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Dear Reader:

Far beyond buzzwords or trends, Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA) initiatives in the workplace have become a key strategy for success. Today's executives recognize the advantage and urgent need to implement policies that drive change and help their workers feel accepted and valued.

During the related L.A. Times B2B Publishing event, held on November 10th at the Beverly Hilton, we hosted forums featuring diverse business leaders from varied backgrounds and industries to share their perspectives. They participated in dynamic panels – one on the importance of Environmental, Social and Governance as part of a company’s DNA, another on how large of a role leadership and accountability plays in business structures, and finally, how companies can achieve a diverse, equitable and accessible work environment. Recaps of these fascinating discussions can be found at latimes.com/diversity, along with the rest of this magazine’s contents.

The event was a great success, and we could not have done it without the support of presenting sponsor The Change Company, platinum sponsors California State University Northridge, Easterseals Southern California, Nixon Peabody LLP, and University of West Los Angeles.

This issue further explores the value of DEIA policies as they relate to both the California business community and how they impact society as a whole. Our readers were also invited to nominate professionals and experts who exemplify DEIA. We present the profiles of these select visionaries here to highlight some of the most prominent and game-changing individuals in their respective organizations and business sectors.

We will be promoting the publication of the magazine, and we invite you to follow us:

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L.A. Times B2B Publishing is looking forward to 2023, and we're already planning several networking events for next year. For sponsorship opportunities, please contact us at b2bpublishing@latimes.com.

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LEADING THE WAY

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Some Organizations Continue to Struggle with Effective Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

Only 9% of respondents believe their DEI efforts have been highly effective

A SURVEY CONDUCTED EARLIER this year paints a promising picture of widespread adoption of diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) initiatives, but also revealed that a number of businesses are struggling to keep up or meet goals.

"The Future of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion," conducted by The HR Research Institute, reveals that most diversity, equity and inclusion programs remain undeveloped, despite the fact that building DEI initiatives is shown to foster stronger employee relationships and increase financial performance. A mere 9% of respondents rate their organization's

DEI initiatives as being highly effective. Organizations with successful DEI programs put in the time to comprehensively define and prioritize them, and they have the support of top management.

"It is a hard hill to climb and to get leaders to understand the importance of diversity, equity and inclusion in an organization and how that does drive business operations and business decisions. You say you want to look like the communities in which you serve, but do you really? And it's really taking a step back and looking at it and saying we just got to do better," said Billie Wright, VP of People Operations at

Nava Public Benefit Corporation, who serves on HR Research Institute's The Future of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion 2022 Advisory Board.

Other major findings include:

- **Companies struggle to fully develop their DEI programs:** Only about 22% indicate that DEI initiatives in organizations have reached the "expert" or "advanced" stages of the HR Research Institute's DEI maturity model. Although most organizations are having trouble effectively managing DEI, more than 44% say that DEI plays a role in strategic planning and another 32% integrate their DEI frameworks into the business strategy.
- **Less than half (48%) agree that pay is equitable in their organization and most are not investing in understanding gaps:** Just 9% say equitable pay is a top priority among executives, while 28% say that equitable pay is not currently an organizational priority at all. Only 30% say they are actively investing in understanding the pay equity gap in their business, while 14% say they don't measure pay or pay equity at all.
- **Most companies underutilize DEI metrics and training:** Those that do measure their current state of DEI most rely on basic compliance-oriented workforce data (56%). Only 40% offer DEI-related learning and

development to all employees. The most common program is unconscious bias training (69%).

- Progress has been made in cultivating a more diverse workforce, but many companies still have a long way to go:** Nearly half (48%) agree their workforce is more diverse than it was two years ago, but more than half (57%) say ethnic/racial minorities make up no more than one-fifth of their organizations' leaders and 20% say the same about women.
- Companies are often not implementing benefit programs that appeal to a diverse workforce:** While 70% offer flexible work options, fewer offer paid parental leave (58%), benefits for domestic partners (43%) and family building benefits (23%), and 18% only provide the benefits mandated by law.

The survey also found that organizations with strong DEI practices are more likely to consider a wider range of characteristics in their scope of DEI, integrate DEI strategic frameworks into their business strategies, emphasize DEI in talent acquisition and employee communications, and have programs to improve diversity in the leadership ranks through an array of training and metrics.

"DEI has become a top concern over the last two years, but organizations can't get to DEI success overnight. In fact, we found that only about a fifth of HR professionals say that DEI initiatives in their organizations have reached the 'expert' or 'advanced' stages of HR.com's DEI Maturity Model," said Debbie McGrath, CEO of HR.com. "So, we still have a long way to go. The good news is a lot more HR departments are prioritizing this and seeking out best practices so their organizations can boost diversity, equity and inclusion as quickly as possible."

Similarly, research from Culture Amp reported earlier this year found that while many companies have

made diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) commitments, few organizations are yet to make meaningful progress on these commitments. Culture Amp's 2022 "Workplace DEI Report" revealed a striking disconnect in organizations' commitment, action and impact on DEI, with many organizations failing to collect DEI data or strategically invest in programming that will improve DEI outcomes.

In Culture Amp's survey of HR and DEI practitioners, 81% reported that they believe that DEI initiatives are beneficial to their organizations. Yet only 34% of respondents reported having enough resources to support their DEI initiatives. Despite lacking resources to drive change, the overwhelming majority (85%) of respondents agreed that their organization is building a diverse and inclusive culture, and employee perceptions of diversity have improved year over year.

Six out of 10 (63%) companies reported hosting events and DEI-related discussions, but research finds that companies often stop there. Only 50% of surveyed companies reported having a DEI mission statement and only 49% have a strategic diversity plan in place – both crucial steps in creating the organizational alignment necessary to create lasting, structural change.

More organizations are investing in DEI staffing and specialists, with 40% of organizations building out the specialized expertise needed to build successful equity & inclusion programs. Eight out of 10 DEI roles have been hired in the last 18 months, meaning that most companies are still at the beginning of their change journeys and there may yet be hope for additional progress.

During the last year, the experiences of Black and Asian employees largely improved, a trend that could be partially attributed to collective activism around Black Lives Matter and Stop AAPI Hate. While

these communities have seen improvements, Black employees still experience a gap in "perceptions of equal opportunities," and Asian employees still report they often lack a voice at the leadership level. On the other hand, Latinx and LGBTQ employees' experiences largely declined.

Culture Amp's research also shows that companies aren't doing enough to support working parents and caregivers. These investments would have been especially beneficial for women, with women reporting a 7% point decrease in agreement to "I am able to manage any caring responsibilities while transitioning back to work."

Moreover, there was a significant decrease in women's ability to balance their workloads. While most companies (94%) reported providing some type of mental health benefit, only 21% said they are providing child care assistance and less than 10% of respondents reported providing senior care benefits. In order to create a better work world, companies will need to flex their benefits to better serve the urgent needs of their employees.

To make progress on representation, companies need to collect more data on the demographics and experience of their workforce, and use it transparently to help drive leader awareness and action, as well as provide accountability to their employees. Research also shows that only 40% of organizations are conducting DEI-specific surveys (a key driver of inclusion).

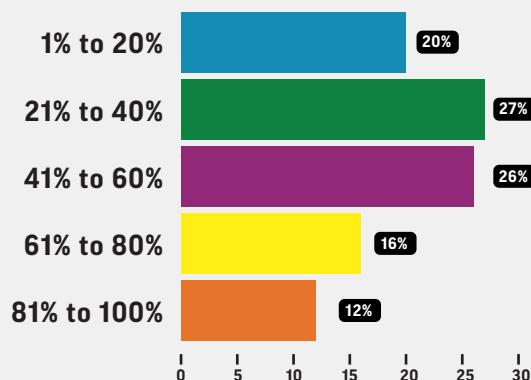
Culture Amp data shows that improving the transparency and consistency of core organizational processes are the best way to drive equity. Specifically, initiatives that are particularly effective at driving equitable outcomes include:

- Implementing employee recognition programs
- Having formal mentorship or sponsorship programs
- Creating clear advancement processes
- Explicitly sourcing underrepresented candidates

"Investing in DEI is more important than ever," said Aubrey Blanche, senior director of equitable design, product & people at Culture Amp. "Yet, while many companies believe that DEI is valuable, organizations are often not providing adequate resources or aren't strategically investing in DEI at the right levels to create significant change. This means that companies are largely performing, rather than creating DEI. There are steps that companies can take to move the needle on their DEI commitments. Making decisions based on DEI data and having a mission statement are important first steps. To build a diverse and inclusive workplace, companies need to build fair, equitable processes. Greater investment in DEI data collection, employee recognition, formal mentorship and clarity of advancement processes will better equip companies to achieve the sea change they say they're seeking."

About half of HR professionals say women represent no more than 40% of people managers, and a fifth say women are no more than 20% of people managers

Survey Question: About what percentage of your organizations people managers are women? Note: This refers to employees who have other employees reporting to them



Professional Development Is Key to Retaining Diverse Talent

Studies show a large disparity in development opportunities for people of color, women and Millennials

AS TALENT SHORTAGES PERSIST, a recent survey reveals that professional development opportunities are one tool for retaining employees. Indeed, 58% say they are likely to leave their company without professional development – or continuing education and career training to help develop new skills, stay up to date on current trends, and drive career advancement.

This likelihood to leave holds especially true among women, people of color and Millennials.

But for people of color, there may be a gap in access to these opportunities. Conducted by The Conference Board, the survey reveals that more people of color report a lack of opportunities and resources for professional development than their white counterparts.

The workforce survey captured the thoughts of more than 1,200 individuals – predominantly professional/office workers – from May of this year. Respondents weighed in on the importance, access, reasons and barriers to professional development.

Key findings include:

Development opportunities are key to retaining employees – especially women, people of color and Millennials.

The survey asked: How likely are you to leave your company for another if you do not receive the development opportunities you believe you need?

- Women, people of color and Millennials are more likely to leave their organization if they don't receive development opportunities.
- Gender:
 - ▶ Women: 61% would leave
 - ▶ Men: 55%
- Race:
 - ▶ Black: 68%
 - ▶ Hispanic and Latino: 70%
 - ▶ Asian: 80%
 - ▶ White: 53%
- Generation:
 - ▶ Millennials: 66%

- ▶ Gen X: 63%
- ▶ Baby Boomers: 47%
- The disparities are even more striking among women of color:
 - ▶ Black women: 71%
 - ▶ Hispanic women: 70%
 - ▶ Asian women: 70%
 - ▶ White women: 56%
- Overall, 58% of workers are likely to leave their company if they don't receive professional development opportunities.

"These survey results reveal that, in the midst of a talent shortage, providing and promoting opportunities for career and skills development can be a critical way to attract candidates," said Rebecca Ray, executive vice president of human capital at The Conference Board.

"In order to retain and grow the diversity of thought and experience within your organization, it is critical to ensure that all employees have access to rich professional development opportunities."

Most employees highly value the opportunity to develop work-related skills.

How important is it to you to continuously develop your work-related skills?

- 96 percent of respondents say it is important or very important for them to continuously develop their work-related skills.
- More people of color say continuously developing skills is very important:
 - ▶ Black: 87%
 - ▶ Hispanic and Latino: 86%
 - ▶ Asian: 78%
 - ▶ White: 73%
- More women say it is very important than men:
 - ▶ Women: 80%
 - ▶ Men: 70%

Despite the high value placed on professional development opportunities, people of color report a greater lack of access to these opportunities and resources.

What barriers/challenges do you experience in developing your skills?

- More people of color report a lack of opportunities and resources for professional development than their White counterparts.
- Lack of resources:
 - ▶ Black: 38%
 - ▶ Hispanic and Latino: 35%
 - ▶ Asian: 40%
 - ▶ White: 28%
- Lack of opportunities:
 - ▶ Black: 37%
 - ▶ Hispanic and Latino: 37%
 - ▶ Asian: 36%
 - ▶ White: 27%

Employees think leadership, critical thinking and adaptability will be the most important skills for the future.

Which of the following non-technical, personal skills will be important for your future job opportunities and career success?

- Top three skills overall:
 - ▶ Leadership: 40%
 - ▶ Critical thinking: 36%
 - ▶ Adaptability and agility: 35%
- Bottom three skills overall:
 - ▶ Empathy: 11%
 - ▶ Resilience: 12%
 - ▶ Global and cultural awareness: 15%

Women think adaptability and agility will be more important (39%) than men (30%).

"Employees have made clear their desire to keep learning and growing both within and beyond their current roles," said Jennifer Burnett, principal of human capital at The Conference Board.

"It is in the best interest of employers to provide all employees across their business with learning and development opportunities related to business priorities and overall personal growth, whether it's ensuring there are appropriate resources for frontline workers or highlighting the importance of empathy for managers in a hybrid work world. Creating a culture of learning will not only help your employees flourish but will help your company stay ahead of the rapidly changing business environment."



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Federal Government Aims to Set Example of How to Build a More Diverse American Workforce

As the nation's largest employer, the Federal Government has taken on the challenge to provide an example of how it should be a model for Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility (DEIA), where all employees are treated with dignity and respect

IN A PUBLIC STATEMENT issued this past summer, the White House shared that “we are at our best when drawing upon all parts of society and our

greatest accomplishments are achieved when diverse perspectives are brought to bear to overcome our greatest challenges.”

On June 25, 2021, White House Executive Order 14035 created the DEIA Initiative and directed federal agencies to follow a timeline to execute the federal government’s DEIA mission and vision.

The DEIA Initiative Team – the Office of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility (ODEIA) at the Office of Personnel Management (OPM); the Office of Management and Budget (OMB); the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC); and the White House Domestic Policy Council (DPC) – are leading the federal government’s efforts to integrate and prioritize DEIA in the workplace. This interagency team provides agencies with information, resources, and a framework to develop and implement strategic plans that identify actions to advance DEIA.

The team announced that it is implementing a robust set of DEIA Executive Order priorities, including:

- Promoting partnerships and recruitment
- Utilizing data collection and analysis
- Advancing professional development
- Expanding employment opportunities for formerly incarcerated individuals
- Promoting paid internships
- Creating chief diversity officers
- Promoting pay equity
- Providing DEIA training and learning
- Advancing equity for LGBTQI+ employees
- Advancing equity for employees with disabilities
- Ensuring safe workplaces

The DEIA Initiative Team also provided critical guidance and support to federal agencies, including:

- A self-assessment tool and promising practices guidance document.
- A government-wide strategic plan to advance diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility in the Federal workforce, which provides a roadmap outlining priorities for agencies to consider in their strategic plan development.
- An online professional learning community with templates and resources, and ongoing support with DEIA office hours to develop DEIA strategic plans and remove any potential barriers.

Federal agencies created baseline assessments and agency-wide strategic plans, including:

- Conducting assessments to understand their current state of DEIA implementation as informed by a DEIA Maturity Model.

• Creating cross-functional teams to develop DEIA strategic plans and implement activities. The cross-functional teams varied based on agency structure and included a whole of agency approach.

- Developing mission and vision statements to serve as guiding principles for DEIA efforts.
- Ultimately, federal agencies created strategic plans that identify the agency context, as well as milestones, goals, actions and potential barriers to advance DEIA. Agencies collaborated regularly with the DEIA Initiative Team to discuss implementation across the following timeline:
 - 100 Days: Agencies submit DEIA self-assessments
 - 50 Days: Initiative Team issues the DEIA government-wide strategic plan
 - 270 Days: Initiative Team collects agency DEIA strategic plans

The DEIA Initiative Team and federal agencies will focus on underserved communities through best practices, including but not limited to:

- Convening an executive level diversity officer council to provide agency chief diversity officers and senior leaders a formal forum to exchange ideas, best practices, and challenges in implementing and assessing progress of the DEIA mission and vision.
- Adopting practices to serve all dimensions of diversity in the federal workforce, including engagement with employee resource groups and federal unions, increased utilization of promotion and retention strategies, promotion of internship and mentorship programs, and expansion of partnerships with Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs).
- Utilizing current hiring authorities to encourage employment of veterans, military spouses, individuals with disabilities and early career talent, among others. These hiring authorities are designed to give agencies flexibility to quickly hire top talent for critical positions and remove barriers to employment.
- Increasing the number of internships, especially paid internships across the Federal government.

Serving as a model for the nation, the DEIA Initiative Team is committed to leading the government-wide DEIA strategy to help agencies implement and evaluate their plans to create more diverse, equitable, inclusive and accessible workplaces. Together, the interagency team will continue to offer office hours, professional learning opportunities and ongoing technical assistance. For more information, visit OPM.gov.

Staying The Course: Building A Diverse, Equitable and Inclusive Workplace

Leaders at Nixon Peabody LLP discuss how they've gone beyond mission statements and into real DEI actions

THANKS TO DECADES OF work from grassroots advocacy groups and professional service allies – including Nixon Peabody – most of us now agree that building diverse, equitable and inclusive workplaces is a corporate imperative, with substantial social and economic benefits.

We must never take our new consensus for granted, but we can be confident that many businesses, customers and employees share this aspiration. Now that our missions are broadly aligned, we must examine our practices closely and ask ourselves some crucial questions: How effectively do our real-world actions reflect our stated DEI principles? Which tactics and strategies are truly moving the needle? And how do we engage with skeptics – in Big Law and beyond – who claim to see tension between the twin goals of representation and results?

Nixon Peabody's Los Angeles office, home to 114 professionals who embody Southern California's dynamic cultural diversity, offers a clear answer to each of these important questions. Since opening our L.A. office in 2005 – an ambitious West Coast expansion for a firm that began more than 100 years ago in Rochester, New York – we have made an intentional and concentrated effort to attract, develop, and retain top talent, with a particular focus on skilled attorneys from backgrounds that are underrepresented in our industry.

In fact, more than 80% of the people at Nixon Peabody L.A. identify as women, people of color, or as members of the LGBTQ+ community or another underrepresented group. More than 75% of all NP L.A. attorneys – including 60% of partners – are also members of underrepresented groups. And our years-long commitment to diversifying our firm and the L.A. office continues to pay dividends in today's highly competitive job market: In 2022, we've added seven partners and nine associates to the L.A. team, nearly 63% of whom are diverse. There is perhaps no greater testament to the way Nixon Peabody's diversity commitments resonate among talented attorneys and the industry at large. Firmwide, we have set ambitious goals to continue diversifying our

equity partnership – the ranks of attorneys who own our business – by 2025.

Clearly, Nixon Peabody L.A. can claim one of the most diverse and inclusive Big Law offices in the country. We've invested the time, attention and resources required to make this happen, because we know that even the most well-intentioned principles fall short unless they are paired with concrete actions and validated by rigorous, measurable standards.

So, how have we done it? Building a firm that reflects our colleagues, clients and communities requires thoughtful strategies for recruiting and hiring. Our firm follows the Mansfield Rule criteria, which require that 30% of the candidates considered for significant leadership roles must be women, attorneys of color or LGBTQ+ attorneys. And our commitment to representation in recruiting and staffing extends from C-suite executives to summer associates. Half of all second- and third-year law students interviewed for coveted internships, and 20% of candidates interviewed for open lateral associate positions, must come from underrepresented backgrounds. This ensures that we are truly considering a broad range of candidates who reflect the diversity of our communities and clients. Our DEI goals are threaded through every stage of the hiring and talent development process – ensuring that we are building a firm and an L.A. office that mirrors the people we serve.

We also understand that hiring diverse talent is only the first step in a continuous, thoughtful effort to create an equitable and inclusive organization. We build our teams through new hires and extensive support for the people already here. By offering robust mentoring and sponsorship programs, and creating resource groups with a direct line to firm management, we ensure all our team members can make their voices heard on the issues that affect their performance, career development and firm citizenship.

