Vault Law Firm Culture & Inclusion Questionnaire

Firm Information

- **Firm Name:** Please provide the full name of your firm.

Chamberlain, Hrdlicka, White, Williams & Aughtry

Leadership

- **Head(s) of Firm:** Please provide the name and title of the head(s) of the firm (e.g., Chair, CEO, Managing Partner). Enter information for more than one individual, if applicable.

C. Larry Carbo III, Managing Shareholder
Erin Hulme, Chief Operating Officer

- **Inclusion Professional(s):** Does the firm have a Chief Diversity Officer, Director of Inclusion, or other professional(s) leading the firm's inclusion initiatives? If so, please provide the name and title of the inclusion professional. Enter information for more than one individual, if applicable.

No

- **Ownership:** Is the firm women-owned, minority-owned, and/or LGBTQ+-owned? If so, please note any related certifications (e.g., NAMWOLF).

No

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Culture and Community

- **Affinity Groups:** Does the firm have internal affinity groups or networks (open to all employees)? What affinity groups or networks does the firm have? What kind of support does the firm provide for these affinity groups or networks?

Chamberlain Hrdlicka has Employee Resource Groups for Women in Law and Allies, Affinity Groups & Allies, and a Diversity Equity and Inclusion committee.

- **Culture and Inclusion Events:** Does the firm host culture and inclusion retreats or conferences? If so, please describe these events.

Yes, Chamberlain Hrdlicka hosts a variety of culture and inclusion–focused initiatives through its Employee Resource Groups, including Women in Law and Allies and Affinity Groups & Allies, as well as its Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Committee. These groups regularly organize meetings, programming, and firmwide events that foster inclusion, support professional development, and encourage engagement across the firm.

- **Cultural Awareness:** How does the firm commemorate important dates honoring different cultures of employees within the firm (e.g., Black History Month, Women's History Month, Pride Month, etc.)?

Chamberlain Hrdlicka commemorates important cultural and heritage months through firmwide communications and programming led by its Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Committee and Employee Resource Groups. These efforts can include educational presentations or internal communications highlighting the significance of each observance, and opportunities for engagement that promote awareness, inclusion, and appreciation of the diverse backgrounds and experiences of our employees.

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- **Inclusiveness:** Please describe steps the firm has taken to create an inclusive environment for women, people of color, LGBTQ+ individuals, people with disabilities, and parents/caregivers.

Chamberlain Hrdlicka fosters an inclusive environment through firmwide initiatives that promote respect, collaboration, and equal opportunity. These efforts include diversity-focused programming, internal committees and groups that support community building, and policies designed to ensure all employees feel valued and supported. The firm is committed to creating a workplace where individuals of all backgrounds—including women, people of color, LGBTQ+ individuals, people with disabilities, and parents/caregivers—can thrive and succeed.

Networking, Mentoring, and Professional Development

- **Mentoring & Sponsorship:** Does the firm offer a mentorship or sponsorship program that connects junior attorneys with senior leadership? If so, please describe.

Yes, the firm offers structured mentorship opportunities designed to connect junior attorneys with senior attorneys. Through its mentorship program and “pod” system, junior attorneys are paired with more experienced attorneys and partners, fostering meaningful relationships, guidance, and professional development. These smaller group settings encourage regular interaction, provide access to leadership, and support career growth within a collaborative environment.

- **Reverse Mentoring:** Does the firm pair senior attorneys with junior attorneys to help bridge generational or cultural gaps, share perspectives and skills, and foster a more inclusive culture?

Yes, the firm fosters collaboration and inclusion by pairing attorneys across different levels of seniority through its “pod” system. These pods bring together attorneys from various practice groups and experience levels, creating opportunities for junior attorneys to engage directly with senior attorneys and firm leadership. This structure encourages the exchange of perspectives, supports professional development, and helps bridge generational and cultural gaps, contributing to a more connected and inclusive firm culture.

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- **Associate Committee:** Does the firm have an associate committee that consults with the partnership? If so, please describe how that committee engages with the partnership.

Yes, the firm has an Associate Task Force that serves as a liaison between associates and firm leadership. This group provides feedback, shares perspectives on associate experience, and collaborates with the partnership on topics including professional development, engagement, and workplace initiatives. The Associate Task Force helps ensure that associates have a voice in firm decisions and contributes to a more inclusive and responsive environment.

- **Professional Development:** Does the firm offer professional development programs specifically for junior attorneys? Please elaborate on the professional development programs available to junior attorneys.

Yes, the firm offers a variety of professional development programs tailored to junior attorneys led by the Professional Development & Recruiting Manager. These include formal training sessions, mentorship opportunities, and hands-on learning experiences designed to build both legal skills and client-facing capabilities. Junior attorneys benefit from structured guidance, regular feedback, and opportunities to work closely with senior attorneys and partners. Additionally, initiatives such as the firm's mentorship program and pod system further support ongoing development, collaboration, and career growth within a supportive and team-oriented environment.

Recruitment, Promotion, and Advancement

- **Recruitment Process:** What steps has the firm taken to build a more inclusive recruitment process (e.g., interview training, behavioral interview questions, blind resume review, etc.)?

