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ACC Foundation's DEI Maturity Model is a Roadmap for Change

Community

Diversity and Inclusion

Diversity Equity & Inclusion Maturity Model

ACC Foundation
Association of Corporate Counsel

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DEI — diversity, equity, and inclusion — is a hot topic and critical aspect of workplace training, culture, relationships, promotions, pay, and more. It is essential for in-house counsel to assure it is implemented, fostered, and effects change not only in the legal department but throughout the organization.

Benchmarking to establish milestones

Whether a DEI program is just beginning or well established — savvy counsel know that measurement is key toward knowing where the organization is and what steps it must take to mature along the way.

To assist legal department leaders in this effort, ACC and the ACC Foundation, working with an advisory committee of top corporate executives with DEI expertise, developed the DEI Maturity Model, which was launched in November 2021.

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Additional resources and case studies based on the model are planned — all help make DEI programs a success.

To further introduce the resource and discuss how it can be applied in legal departments and more generally across organizations, ACC Foundation and Ethisphere Institute partnered on an online program "Measure for Change - A discussion on the ACC Foundation DEI Maturity Model" held on Feb 17, 2022.

The panel included:

- Jen Chen, Director, ACC Foundation
- Keilon J. Forest, Program Director, ACC Foundation
- Craig Moss, Vice President of Measurement, Ethisphere Institute
- Burt Fealing, Executive Vice President, General Counsel, and Corporate Secretary, Southwire Company
- Linda Gatsby, Senior Vice President, General Counsel, and Chief Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Officer, NBME

The panel was moderated by Anand Sharma, managing partner of Finnegan, Henderson, Farabow, Garrett & Dunner, LLP.



Anand Sharma moderates a panel on navigating your career when you're a person of color with Burt Fealing and Linda Gatsby as part of the ACC Foundation webinar on the DEI Maturity Model. Jennifer Chen introduces the panel.

Tools, resources, and success stories

The DEI Maturity Model will continue to grow in relevance and content as participants add their own success stories, useful resources, and additional tools.

A key element highlighted during the program was to assure that all areas of the legal department,

and hopefully the organization itself, are assessed via a DEI lens. For example, “Those who have reached a level of equity may not feel included fully in activities, mentoring opportunities, and more,” Forest says. That is, although an organization may succeed in diversity and equity — a truly mature organization will measure success by inclusion.

Many companies don’t measure where they are, so they don’t know how to get where they want to go, according to Moss of Ethisphere Institute, a program partner.

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Setting priorities

The DEI Maturity Model informs organizations on how their progress, internally and externally, compares to others. “What should I do to get better” will be clear, Moss says. It will help set a baseline and priorities. Users will “understand the difference between maturity metrics and performance metrics,” toward fine-tuning the program for the long term, he continues.



Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Maturity Model

The ACC/ACC Foundation DEI MM is organized into 13 categories, each detailing three levels of maturity – early, intermediate, and advanced. The categories include:

- Strategic Planning
- Governance and Resourcing
- Operational Model/Workstreams
- Recruitment
- Talent Development – Career Development
- Professional Development
- Talent Development – Advancement
- Talent Retention
- Succession Planning
- Measurement
- Goal-setting/Communications
- Incentives and Consequences
- Community Engagement

Knowing which areas to focus on is key toward developing — and maturing — a successful DEI program. The ACC DEI Maturity Model provides these 13 categories as presented by Keilon J. Forest.

DEI is one of the top two priorities in organizations now. “We are seeing companies setting goals, but they don’t necessarily have the governing structure to achieve the goals in a timely manner,” Moss adds. The DEI Maturity Model will guide them.

[Download the DEI Maturity Model.](#)

Being intentional about career advancement

“We have to be very intentional about what we are doing to help people advance in their careers,” says Fealing during the panel discussion, referencing moving ahead in one’s career as a person of color. “When we talk about a successful diverse lawyer, they’ve utilized mentors and sponsors,” Sharma points out.

“Mentors and sponsors have been pretty important in the trajectory of my career,” shares Gatsby. “Being a Black woman, for me, adds more at the table. It’s my uniqueness that allows me to look at things differently than perhaps some others have, to come up with solutions.”

Model development

The ACC Foundation worked in partnership with law firms Greenberg Traurig and Finnegan to interview a number of general counsel. Their stories laid the foundation of what best practices and policies helped them to defy the odds and can help ensure there continue to be more diverse leaders to follow.

- Ricardo Anzaldua - Freddie Mac, General Counsel
- Marcus Brown - Entergy, Executive Vice President & General Counsel
- Halimah DeLaine Prado - Google Inc., General Counsel
- Burt Fealing - Southwire, EVP, General Counsel, Compliance and Corporate Secretary
- Elisa Garcia - Macy's, Chief Legal Officer
- Lily Hughes - Arrow Electronics and Public Storage, Former SVP, Chief Legal Officer
- Don Liu - Target, Executive Vice President and Chief Legal and Risk Officer
- John Page - Golden State Food, SVP, Chief Corporate Social Responsibility Officer & CLO
- Halimah DeLaine Prado - Google Inc., General Counsel
- Kim Rivera - HP, Inc., Chief Legal Officer/ President, Strategy & Business Management
- Julia Simon - Mary Kay, Chief Legal Officer and Corporate Secretary
- Alan Tse - JLL, Global Chief Legal Officer & Corporate Secretary
- Wanji Walcott - Discover Financial Services, Inc., Chief Legal Officer and General Counsel

A working group was then convened to develop and refine the categories and descriptions within the model. Members of the working group include:

- Diana Barlow, Voya Financial
- Mary Burelle, McDonald’s Corp.

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- Elizabeth Campbell, Campbell Soup Company
 - Earnest DeLoach, Balfour Betty U.S.
 - Sneha Desai, BASF
 - Andre Green, Freddie Mac
 - Kristen Jones, McDonald's Corp.
 - Christine Juhasz, MassMutual
 - Bobbie Jo Kalamaras, Freddie Mac
 - Jennifer Lagunas, AbbVie
 - Eric Mahler, Meritor
 - Jim Michalowicz, TE Connectivity
 - Alison Nelson, Ford Motor Co.
 - Sam Ranganathan, AbbVie
 - John Seward, Intel
 - Adonica-Jo Wada, Facebook
 - David White, Accenture

[For more DEI resources, visit the ACC Foundation's IDEAL page.](#)

Has the ACC Foundation DEI Maturity Model helped your company on its DEI journey? Send the [ACC Foundation](#) your success stories.

[Debra Z. Roth](#)



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Debra Z. Roth, an ACC content contractor, has been a journalist, including freelance, and a communications marketing practitioner. Her news stories, features, and editorials have been published in *The Washington Post*, *Newsday*, magazines, websites, and aired on broadcast. And she has led international marcomm for non- and for-profits, including the YWCA USA, National Association of Secondary School Principals, and the National AIDS Fund (now AIDS United), and worked at PR firms, including the Academy for Educational Development (now fhi 360). Her clients have included the National Legal Aid & Defender Association, US Department of Justice, Georgetown University Hospital, and the Tinner Hill Heritage Foundation.