Nixon Peabody has been a strong advocate for DEI principles in Big Law since long before the current consensus formed. Like any organization with a long-standing commitment to this work, we have often



Courtesy of Nixon Peabody LLP

faced skepticism for those who claim such efforts are superficial – that DEI is merely an exercise in optics.

This couldn't be further from the truth. The research is clear: Diverse teams devise better solutions for clients. When a team draws on the varied experiences and knowledge of each member, the end result is more creative, more innovative and more effective. While we have always known that building a diverse organization is the right thing to do, we also see that it's the smart thing to do. There is no tension between representation and results because our firm proves that one leads directly to the other.

Our clients are also prioritizing their DEI principles and taking active steps to live out their values. We are thrilled to contribute to these efforts. This year, we introduced our industry-leading DEI Strategic Services team, designed to position our clients for long-term success by helping them develop inclusive cultures that drive business success, elevate their brands and respond to the needs of their people.

The consensus is clear: Companies who act on DEI do better. Organizational success is measured not by stated promises but by disciplined practices that make a meaningful difference. Nixon Peabody is proud to lead the movement toward a more inclusive legal profession, and we're excited to team with our people, our clients and our communities to create lasting change.



– Sonia Nayak
Los Angeles Office
Managing Partner;
Nixon Peabody LLP



– Rekha Chiruvolu
Chief Diversity, Equity
& Inclusion Officer;
Nixon Peabody LLP

Restaurant Industry Releases DEI Research and Framework for Building Successful Future Programs

The study demonstrates the disparity in perception of DEI effectiveness between management and employees

IN AUGUST, THE NATIONAL Restaurant Association released a landmark diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) report measuring the awareness and perceived effectiveness of DEI practices among employers and employees in the restaurant industry.

The research, conducted in collaboration between the National Restaurant Association, the National Restaurant Association Educational Foundation (NRAEF), the Multicultural Foodservice & Hospitality Alliance (MFHA) and Cornell University Nolan School of Hotel Administration, found an association between the impact of DEI strategies and foodservice workers' job satisfaction. The study also highlighted differences between a company's perceptions about its DEI effectiveness and its employees' experiences.

Ultimately, the report reinforces the critical importance of effective DEI policies in driving employee engagement and retention within the restaurant industry.

To support the development of effective DEI programs across the industry, MFHA created "ELEVATE - A Menu for Change." The framework provides restaurant operators with proactive business strategies and plans for building a more diverse, inclusive, and engaged workforce.

"This research highlights the opportunity for companies to elevate their DEI game," said Gerry Fernandez, president and founder of the Multicultural Foodservice & Hospitality Alliance. "We have this incredible opportunity to listen, learn and act to improve our DEI practices. Committing to and investing in these changes can increase retention of current restaurant industry employees and enhance the overall perception of working in the restaurant industry. Our mission is to open doors of opportunity for people from all backgrounds, and we are eager to help do whatever it takes to ensure our industry is the gold standard for diversity, equity, and inclusion."

When asked about the current profile of diversity in the foodservice industry, individuals typically reported differently than the enterprise. This suggests businesses may perceive an environment of diversity that is different than what is experienced by employees. If left unchecked, this has the potential to minimize the experience of historically marginalized communities;

limit an organization's ability to recognize the need for a more diverse workforce and change recruiting policies accordingly; and create an environment for turnover. Key findings include:

- Enterprise-level reporting of gender demographics is different than individual employee reporting. Enterprises underreport the percentage of female employees and overreport the representation of non-binary/non-conforming employees compared with how employees self-report (55% of individuals identify as female, enterprises report 35%).
- A greater percentage of individual employees self-identify as Hispanic, Black/African American and other races than enterprises report.
- Enterprises reported a higher representation of people with disabilities than individuals indicated; 16% of individual employees self-reported having a disability, while enterprises report 34%.

Enterprises generally believe they have created work environments that support DEI, yet awareness of those policies is often weak among current employees and even more so among former employees. This can lead employees to believe that DEI is not a strategic priority, which can ultimately lead to a lack of job satisfaction and higher turnover. Key findings include:

- Ninety-two percent of enterprises report having dedicated DEI initiatives, however, there is limited awareness of those policies among employees. For example, 78% of enterprises reported having employee diversity training or awareness events, while only 48% of current employees and 34% former employees reported receiving this training.
- Seventy-three percent of enterprises believe that a diverse workforce improves a company's innovation, yet 54% of enterprises believe that money spent on diversity programs is not having a noticeable impact.
- Fifty-eight percent of enterprises believe they provide adequate DEI training.
- Thirty percent of current employees and 14% of former employees believe the diversity programs

in place at their restaurants have a positive impact on the workplace.

In general, the research suggests that current employees are satisfied with their work and overall have positive views about working in the restaurant and foodservice industry. The report indicates a correlation between employee sentiment about working in the industry and supervisor support. Addressing work challenges, investing in training and team member development, and creating authentic and sustainable employment opportunities through a culture of belonging and inclusion can help to address these gaps. Key findings include:

- Seventy-two percent of current employees expect to be employed by their current restaurant/organization in one year.
- Seventy-seven percent of former restaurant industry employees are not currently looking for employment in the industry.
- Sixteen percent of former restaurant employees expect to return to work in the industry.

To drive positive change in DEI initiatives for enterprises and employees, the MFHA created "ELEVATE - A Menu for Change" - a step-by-step toolkit with proven best practices and proactive business strategies.

"The restaurant workforce is the most diverse across the U.S. economy. The new insight provided by our research and the MFHA's ELEVATE framework creates an opportunity to develop a standard for meaningful DEI programs across the industry," said Michelle Korsmo, President & CEO of the National Restaurant Association, and CEO of the National Restaurant Association Educational Foundation.

"Our industry historically has welcomed all people looking to chase their American dream with a solid career and ownership potential. As our current and future workforces focus on new goals and change their expectations, we want the industry to continue to be a place that welcomes all and supports personal and professional growth."

Planting the Seeds of Change

Education plays a critical role in shaping future leaders who care about workplace diversity

BUILDING AN INCLUSIVE, EQUITABLE and diverse business culture is never easy, but the payoff when accomplished is clearly worthwhile. According to a McKinsey & Company report, companies with racial and ethnic diversity are 36% more likely to outperform their peers. And the Harvard Business Review (HBR) stated that 70% of diverse companies are better positioned to capture new markets, which in turn comes with better performance and improved profits.

Fostering a work environment where employees feel included and valued, and are treated fairly and with respect requires leaders who are willing to make diversity and inclusion a bedrock of the organization's mission, policies, and practices. HBR further reports, "What leaders say and do makes up to a 70% difference as to whether an individual feels included. And this really matters because the more people feel included, the more they speak up, go the extra mile and collaborate – all of which ultimately lifts organizational performance."

So, how do we instill tomorrow's leaders with a true passion for making workplace diversity a reality? The answer is higher education.

Higher Education Creates Future Leaders

Institutions of higher learning have long held a prominent role in nurturing tomorrow's business and societal leaders. The importance of education is unquestioned as is the formative power of being exposed to new ideas and opportunities. Colleges and universities can be fertile grounds for incubating the leadership qualities that will one day transform businesses, bring innovation and solve some of the world's most vexing problems.

Nurturing future leaders, who will bring diversity and inclusion to the forefront of their respective organizations, starts with educational opportunities. It is simply common sense to recognize that providing access to higher education for a more diverse student body will inevitably incubate leaders who are more sensitive to the importance of diversity and inclusion in the workplace.

Unfortunately, higher education today is often out of reach for many potential students who lack sufficient resources to further their academic aspirations. That is why the democratization of education is important. The University of West Los Angeles (UWLA) has made such democratization the foundation of its

mission as a learning institution. UWLA is committed to making quality higher and post-graduate education affordable and accessible to those who might not otherwise have the opportunity – especially those who must work full- or part-time while they study. The flexibility provided helps UWLA to have a uniquely diverse student base.

"As an institution, we are committed to meeting the underserved community's needs. I hope UWLA will be recognized for its efforts to close the 'equity gap' left by the California State University system schools. We are making great strides towards strategically positioning ourselves to reach more students. Our School of Law continues to produce talented trailblazing attorneys. Our School of Business has earned the reputation of equipping managers and leaders with the knowledge, skills and abilities needed to impact their organizations positively each day," explained Perry Martin Jr., professor of business; director of Faculty Development; and Dean of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Transformation at UWLA.

Practical Knowledge Builds Practical Leaders

You can train leaders. Leadership is on the curriculum and the skills it takes to become an effective leader are core to UWLA's academic approach.

Robert W. Brown, UWLA president, explained it this way: "We focus on practical, outcome-oriented education, which is taught by esteemed faculty who are also practitioners in their field. With a student body that includes many working students, we make sure that the education provided at UWLA is more than theoretical, it's useful. As I often say, our students can use what they learn on Thursday at their jobs on Monday."

President Brown added, "We know our strengths as an educational institution, and we focus on those things that are most meaningful to our students. Our students come to pursue degree completion of a Bachelor of Science in business administration, or they're coming back to school for a post-secondary JD degree to become a lawyer or to secure a Master of Science in Organizational Leadership, Management and Technology to advance or catalyze their careers in business."

This type of practical learning helps develop a depth of knowledge and understanding that is invaluable to functioning effectively in the workplace. And those



Courtesy of UWLA

that are able to demonstrate a mastery of the job are often rewarded with advancement and eventually leadership.

Students Who Value Diversity Can Become Leaders Who Promote It

When students are exposed to a diverse and inclusive learning experience, there is an opportunity to make a lasting impression. Graduates of diversity-oriented institutions, like UWLA, come away with an experience grounded in the values of fairness, equity and respect. Once embedded in their thought processes, these graduates are more likely to become the diversity-minded leaders of the future.

President Brown recently passed along his thoughts on leadership to UWLA's 2022 graduating class. He imparted, "What you achieve in the journey is not as important as what you become through the journey. Setting the bar high for yourself is admirable and striving to achieve your professional goals is commendable. But what you make of yourself and the kind of person you become through your journey is what truly matters the most."

Institutions of higher education have an obligation to nurture an environment that promotes diversity and inclusion, creating an atmosphere that will foster a generation of leaders who will bring those values to the workplace.

Professor Martin concluded, "Any teacher will tell you that there is nothing quite like the feeling we have while witnessing one of our students becoming an agent of change in their present organizations. Our students are in the fight, and we go to battle with them!"

UWLA is a Black-owned and -operated university based in West Los Angeles. Driven by its opportunity mission, UWLA provides diverse students a path to success via its School of Law (Juris Doctorate program) and School of Business, which offers both bachelor's degree completion and master's degree programs.



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Journalism's Commitment to DEIA Grows as the Diversity Pledge Institute Celebrates Its First Anniversary

The Institute at the Walter Cronkite School of Journalism and Mass Communication aims for stronger news organizations and more accurate reporting for all

IN THE PAST YEAR, the Diversity Pledge Institute (DPI) has expanded its Learning Circle program offerings, launched its Newsroom Diversity Survey pilot and partnered with The Ida B. Wells Society for Investigative Reporting, Editor & Publisher, News Revenue Hub and the Journalism Education Association, and found a physical home at Arizona State University's Walter Cronkite School of Journalism and Mass Communication.

"I started DPI because I believe that diversity makes for stronger newsrooms and better journalism, and over the past year I have been fortunate enough to be surrounded by people who hold the same belief," founder Larry Graham said. "From our staff who work tirelessly to bring DPI's programs to life to our board of directors who help guide the ship, reaching this important milestone would not have happened without them."

"DPI has been a lifeline to me as well as many of my friends and colleagues in journalism," said Daphne Duret, who recently joined The Marshall Project as staff writer to cover policing. "I have jokingly called Larry 'the Harriet Tubman of Journalism,' and the truth is that his inside knowledge of how this business works has empowered me and others to successfully navigate through spaces where we were previously rare or nonexistent."

"For every public announcement of a new partnership or initiative from DPI this past year, there have been countless more victories in the day-to-day work of a group of people who are always accessible, always willing to provide advice or make a connection, and always willing to do the kind of unseen work that holds our news outlets accountable to DEIA in a tangible way," she continued. "As proud as I am to call Larry a friend, I am happier still that DPI has become

the action-driven ally our industry needs to keep us fair and honest in making sure the demographics of our newsrooms reflect the communities we cover."

The organization has also worked with newsrooms across the nation to place journalists from diverse backgrounds into roles that further their careers and allow them to thrive in newsrooms actively involved in improving diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility in the news industry.

"After taking an extended maternity leave, DPI helped me kickstart my career again in journalism," Chantal Allam, a reporter covering real estate for the Raleigh News & Observer.

"With Larry's guidance, I forged critical connections with both local and national media outlets, eventually landing my dream job with the Raleigh News & Observer. It wasn't easy, but I got there with DPI's support."

This two-fold approach to DEIA – providing support to journalists from diverse backgrounds and working with newsrooms to create more diverse, equitable, inclusive and accessible spaces – has allowed DPI to have real impact in helping newsrooms to start developing goals around retention that can lead to increased audience engagement and revenue.

"I always tell people that I want to get to the point where the work DPI does is no longer needed," Graham said. "But until we get to that point, and I hope we do, DPI will continue to provide free services to journalists from diverse backgrounds and provide the necessary support for newsroom clients as they work toward more equitable and inclusive practices."

Over the past few months, the DPI team has taken their message on the road at journalism conferences throughout the country. From the Investigative Reporters and Editors Conference in Denver to the Online News Association in Los Angeles and America's Newspapers Senior Leadership Conference in New Orleans, DPI staff have talked with journalists and newsroom leaders to hear firsthand their experiences with DEIA in their newsrooms and the struggles they're having in hopes of addressing them with future programming.

"These conversations have been a great addition to the work we are doing in finalizing our diversity and inclusion survey that will officially launch early in 2023," Gaby Martinez-Stevenson, DPI's director of institutional research, said. "This survey will further help the industry develop a common understanding of DEIA as well as help identify the appropriate strategies and tools needed to address these barriers."

Understanding and Creating Equity Around Disability

Easterseals is leading the way to full equity, inclusion, and access through life-changing disability and community services

FOR MORE THAN 100 years, Easterseals has worked tirelessly with our partners to enhance quality of life and expand local access to healthcare, education, and employment opportunities.

Easterseals Southern California (ESSC) is the largest provider of disability services in California and one of the largest in the country. ESSC's strength is in our diversity and inclusive culture. We are committed to making sure our leaders, staff, volunteers and partnerships are as diverse as the communities we serve. Easterseals, in action and advocacy, prioritizes equity, respect and belonging. With a staff of 2,500 professionals, the organization provides services to more than 15,000 people and their families throughout Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, San Diego, Imperial, Kern, and Ventura counties.

Through programs and services tailored to meet the needs of individuals, ESSC supports full participation and inclusion within the local community. From early childhood programs for the critical first five years to autism services, daily and independent living services for adults, senior services, employment programs, veterans' services, and more. Easterseals' public education, policy and advocacy initiatives positively shape perceptions and address the urgent and evolving needs of the one-in-four Americans with disabilities today. Easterseals is empowering people with disabilities, families and communities to be full and equal participants in society.

ESSC's bold Vision and Impact Plan – which addresses the needs of the disability community, diverse in race, gender, sexual orientation, age, religion and culture – defines how the organization supports people with disabilities now and in the future. The goal is to make Southern California the most inclusive



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place for people with disabilities to live, learn, work and play by 2030. In addition, ESSC has built a workplace and communities where everyone belongs. As a result, ESSC has developed two initiatives to support those goals:

RISE (Respect, Inclusion, Self-awareness and Equity) focuses on building a diverse and inclusive workplace. Through this program, staff training opportunities support inclusion within the workplace and inclusion affecting the participants who receive ESSC's services. Trainings have included "Disability in the Black Community," "Subtle Acts of Exclusion," "Understanding Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity" and "Awareness and Disability Training," to list a few. Staff also participated in listening circles, sharing and learning from each other's diverse experiences as individuals, and as direct-care professionals. RISE extends to the organization's talent recruitment efforts with tailored outreach to hire staff representative of the populations the organization serves.

IDEA (Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Access) ensures ESSC's services are inclusive for the diverse populations the organization serves and advances health equity in our communities. In particular, IDEA

addresses the disparity in access to early autism diagnosis in communities of color and underserved communities by reaching out and providing free diagnostic services and referrals to therapy providers, and by raising awareness in the community itself.

Long excluded and often overlooked, people with disabilities are supported by ESSC to thrive, be fully included, and have equity and access. ESSC continues on the path toward supporting staff, participants and their families to be partners in building a more inclusive community.



*– Kimberly Cohn
is the Chief Marketing
Communications Officer at
Easterseals Southern California.*

CSUN Assistive Technology Conference Showcases Innovations for a More Inclusive World

THE EXHIBIT HALL AT the CSUN Assistive Technology Conference featured a treasure trove of devices and software that help people with disabilities navigate – and fully experience – the world.

There were apps that audibly describe the surrounding world for people with impaired vision, phones that display scrolling captions of conversations for people with hearing loss and spoons with stabilizing handles for individuals with hand tremors.

At a recent conference, one wearable video camera, BrainPort V100, connected to an oral electrode array that stimulated shapes and patterns on the user's tongue, essentially painting pictures for the visually impaired wearer to imagine.

"We had a grandfather who said he saw his grandchild for the first time," said William A. Conn, then-vice president of sales and marketing for BrainPort Technologies, the company displaying the device.

Assistive technology can be as complex as the BrainPort camera or as commonplace as reading glasses. According to the World Health Organization, more than 1 billion people globally need one or more assistive devices, and the demand is expected to double by 2030.

The CSUN Assistive Technology Conference offers experts in the field of assistive technology, users of the technology, and advocates to come together to exchange ideas and solutions that move us toward a society of greater inclusivity and belonging.

Technology for All

Conceived in the mid-1980s, the CSUN Assistive Technology Conference (then known as the International Conference on Technology and Persons with Disabilities) was the brainchild of Dr. Harry Murphy, then-director of CSUN's Center on Disabilities, and a disabilities specialist with decades of experience working with the Deaf and Hard of Hearing communities.

In the decades since, the event has earned an international reputation as the premier conference of its kind.

Whether it's an app or a modified wheelchair, touring the exhibit hall showcases the most up-to-date

assistive technology, prototypes or time-tested solutions. A wristband recently on display used sonar to locate obstacles near people with visual impairments, then vibrated to help navigate around them. An app connected people who are blind or have low vision to trained agents who serve as "on-demand eyes."

Even if all conference attendees aren't in the business of developing assistive technology, they are certainly interested in using it. Corporate participants include Amazon, T-Mobile and Sony, for example. While these companies aren't necessarily developers of assistive technology, they recognize their customer base consists of those with disabilities and the importance of offering the best experience to all customers.

"The mission set in the 1980s is just as important today. All across the conference, there are thought leaders, industry professionals and end users committed to the same goal of making the world an inclusive and accessible place for all people," said Julia Santiago, interim managing director of the Center on Disabilities, the center that organizes the conference.

A recurring theme at the conferences is the need for tech companies to change their cultures to focus on accessibility. Further work in this area remains to be done as past keynote speakers have called upon businesses to reframe the understanding of disability and beneficiaries of assistive technology, and to work harder toward inclusivity.

Johanna Lucht, the first NASA engineer who is deaf and has taken an active role in the control room during a crewed test flight, delivered a keynote address at the 34th conference that stressed removing barriers to developing assistive technology. She noted that many of the most beneficial technologies for people with disabilities were not designed for that purpose. For example, ridesharing services such as Uber removed potential miscommunications that occurred when the Deaf or Hard of Hearing ordered taxis through interpreter services – the apps have enabled people to type in exact addresses.