Yes, the firm has taken several steps to promote a more inclusive recruitment process. These include providing guidance to interviewers to ensure a consistent and equitable evaluation process, incorporating structured and behavioral interview approaches, and engaging a broad group of attorneys in the interview process to bring diverse perspectives. The firm also partners with a variety of law schools and organizations to expand outreach and attract a diverse candidate pool, reinforcing its commitment to building an inclusive pipeline of talent. Additionally, we have a required interview training webinar.

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- **Fellowship/Scholarship:** Does the firm offer any scholarships, fellowships, or internships? If so, describe those programs. How many of the law students who participated in the firm's most recent 2L summer associate program were hired through such a program?

Yes, the firm offers an annual Summer Associate Program for both 1L and 2L law students. This program serves as a pipeline for entry-level hiring and provides participants with meaningful, hands-on legal experience, exposure to various practice areas, and opportunities to work closely with attorneys across all levels.

Summer associates are integrated into the firm through substantive assignments, mentorship, and networking opportunities, allowing them to gain a comprehensive understanding of the firm's culture and practice.

The firm's 2L Summer Associate Program is a key source of full-time hiring, and the majority of 2L summer associates who receive offers through the program ultimately join the firm as full-time associates.

The firm also participates in the Houston ALA Diverse Scholar Program, which is an opportunity for an undergraduate students to learn more about business services of law firms.

- **Advancement:** Describe any firm initiatives to create equal opportunities for all attorneys with respect to work allocation, performance reviews and upward reviews, and/or promotions.

The firm promotes equal opportunities for all attorneys through structured and transparent practices across work allocation, performance evaluations, mentorship, and advancement. Work assignments are actively monitored to ensure equitable access to meaningful, career-building opportunities, with consideration given to development goals and workload balance. The firm conducts standardized yearly performance reviews supported by ongoing feedback, multiple reviewers, and clear competency frameworks to ensure consistency and reduce bias. A transparent upward evaluation process allows associates to provide confidential feedback on leadership, reinforcing accountability and continuous improvement. Additionally, a formal mentorship program offers consistent access to guidance, networking, and professional development resources. Promotion criteria are clearly defined and communicated, with decisions based on a combination of performance, feedback, and contributions, ensuring a fair, consistent, and inclusive path for advancement.

- **Multitiered Partnership:** Does the firm offer a multitiered partnership? If so, please describe.

Yes, the firm has a two-tier partnership structure: Income Shareholder and Equity Shareholder. Income Shareholders contribute significantly but do not hold ownership, while Equity Shareholders have an ownership stake and participate in profits and firm governance.

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- **Alternatives to Partnership:** Does the firm offer a non-partner track alternative for attorneys? If so, please describe.

The firm offers non-partner career paths, including “Of Counsel” and “Senior Counsel” roles, providing experienced attorneys with meaningful opportunities for advancement, leadership, and long-term professional growth outside the traditional partnership track.

- **Reduced Hours and Flex-Time Options:** Does the firm offer reduced hours and/or flex-time options? If so, please describe and explain how working an alternative schedule might affect an associate’s path to partnership.

No

- **Credit for Work Other Than Client Billable:** Does the firm provide hours credit for work not pertaining to clients, such as recruiting, business development, knowledge management, or inclusion efforts? Note that this does not include pro bono projects. If so, describe the policy for such work.

The firm offers a discretionary good citizenship bonus that recognizes eligible attorneys’ contributions beyond billable work and profitability. This bonus considers participation in non-billable activities that support the firm’s success and culture, including internal firm initiatives, attendance at firm-sponsored events, involvement in bar associations, preparation of continuing legal education materials, article writing, community service, and mentoring.

Bonus determinations are made through a qualitative assessment of each attorney’s overall contributions and engagement throughout the year, reflecting the firm’s emphasis on collaboration, professional development, and strong community relationships.

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Successes and Priorities

- What are the firm's top three accomplishments or areas in which the firm has had its greatest success with respect to fostering inclusion within the firm?

1. Earning Mansfield Plus Certification
2. We participate in the Houston Bar Association program hiring diverse summer associates. As part of the program, we have hired the summer associates as attorneys.
3. We participate in the HALA Scholar Intern Program giving diverse college students exposure to the business of law.

- What are the firm's top three priorities for advancing inclusion within the firm?

1. To continue to earn Mansfield Plus Certification for the next iteration with more criteria.
2. Implement an Annual Calendar of Diverse events for historically under-represented groups.
3. Continue to frow the DEI Committee

Advice to Candidates

- What advice do you have for candidates who are looking for an inclusive work environment? What questions should they ask when interviewing to help them assess the extent of a firm's commitment to inclusion?

Candidates seeking an inclusive work environment should look beyond surface-level statements and evaluate how inclusion is reflected in a firm's culture, policies, and day-to-day interactions. Candidates may also consider asking how the firm supports diverse perspectives through internal programs, committees, or affinity groups, and how feedback from attorneys is incorporated into firm initiatives. Questions about retention, advancement, and how the firm fosters connection across practice groups and seniority levels—such as through mentorship programs or team-based structures—can be especially valuable. Ultimately, candidates should look for an environment where they feel supported, heard, and able to build strong professional relationships, as these are often the clearest indicators of a genuinely inclusive workplace.

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Additional Response Space

Please use this page for information that did not fit in the spaces provided. If this is a continuation of a prior answer, please indicate which question(s) are being addressed.

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