&I team, Akin Gump faced the twin pandemics of the coronavirus and racial injustice. At the outset of the pandemic, when we pivoted to working from home, we were able to rely on the firm's existing Agile Work Program to smoothly transition to working remotely and ensuring client service at the highest levels.

In response to the demands placed on parents and caregivers now working at home, we executed communication from our chairperson highlighting the challenges faced by caregivers. We also provided guidance to practice-group leaders and to partners generally to ensure flexibility and understanding for the additional demands on caregivers. We also held regular check-ins with attorneys and staff, regardless of their caregiving responsibilities, to stay connected and help identify potential issues.

In 2020, Americans also finally recognized and acknowledged systemic racism in a way we hadn't before. At Akin Gump, our FW Council and D&I team led a response to the long-overdue reckoning on racial justice that included making public statements and providing support to racial justice efforts outside the firm, as well as significantly enhancing our existing D&I efforts. This included launching an implicit bias/inclusive leadership initiative and establishing a racial justice steering committee; donating \$100,000 each to the NAACP Legal

Defense and Educational Fund and the Equal Justice Initiative; providing immediate access to antiracism books and resources for all employees; hosting an impressive number of speakers who addressed race and D&I (including Mo Cowan, Ibram X. Kendi, John Yang, Lupe Martinez, and Sharice Davids); holding a firm-wide town hall; declaring Juneteenth a firm holiday and organizing topical programming to recognize the day; enhancing focus on our D&I efforts; and creating, with other firms, the Law Firm Antiracism Alliance.

We have some strong results to show for these efforts, such as a partnership that is 25 percent women and 14 percent partners of color. Additionally, our partner promotions over the past five years have been 37 percent women and 25 percent attorneys of color. There is much more to do, but we are honored to share the following recognitions and awards our efforts have earned to date:

- Six of the last seven years on The American Lawyer's A-List
- Fourteen consecutive perfect scores on Human Rights Campaign Foundation's Corporate Equality Index
- 2020 Diversity & Flexibility Alliance Flex Impact Award
- From Yale Law Women: 2021 honorable mention for LGBTQ+ representation and health and wellness; 2020 top firm for working mothers and family planning; and 2019 Top Ten Family Friendly Law Firms
- 2020 Diversity Lab's Mansfield 3.0 Certified Plus certification
- 2020 MCCA Thomas L. Sager Award national finalist
- 2019 NAPABA Law Firm Diversity Award