Conversely, video closed captioning can benefit people without disabilities enabling individuals to better understand content in a noisy space. "The point I'm making is, society is too hung up on the definition behind assistive technology," Lucht said. "This technology can also benefit everyone."



Microsoft is one company that has been praised for its inclusive hiring practices, including programs to hire people with intellectual developmental disabilities and individuals with autism. In 2018, Microsoft Chief Accessibility Officer Jenny Lay-Flurrie discussed these programs, noting candidates with autism are often extremely qualified but by traditional measures do not perform well in interviews. Individuals who approach tasks differently are valuable in creative problem-solving.



Courtesy of CSUN

Lay-Flurrie, who is deaf, also discussed the company's commitment to accessibility features in products and customer support, such as a free app that narrates the world, and a more prominent display of the Accessibility Checker tool that notifies users of accessibility issues in their content – a feature beneficial to everyone.

Commitment to Inclusivity

Today, the conference attracts nearly 5,000 participants from all 50 states and more than 35 countries.

It has an international reputation for expanding the knowledge base of professionals and introducing newcomers to the field. It is part of a long history of involvement in assisting people with disabilities dating back to 1961, when the university was known as San Fernando Valley State College.

"As an institution that is fiercely committed to advancing and advocating for equity, access and inclusion, CSUN is proud to host this annual conference. Our efforts encompass all facets of inclusivity, and we

recognize that we need to continue to accelerate our work if we are to realize a society where everyone can participate, contribute and thrive. This objective has always been at the heart of CSUN and this conference," said CSUN President Erika D. Beck.

The **38th Assistive Technology Conference** takes place on March 13-17, 2023 at the Anaheim Marriott. The exhibit hall is open to the public and admission is free from March 15-17, 2023.



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Affordability Remains Top Consideration on Where and Whether Students Attend College

Pre-college testing policies can also have an outsize impact on a diverse student body

SURVEY RESULTS RELEASED THIS summer by EAB of nearly 5,000 students who graduated from high school in 2021 revealed that test-optional admissions policies have had significant DEI impacts on college applications.

Overall, 15% of Gen Z students say they applied to a school specifically because it did not require them to submit an SAT or ACT score with their application. Black and Hispanic/Latinx students were much more likely (24% and 21%, respectively) than their White or Asian counterparts (12% and 15%, respectively) to apply to a school because of its test-optional policy.

"The majority of higher ed institutions suspended or permanently discontinued testing requirements during the pandemic, and many schools still do not require students to submit SAT or ACT scores," said EAB's dean of enrollment management Madeleine Rhyneer. "Unfortunately, schools aren't doing a very good job

of making it clear to students whether their institution is test-optional for every academic program and scholarship. Schools looking to diversify enrollment would be well-served by clarifying and promoting their testing policies."

The new EAB survey also showed that college affordability continues to be the top consideration in whether and where students apply and enroll. Thirty-six percent say they picked their institution for its "affordable tuition." Roughly one-third of Black (32%) and Hispanic/Latinx (35%) respondents who decided not to attend college this year said that cost concerns drove their decision.

As the number of high school graduates who enroll in college continues to decline, schools are getting more creative in how they attract and engage prospective students. Some have begun offering \$1,000 "bonus" scholarships, added to the aid package when

a student enrolls, to incentivize applicants to make a campus visit. This bonus scholarship incentive was favored by 64% of EAB survey respondents, making it far more popular than other potential choices, including free school apparel (39%) or reimbursement for campus visit travel costs (39%).

Not all students are interested or able to make in-person campus visits a staple of their college search experience. Seventy-five percent of survey respondents said they took at least one virtual campus tour during 2021, a 50% increase from the 2020 school year.

"Getting a prospective student to visit your campus in person has been a staple of college recruiting for years," Rhyneer added. "It makes perfect sense since a campus visit is strongly correlated with a student's decision to enroll. However, since many families lack the resources or flexibility to travel, creating an effective virtual tour of your campus has become critically important, especially for schools looking to diversify their applicant pool."

EAB collected survey responses from 4,848 students who graduated from high school in 2021. The report also includes analysis of student behavioral data from more than 1,100 partner colleges and universities.

From kindergarten to college to career, EAB partners with leaders and practitioners to accelerate progress and drive results across five major areas: enrollment, student success, institutional strategy, data analytics, and DEI.



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Leveraging ESG for DEIA Results

Many believe DEIA is valuable but have not invested sufficient resources towards change

“THE SECRET OF CHANGE is to focus all your energy not on fighting the old but on building the new.” – Socrates

People are looking for a sense of belonging and corporate responsibility, and shareholders want to see an organization's commitment to the same. A recent Culture Amp report shows that while many companies believe diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility (DEIA) are valuable, leadership has not invested adequate resources to create significant change. Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) methods inherently involve tracking metrics for reporting and can be leveraged to help organizations better measure, and optimize ESG and DEIA initiatives.

What is ESG?

ESG is an acronym for Environmental, Social and Governance. ESG is best characterized as an analysis framework that helps stakeholders understand how an organization manages risks and opportunities related to environmental, social and governance criteria¹. It is essential to note that the precursor to ESG, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), takes more of a philanthropic than a measured approach.

Interestingly, ESG is not as commonly known as DEIA. For DEIA practitioners, ESG can be a secret weapon in the fight to move DEIA initiatives and metrics forward. ESG can serve as an alternative that lessens the disruption to the status quo. The level of visibility and support ESG receives allows DEIA to receive the attention that it is often lacking. ESG, CSR and DEIA are all crucial to making a company more appealing to candidates, employees, and shareholders. However, ESG is unique as it is designed to look at issues through the lens of business risks, which tends to resonate with senior leaders and the business community.

The ‘S’ in ESG, which focuses on social aspects such as Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, aids in prioritizing DEIA and may benefit a company’s ability to attract and retain top talent. However, leaders must go beyond the aspects of recruiting and retention and incorporate ESG principles into the entire employee experience. Below are tips for ESG and DEIA success:

Top 3 ESG Tips for DEIA success:

1. **Communicate ESG efforts with pride** – transformation within an organization must be at the top

with clear communication to the people within the organization. Leaders must recognize that employees are at the core of the relationships that will make ESG successful. Multiple studies show that employees prefer to work for purpose-led companies. So, clarify the ESG priorities your organization is committed to and exactly how employees can play a role.

2. **Bake ESG into the organizational DNA** – It is essential to ensure that employees understand how ESG benefits customers, communities, and the overall brand. Are employees aware of the ESG efforts? Or are ESG efforts only shared with a select few? Employees should understand exactly how an ESG strategy affects their day-to-day roles. This practice adds to inclusivity and overall employee engagement.
3. **Focus on culture change instead of compliance** – ESG will not be successful if it is seen as simply a required certification or oversight. Integrate ESG into the organization’s culture by tying it to values. Such values as respect, community, and integrity align nicely with climate control, health and safety, DEIA, and other ESG indicators.

Companies with solid ESG strategies have developed resilience during these turbulent times. Embedding ESG into an organization’s culture and purpose can prepare the organization for significant social shifts and rally employees to embrace personal responsibility for company goals that impact climate change, race relations and overall consumption. Leaders can use ESG to garner and foster more profound levels of support for DEIA in hopes of seeing significant changes in our workplaces.

Fully embedding ESG into purpose, culture and ways of working can prepare people for future disruptive events such as pandemics, fiscal crises, or significant social shifts. It also rallies people to conscientiously embrace personal responsibility for high-impact areas such as climate change, race relations and responsible consumption of our world’s resources.



– Dr. Thelá Thatch
CEO & Founder of
Thelá Thatch Consulting

¹ESG (Environmental, Social and Governance), <https://corporatefinanceinstitute.com/resources/csg/csg-environmental-social-governance/>

Coalition Launches Guidelines on Inclusive Language and Images in Scholarly Communication

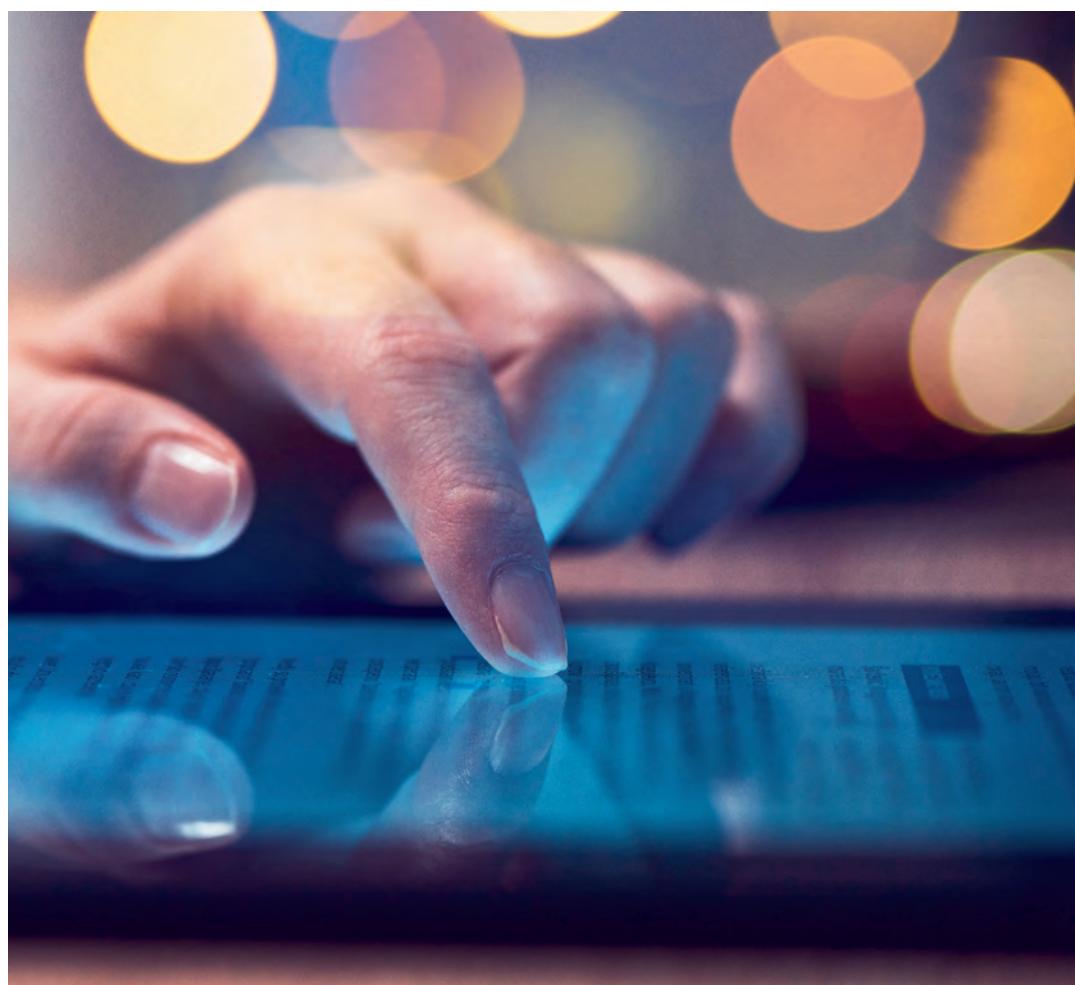
The new resource will serve the academic publishing world, giving them a path to utilize modern and inclusive language

IN OCTOBER OF 2022, the Coalition for Diversity and Inclusion in Scholarly Communications (C4DISC) released a resource to deepen reflection and help people in the scholarly publishing world improve the way in which they navigate through DEI challenges: the “Guidelines on Inclusive Language and Images in Scholarly Communication.”

Following the success of the previous toolkits like their “Anti Racism Toolkit for Allies,” the “Anti Racism Toolkit for Organizations,” and the “Anti Racism Toolkit for Black, Indigenous, and People of Color,” C4DISC is now releasing its “Guidelines on Inclusive Language and Images in Scholarly Communication.”

The new toolkit is meant to be a global tool, educational resource and living archive to help all authors, editors, and reviewers recognize the use of language and images that are inclusive and culturally sensitive.

The guidelines can be used at various steps of the scholarly publishing process, such as manuscript writing, peer review and presentation of published output. The working group, reflecting a diverse body of international volunteers, came together in response to the growing need for more comprehensive and global guidelines for inclusive language and images. The guidelines are designed to continually evolve, relying on the entire scholarly publishing



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community to help grow and improve them over time by suggesting new references, recommendations, and resources.

Authors of the guide stated that its aim is to help people in the scholarly ecosystem to consider the foundation of their own thinking. As they wrote: “Researchers and authors can examine their own biases and determine how these might affect their work. So too can other stakeholders involved in the publishing process, whether they are colleagues, editors or peer reviewers. By taking the time to examine the potential biases existing in their own work as well as the work of others, researchers and authors can help to make the world of scholarly communication more inclusive.”

In order to have many points of entry, the primary section of the toolkit is organized into lists. To avoid falling into the trappings of default or biased thinking, the information might be ordered randomly or in alphabetical order. Once a term is named, the guides define the term, suggest ways of avoiding discriminatory language, offers ways to reframe the term, points to some concrete examples in research and provides references. While the entries are not exhaustive, they do provide a useful way for participants in the knowledge creation and dissemination ecosystem to learn, change, use and help the communities they serve.

“Scholarly communication is often defined as ‘the system through which research and other scholarly writings are created, evaluated for quality, disseminated to the scholarly community and preserved for future use.’ It is meant to serve the public and advance the pursuit of knowledge. It is important that this is done in a way that includes the whole – not just of scholarly communication itself, but of society,” wrote the authors.

C4DISC was founded by representatives from 10 trade and professional associations. Its vision is a socially just community that welcomes, values and celebrates all who seek to contribute to scholarly communications, and its mission is to work with organizations and individuals to build equity, inclusion, diversity, and accessibility within the community. C4DISC members meet monthly to address its areas of focus, including developing a joint statement of principles; conducting market research; providing training resources, best practices, toolkits, and documentation for our collective memberships; and establishing outreach programs, curricula, events and publications.



DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION & ACCESSIBILITY: DEIA LEADERSHIP FORUM

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The ESG Effect

How has Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) changed the way businesses view DEIA initiatives, and how and where are organizations seeing the greatest impact?



MODERATOR

Dr. Thelá Thatch

CEO

Thelá Thatch Consulting

Dr. Thelá R. Thatch is the CEO & founder of Thelá Thatch Consulting. She has over two decades of experience in human resources and talent management, with a focus on building internal cultures and external communities committed to inclusion, equity, and belonging. She is a professor, writer and author of "The Dog Chef," "Employee Handbooks 101" and "The Diversity Dilemma."

PANELISTS



Makensy Smith

Founder

Human Relations - A Growth Agency

With over 10 years of public relations & community-driven experience, Makensy considers herself a growth agent, having nurtured fruitful careers and sustainable relationships with media, corporations, and talent alike - bringing to life a landscape of organic moments spanning music, film/TV, sports, fashion, technology, business, nonprofit, and well-being.



Carlos Salas

President

The Change Company

Carlos P. Salas serves as president of The Change Company CDFI LLC ("The Change Company"), a financial services company focused on serving underbanked borrowers and communities across the U.S., since August 2021; as CEO of Change Lending, LLC, its mortgage lending subsidiary; and as director of The Change Company, certain of its subsidiaries since August 2018. Previously, Mr. Salas served as chief executive officer and president of COR Clearing LLC (n/k/a Axos Clearing LLC, a subsidiary of Axos Financial Inc.). Mr. Salas received a Juris Doctor from the University of Chicago and a Bachelor of Arts from New York University.



Dr. Thatch: ESG plays a role in Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and DEIA initiatives. While ESG has been around for several years, there has been an increased corporate focus on these initiatives, especially during the pandemic – can you speak to this?

Makensy Smith: The onset of the pandemic forced the world to pause, reflect, and proactively unpack social and cultural realities on a personal, local and global scale. Quarantine and idle time led to mass levels of information, emotion and online engagement. The unknown forced us to shift from focusing on the formulaic and mundane and peek into perspectives, connecting with stories in a deeper and more transparent way. In the time of social media, brand partnerships, and celebrity CEOs, ESG is a key component to any company or brand's public image and ultimately its business and growth potential.

Dr. Thatch: We have talked about how they are interrelated, but why is ESG central to the conversation of DEIA?

Smith: Leadership must be intentional about ESG by focusing on how the work environment reflects the needs of the workers and the community at large. Work conditions should be safe, inclusive, and promote growth and well-being; this will ensure ethical and conscious behavior from leadership and co-workers alike. This messaging starts internally and is reflected outwardly to consumers in an exponential way.

Dr. Thatch: What are financial institutions doing to further assist underrepresented communities and diversify their clientele?

Carlos Salas: Financial institutions fail underbanked communities for two main reasons. First, regulation has made it riskier to serve these communities

through the unintended consequences of consumer protection rules. These rules place undue risk on lenders who finance low-income borrowers, making these loans scarce. Second, underbanked communities are perceived as offering too little upside to overcome the added risks in serving them. This is a real blind spot for the financial industry. The underbanked market is one in four American families – over 33 million households – and because it is underserved, represents a great opportunity for financial service providers to grow with a large community of eager customers. To overcome these obstacles, institutions need to learn to navigate these markets and regulations. One great avenue is to partner with a Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI), which is a U.S. Treasury designation for a lender focused on serving underbanked borrowers.

Dr. Thatch: How has ESG changed the way businesses view DEIA initiatives? How and where are your organizations seeing the greatest impact?

Smith: We've seen plenty of monetary donations to causes and organizations – which I hope continues – but I'm also seeing an emergence in storytelling and using personal narratives to generate an emotional brand resonance. This not only represents a company's social and ethical values but also personifies them. At Human Relations – A Growth Agency, we value the power of media and storytelling to authentically communicate a corporation's dedication to DEIA and ESG.

Salas: I think that I can tell you in my organization [DEIA] is an across-the-board commitment. We internalize the mission and focus of our business. When we recruit people, we make sure that they understand that we have a mission, a focus, and we hold people accountable to their earnestness in terms of how they approach this.

Leadership & Accountability

Enacting change, especially in larger organizations, can be a challenge even for leaders who are committed to enhancing DEIA initiatives. How important is it to continue to hold leaders accountable to making necessary changes that lead to success? Why is accountability so important to this conversation?



MODERATOR

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Dr. Thelá R. Thatch is the CEO & founder of Thelá Thatch Consulting. She has over two decades of experience in human resources and talent management, with a focus on building internal cultures and external communities committed to inclusion, equity, and belonging. She is a professor, writer and author of “The Dog Chef,” “Employee Handbooks 101” and “The Diversity Dilemma.”

PANELISTS



Monty Adams

Diversity, Equity & Inclusion
Program Manager
City of Hope

Monty Adams has worked for various research and medical institutions: Caltech, Children's Hospital of Los Angeles and Kaiser Permanente, Southern California and is now currently working for City of Hope in a diversity, equity and inclusion role. In this role, he oversees mandatory DEI training for all staff at City of Hope, the newly acquired Cancer Treatment Centers of America (CTCA) and the Translational Genomics Research Institute (TGen). Monty also works and partners with the KJLH radio station with coordinating and sponsorships for various community events hosted by KJLH.



Dr. Erika D. Beck

President
California State University,
Northridge

Dr. Erika D. Beck became president of California State University, Northridge in January 2021. Prior to her appointment, she had served as president of California State University Channel Islands since 2016, and as provost and executive vice president at Nevada State College. As an advocate for the power of higher education to improve lives, transform the community, and promote social mobility, Beck works to ensure the academic success of students so that they can become leaders in today's rapidly changing economy and society. This focus includes an unwavering commitment to advancing equity, inclusion and justice for a more equitable future.



