Vault Law Firm Culture & Inclusion Questionnaire

Firm Information

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

Farella Braun + Martel LLP

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.

Co-Managing Partners: Karen Kimmy and Holly Sutton

- **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.

Partner and Chief Talent and Inclusion Officer: Sarah Good

- **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?

Yes:
1. Women's Leadership Committee - Farella’s Women’s Leadership Committee focuses on retaining, developing, and promoting women attorneys at Farella, both within the firm and in the legal profession. To fulfill this mission, the Committee provides programming for women attorneys, promotes equal access to professional opportunities, and works on mentorship and inclusion for women attorneys at all levels. It also hosts events with clients to collaborate regarding advancement and equality for women in the legal profession.
2. Diversity Committee - Farella’s Diversity, Equality + Inclusion Committee is one of the largest committees at the firm and is truly a cross-section of the firm, including attorneys and staff, which reflects the intense commitment of all firm members towards diversity and inclusion. The Committee is focused on supporting and developing innovative initiatives to work towards greater diversity and inclusion of everyone working at the firm as well as in the greater legal community. It is also committed to promoting diversity and inclusion in recruiting, retaining, and advancing attorneys to partnership.

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

The firm supports various events through partner organizations, including pipeline programs and affinity bar organizations. In past years, we have hosted local bar association events such as a Latinx Partners and Associate Receptions. We also host our annual Diversity Scholarship Reception for first-year Bay Area law students. We have also hosted internal panels and retreats for attorneys at varying levels.

- **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.)?

The firm is a member of the Institute for Inclusion in the Legal Profession, which gives us access to their regular Heritage Month webinar series. These webinars are regularly advertised to the firm at large. We also have events or panels to honor different cultures of employees throughout the year. The firm observes Juneteenth.

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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.

We are committed to fostering an inclusive culture for women, people of color, LGBTQIA+ individuals, people with disabilities and parents/caregivers. We are an active participant in the Leadership Council on Legal Diversity (“LCLD”), with numerous alumni of LCLD’s Pathfinder and Fellowship programs among our attorneys. We regularly bring in outside speakers to support our inclusivity efforts such as a speaker on neurodiversity as well as annual anti-bias education and training.

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 both one-on-one peer mentoring for all incoming associates and all associates and special counsel are members of a small mentoring circle run by our partners.

- **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?

N/A

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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 associate members of our Learning and Development Committee often meet with our co-managing partners and other partners on matters of importance to our associates and special counsel. In addition, our co-managing partners meet quarterly with all associates and special counsel to discuss how the firm is doing and field questions.

- **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. Much of the professional development opportunities occur organically as associates work directly with partners and clients in small teams or often on a team comprised of one associate and one partner. We also provide early career opportunities to associates that often are unavailable in larger law firms – for example, we target associates having taken and defended their first depositions within their first three years of practice and work to get associates into court as soon as possible. We believe that this mode of learning directly from working with partners and being provided with meaningful substantive experiences early in one's career is most effective for associates to develop their skills and judgment quickly. The firm also has developed training programs for each practice group. For example, the firm developed a Litigation Workshop series of 14 programs that covers the life cycle of a case through trial and appeals for all junior attorneys. We also regularly host NITA Deposition and Trial programs in-house to provide hands-on training for depositions and trial.

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.)?

Farella Braun + Martel has taken a number of steps to foster a more inclusive and equitable recruitment process. The firm provides interviewer training focused on fair and consistent candidate evaluation and utilizes structured panel interviews to help reduce individual bias and ensure that candidates are assessed from multiple perspectives. Interviewers incorporate behavioral interview questions designed to evaluate competencies and experiences using consistent criteria across candidates. In addition, the firm's Diversity, Equality + Inclusion Committee actively supports the recruitment, retention, and advancement of attorneys and works to promote inclusive hiring practices throughout the recruiting process. Farella is committed to creating an interview experience in which all candidates are welcomed, respected, and evaluated fairly based on their qualifications, experiences, and potential contributions to the firm.

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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's annual Diversity Scholarship program. This program provides $15,000 to three 1L students at Bay Area law schools each year. It is not tied to employment; no 2L Summer Associates were hired out of this program.

- **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.

Within litigation, the Partner and Chief Talent and Inclusion Officer assigns all work to all associates other than in very small practice groups. In this fashion, the Firm ensures that there are equal opportunities for all attorneys to work on the matters that may be most beneficial to career development.

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

N/A

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

Yes. On a case-by-case basis, the firm may offer a special counsel position to senior attorneys in an area of importance to the firm.

- **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.

Yes. No impact on the path to partnership.

- **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 "citizenship" credit up to 50 hours per year in specified areas including recruiting, business development, speaking and authoring articles.

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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. Since 2008, the firm has run a Pipeline Program in the summer for rising high school seniors from underserved public schools who typically are first-generation college bound. Many attorneys and staff at the firm participate in the program and in mentoring our pipeline interns. The program includes work experience at the firm, learning about the legal practice areas, programs on college applications and putting on a mock trial at the end of the summer. The interns also have visited with the Admissions Department of a local Bay Area law school, met with an Associate Justice of the California Supreme Court and met with an in-house team of one of our large corporate clients during their time with us.
2. For over 20 years, we have awarded Diversity Scholarships to rising 2L law students at Bay Area law schools whose academic achievement, employment and community service indicate strong potential to excel in the legal profession and be a future leader in taking actions towards making the legal profession more diverse, equitable, and inclusive. This means actions towards ensuring or working to ensure equal access, opportunity and participation for everyone in the legal community. Farella has awarded $675,000 in scholarships to 95 Bay Area first-year law students.
3. The Women's Leadership Committee is focused on retaining, developing and promoting women attorneys at Farella, both within the firm and in the legal profession. To fulfill this mission, the Committee provides programming for women attorneys, promotes equal access to professional opportunities, and works on mentorship and inclusion for women attorneys at all levels. It also hosts events with clients to collaborate regarding advancement and equality for women in the legal profession. The committee has 22 members and is jointly chaired by a partner and senior associate.

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

1. Supporting first-generation college attorneys through both recruiting and professional development efforts.
2. Continuing our efforts around inclusive hiring practices and supporting the professional development of all individuals at our firm.
3. Ensuring that all attorneys have equal access to work on matters that will provide the most career development opportunities.

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?

We suggest it is important for associates to understand how work is assigned and how teams are formed for pitches and for matters.
While overall demographics and numbers are important, they often don't tell the whole story. Ask associates about ways that the firm makes them feel supported and included.

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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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