Elizabeth Morrison

Chief Diversity, Equity &
Inclusion Officer

Levi Strauss & Co.

Elizabeth Morrison is the chief diversity, equity & inclusion officer at Levi Strauss & Co. She is focused on implementing and elevating diversity, and building a vibrant, inclusive workplace for all employees. Her strategy is anchored in dynamic communications and employer branding, change management, workforce data, and innovative program development.



Hannah Said

Diversity, Equity & Inclusion
Woven

Hannah Said is a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) facilitator, researcher, and community organizer. She recently worked at Walt Disney Company as a Diversity and Inclusion Activation Manager; and currently works as a Diversity and Inclusion Business Partner at Lyft. Said also has a DEI consulting company called Woven (woveninclusion.com) and a Queer and Middle Eastern coffee pop-up called Saffron Cowboy (@saffroncowboy). She loves building diverse, inclusive and equitable communities inside and outside of the office.

Shared Insights from the EVENT



Dr. Thelá Thatch: As leaders, how can we support diversifying our organizations, and specifically the leadership within them? How can we best mentor and develop under-represented leaders?

Monty Adams: I think it is very important for human resource leaders, and in particular recruiters, to build relationships with historically Black colleges and universities, but it doesn't stop there. As we all know, the city of Los Angeles and the communities within the city are very diverse, so building pipelines to our very own California State Universities and city colleges is crucial in creating a diverse slate of candidates as well.

Hannah Said: I believe that every single leader should be in therapy. How can you truly lead a team if you haven't worked on your internal self? How can you unlearn problematic communication styles from childhood or bias if you haven't examined it? When an unrepresented person walks into the room of people who haven't done their self-work, they will leave – which feels and looks bad. To retain underrepresented talent, especially in leadership, everyone needs to be actively working on themselves.

Elizabeth Morrison: You need to really drive an understanding of diversity as a business imperative and when done right it's a differentiator for your business, for your culture. Populations are changing, the workforce is changing, and this isn't just from a race ethnicity lens ... this is a generation lens.

Dr. Thatch: How are you holding companies and leaders accountable when it comes to diversity, equity and inclusion?

Morrison: When I arrived [at Levi Strauss & Co.] which was the end of 2020, COVID was in full effect and we also had our racial reckoning. The

challenge was: How do we get this done? I was there to do that work, and there was an incredible hunger and excitement. Over time is where the challenge comes in, because there can be a lot of fatigue, and over time, business conditions change. Now we're facing economic challenges. You have to keep your eye on the ball because diversity is a cumulative practice, and if you put the ball down or you walk away, when you go to start it back up, you're not starting where you left off – you're starting all the way back at the beginning.

Dr. Thatch: Can you speak about your roadmap to the future and why it is foundational to your leadership?

Dr. Erika D. Beck: Having a "North Star" – a fixed point on which to focus your work – is essential. My North Star is the opportunity and responsibility to transform lives for the better and to do that authentically. Equity, inclusion, justice and belonging must be woven into behaviors, strategies, and actions. At CSUN, our campus has been a trailblazer in advancing racial and social justice, with a singular commitment to serving our student population across every identity and lived experience.

Dr. Thatch: How can we best mentor and develop under-represented leaders?

Said: It's critical that a mentor has the capacity, time and resources. It's a huge disservice for the mentee to get a mentor that doesn't have this. It is already very vulnerable, as mentee, to ask for help; it's even worse feeling like a burden. It's also very important to have a holistic strategy in place around what the mentorship program is and what is to be expected – clarity is key. Once a mentee is placed, it's important for them to self-advocate. If a mentor doesn't fit, ask for a new one.

How To Build a Diverse, Equitable & Inclusive Work Place

These executives have successfully built teams that truly embody inclusivity. What practices have yielded the best results and what are the challenges they faced along the way?



MODERATOR

Dr. Beverlyn Mendez

COO

Easterseals Southern California

Dr. Beverlyn Mendez is the chief operating officer of Easterseals Southern California. Beverlyn leads a diverse, dedicated team of nearly 2,500 employees to provide life-changing disability services for over 15,000 individuals and their families. She is passionate about the journey of advancing equity, building respect and celebrating belonging in the workplace.

PANELISTS



Robert W. Brown

President

University of West Los Angeles

Robert Brown is the president of the University of West Los Angeles, and its school of business and school of law. UWLA offers access to opportunities in higher education for those from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds. During Brown's tenure, he's overseen an overhaul of the university's mode of providing quality legal and business education – effectively democratizing education.



Sonia Nayak

Los Angeles Office Managing Partner

Nixon Peabody LLP

Sonia Nayak is the managing partner of Nixon Peabody's Los Angeles office, where she leads a group of powerhouse attorneys from a wide range of backgrounds to make it one of the most diverse and inclusive, full-service big law offices in the country. Sonia's practice centers on real estate development, including tax credit finance, affordable housing and commercial lending. While her practice is national in scope, she works on many tax credit-financed developments in the L.A. region and is able to see firsthand how her work positively impacts our community.



Angela Roseboro

Chief Diversity Officer

Riot Games

For over 30 years, Angela Roseboro has been a leader in building human capital strategies. She has held positions leading diversity and inclusion, talent management, and leadership development for Fortune 500

and mid-stage technology companies. Roseboro is known for successfully navigating companies through challenges with her forward thinking and pragmatic approach to problem solving. In her role as chief diversity officer at Riot Games, she led its diversity and inclusion (D&I) team and efforts across the organization ensuring that D&I was integrated in Riot's broader strategy to identify, recruit, develop and retain the best talent.



Mark Gunn

Chief Human Resources Officer

99 Cents Only Stores

Mark Gunn is the chief human resources officer for the 99 Cents Only Stores. He directs a 40-plus person HR organization as well as manages the company's equity and inclusion initiatives. He is a transformational leader who drives critical human resource initiatives that result in a more engaged workforce.

Shared Insights from the EVENT



Dr. Beverlyn Mendez: As the largest disability services organization in the country, Easterseals interacts with businesses and organizations of all types. Through our mission to lead the way to full equity, inclusion and access through our services, we know that inclusive organizations weave DEIA into everything they do. What specific experiences prepare future executives and managers to participate in creating a workplace culture of inclusion?

Robert Brown: I think one of the primary considerations, especially from the UWLA perspective, is that we consider ourselves an elite university that's not elitist. Although we are an institution of higher education dedicated to providing very rigorous curriculum and educational instruction, we also want to be as inclusive as possible. We're dedicated to the mission of being opportunistic and providing opportunities for people in particular who might not otherwise have those opportunities.

Dr. Mendez: How do you ensure all employees understand and engage in the furthering of their organizations' DEIA efforts?

Sonia Nayak: At Nixon Peabody, DEI is part of our firm-wide strategic plan and woven into the fabric of our organization. We consider DEI in our recruiting, our mentorship and sponsorship programs, our professional development and coaching resources, our promotion and advancement decisions, and our succession planning. We ask attorneys to dedicate at least 40 hours a year to diversity activities, and each month we recognize an attorney who has demonstrated an outstanding commitment to advancing DEI in our firm or communities.

Dr. Mendez: Employers can intentionally use inclusive language and imagery and promote existing offerings that enhance inclusion, such as their EAP, wellness

and mental health benefits, flexible work options, and accommodations. How does your industry get the most out of DEIA initiatives? What fundamentals, be they cultural or operational, need to be addressed for successful outcomes?

Angela Roseboro: I think as you grow and scale, you have to redefine what is best and you also have to have processes in place. But the first thing you have to do is throw away the playbook. I've been doing this for a long time, and I think in a lot of companies, they start with non-functional programs, and I have to go back and fundamentally ask: "What are we here to do?"

Dr. Mendez: What advice would you give an HR executive desiring to elevate the issue of diversity in their organization with their senior leadership?

Mark Gunn: A problem that we have in our society today is when people make a mistake, we want to demonize them, we want to put them in a "penalty box." That automatically shuts down the dialogue that would get us to the other side of an issue. So, if we can create an environment in our organization where we are open to the conversation, and provide a safe space for people to have the dialogue, and when it gets messy, stay in the mess, right? Don't try to shut it down – let's deal and let's have the conversation. What we're dealing with as a society around equity, diversity and inclusion is accessed through the dialogue.

Brown: You know, everybody wants to be recognized for the value that they bring, irrespective of physical characteristics, gender characteristics, ethnicity – people just want to be recognized for the value that they bring to the table. It's really so important [for leadership] that the core we're talking about is acknowledging, receiving, encouraging people.

The DEIA Forum,

which took place at the Beverly Hilton on November 10, brought together the best and brightest among California's diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility experts. The event, which featured three engaging discussions about the state of DEIA in the modern workplace, also gave participants the opportunity to connect, converse and learn from each other's experience. The ability to be open and honest about progress towards a more equitable future was tantamount to the DEIA Forum experience, and participants took a shared sense of optimism away from the experience.



Norvell Thomas of Thela Thatch Consulting, Angela Roseboro of Riot Games and Monty Adams of City of Hope



Victoria Dochoghlian and Dr. Erika D. Beck of platinum sponsor California State University, Northridge with Nayiri Baghdassarian of SGV Economic Partnership.



Ron Ramos, Shirley Tenorio, Mashi Rahamoini, Liberty Gascon-Galindo and Ayleen Kaladzhyan of MMC await the event.



Mark Whitley of sponsor Easterseals Southern California, Jeanette Neumann and Mark Bertrand of Boeing Capital Corporation



Jason Avila, Sonia Nayak and DeMesme Anders of platinum sponsor Nixon Peabody LLP



Alyssa Kavner is Vice President, Clinical Training & Quality at sponsor Easterseals Southern California.



Mark Shortt, Cindy Nagel, Evey Gonzalez and Milo Dodson of Belkin International enjoy the event.



Mark Demos of Crowe LLP and Carlos Salas of The Change Company, which was one of the forum participants.



Stephen Lee of Bank of America and Robert W. Brown, president of platinum sponsor UWLA.



Rebecca Mais of The Change Company watches the forum event.



CSUN's Jonathan Adrias, Carmen Ramos Chandler, Suren Seropian and Erik Martinez

DEIA Visionaries

The work of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility leaders has been catapulted into the spotlight as they have been placed under additional pressure to provide guidance to not only their own organizations, but the business community at large. The importance of their critical efforts cannot be overstated.

In this magazine, the Los Angeles Times B2B Publishing team has selected, based on submissions of hundreds of nominated DEIA professionals and experts, a list of the most prominent game changers and thought leaders in the business world today.

While the profiles of professionals alphabetically assorted here are in no way exhaustive, they include some true DEIA visionaries whose work has inspired Southern California and beyond, and that we believe will inspire our readers as well.



Anthony Agbasi

*Managing Director
Accenture*

AnTHONY AGBASI is a leader in advancing inclusion and diversity (I&D) at Accenture and in the Los Angeles community. Soon after starting at Accenture in 2005, he joined the African American Employee Resource Group (ERG) to help promote education, diversity and career advancement for the I&D population at Accenture. He believes that it's critical to have a process in place of attracting, retaining and advancing diverse talent to keep moving in the right direction. He is now the executive sponsor of Accenture's SoCal African American ERG and a very active member of Accenture's SoCal office I&D council. During his time at Accenture, Agbasi has focused on driving empowerment and career advancement opportunities that support I&D, with an emphasis on making sure Accenture is hiring and promoting people of color. He is also helping lead the effort at Accenture to recruit from non-traditional schools that have more diverse populations.



Clifton W. Albright

*President & Founding Partner
Albright, Yee & Schmit,
APC*

As president of Albright, Yee & Schmit, APC, Clifton W. Albright ensures the firm recruits minority lawyers and staff of all ages, has mentoring programs to prepare minority lawyers for partnership and trains staff to manage all aspects of the business of law, including the latest technology. He pays for child care and programs for his firm's employees to ensure all predominantly minority employees have access to the best education for themselves and their children. Albright also sponsors and participates in programs to help minorities play the game of golf and understand the connection between golf and business. He also supports, creates and participates in programs demonstrating the importance of building relationships and being reliable and timely. Albright is a member of clubs and organizations that don't interact with many minorities; he educates them about discrimination, unconscious bias and racism.



Stephanie Allain

*President
Producers Guild of
America*

STEPHANIE ALLAIN is a writer/producer who is the first woman of color to serve as PGA president. She began her career at 20th Century Fox as a story analyst before becoming a creative executive at Columbia Pictures, where she supervised John Singleton's "Boyz N The Hood," a critical and commercial success that earned Singleton two Oscar nominations. At the studio, she rose to the post of senior VP of production, supervising a slate of diverse films. As director of the L.A. Film Festival from 2011-2016, she pioneered metrics for transparency in percentage of films authored by women and people of color, which has become the standard. Allain, who made history in 2020 when she became the first Black woman to produce the Academy Awards (for which she was Emmy-nominated), has produced award-winning films through her production company, Homegrown Pictures.

VISIONARIES



Marquis Allen

*Director, Diversity &
Inclusion Advocate*
RSM US LLP

Marquis Allen has been with RSM for nearly nine years as a business development director focused on the technology industry. During his time at RSM, he has not only proven to be an exceptional grower of new business, but also a grower of our diversity and inclusion efforts. He has been a passionate participant in CDI programs nationally, as well as in RSM's Los Angeles office and has been the face for many key programs. Allen focuses leading efforts tied to diversity and inclusion for RSM's Integrated Marketing & Communications department; and serves as a First Choice Advisor Center faculty member with a focus on developing sales and growth training programs targeted to diverse audiences, as well as teaching sessions for RSM CDI groups and outside diverse professional associations. He collaborates with the communications team dedicated to ESG to ensure alignment and consistency of messaging across programs.



Quayla C. Allen

*Director of Equity, Impact
and Belonging*
Sundance Institute



Chancela Al-Mansour

Executive Director
Housing Rights Center

Quayla Allen is the director of equity, impact and belonging at the Sundance Institute, where she has been since January 2020. During her time she co-led the Sundance Institute's Safety and Belonging Program aimed at creating a resilient community capable of modeling the institute's values of equity, safety and inclusion to create an accessible environment that is welcoming to all. Her work in this area has reverberated throughout the institute, the field and beyond, setting a model for other organizations. While Allen has been a professional in the DEI space for over five years, equity and inclusion are a lifelong commitment given her position as a Black woman at the intersection of other marginalized identities. She believes at the heart of any successful DEI initiative is the belief that all individuals have physical and psychological safety.

Chancela Al-Mansour strives to ensure that the Housing Rights Center staff represents and understands the diverse communities it serves across the Greater Los Angeles area. This includes ensuring a substantial portion of the staff is bilingual, and HRC currently has staff capacity in Spanish, Korean, Armenian, Tagalog and American Sign Language. Staff is also geographically distributed across South Los Angeles, East Los Angeles, West Los Angeles and the San Fernando Valley. HRC's staff is also racially/ethnically, religiously and gender diverse, including importantly in its key leadership positions. Since HRC's offices closed to the public early on in the pandemic, Al-Mansour has proceeded with an acute awareness of the disparities in home environment, available equipment and tech literacy, among other factors. She instituted a monthly stipend for all staff to cover costs arising from working from home, as well as an additional gas stipend when prices surged this year.



Sahar Andrade, MB.BCh

DEI Consultant
Sahar Consulting, LLC

As a diversity, equity and inclusion consultant, Sahar Andrade's uniqueness and impact comes from marrying neuroscience and the principles of diversity, inclusion, unconscious bias and equity that tend to make impact. She facilitates difficult conversations in organizations between employees and management, creating belonging and psychological safety. Andrade has been training government agencies – from counties to cities to fire departments as well as big nonprofits – on DEI matters. She is leaving an impact wherever she goes to build bridges between diverse employees and organizations. Andrade teaches the organizations she works with to understand unconscious bias and stereotypes so they can deal with the root of the issues – not the symptoms – to bring lasting change that promotes team building, safe and positive working environments that generate higher revenues.



Maribeth Annaguey

Partner
Ellis George Cipollone
O'Brien Annaguey LLP



Jagdeep Singh Bachher

CIO & VP of Investments
University of California

As the only Latina/Filipina attorney on the Ellis George Cipollone O'Brien Annaguey LLP Management Committee, Maribeth Annaguey is dedicated to furthering the firm's efforts in diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility. She founded and spearheads the inclusion and community outreach committee at the firm to promote, catalogue and harmonize the firm's diversity and community outreach efforts. Under Annaguey's leadership, the firm has initiated cultural events and educational programs, such as the 21-Day Racial Equity Habit Building Challenge, and is strategizing ways to respond to the Women Lawyers Association of Los Angeles Call to Action Challenge of promoting the advancement of women. She was recently elected to the Board of Directors for Hispanas Organized for Political Equality (HOPE), a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization focused on empowering communities through advocacy, Latina leadership training and increasing knowledge on the contributions Latinas have made to society.

When Jagdeep Singh Bachher took on the role of the University of California's chief investment officer more than eight years ago, one of his first undertakings was to build a sustainable investment framework, a key part of which is advancing diversity, equity and inclusion. As investment professionals, Bachher and the team at UC Investments understand that diversity brings higher performance and better results, and accessing the full range of top talent is critical to managing risk. He strongly believes the future is diverse. Since 2015, he has strengthened the diversity within his own team, engaged in dialogue with investment partners around diversity and inclusion policies, and sought access to top-performing firms owned by women and people of color. Bachher has broken new ground within the investment industry around the critical importance of DEI by intentionally – and transparently – acting to increase diversity on many levels.

VISIONARIES



Trisha Bantigue

Chief Executive Officer
Queenly

Trisha Bantigue strives to have Queenly reflect the progressive, inclusive goals that she stands for and provide real access and affordability to women everywhere. She is passionate about having diversity and representation within the fashion industry by including the largest size inclusion with Queenly's inventory, as well as being radically inclusive in social media and photoshoot campaigns by having minority, plus-size and trans women models represented. Bantigue has worked with Slay Models, the world's first and only trans modeling agency, and has sponsored its Pride 2022 event. Also, she has hired a female-majority team, including the engineering team, as she has always been an advocate for women in STEM roles. For example, she has mentored and encouraged an employee who identifies as a Black female engineer in growing as a leader by speaking at tech conferences about her experience as a minority in tech.



Judy Belk

President & CEO
The California Wellness Foundation



Dr. Giovanna Brasfield

CEO & Principal Consultant
Brasfield & Associates, LLC

Judy Belk is the president and CEO of The California Wellness Foundation. She uses her vision and her voice to help Cal Wellness "level the playing field" so that everyone has access to health care, quality education, good jobs, healthy environments and safe neighborhoods. Her work for The California Wellness Foundation and several other organizations is rooted in her belief that wellness is not achieved until all are given access to adequate resources. This work reflects her commitment to diversity, equity, inclusivity and accessibility. Under her stewardship, the California Wellness Foundation aims to provide opportunities across all communities with a special concentration on those that have been impacted by racism and structural inequities. This commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility is reflected within its own team, where 67% are people of color, 74% are women and 82% of its board of directors are people of color.

As a change agent and advocate for DEI, "Dr. G" Brasfield has developed programs and guided innovative thinking that has led to organizational change across construction. Initially, she started her consultancy in 2004, but transitioned to work directly for civil or commercial contractors. During tumultuous times, she decided to leave her vice president position to relaunch her firm in 2021 and utilize her requisite skills to assist and enhance DEI programs for organizations across construction. Brasfield has used inclusion in leading trainings, strategy and Employee Resource Groups (ERG) within organizations through systems design, organizational change, allyship and leadership development. She drives organizations to go beyond DEI talk by taking actionable steps to create culturally diverse, equitable and inclusive workplaces from trainings, conversations, methods and actions. A longtime consultant and advocate for DEI education, workforce issues and small businesses, Brasfield is a passionate change agent across the construction industry.



Robert W. Brown, J.D.

President
University of West Los Angeles

Finding ways to democratize educational opportunities for diverse student populations is at the very core of Robert W. Brown's belief system. As president of the University of West Los Angeles ("UWLA"), School of Law and School of Business, he has been passionately committed to the cause of diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility. His own personal journey, having overcome the societal challenges of going to school and starting his business career as a young African American man in the 1970s, has informed his dedication to this cause. Throughout his career as a businessman, lawyer and educator, he has been dedicated to helping others attain their goals and aspirations. Fueled by a passion to open the educational doors to students who might not otherwise have the same academic opportunities, Brown has overseen an overhaul of the University's mode of providing quality legal and business education to a diverse array of students.



Patricia Brum

Partner
Snell & Wilmer

Patricia Brum is a strong advocate for the LGBTQ+ community and takes pride in her identity. After finding her place at Snell & Wilmer in 2019, she now serves as the co-chair of Snell & Wilmer's LGBTQ+ affinity group, SNELLGBTQ+, and co-editor of the firm's Global Connection Newsletter. She facilitates opportunities for the firm's LGBTQ+ attorneys and staff to have a supportive space to discuss issues of concern and promote hiring and retention of LGBTQ+ identifying talent. In 2021, Brum and her co-chairs led a discussion on overcoming barriers to openly identifying LGBTQ+ legal professionals, as well as a conversation with the first openly gay Black member of Congress. SNELLGBTQ+ has also focused on community building by offering fun spaces for members and allied colleagues to come together to connect and learn. She is also a prominent leader in the community through her work in several nonprofit organizations.



Emily Burkhardt Vicente

Partner; Co-Chair, Labor & Employment; Co-Chair, Diversity & Inclusion
Hunton Andrews Kurth LLP

As co-head of Hunton Andrews Kurth's national labor and employment practice, Emily Burkhardt Vicente uses her leadership role to promote, advocate and advance women lawyers within her team. She is focused on the sponsorship of women and diverse lawyers in her group, and looks for opportunities to promote women and diverse lawyers on her team internally and externally to help position them for success. As co-chair of the firm's Diversity and Inclusion Committee, she has worked to promote opportunities for women and other diverse lawyers within the firm and profession. She has skillfully navigated this role, particularly in recent years in which pay equity, the #MeToo movement, racial equality, gender identity and other inclusiveness conversations, require a mix of empathy, honesty and practicality from leaders. Her voice is effective and respected as one of the firm's thought leaders on these topics.

VISIONARIES



Lisa Catanzarite, Ph.D.
VP, Research & Evaluation
UNITE-LA

Dr. Lisa Catanzarite has worked closely with her colleagues to focus on anti-racism (A/R) and race equity at UNITE-LA over six years. The initiative started with several efforts including staff Implicit Bias training; improved recruitment of Black program participants; and (uneven) attention to A/R in some of the external work. However, A/R wasn't an organizational priority until after the 2020 murder of George Floyd, when she approached the organization's CEO about a formal effort to fully integrate and deepen A/R in internal operations and external work, with a central focus on dismantling anti-Blackness. She helped draft a preliminary work plan, which proposed several new efforts, including a staff Anti-Racism Planning Group to drive the work, staff professional development and A/R strategic planning. As a sociologist and former professor, Dr. Catanzarite's teaching and published research centered on social stratification, particularly labor market inequalities by race/ethnicity and gender.



Cheryl Chang
Partner, Financial Institutions
Litigation and Regulatory
Compliance
Blank Rome LLP



Cyndie Chang
Managing Partner, Los
Angeles Office
Duane Morris LLP



Sarah Chavarria
President
Delta Dental of California and Affiliates

Sarah Chavarria learned at an early age that a strong leader is one who supports holistically and teaches important values like character, teamwork and purpose. As president of Delta Dental, the nation's leading dental insurance provider serving over 41 million members, she uses this mindset to shape a heterogeneous corporate culture, advocate for the importance of oral health in improving overall health and create a more equitable society through inclusive health care programs. For Chavarria, these objectives go hand-in-hand – by building a diverse team, Delta Dental is better positioned to serve the breadth of the communities they represent and can be a leader in providing comprehensive, accessible and integrated health care. She applies DE&I and people-first teambuilding principles to quality patient care in ways that will create better health outcomes for more members and bring together the healthcare ecosystem in new ways.



Rekha Chiruvolu
Chief Diversity, Equity &
Inclusion Officer
Nixon Peabody LLP



Flora Chou
Associate Principal,
Architectural Historian/
Cultural Resources Planner
Page & Turnbull

Rekha Chiruvolu, Nixon Peabody's chief diversity, equity & inclusion officer, has always been passionate about DEI. She is an attorney who practiced litigation for almost 10 years before turning her passion into her career. Prior to earning the title, she served as director of diversity, equity & inclusion at the firm for more than six years. Chiruvolu has been instrumental in establishing Nixon Peabody's DEI goals and policies. She leads the firm's six resource groups (Black, Asian and Middle Eastern American, Hispanic, LGBTQIA, Veterans and Women), tasked with promoting DEI within the firm while supporting external community and industry organizations that champion these shared values. Chiruvolu also develops trainings and other programs featuring inspiring thought leaders and works with NP's practice groups and recruiting, professional development, and business development teams to ensure DEI elements are woven into all aspects of the firm.

An associate principal, architectural historian/cultural resources planner with Page & Turnbull, Flora Chou, LEED AP, integrates preservation principles with urban planning, sustainable design and community development, with a focus on heightening diverse cultural resources. She is an expert in determining a site's historic status and its critical presence in cityscapes, regional revitalization and long-term preservation success. This involves evaluating sites for eligibility by studying their changes over time and examining their historical context and relationships to developmental patterns to ensure educated conclusions on potential landmark status. Her creative approaches to preserving historic sites steeped in diversity range from mid-19th century adobe structures to mid-20th century modern buildings, such as the Glendale Masonic Temple and Griffith Park's famed Greek Theatre, among others. Chou's relied-on expertise in preparing detailed historic and technical reports are integral to preserving cultural icons and advancing modern sensibilities as well as upholding communities' inherent and ongoing diversity.

VISIONARIES



Karen A. Clark

SVP & Multicultural Strategies and Business Development Manager
City National Bank

Karen A. Clark serves as the senior vice president, marketing product digital for City National Bank. She also serves as the multicultural strategy and business development manager, as well as a member of the CEO's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Task Force. In this role, Clark develops marketing and business development strategies to serve clients from diverse communities. Internally, she launched the bank's first enterprise-wide mentoring program; the first digital and business influencer campaign; and the unconscious bias training program. She also manages City National's Colleague Resource Groups such as the Women's Network, Black Colleague Alliance and Asian American Network. CRG participation is up 37% since pre-pandemic. In 2020, when colleagues especially wanted to feel connected, the bank had a 35% increase in membership in its Black Colleague Alliance and its Women's Network hosted more than 30 virtual events.



Derrick Coleman

Managing Director
GHJ

Derrick Coleman leads GHJ Search and Staffing, the firm's recruiting arm, and serves as an internal DEIA leader. In all aspects of his professional and personal life, he leads by example. He is a hands-on leader who inspires others to succeed, and has gone above and beyond to elevate underrepresented voices. Under Coleman's leadership, Search and Staffing recruits candidates for GHJ and corporate clients all over Southern California. He advises clients on how to find the best candidate for each role and how to augment their recruitment strategy to attract a diverse pool of candidates. Coleman also leads GHJ's BIPOC Cohort, an employee resource group focused on advancing the careers of professionals who are Black, Indigenous and other people of color in the accounting profession. He has written articles and blogs about the role of DEIA in hiring, retaining and leading a diverse workforce.



Jeff Consoletti

Founder, Principal & CEO
JJLA

For nearly two decades, Jeff Consoletti has been passionate about producing, leading and supporting events for social good. In forming his agency, JJLA, he ensures the firm maintains a consistent commitment to causes and nonprofits that are important to him as well as his team. As an LGBTQ+-owned business, Consoletti and JJLA have been pioneers and influential voices in the Pride movement nationwide. He has worked to help Pride organizations build strategic fundraising and revenue-driving initiatives while improving overall guest experiences. He has championed artists and performers that identify as queer or are part of the LGBTQ+ community to headline Pride events from Los Angeles to New York. When ally artists are selected, JJLA ensures a commitment to diversity by profiling Black, Brown, non-binary and transgender performers. Consoletti has also made it his mission to produce spaces that are safe and inclusive for all members of the community.



DuVon G. Davis

SVP & Senior Relationship Manager
Wells Fargo



William Delgado

Founding Partner
DTO Law

DuVon Davis' personal passion and commitment to lead DEIA within his employer, Wells Fargo, as well as outside through his other affiliations is extensive and vast. His leadership to be involved in the community with his tireless and dedicated energy is remarkable. He is always involved in efforts to make improvements and volunteers to help others as much as possible. As the Wells Fargo Southern California Commercial Banking Diverse Segment Pod Leader, Davis leads a team of banking professionals to increase the bank's outreach to a number of banking relationships with diverse-owned or diverse-led businesses in Southern California. Also, as the Wells Fargo Greater Los Angeles Black & African Employee Resource Network Officer (former chair and former executive advisor), he mentors younger employees and helps the organization host networking, educational and cultural events.

Will Delgado has been a tireless advocate for the diversification of the legal profession. He has been one of the leaders of NAMWOLF (the National Association of Minority and Women Owned Law Firms) for many years, where he served as the vice chair of the board between 2018-2022. He is also active in MCCA, the Hispanic National Bar Association and the Cuban American Bar Association, serving as a panelist or facilitator throughout the years at their conferences. Also, he was a 2017 Fellow of the Leadership Council on Legal Diversity. For six years, Delgado volunteered his time to the Los Angeles Police Department. He was first selected as a hearing examiner, a quasi-judicial post, by then-LAPD Inspector General (now U.S. District Court Judge) Andre Birotte. After three years of service as an examiner, Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa appointed Delgado to serve as a commissioner on the LAPD's Permit Review Panel.



Hayley Dickson

Wealth Management Advisor
Northwestern Mutual

Hayley Dickson seeks to help clients un-learn shame, fear and paralysis when it comes to their financial reality. She realizes that even among highly educated groups, members of our communities have too long gone without the important resource of a sound financial education. An advocate for women, Persons of Color and the LGBTQ+ community, Dickson views financial planning as a means of empowerment for her clients. She helped establish the district-level LGBTQ+ and Ally Council as a means to create an inclusive space for LGBTQ+ individuals in the workplace. The council also helps fellow financial advisors better serve clients in the LGBTQ+ community. Under her leadership as the vice chair, council members provide company leaders and allies with valuable educational opportunities and resources from which to learn about, volunteer with or host fundraisers for LGBTQ+ community organizations or events.

VISIONARIES



Dr. Milo Dodson

Senior Manager, DEI and Community Outreach
Belkin International

Belkin culture is rooted in its commitment to create an environment that fosters diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging; Dr. Milo Dodson has made great strides in program implementation to further amplify this tenet. As a strategic partner for the global diversity & inclusion and community outreach functions, he leverages organizational design and development expertise to introduce best practices to attract, retain and develop diverse talent company-wide, driving community and culture priorities with a focus on inclusive behaviors and business practices at all levels. Dr. Dodson works with key executives and senior leaders to identify, define and advance both short-and long-term goals and build strong business cases to effectively communicate and execute priorities; this is achieved through developing, deploying and sustaining diversity & inclusion programs, and community engagement strategies at the local, regional and global levels.



Thomas Dover

Chair, IP Group – Member Diversity Committee
Nossaman

Thomas Dover serves as a member of Nossaman's Diversity Committee. The committee's core beliefs include a deep commitment to fostering a diverse and inclusive environment at the firm. Unquestionably, diversity enhances Nossaman's ability to serve clients and creates a more dynamic workplace for everyone. Helped by Dover's guidance, the diversity of the firm's attorneys, policy advisors, paralegals and professional staff provides Nossaman with a rich blend of perspectives that translate into better solutions for the firm's clients. Internal affinity groups have also been created by Dover and his colleagues to focus on LGBTQ+, minority and women's issues. The groups serve as a resource for mentoring, support, networking and professional development. This commitment to equal opportunity means that no one's career at the firm will be limited in any way by race, color, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, religion, nationality, age, disability, marital or parental status.



Danijella Dragas

Chief Executive Officer
The Lending Corporation LLC

Born and raised in Oxford, England, Danijella Dragas earned a B.S. in economics/international trade and banking from the prestigious University of London. She was employed by Bear Stearns Investment Banking firm for over 18 years and worked at their offices in London, São Paulo, Beijing, New York and Irvine. Her specialty was asset management and capital markets/investment banking. During her final four years at Bear Stearns, Dragas was one of the original team members that introduced their mortgages to the banking industry in the residential wholesale market. She has continued her career in residential, commercial lending for 36 years. Her focus has been on construction finance, asset repositioning, fintech and blockchain, in addition to numerous prestigious commercial projects on an international level. Dragas has also worked on multisector business finance, corporate sponsorships, hospitality, clean energy, trade programs and pre-IPO.



Camilo Echavarria

Partner
Davis Wright Tremaine LLP

Camilo Echavarria's contributions to advancing diverse attorneys and his community are what distinguish him and make him the personification of leadership and influence. He is the vice chair of the firm's Executive Committee, the partner in charge of the Los Angeles office and an active member of the firm's Diversity Executive Counsel, the top governing diversity committee at the firm. He is also a member and former co-chair of the CMCP Board of Directors, as well as a former regional president of the HBNA. Through his efforts, diverse attorneys at Davis Wright Tremaine have thrived and grown. Echavarria cultivates deeper relationships with our attorneys of color and influences institutional change on their behalf. Through his relentless willingness to challenge convention and refusal to accept incremental change, he has emerged as a transformative voice in promoting the firm's DEI goals.



Evette Ellis

Chief Workforce Officer
ChargerHelp

Evette Ellis' career journey began at 16 years old, when she worked in the office of the Compton Summer Youth Program giving out paychecks, upholding the dress code policy and helping with career readiness. A big undertaking for a 16-year-old, but she wasn't your average teenager. It was also her first glimmer of clarity and discovering her ability to lead. Today, Ellis is the co-founder and chief workforce development officer at ChargerHelp Inc. She is also a speaker and strategist specializing in workforce development. Her previous 10-year career with the U.S. Department of Labor's Job Corps, where she served as a career transition and outreach specialist, has allowed both an internal and external understanding of how to develop workforce alongside of actual work, specifically for people of color. Another highlight of Ellis' career is her groundbreaking work at the Los Angeles Cleantech Incubator.



Dr. Apollo Emeka

Founder & Principal
Apollo Strategy Group Inc.

Dr. Apollo Emeka is an executive leadership coach and strategic consultant whose vision is to create a world where everyone reaches their full potential for good. In line with that vision, he encourages his clients to leverage their full selves and embrace diverse perspectives to achieve ambitious goals. Since 2016, Apollo Strategy Group, Emeka's Pasadena-based start-up, has delivered high-impact leadership coaching and enterprise consulting services with an emphasis on authenticity, intention, courage and inclusion. Emeka and his team's experiences as Black professionals inform their work helping leaders and businesses thrive. Challenging assumptions about the pathway to success, he started out as a 4th grade dropout and grew into the entrepreneurial and motivational force-of-nature he is today. Now, he leads his company with the belief that there is no better population to drive change and innovation than diverse entrepreneurs and business owners.

VISIONARIES



Terrance J. Evans

Partner
Duane Morris LLP

Terrance J. Evans is a partner in the San Francisco and Los Angeles offices of Duane Morris LLP, where he serves as the co-leader of the firm's banking and financial services practice. He is also the co-chair of the Duane Morris San Francisco Diversity and Inclusion Committee and regularly counsels clients regarding racial justice, and diversity and inclusion issues. He has led dozens of diversity trainings for judges, lawyers, law students and members of the community around the United States. Evans is the first Black man elected to serve as a statewide representative on the Board of the California Lawyers Association. He has spoken at more than 150 diversity, equity and inclusion programs, and civil rights programs in partnership with more than 50 law schools, bar associations, colleges, universities, high schools, law firms, churches and other organizations. Evans has also spent countless hours mentoring diverse law students and lawyers.



George C. Fatheree, III

Partner
Sidley Austin LLP

George Fatheree has a distinguished profile and reputation in California – and nationwide – built on his commercial real estate practice, counseling of artists and museums in arts and culture transactions, civil rights-focused pro bono work, and extensive civic and community service. He is regularly engaged in impact-focused pro bono matters such as representing the descendants of Willa and Charles Bruce in the landmark return of the Bruce's Beach property – a groundbreaking transaction involving the return of property that was wrongly taken from an African American family almost 100 hundred years ago. Fatheree also represented Debbie Allen Dance Academy in its acquisition, financing and development of a state-of-the-art performing arts academy in the West Adams district of Los Angeles, and assisted Black Lives Matter Los Angeles in its acquisition of a headquarters building. These projects have been recognized as important civic and cultural additions to the city.



Terrence Mark Franklin

Partner
Sacks, Glazier, Franklin & Lodise LLP

Terrence Franklin's widespread efforts and impact in the DEI&A space over the course of his career have been honored for his accomplishments in furthering the advancement of diversity and inclusion in the legal industry and beyond. He had been practicing trusts and estates litigation for nearly 25 years before he discovered his legal career was the path to his mission in life, to "Help Bend the Arc of History Towards Justice" by sharing the story of his family's experience escaping from slavery, nearly two decades before the end of the Civil War. In dozens of presentations throughout the U.S., media interviews and articles, he has retraced his journey to uncover his fourth great-grandfather's will and the unexpected will contest that threatened to keep his fourth great-grandmother Lucy, her children and grandchildren enslaved. Franklin's goal is to widely educate others, and push back against dehumanization and racism.



LEADING WITH CHANGE

Davis Wright Tremaine congratulates our Partner **Camilo Echavarria** for being recognized as a Visionary in the 2022 Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Accessibility Magazine by L.A. Times B2B Publishing. As Vice Chair of the firm's Executive Committee, Partner-in-Charge of our Los Angeles office, and member of the Diversity Executive Council, Camilo has been an inspirational driver of DEI at DWT. Thanks to his efforts, we continue to drive towards our vision: to foster a culture where all talented individuals – including those from traditionally underrepresented communities in the legal profession – can have, and can see, a path to success.

VISIONARIES



Gary D. Frazier

Founder & CEO
Worksite Labs

Compton native Gary Frazier built Long Beach-based Worksite Labs (WSL) from scratch. When you ask him about diversity, his answer is "Diversity is in our DNA, it's organic for us." While initially founded to provide fast, reliable and affordable gold-standard PCR testing where it was needed the most in the COVID-19 fight (including a free community clinic that continues to offer vital health screenings in South Los Angeles), Worksite Labs recently relaunched with an expanded mission to further disrupt and rebuild the nation's diagnostic services industry with decentralized testing. Over 50% of WSL's employees are people of color as is the majority of its 16-person executive team. Worksite Labs' evolution, growth and mission directly speak to increasing access to healthcare information, so people can take control of their wellbeing. At the same time, Frazier continues to lead his earlier start-up, OM Healthcare, which offers consumer-direct, open market health coverage.



Christina Rivera Glennon

Head of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Programs & Operations
Levi Strauss & Company

As the global head of diversity, equity and inclusion programs and operations, Christina Glennon brings a unique strategic approach to LS&Co. in driving and delivering DE&I for its employees to ensure an inclusive employee experience. She is a veteran of the United States Army and serves as a subject-matter expert on military transition programs and veteran/military spouse hiring, which has helped LS&Co. expand the dimensions of diversity that it prioritizes within the company. She also brings deep expertise across DE&I from brands such as Sears Holdings, Taco Bell Corporation and Starbucks. Glennon's leadership has been fundamental in laying the foundation for the company's culture of inclusion and belonging, and this can be seen in LS&Co.'s first-ever Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Report from 2021, which in part highlights continued efforts to understand the identities, intersectionalities and experiences of its people worldwide, from its corporate to distribution populations.



Marcos Gonzalez

Founder & Managing Partner
VamosVentures

Marcos Gonzalez is the founder and managing partner of VamosVentures, a venture capital fund focused on Latinx and diverse founders leading early-stage tech-enabled companies. The mission is to generate market rate investment returns and deliver meaningful impact through wealth creation, social mobility, unique tech solutions, and by taking a visible and clear stand as Latinx investors. As the son of two Mexican immigrants, he saw firsthand the resilience, creativity and entrepreneurialism of the Latinx community. As he entered the world of fintech, he saw that while 60 million Latinx people account for \$2.3 trillion of economic activity and the number of Latinx business owners grew by 34% last year, Latinx founders and GPs represent less than 2% of venture-led companies and venture capitalists. Gonzalez started VamosVentures to invest in a growth opportunity and empower and accelerate diverse teams tackling persistent challenges in communities across the United States.



Keith M. Gregory

Partner
Snell & Wilmer

As co-chair of Snell & Wilmer's First-Gen Forward program, Keith Gregory demonstrates how his values are aligned with the firm's commitment to do its best to understand and appreciate the unique journeys its attorneys take before joining the firm or entering the legal profession. This program endeavors to provide first-generation attorneys with additional resources and programming to allow them to achieve professional growth and success at the firm. Gregory has facilitated roundtable discussions for first- and second-year associates and summer associates to focus on some challenges first-generation professionals may face as they are transitioning to practicing attorneys. He has also organized educational events that focus on financial planning for First-Gen attorneys, with topics that have included the firm's profit sharing and savings plan, student loan information, and tips for financial success. Gregory serves on the DE&I committee as well as the firm's LGBTQ+ affinity group, SNELLGBTQ+.



Cooper Harris

Chief Executive Officer
Klickly

Cooper Harris has exhibited true leadership in Diversity, Equity and Accessibility through several avenues throughout her career. She has founded several companies in a male-dominated arena and made it her mission to provide a safe, supportive and career-fostering environment for all her employees. At Klickly, Harris has built a team of diverse, extremely talented people spanning from the U.S. to Ukraine that all share the same vision of building the best business in the world. She continually explores avenues of inclusion by allowing the team to express themselves in ways they are most comfortable, building a safe space to share our stories and openly expressing her support for each community her individual employees represent. Outside of her internal team at Klickly, Harris also has made it her mission to make technology accessible to other companies.



Kristi Henderson

Global Head of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion
Anomaly

Kristi Henderson's deep understanding and decades-long practice of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Accessibility have helped cement her as a leader with tremendous impact in many spheres. As Anomaly's global head of diversity, equity and inclusion, her role is to provide visible, reliable leadership in DE&I. This includes thought leadership, furthering Anomaly's partnerships and cultural presence, and developing professional support for all employees, especially those from underrepresented communities. A key part of Henderson's role is to expand organizational knowledge and share insight and DE&I best practices. She has expanded Anomaly's global talent development platform called DNA to include sessions that center on a range of DE&I topics: from the urgency of intersectionality to using a racial equity lens across client and content work. This summer, she led a DNA Q&A session across six global offices on abortion rights in the wake of the overturning of Roe v. Wade.

VISIONARIES


Helen Hernandez
President

The Imagen Foundation


Quita Highsmith
VP & Chief Diversity Officer

Genentech


Jane Hinton
Partner

Hunton Andrews Kurth LLP

Helen Hernandez has trailblazed a long career working for diversity, equity, inclusion and access, and her many groundbreaking achievements in DEIA's cause have been inspirational. She started serving as an AFL-CIO organizer, working on behalf of Latino laborers, including the undocumented. She was undefeated, registering double-digit election victories and opening the door for the workers she organized to be treated equitably and fairly, protected from exploitation, and receive the dignity and respect that all deserve regardless of immigration status. In 2017, Hernandez was tasked by the L.A. County Board of Supervisors as one of three co-chairs to create a process for bringing DEIA to the arts to all residents in Los Angeles County. Her efforts resulted in more funding to arts organizations, increased arts internships, a 1% development fee for construction in unincorporated areas of the county and a cultural policy for all county departments.

Quita Highsmith joined Genentech in 2010 and was selected in 2020, following a number of leadership roles in sales and advocacy relations, as the first chief diversity officer in the company's 46-year history. She now reports to the CEO and is responsible for enterprise-wide strategic initiatives that drive impact by investing in commercial efforts, stakeholder engagement, research innovation and community relations. Prior to taking on this role, Highsmith pioneered and co-founded Advancing Inclusive Research, Genentech's initiative to reduce disparities in clinical research participation for underrepresented groups. Since announcing Genentech's 2025 D&I Commitments last year, she has shepherded notable progress across each of Genentech's D&I pillars: fostering belonging, advancing inclusive research and health equity, and transforming society. In an effort to create lasting change for employees and patients even beyond 2025, she has challenged teams across Genentech to look inward, examine existing processes and practices, and make equity-centered systemic improvements.

As the Office Diversity & Inclusion Initiative leader and co-chair for the firm's Los Angeles office, real estate partner Jane Hinton works to promote the firm's educational programs on diversity and inclusion in the Los Angeles office of Hunton Andrews Kurth. These programs, which are available to all firm lawyers and staff, include engagement opportunities, with the goal of fostering greater awareness, education and understanding of important issues on social justice, racial and gender equality, and promoting a culture of diversity and inclusion within the firm. In addition to the informal mentoring that she participates in with associates and counsel across the firm and offices, Hinton is also the point-of-contact for the Los Angeles Office Women's Mentoring Circle and has arranged and participated in various events for other office mentoring circles including the San Francisco, Los Angeles, Atlanta, Charlotte and Miami offices.



We believe that health isn't an industry, it's a cause.

From our dedication to delivering culturally responsive care to helping support the social needs of our communities, we ensure that equity, inclusion, and diversity are woven into the fabric of everything we do.

Kaiser Permanente congratulates Senior Vice President of Human Resources Frank Hurtarte for creating a workplace where everyone has an equal opportunity to reach their full potential and use their diverse perspectives and strengths to support our mission.


Frank Hurtarte

 Senior Vice President,
Human Resources,
Kaiser Permanente Southern
California & Hawaii regions

VISIONARIES



Frank Hurtarte

*SVP of Human Resources,
Southern California and
Hawaii Markets*
Kaiser Permanente
Southern California

As senior vice president of human resources for Kaiser Permanente Southern California region and Hawaii markets, Frank Hurtarte is steadfast in his commitment to equity, inclusion and diversity in the workforce. He has made it a priority to ensure that Kaiser Permanente's workforce reflects the diversity of Southern California and Hawaii. He believes strongly that a workforce of different races, ethnic diversities, ages, genders, religions, abilities, sexual orientations, military experiences, and so many other representations enrich and promote Kaiser Permanente's success and reputation as an equal opportunity employer free of harassment and discrimination. This applies to hiring executives and frontline employees, as he believes this strongly makes Kaiser Permanente an attractive place to receive care, be a better partner in the community and ultimately a great place to work. Hurtarte has led efforts to ensure equity and inclusion for all employees regardless of their background.



Mohammed Islam

*Chair
DIVERSITY BIZ
FORUM*

Mohammed Islam, MBA, is the chairman of DIVERSITY BIZ FORUM (DBF), a program of SABAN (South Asian Business Alliance Network). DBF is a pro-business, leadership, advocacy and business networking group of diverse-, minority-, women- and veteran-led small businesses. Islam and his team organize and work together with community business organizations for diversity, small business issues and advocacy. He is also affiliated and a committee member of other diversity community and business chambers, and economic groups and organizations. He organizes and promotes business events and programs for the diversity community, such as business mixers, seminars, expos, and showcases such as the "Diversity Business Mixers and Expo" seminars on "Business Finance Access," and other events. Islam has led the creation of a data resource of more than 100,000 emails, thousands of social media links, and e-marketing for small, community and diversity businesses.



Monica M. Jaramillo

*Co-Founder
LABEL The Agency*

Monica Jaramillo was the first person in her family to go to college and was able to attend UCLA with a full academic scholarship. It was during a career night hosted at UCLA where she met the co-chairman of Rogers & Cowan, who hired her. She learned about personal publicity and talent relations and had great mentors but very often found herself to be one of the only people of color in the room. Jaramillo began working in brand marketing for talent campaigns and special events. Time and time again, she had to remind her non-BIPOC colleagues that they needed to think in color and that all humans were consumers. She has now represented and amplified a number of emerging Latinx voices. Jaramillo has always made a conscious effort to hire diverse talent, as well as mentor as many young women as she can.



Mari-Anne Kehler

*Partner, Chief Strategy Officer
GHJ*

Mari-Anne Kehler, CDP, is chief strategy officer and partner at GHJ. As a hearing impaired person and mother to a son with autism, she is no stranger to the considerations that must be made to accommodate people from different backgrounds. She is a leader in the disability community and major proponent for disabled self-advocates, mentoring people with disabilities and their families through the transition into adulthood. This emphasis on giving people the space to be their true selves and unlock their full potential has been a major driver in her efforts to promote diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility. As GHJ's first non-accounting partner and a member of its executive committee, Kehler uses her position of leadership to elevate voices who are not always included in the conversation to create a better workplace for all, especially within the firm.



Kristy Kim

*CEO & Co-Founder
TomoCredit*

When TomoCredit CEO and founder Kristy Kim was a young immigrant student at UC Berkeley she found herself denied five times for an auto loan. Unable to get an apartment, basic living needs were made impossible for someone new to the country without a credit score. Today, her company is breaking the cycle of "credit poverty" for immigrants, POC and women by offering access to credit that's FICO independent, immune to current interest rates and helping protect the most vulnerable communities from predatory lending scams. To date, Kristy and TomoCredit has processed over two million applications and raised over \$200 million. Plus, at TomoCredit, 95% of her full-time employees are immigrants, 90% of cardholders are POC and 60% of C-suites are female. To say that Kim is breaking down the white, male, fintech club of old is an understatement!



Lee Ann Kline

*President & Founder
STEM Advantage*

Lee Ann Kline is president and founder of STEM Advantage, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization celebrating its 10th anniversary in 2022. She left her corporate role at Ernst & Young (EY) in October 2020 and is focused on STEM Advantage full-time providing in-kind professional services. She began her career as a programmer at IBM keenly aware of the lack of women in her field as well as the need for role models. As her career progressed and she became a consultant, she observed first-hand the lack of gender and racial diversity in the technology organizations she served. Inspired to create change, Kline leveraged her network to create STEM Advantage in 2012. With the organization, she is addressing the lack of gender and racial diversity in the STEM workforce, while also addressing the racial wealth gap as she has identified a diverse talent pool that was not being tapped.



JC Lacey

Principal
JCL Consulting Group

JC Lacey specializes in managing community outreach events focused on diverse, multilingual and multi-demographic audiences. As owner and principal project manager at JCL Consulting Group, he is dedicated to stakeholder engagement in traditionally underrepresented communities. He has the experience of managing a wide range of community engagements and events, from one-on-one interviews, pop-up engagements and focus groups, to the City of Los Angeles' Fire Service Recognition Day and the annual Kingdom Day Parade in Los Angeles. Recent projects and engagements led by Lacey that demonstrate his commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility include the LA Metro K-Line community events and Line opening event; the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California ("MET") Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Forum; the Caltrans Cal Integrated Travel Project; and his work as vice president on the Board of Directors of the Crenshaw Chamber.



Lacy Lew Nguyen Wright

Executive Director
Hillman Grad Foundation

Lacy Lew Nguyen Wright currently serves as the executive director of Hillman Grad Foundation, Lena Waithe's production company that focuses on amplifying and celebrating the stories of diverse, historically marginalized communities, and developing a new generation of underrepresented creatives. She was one of the key players in the formalization of Hillman Grad Foundation, the nonprofit branch of Hillman Grad Productions, as the foundation only received its 501(c)(3) status last year. As the executive director, Lacy oversees and handles the day-to-day operations of its Mentorship Lab and Indeed's Rising Voices Initiatives, which both offer opportunities for marginalized storytellers in the entertainment industry. The Hillman Grad Mentorship Lab offers opportunities for marginalized storytellers to connect, grow and accelerate their careers in television and film. In all the work she does, Wright aims to leave a positive social impact.



Lauri Lewis

Startup Legal Garage Coordinator and Board Member
UC Hastings College of Law; Startup Legal Garage

As a board member and coordinator of the Startup Legal Garage, Lewis has used her experience co-founding businesses and working on business law transactions to help bring a more diversified group of entrepreneurs to the market. Starting in the midst of the pandemic, she brought visibility to the plight of entrepreneurs by advocating for more collective resources among the University of California campuses. This call led to further collective UC initiatives to assist entrepreneurs, and more resource information on multiple University of California websites. Through the UC Hastings Startup Legal Garage, Lewis has reached out to diverse communities over the years from ethnic minority groups, sports associations, universities, secondary education personnel and many other traditional lending, investing groups to offer free legal resources to more start-ups. Her efforts led to a more diverse group of entrepreneurs, including minorities, military professionals and innovative entrepreneurs having more pro bono legal resources.



Steven Lewis

Principal
ZGF

Steven Lewis leverages his leadership role as a principal at ZGF to create a culture of DEI through facilitating dialogues on the topic, hosting education programs, actively recruiting and mentoring Black architects, using his network to form partnerships with BIPOC design firms, developing internship and scholarship programs for BIPOC student architects, and leading ZGF's JEDI Committee – incepted after the murder of George Floyd and subsequent Black Lives Matter protests. During this turbulent time of racial reckoning in the United States, ZGF looked to him as an expert in DEI as it relates to the architecture industry for guidance on a path forward. As the firmwide leader of ZGF's JEDI Committee, Lewis has banded together the firm's six offices to make a commitment to partnership with Black-owned firms. Under his guidance, each office has developed relationships with three Black-owned architecture firms each with the goal of developing future opportunities for partnership.



Stephanie Leyva

Director of Partnerships
Thematic

As Thematic's director of partnerships, Stephanie Leyva has nurtured a thriving community of over half a million creators at Thematic and instrumental in their continued growth. A proud Latina and first-generation American, she is determined to share her perspective on women in tech and be a leader in the music and creator economy. To date, she has mentored over 100 students across the world through her first-of-its-kind extern program. Leyva is excited to be a role model for future generations. Thematic as a company has a female majority board (two-thirds female) and places an emphasis on diversity. It provides a peer-to-peer marketplace for music artists to discover and exchange creative assets and services. It has 500,000 creators in 220 countries, 1.8 million music licenses have been generated, which has driven over 30 billion song plays and 21 million new fans for independent artists.



Mark Liu

Consultant, Corporate
Akerman LLP

A consultant with the corporate team at Akerman LLP, Mark Liu is dedicated to the advancement of diversity, equity and inclusion within the company as a member of its DEI initiative. As an active member of the Southern California business community, he has served as director and executive officer of the Asian Business League of Southern California (ABL) since 2018, a nonprofit organization which has helped Asian business owners facilitate relationships and opportunities since 1984. Through ABL, he has had the privilege to meet, engage and counsel Asian entrepreneurs across various industries. Liu is committed to being a great platform in providing members of the Asian business community with the resources they need to grow their business.

VISIONARIES



David Malonson

Director, Regional Controller
Shawmut Design and Construction

In his role as director and regional controller of Shawmut Design and Construction's west region, David Malonson inherently makes a huge impact on the business. As co-chair of the firm's national Diversity Leadership Council (DLC) for two years and counting, his impact is amplified tenfold as he drives Shawmut towards its diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility goals, working to create a companywide culture and workplace environment where everyone can show up as their authentic selves and reach their fullest potential. After Shawmut's CEO Les Hiscoc declared DEIA a business imperative, Shawmut created the DLC to drive the work and progress, partnering with Deloitte Human Capital and Catalyst to develop a strategic framework to advance toward its DEIA goals. Key to driving progress and change is Malonson and his two DLC co-leads operationalizing the work and using data to establish accountability.



Mercedes Martin

Shareholder
Buchalter

Mercedes Martin is an active participant in Buchalter's Diversity Committee and Women's Committee, and has been instrumental in implementing firmwide diversity events to shape the firm's culture across its growing number of offices in the West Coast. In 2019, she was elevated to shareholder, one of the youngest females to be promoted to the position. Under Martin's leadership, Buchalter's Diversity Committee regularly reviews the firm's practices to identify and address areas which might benefit from improvement, and creates an action plan to the Board of Directors to implement changes in hiring or other support policies and procedures. The committee frequently hosts cultural recognition events throughout the year for all lawyers and employees that give us all an opportunity to share, learn and celebrate both diversity and commonality. Buchalter received a score of 100 out of 100 on the Human Rights Campaign Foundation's 2022 Corporate Equality Index.



Jennifer Marie Martinez

Chief Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Officer/Partner
Hanson Bridgett

In January 1, 2021, Jennifer Martinez became Hanson Bridgett's first chief diversity, equity & inclusion officer, a role shaped by her commitment to and passion for diversity in the legal profession, even before the role existed. As a Latina rising through the ranks of the legal industry, she has time and time again learned, identified, and equipped herself and those around her to solve key issues that some others may not have identified. As chair of the firm's Recruiting Committee, and a mentor to law students and young attorneys, Martinez has seen the need for law firms to play a more active role in addressing challenges for attorneys from diverse backgrounds. This includes a focus on more diverse hiring and recruitment, anti-racism education and stopping microaggressions in the workplace, changing how attorneys share credit and opportunities, and reprioritizing the firm's pro bono work toward racial and social justice.



Mark Masliah

Financial Advisor
Northwestern Mutual

A member of the LGBTQ+ community himself, Mark Masliah helped establish the district-level LGBTQ+ and Ally Council as a means to create an inclusive space for LGBTQ+ individuals at Northwestern Mutual. Additionally, the council helps fellow financial advisors better serve clients in the LGBTQ+ community. Under his leadership (he serves as chair of the council), council members provide company leaders and the ally community with valuable educational opportunities and resources from which to learn about, volunteer with or host fundraisers for LGBTQ+ community organizations or events. While still young (founded in 2019), the council has grown to over 65 members across five local offices and 180+ employees, attracting members representing all segments of the LGBTQ+ community. On a corporate level, they have taken great strides in growing an out and proud network across the organization's 15,000+ employees, pushing for cultural awareness, understanding, education and support.



Richard Matricaria

EVP/Chief Operations Officer – Western Division
Marcus & Millichap

Richard Matricaria has a natural appreciation for diversity and inclusion, and takes action to make a difference. He was key to the launch of the firm's William A. Millichap (WAM) Fellowship Program, a comprehensive two-year training and development program designed to prepare participants from all backgrounds for a rewarding career in commercial real estate. The program serves as a benchmark for providing a strong infrastructure to future generations interested in all aspects of CRE, with a focus on developing the skills and experience of applicants through training in financial literacy, entrepreneurship and real estate. Matricaria took it upon himself to ensure inclusion and outreach efforts uphold and honor the professionalism intended for the firm. His passion for serving as a role model and resource within the industry directly aligns with the values that CEO Hessam Nadji has instilled in the company.



Catherine Mattice

Founder & CEO
Civility Partners

Catherine Mattice has dedicated the last 15 years of her life to one mission – building a community of thriving individuals starting at the place they spend the majority of their time: the workplace. She specializes in coaching toxic leaders – those identified as abrasive, abusive or engaging in workplace bullying. Her method was designed specifically for people who are unaware of, or who minimize, the impact of their abusive communication and behavior, and is based on Dr. Laura Crawshaw's extensive research with over 450 executives, managers, supervisors and professionals. Mattice genuinely cares about her team as people, respect and welcome differences. By treating all team members with fairness and respect, she allocates resources and holds herself accountable for enhancing diversity and inclusion. She arranges monthly impact meetings with her staff to convey positive news and reward their individual contributions.

VISIONARIES



Jeanne Mau

SVP, TV Programming Diversity,
Equity & Inclusion
NBCUniversal

For more than 20 years, Jeanne Mau has been a champion for underrepresented talent in front and behind the camera in television. She has helped launch the careers of numerous television writers and directors, first at CBS and now at NBCUniversal. Working in close partnership with creative executives and producers, she has also directly impacted storytelling on series at both companies to ensure the stories of marginalized communities are not only told, but also celebrated. In September 2021, Mau joined NBCU to lead comprehensive DEI efforts across the entertainment television portfolio, marking the first time that one DEI leader has the oversight of the company's linear entertainment networks and powerhouse studio group. This includes the entertainment networks in the NBCU Television and Streaming portfolio as well as Universal Studio Group. Mau created NBCU LAUNCH, a new umbrella brand that houses the DEI efforts across NBCU's television portfolio.



Kelsey McCann

Chief of Staff
Edelson P.C.



Mitra Memari

Partner
ZGF

Three years ago at the age of 25, Kelsey McCann was elevated to the position of chief of staff of Edelson P.C., a national plaintiff's law firm. Her marching orders were clear, though undefined: "Find a place where the firm is failing and fix it." She started on diversity, delivering a sobering message to the firm. Despite the best of intentions, Edelson P.C. was failing to recruit and retain diverse talent. McCann had a larger message: diverse candidates were not finding their way to the plaintiff's bar. She changed the recruiting process at the firm and devised a summer program to ensure that law students got real training and mentorship. The results were outstanding; currently half of the firm are women and more than 30% represent traditional minority communities, with six women and three men in leadership roles.

Born in Iran, Mitra Memari emigrated to the U.S. when she was a teenager. Her experiences adapting as a minority female in a new country fostered a strong passion for diversity, inclusion and equity. At ZGF, she is one of the founding members of the Diversity and Inclusion Advocacy Group, which focuses on promoting a culture of respect, support and implementing firmwide initiatives for inclusion. Memari is also involved in the Southern California Chapter of the National Organization of Minority Architects as a volunteer and mentor in the Project Pipeline Architecture Summer Camp, which introduces architecture and the design profession to minority youth. Additionally, she was recently quoted in an article titled "Increasing Diversity in Architecture: Firm Initiatives" in ARCHITECT Magazine outlining her goals and specific steps towards a more inclusive and diverse culture within the architectural industry.

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CONGRATULATES



ELIZABETH A. MORRISON
Chief Diversity, Equity
and Inclusion Officer



CHRISTINA RIVERA GLENNON
Global Head of DE&I Programs
and Operations

for being recognized as

2022 Visionaries

by L.A. Times B2B Publishing



Bravo!

Our progress would not be possible without your leadership and dedication to what you both do. This recognition is well deserved! We've built an indelible and sustainable foundation for DE&I at LS&Co. This will enable us to continue to lead with our values while creating a culture where we can be our best selves in service of our global consumers and brands.

VISIONARIES



Dr. Beverlyn Mendez

Chief Operating Officer
Easterseals Southern California

As chief operating officer of Easterseals Southern California (ESSC) – the largest disability services provider in the state, Dr. Beverlyn Mendez leads a staff of more than 2,500+ professionals who provide services to 15,000 people throughout Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, San Diego, Imperial, Kern and Ventura counties. She heads the organization-wide \$300 million budgeting process and supervises the vice presidents who lead the organization's Adult Day, Living Options and Employment Services, as well as the chief officers who lead Clinical Services, Human Resources, Marketing Communications, Information Technology, as well as other key leaders. Her commitment to diversity & inclusion represents a personal and professional dedication to creating a world in which we all belong are accepted and respected. Dr. Mendez developed the organization's driving and mission-based D&I statement in collaboration with staff, disability leaders and participants.



Adrian Mendoza

Co-Founder & General Partner
Mendoza Ventures

Adrian Mendoza's story started right in Los Angeles as a child of two Mexican immigrants. Both of them worked out of their house and were both entrepreneurs. He then moved to Boston in the late 1990s and launched his first company in 2008. As a founder of Mendoza Ventures, Adrian said he saw no one who looked like him, which became even more prevalent as a venture capitalist. During his first five years growing Mendoza Ventures, he felt as if his firm was the only Latino-led venture capital firm on the East Coast and that was a sad realization. He helped start the firm to address the funding gap in the pre-seed investment stage for underrepresented founders. Mendoza Ventures prioritizes diversity and has a purpose to change the face of venture capital – they are more than just a check; they support their founders throughout their journey.



Senofer Mendoza

Co-Founder & General Partner
Mendoza Ventures

Mendoza Ventures is a woman-and minority-owned business. Co-founder Senofer Mendoza switched to venture capital after a career in enterprise sales and hospitality design. She started Mendoza Ventures to address the growing funding gap in the pre-seed investment stage. She is a published author, innovator and thought leader in the technology, start-up and venture capital space with a passion for equality and diversity. Mendoza brought these qualities to the table when starting Mendoza Ventures and is an advocate for DEI initiatives across both her professional and her personal life. Mendoza Ventures is instantly differentiated in the market with every general partner at the firm either being female or a minority. As they grow their business, Senofer and Adrian Mendoza want to be mindful of representing the entire population. Mendoza Ventures' portfolio is 80% diverse in the CEO role (women, minorities, immigrants).



Shawne Merriman

Strategic Partner
Family First Life Insurance

Former professional football star Shawne Merriman is most well-known for his performance on the football field, but his work off the field is in many ways far more impressive. Growing up, he struggled first hand with homelessness, lack of food and addiction in his family. Despite these challenges, he worked to overcome these obstacles and have a successful, impressive career. Now, Merriman is focused on assisting others in establishing generational wealth through his partnership with Family First Life Insurance. He believes in guiding underprivileged and underrepresented community members to become leaders in their wealth and their personal brands. Outside of his work, Merriman is also active as a supporter of charities such as The Alpha Project and The Salvation Army of San Diego.



Eugene "Mitch" Mitchell

SVP, Diversity and Community Partnerships
Sempra

As the leading energy infrastructure company in North America serving 40 million customers worldwide, Sempra has a workforce of 20,000 employees that are located across multiple geographies, and within different operating companies at multiple locations – in the field, within different office complexes and at corporate headquarters. Adding to the complexity are regulatory obligations that draw hard and fast delineations between these operating companies. All of this creates a unique challenge to build a cohesive, inclusive culture of belonging for Eugene "Mitch" Mitchell, Sempra's senior vice president of diversity and community partnerships, who is a recognized D&I leader in Southern California. He believes in building a more inclusive culture of belonging; imperative in giving employees opportunities to engage and expand their understanding. From individual involvement to meetings and events, Mitchell has introduced and sponsored a variety of programs that encourage everyone to be part of the diversity journey.



Bonita B. Money

Founder & Executive Director
National Diversity and Inclusion Cannabis Alliance

Bonita Money is a pioneer in the cannabis industry, specifically around diversity and inclusion in an industry that is 98 percent white and male. She founded one of the first social equity and social justice organizations in the nation, National Diversity and Inclusion Cannabis Alliance (NDICA), and because of her tireless efforts, she has paved the way for social equity programs that were first launched in California cities such as Los Angeles, Oakland, San Francisco and Sacramento in 2017. Money's social equity programs gave priority processing for People of Color from marginalized communities that had been impacted by the War on Drugs to obtain cannabis business licenses in opening cannabis businesses in an industry that has shut out Black and Brown folks that went to prison for the plant that is now making billions of dollars in the legal market.



Elizabeth A. Morrison

*Chief Diversity,
Equity & Inclusion Officer*
Levi Strauss & Co.



John Murillo

SVP, Market President
Enterprise Bank & Trust



Sonia Nayak

*Partner; Officer Managing
Partner, Los Angeles*
Nixon Peabody LLP

As the first person to hold the role of chief diversity, equity & inclusion officer at Levi Strauss & Co., Elizabeth A. Morrison is adding strategic expertise and thought leadership to guide LS&Co. in taking a critical step forward on building its core values and driving sustainable systemic change for employees, consumers and communities. Her resume includes 20 years of shaping diversity and culture within institutional brands. Under Morrison, LS&Co. has made notable progress in a short time in its commitments to advance equality and build a workforce that better represents its consumers, while ensuring that employees feel a sense of belonging. This can be seen in LS&Co.'s first-ever Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Impact Report from 2021. She also built a maturity model into the company's DE&I strategy, which is critical to helping leaders and employees understand the long-term commitment and phases of change needed to achieve goals.

Born in Mexico, John Murillo migrated from Tijuana in third grade, and his connection to the Hispanic community allows him to serve as an advocate for diversity both at Enterprise and in the business community of Los Angeles. He has deep roots in advocating for DEI efforts in the financial services industry and continues to build on an already remarkably distinguished career in financial services, currently serving as SVP, market president for Enterprise Bank & Trust. He has more than 30 years of experience, having worked his way from a part-time teller all the way through multiple executive positions. Murillo prides himself on using a consultative and collaborative approach to help his clients in reaching their financial objectives. He has an extensive background in managing and developing diverse and inclusive teams, in addition to a thorough understanding of establishing and growing customer relationships.

Sonia Nayak is a successful partner, dedicated firm citizen and admired leader at Nixon Peabody LLP. Over the course of her 17-year career at NP, she has taken on a variety of leadership roles within her practice group, her office and the broader firm. Nayak has prioritized her firm's diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives through roles such as partner lead for the L.A. Women Attorney's Group in 2020 and former partner chair of the Asian and Middle Eastern American Resource Group. In leveraging these platforms, she designed programs for colleagues to celebrate their inherent and acquired diversity and created opportunities for the next generation of attorneys. Nayak also leads the firm's New Markets Tax Credits team, lending her knowledge on new capital for businesses looking to operate in economically disadvantaged neighborhoods. She has also played a key role in attracting and recruiting diverse talent to the firm.

CONGRATULATIONS JOHN MURILLO

Recognized as a 2022 Visionary by L.A. Times B2B Publishing



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partnering with
clients and our
communities to
help them grow
and thrive.**

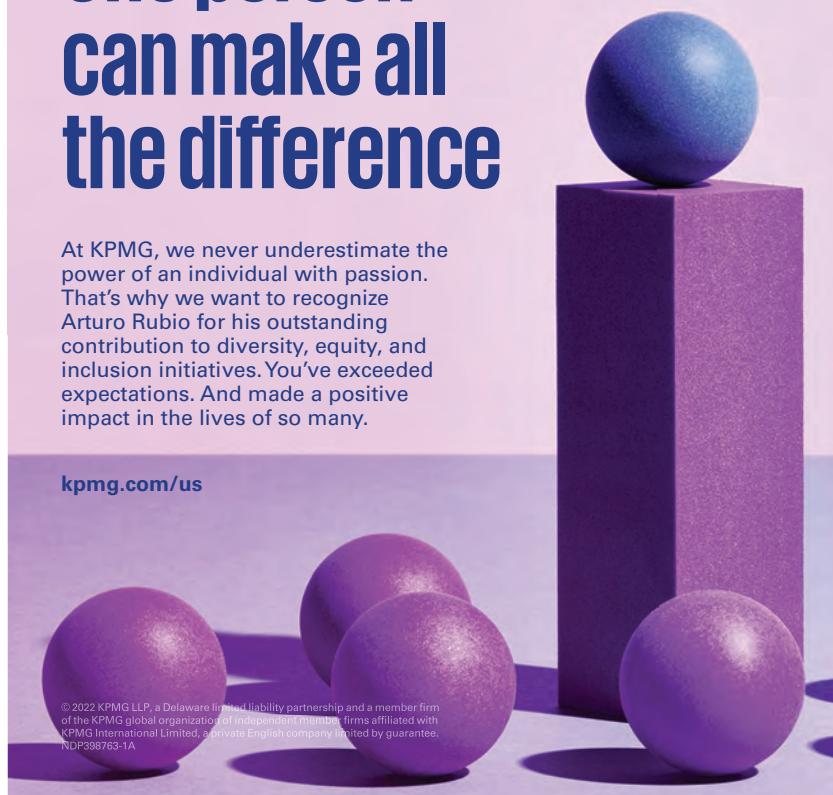
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KPMG

One person can make all the difference

At KPMG, we never underestimate the power of an individual with passion. That's why we want to recognize Arturo Rubio for his outstanding contribution to diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives. You've exceeded expectations. And made a positive impact in the lives of so many.

kpmg.com/us



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VISIONARIES



Bridget Netter

SVP of Programs and Talent Development
UNITE-LA

As a leader in education and workforce development, Bridget Netter has committed her career to ensuring equitable outcomes for Angelenos facing systemic racism and socio-economic barriers to educational attainment and access to high growth, high wage careers. At UNITE-LA, she has worked collaboratively with employers, education, philanthropy and civic leaders to develop business education partnerships that resulted in alliances for driving a more inclusive talent pipeline to meet the needs of our region's growing workforce. For example, with a focus on increasing social and economic mobility of Black and Brown students in South L.A., Netter worked with Mayor Eric Garcetti's team to launch South L.A. Scholars, a program that provides paid internships in healthcare for students in South L.A. high schools. She also worked with Supervisor Holly Mitchell's office to launch a project to recruit and prepare students from District 2 with paid internships and jobs in technology.



Dr. Rita Ohaya

Regional Supplier Diversity Director
Skanska USA Building Inc.

As a social and contract equity subject matter expert, Dr. Rita Ohaya advocates for small and disadvantaged businesses. She has maintained a career objective of equipping small and disadvantaged businesses with strategies to compete in the marketplace successfully and offer a level playing field for participation. She supports economic sustainability for small and diverse businesses through access to capital, training, development, compliance and community engagement. Dr. Ohaya has been instrumental in leading social and contract equity initiatives to maximize opportunities, knowledge transfer and development for small, diverse, historically underutilized and marginalized businesses. Through her work or leadership with several corporations and public entities, Dr. Ohaya has instituted training courses and technical workshops that introduce businesses to all facets of operating in the construction sector. She has also orchestrated networking opportunities and relationship building for over 500 small and diverse businesses.



Dr. Erika Taylor Page

Chief Workforce Advisor
Nuleep

Dr. Erika Taylor Page has led with stellar leadership, empathy, community impact and more across companies and communities from Disney, startups, nonprofits and boards. She has developed leadership and DEI frameworks and programs for Fortune 500 and start-up teams. She also teaches as an adjunct at USC, DEI and organization structures. Dr. Page has provided trainings and programs for the trainers, leadership and employees for employee empowerment, inclusion and diversity, DEIA, unconscious bias, inclusive ecosystems, and community impact. Not only does she train the next generation of leaders, she has also supported multiple youth programs at Nuleep, which include DEI awareness, support and community impact. Nuleep's Hexagon program included top start-ups and nonprofits in the community, including HBCUVC, Homeboy Industries, Electric Fish, Circular Fashion and Holliston Foundation, where students supported each organization to create impact.



Paulette Pantoja

Chief Executive Officer
Blu Digital Group

Since founding Blu Digital Group, Inc. in 2005, Paulette Pantoja has always focused on diversity and inclusion. Whether it be in mentoring and encouraging staff to step into roles that help them grow to fostering diverse hiring practices, she has made company culture a priority, citing that employees come first, customers second, believing the culture of a company is what ensures its success. Blu has a diverse workforce in terms of age, race, religion, nationality, sexual orientations, gender, gender identity and national origin that brings diverse viewpoints and perspectives to the company. In the traditionally white male-dominated media industry, Blu is unusual in that less than half of the staff are white male, with the majority of the workforce made up of African American, South East Asian, Islander or Hawaiian, Hispanic/Latino and mixed race men, women and non-binary.



Meena Patel

Director of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion
NextGen Healthcare

Meena Patel joined NextGen Healthcare as its first-ever director of diversity and inclusion in 2021. This new role was created with the company's realization it could do better with its DE&I initiatives, and her leadership has delivered more than anticipated. Utilizing a two-pronged approach, Patel has been helping shape the company's viewpoint of DE&I through mindset and metrics. Mindset includes the building blocks of diversity, equity and inclusion to create a workplace that supports, welcomes and celebrates everyone; a culture of inclusion and belonging. Metrics examine recruiting, hiring, promotions and retention. In less than two years, Patel has relaunched NextGen Healthcare's ERGs, including NextGen United (BDC/U.S. collaboration), and created three new ERGs: beiNG (Black Equity and Inclusion at NextGen), Latinx and AAPI (Asian American Pacific Islander). She also creates themes for ERGs to follow each quarter, providing talking points and guiding the conversation for ERG leaders.



Louis Perry

President
Kadima Security Services

Louis Perry is the president of Kadima Security with over 30 years in the security industry. He has provided security for elite and high-profile people such as politicians, former presidents, court security details, personal protection, etc. As a security expert for NBC4, CBS2, KCAL9, KTLA and in over 90 publications, Perry provides expert crime prevention tips. The Jewish community has embraced him since his early days in Brooklyn, New York. In his early teen years, he worked in the garment industry known as the Schmatta business. Shortly after his move to California, he began meeting his Jewish brothers and sisters in buildings throughout Los Angeles, and that's how he met Rabbi Baruch Shlomo Cunin. Perry has dedicated every mitzvah he has done to Rabbi Cunin and has been a part of the Chabad Telethon for 12 consecutive years.

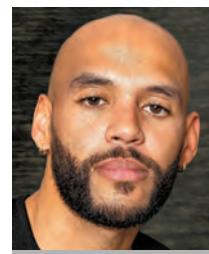
VISIONARIES

**Pedro J.
Pizarro***President & CEO
Edison International*

Pedro Pizarro, president and CEO of Edison International, has spoken about the best part of his job: getting to know Edison Scholars, high school students who get a \$50,000 scholarship to pursue a four-year college degree in STEM. He gives speeches to many students of color (in both English and Spanish) who get this scholarship based on their need, GPA and careers. It is particularly impactful to see how he genuinely promotes the presence of people of color in STEM. Many Edison Scholars end up interning and later working at Edison International. Additionally, Pizarro promoted a survey that African American employees took at Edison International and Southern California Edison and boldly published the results, committing to improving conditions to attract and retain more African American employees and secure their success at Edison International.

**Gary L.
Polk***CEO & Founder
The Polk Institute***Mashi
Rahmani***Founder & CEO
MMChr***Angela
Reddock-Wright***Employment Mediator,
Arbitrator, Investigator
Reddock Law/Judicate
West*

Angela Reddock-Wright is an employment mediator, arbitrator, workplace and Title IX investigator. She has practiced as an employment and labor law attorney for 25 years. After working as an employment litigator for 15 years, in 2011, she opened the Reddock Law Group and transitioned to becoming a full-time neutral. The Reddock Law Group is a boutique minority-and woman-owned dispute resolution and investigations law firm focused on the resolution of employment and labor law, Title IX sexual assault, hazing, and bullying legal claims through the alternative dispute resolution, investigation and other neutral processes. Reddock-Wright is a well-regarded, sought-after DEI trainer for employers and individuals on issues of race, gender and other protected categories in the workplace. She combines her training with her practice as a mediator, arbitrator and workplace investigator, where she is retained to help resolve issues that go to the core of DEI in the workplace.

**Niona
Rich***Managing Director
Vaco***Justin
Riley***VP of Operations &
Business Development
Hillman Grad
Productions*

Niona Rich is a managing director at Vaco, supporting clients to grow their business, helping candidates find their dream job and a leading member of Vaco's inclusion, diversity, and equity steering committee, overseeing a variety of initiatives and programs aimed at embracing differences, leveling the playing field and empowering the Vaco team to listen, act and promote inclusion. Vaco, which delivers critical talent solutions to clients by providing consulting, project resources, executive search, direct hire and strategic staffing solutions with expertise in accounting and finance, technology and operations, has always been committed to diversity, inclusion and equity. Rich has led the expansion of existing programs and developed new initiatives, processes and training to draw the circle wider to broaden perspectives, connect on a deeper level and guide Vaco to be a force for positive change by building diversity and inclusion at the heart of its culture.

As a member of the Claremont Graduate University Board of Trustees, Mashi Rahmani is also the Advisory Board member chair for PEEL Research. PEEL is an interdisciplinary group of social scientists, scholars and field practitioners who aim to explore the root of individual and group prejudice, including what groups experience prejudice most, and how to eradicate such thoughts and attitudes before they manifest into discrimination. Their mission is to eradicate racial-and gender-based prejudice and subsequent stereotyping by understanding and targeting their historical and scientific antecedents. The organization's aim is to use science to explore the issues, feelings and systems that undergird prejudice and its associated behaviors. Rahmani and the team's aim to understand individuals and groups commonly associated with prejudice ideology to further development of inoculations and eradication training in business enterprises such as MMChr.

VISIONARIES



Arturo Rubio

Managing Director
KPMG

Arturo "Art" Rubio has led KPMG's Hispanic/Latino business resource group, Somos KPMG, for over five years. Over this time, he has organized various events to further community development externally and mentorship internally. He has led an initiative to develop a mentoring infrastructure at KPMG, partnering with its L.A.'s African Ancestry business resource group to create a support and development network for young professionals. To highlight the various cultures in Somos KPMG, Rubio organized an office potluck of various Latin American foods, where attendees were asked to answer trivia questions about the history of the countries represented. During Hispanic Heritage Month, he hosted virtual discussions about the experience of Hispanic and Latino immigrants in Los Angeles to spotlight their roles in the development of the city. Rubio also coordinated a Día de Los Muertos event, encouraging attendees to dress up and include their families while watching a film.



Uriel Saenz

CEO & Founder
The US Life Style Group LLC

Uriel Saenz, the chief executive officer and founder of The US Life Style Group LLC, has proven to be a genuine leader who has achieved success by having a futuristic vision and the specific knowledge and skills to turn his ideas into real-world success stories. Acceptance and compassion are among the traits that he has demonstrated repeatedly as a professional through the programs he has created during his career. His demonstrations of honesty and integrity are two important ingredients which make a Saenz a particularly effective leader. His colleagues and constituents know and report he is someone who always sticks to his values, core beliefs and ethics, which is why people embrace his vision and follow him. Saenz has been able to create and bring change, which impacts many different diverse people's lives.



Asal Saffari

Associate
Haynes & Boone

Asal Saffari leads several diversity, equity, inclusion & accessibility initiatives within the Southern California legal community. As an Iranian American woman and first-generation lawyer, she had an untraditional path to becoming a lawyer. She is passionate about helping effect change and hopes to help create a more inclusive environment for other diverse lawyers and law students. As a member and events co-chair of the Orange County Bar Association's (OCBA) Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee since 2020, Saffari has organized several continuing legal education, and diversity, equity and inclusion events. Within her own law firm, she serves as leader of the California Pipeline Initiatives Committee, where she helps organize informative events for diverse and underrepresented students interested in pursuing a law career. Saffari also regularly volunteers at her alma mater, Chapman Law School, for diversity, equity and inclusion programming, including speaking on the 2022 First Generation Panel.



Hannah Said

Diversity & Inclusion Business Partner
Woven

Hannah Said is a diversity, equity and inclusion facilitator, researcher, and community organizer. She has an unwavering commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion fueled by her passion for social justice, art and authentic community building. She uses creativity and humor to bring diverse people together, to create inclusive spaces, and talk about social justice and intersectionality. Her drive for equity comes from her lived experience of being a biracial, queer Muslim woman. Said's professional experience includes working at the California Department of Developmental Services (DDS) building diversity, inclusion and accessibility programs for San Francisco, Marin and San Mateo counties, and granting funding to various disability nonprofits. She has also been conducting research with people of color and disabled veterans at the Veterans Affairs Office, and recruited underrepresented people for San Francisco-based tech companies.



Shirin Laor-Raz Salemmia

Founder & CEO
PlayWerks, INC and WhizGirls Academy

To date, 5,000 girls, boys and adults have come through Shirin Laor-Raz Salemmia's WhizGirls Academy program since its inception in August 2013. This includes summer camps, after-school programs, during school programs, 20 hackathons (including one in Long Beach for Mayor Garcia during Innovation Week, three for the White House and four for Mayor Garcetti) and one TechLAvia event during CicLAvia with Mayor Garetti in South Central L.A. The students in Salemmia's programs have realized that they have a lot of potential and opportunities in the tech space and not be confined by their culture/society or their neighborhoods. She started WhizGirls Academy to focus on diversity, equity and inclusion as a partnership with the Obama Administration White House to help students from the inner city thrive and create career pipelines in the STEM industry and entrepreneurship.



Lara Schmoisman

Founder & CEO
The Darl

Since 2019, The Darl Marketing Agency founded by Lara Schmoisman has been a champion of rights of all to a safe, inclusive workspace. Schmoisman and The Darl hire people from all across the globe, from all walks of life. As an immigrant to the U.S. with a diverse background, She heads the group with confidence and a strong sense of community as the CEO. The Darl also holds monthly team-building challenges that help expose them to each other's cultures, customs and lifestyles. With dances, music, food and more, each person gets a chance to show off their authentic self in a welcoming environment where differences are celebrated. This allows team members to feel included and welcome. At The Darl, it's an important part of the company culture to ensure each employee feels welcome and an adequate amount of representation within the company.



**Dr. Tana M.
Session**
CEO & Founder
Tanamsession.com

Dr. Tana M. Session has spent more than 30 years in human resources and for 10 of those years as the top HR executive for both domestic and international organizations, where she led various change initiatives and up-leveled entire departments, including talent, systems and infrastructure. She has designed highly specialized and engaging training programs on topics ranging from unconscious bias, microaggressions, allyship, multigenerational workforce and other related topics to increase awareness around diversity, equity, inclusion and access, as well as increasing self-awareness of employees and leadership. Dr. Session has partnered with hi-tech start-ups and fast-growth companies as well as McDonald's, Xerox, Creed Perfumery, Interscope Geffen A&M Records, Spotify, HOORAE, Federal Executive Board, Department of Health & Human Services, Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce, NASA and other multi-national for-profit and nonprofit organizations, including the Rainforest Alliance and the YMCA, and government agencies to create lasting change and innovation.



**Lori
Shao**
Founder & CEO
Finli

As a child of an immigrant family, Lori Shao started her career with a different perspective on her industry and consistently saw a disparity between who could be uplifted the most by fintech and who it was being created for. She worked in the financial services industry for over two decades and is a firm believer in the benefits of leveraging fintech and financial institutions in general. Shao founded Finli in 2019 and created solutions specifically around the needs of community-based solopreneurs and small business owners. Other platforms on the market were too cumbrous for what small businesses needed and were not priced with their profit margins in mind. She created a unique payment platform for an underserved segment of the market. Also, she firmly believes in diversity and inclusion, and puts it into practice behind the scenes and within Finli.



**Tia
Sherrington**
General Counsel
DoorDash

Tia Sherrington joined DoorDash in 2017 and today is the company's general counsel where she oversees legal, information security and enterprise technology functions. Before joining DoorDash, she represented tech companies in private practice and in-house at each juncture, finding ways to emphasize the impact women and other underrepresented talent can have when afforded the right opportunities. Sherrington shepherded the company through critical milestones – from building a legal organization from the ground up to guiding DoorDash's IPO, to driving DoorDash's international growth, and championing diversity and inclusion companywide. She is a fierce advocate about diversity and inclusion and invested personally in strengthening diversity, equity and inclusion not only within her organization but across the company. She has a fundamental belief that the best teams are the ones where everyone can bring their complete selves to work, and feel safe and accepted for who they are.



We congratulate our Associate
Asal Saffari
 Haynes Boone salutes **Asal Saffari**
 for being recognized as a **Visionary**
 in the **2022 Diversity, Equity, Inclusion**
 & **Accessibility Magazine.**

HAYNES BOONE
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VISIONARIES



Michael Brian Shortnacy

Partner
King & Spalding

Michael Shortnacy's most notable contribution to DEI has been his groundbreaking work co-leading a team that secured a preliminary injunction against the State of Alabama halting a law that bans and criminalizes the provision of certain medical treatment to transgender teens. He represents several parents, teens, their providers and a pastor challenging the law. The U.S. Department of Justice intervened in the case to argue that the law violates the Constitution's Equal Protection Clause. The State appealed the decision, and Shortnacy and team are briefing the appeal. He devotes significant time mentoring law students and junior lawyers within the firm. He serves as the chair of King & Spalding's Los Angeles Summer Associate recruiting. He is also the firmwide co-leader of the LGBTQ+ Affinity Group. Shortnacy actively participates in the firm's associate development and diversity mentoring programs to foster professional growth and excellence in the firm's junior lawyers.



Dr. Hanna Song

SVP & Chief Diversity Officer
Children's Hospital
Los Angeles



Tawanda Starns

VP, Restaurant Support Center People Experience & Chief Diversity Equity and Inclusion Officer
Chipotle

Since joining CHLA in January 2021, Dr. Hanna Song has been instrumental in developing and leading key efforts to foster an inclusive and equitable environment for patients, families and team members, including launching CHLA's enterprise-wide DEI strategic plan with specific workstreams for workforce diversity, health equity, cultural humility, programming/training and community partnerships. She also engaged workforce development and training related to cultural competencies, including the recently launched Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (SOGI) mandatory training for all team members, and fostered a data-driven approach to understanding diversity in the workforce, trainees, patients and families, and more. Additionally, Dr. Song and her team have facilitated CHLA's Faculty DEI Council and many other representative councils; coordinated the efforts of vibrant, active Enterprise Resource Groups (ERGs); and collaborated with teams across the enterprise to incorporate diversity awareness, education and equity in all new and existing initiatives.

Tawanda Starns has driven diverse and inclusive practices across all levels of Chipotle and has spearheaded critical company changes to ensure all leadership team members, employees and fans are living the brand's purpose to "Cultivate a Better World." She champions a people-first mentality that ensures employees and guests feel valued and heard. She has improved employee well-being and driven diversity across Chipotle's communities with robust initiatives that champion DE&I, including the launch of the MLT Black Equity at Work Certification last year – a program that holds employers accountable to a common Black equity standard and requires meaningful, measurable action and accomplishment in areas such as increasing Black representation at every level, cultivating an anti-racist workplace and ensuring equitable business practices. MLT Black Equity at Work Certification requires employers to make progress toward achieving Black equity internally and also support Black equity in society.



Cynthia Y. Sun

Partner
Sanders Roberts LLP

Cynthia Y. Sun was recently promoted to partner and practices in the areas of general liability, product liability, breach of warranty, breach of contract, consumer fraud and general business litigation. She has represented a variety of clients, from individuals and small businesses to Fortune 500 companies. Sun actively promotes diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility within the firm. She serves as a mentor and resource for female and minority associate attorneys. She hosted and led a discussion about race, ethnicity and gender equity within the profession and the workplace with female associates at the firm as part of the ABA Commission on Women Day of Conversation on May 24, 2022. The purpose of the discussion was to build allyship among women with the goal of tearing down barriers and erode race and ethnicity bias in the legal profession. Sun is also active in the Asian American community.



Meiko Takayama

Founder & CEO
AWE | Advancing Women Executives



Michael Thomas

Principal
Jackson Lewis P.C.

Meiko Takayama had a successful career in the art field in Europe and New York before changing her focus to business consulting. She was a managing director with CEB (now Gartner) through the company's successful IPO and growth to \$450 million in revenue. After managing the West Coast business, Takayama became an executive recruiter and continued to experience a lack of diversity on leadership teams. In an effort to create a paradigm shift in the way companies look at accelerating the careers of underrepresented professionals, she created AWE in 2012. For AWE, diversity means business, process and awareness. Takayama and her team partner with Fortune 1000 companies to create sustainable workplace cultures and embed inclusion throughout organizations. AWE is the leading provider of women's leadership development programs for mid-career and executive women, partnering with over 1,500 professionals and training over 25,000 employees annually.

Michael Thomas, a principal in the Orange County office of Jackson Lewis P.C., has demonstrated a years-long commitment to promoting diversity, equity and inclusion within the firm, and across the legal industry. As a member of Jackson Lewis' Corporate Diversity Counseling Group, he is a recognized DEI expert within and outside of the firm. During the last year alone, Thomas has been tapped as a DEI commenter, presenter and panelist by more than 10 outside organizations. Recently, with Tanya Bové, the office managing principal of the Hartford, Connecticut office, he collaborated with the Association of Corporate Counsel (ACC) to create "RACE Talks: Realign Act Change Engage," a 10-week racial equity education program hosted during the summer of 2021. Participants engaged in educational assignments on different topics, such as workplace bias and the neuroscience of DEI. Thomas has spoken to a variety of organizations and publications about DEI matters.

VISIONARIES



**Yalda T.
Uhls Ph.D.**

Founder & Executive Director
The Center for Scholars
& Storytellers



**Richard
Valenza**

Founder & CEO
Raise A Child



**Eric
Vasquez**

Owner
Veterans Logistics Group

Yalda T. Uhls, Ph.D. is an internationally recognized, award-winning research scientist, educator and author studying how media affects young people. She is the founding director of the Center for Scholars & Storytellers, a research organization based at UCLA, which bridges the gap between social science research and media creation to support authentic and inclusive stories for youth. Through her background as a former movie executive, Dr. Uhls has connected industry professionals with academic experts to improve content children and adolescents consume. She is also an adjunct professor at UCLA, where she conducts research on how media affects the social behavior of tweens and teens, and has published a book on parenting in the midst of the digital media landscape. Within the Center for Scholars & Storytellers (CSS), Dr. Uhls' work focuses primarily on conducting research, creative engagement and collaborating with adolescents through the Youth Media REPresentation Program.

Raise A Child is the nationwide leader in the recruitment and support of LGBTQ+ and all prospective parents interested in building families through fostering and adoption. Their staff mirrors their constituents with regards to gender, race and sexual orientation. As an adopted parent himself, Rich Valenza started Raise A Child over 11 years ago with the goal of fostering insightful inclusion of LGBTQ+ professionals and ensure accountability in the workplace. In addition, Raise A Child serves an important role in ensuring its constituent agency and governmental partners embrace the widest definition of equity and inclusion. It regularly develops, improves and/or modifies its promotional materials so that they are culturally sensitive and accessible to all target groups.

Eric Vasquez has consistently demonstrated exemplary leadership and a strong commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion not only in his business career, but also his military career. Throughout his professional career, he has existed within traditional, conservative spaces that often lack a focus on diversity, equity and inclusion. As a second-generation Mexican American who is also an out and proud member of the LGBTQ+ community, Vasquez has often had to make space for himself where that space wasn't always available, open or affirming. Transitioning out of a full-time role in the U.S. Air Force, he founded Veterans Logistics Group, an SDVOSB and NGLCC-certified LGBTBE, employing 65 unique and innovative individuals spanning four countries. His company prioritizes social and corporate responsibility by providing opportunities to those who don't always have access to them.



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**Alicia
Vaz**

*Partner &
Chief DEI Officer*
Cox, Castle & Nicholson

Cox, Castle & Nicholson partner Alicia Vaz is the firm's chief diversity, equity & inclusion officer. In her role, she serves as a DEI ambassador, internally and externally, and works closely with firm management to advance, create and implement the firm's strategic short- and long-term DEI plans. She also continues to be the chair of the firm's DEI Committee. Having been with the firm for over two decades, Vaz has a proven track record of leadership in advancing diversity, equity and inclusion within the firm. Under her leadership, the DEI Committee has instituted numerous initiatives, including a DEI speaker series and DEI challenges to educate and foster awareness about DEI issues. She was instrumental in the firm's decision to participate in the current cohort of Diversity Lab's Midsize Mansfield Rule Certification process to increase the representation of diverse lawyers in law firms and leadership.



**Charles P.
Vega, M.D.**

*Director, UC Irvine Program
for Medical Education*
University of California,
Irvine



**Joana
Vicente**

Chief Executive Officer
Sundance Institute

Dr. Charles Vega is a champion for health equity for marginalized populations. He is dedicated to this response through his service on key committees and task forces designed to address faculty diversity, and establish a stronger sense of inclusion for all UCI Health stakeholders. He created the Residents and Fellow Scholars Academy, a unique program for residents and fellows from underrepresented backgrounds to immediately join the UCI Health faculty after their training is complete, just as Dr. Vega himself did over two decades ago in the early days of his own career. Additionally, he works with the university and medical school to establish a pipeline of future, current and former medical students to have continuous support at every career stage. This strategic alumni network effort weaves the principles of diversity and inclusion throughout the program, and more importantly, the student and alumni career trajectories.

Born in Macau and raised in Portugal, Joana Vicente joined the Sundance Institute as CEO in November 2021. She is a producer and passionate supporter of independent storytellers who has extensive experience running nonprofits that support artists from diverse backgrounds. Prior to joining, she was executive director and co-head of the Toronto International Film Festival and the TIFF organization. Vicente is a strong advocate for independent voices and advances Sundance Institute's historic commitment to inclusion and equity. She has been leading the organization ensuring equity and belonging are core values to its work within its workplace, its programs supporting artists and its public programs and partnerships that engage audience and industry partners. Vicente holds a strong belief that a collaborative approach bringing this work under one umbrella will strengthen the commitment to a more inclusive Sundance.



**Breana
Weaver**

*Assistant Manager of
Diversity and Inclusion*
PCL Construction –
California Buildings

Breana Weaver joined PCL Construction – California Buildings as assistant manager of diversity & inclusion in March 2021. It was a notable departure from a career in public service, having spent the previous five years with Los Angeles City Councilmember Marqueece Harris-Dawson's team. She was initially tasked with partnering with community organizations and elected officials to build a pipeline of local talent of all ages bound for construction careers. By educating the community on the opportunities available and assisting community members in accessing resources, she worked to increase their economic participation and career mobility in an industry with unmatched potential. Now a year-and-a-half later, Weaver's role continues to expand. She recently contributed to PCL's companywide DEI strategic planning and oversees implementation at the district level as co-chair for the California Buildings DEI Committee.



**Corey
White**

Founder & CEO
Cyvatar

Corey White leads the initiative of promoting diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility in every facet of his life. In addition to being a mentor of Northwestern Mutual Black Entrepreneurs, DEIA is required within his business. Within the company he founded (Cyvatar), he has partnered with Aleria, a company who measures DEIA within the workplace. White believes that leadership teams need to be diverse to succeed, so Cyvatar's Executive Leadership Team is primarily composed of women and men of diverse backgrounds. He ensures women leadership exists and ensures the company actively interviews people from diverse backgrounds. To date, Cyvatar currently has more women employed in the company than men and is incredibly diverse in every aspect across the organization. Cyvatar is proud to be as diverse and inclusive as it is, and it wouldn't have been possible without White's leadership and passion.

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