Vault Law Firm Culture & Inclusion Questionnaire

Firm Information

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

Gunderson Dettmer Stough Villeneuve Franklin & Hachigian, 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.

Jeffrey Higgins, Managing Partner

- **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.

Jane Rhee, Chief People Officer
Michele Logan, Director of Culture and Inclusion

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

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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?

Gunderson Dettmer has nine affinity groups that are open to all members of the firm: Asian American & Pacific Islander, Black, International, GD Pride (LGBTQIA+), People of Color, Unidos (Latinx), Veterans, Women, and Parents & Caregivers.

The firm supports these groups through funding, strategic partnerships, and logistical support to help develop and execute programming that fosters community, professional development, networking, mentorship, sponsorship and inclusion across the firm.

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

The firm hosts culture and inclusion workshops and similar affinity group-focused programs designed to support the professional and personal development of attorneys and professional staff. Examples from 2026 include the Black Affinity Group's multi-day Juneteenth Workshop in the San Francisco Bay Area, as well as upcoming GD Pride and Unidos (Latinx) Affinity Group workshops in Provincetown and New York, respectively. These programs feature professional development, mentorship, networking, cultural programming, and community service opportunities, reflecting the firm's ongoing commitment to supporting the growth, development, and success of its people

- **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.)?

Cultural celebrations are recognized in a number of different ways: by spreading global awareness through firm-wide communications to educate, inform, and increase allyship; through affinity group sponsored social hours, internal and external networking opportunities; educational resources; film screenings and discussions; sharing of personal reflections; professional development workshops; alumni and partner panels; as well as non-profit donations and community service initiatives.

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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.

In addition to a generous paid leave policy, the firm offers the following family friendly programs: a backup childcare program with Bright Horizons (this benefit also includes other programs to help support families); one-on-one support for first time and experienced parents to connect with experts in birth, newborn care, infant sleep, breastfeeding, breastmilk shipping and more (Maven is the name of the program); Mindful Return is an e-course (and community) dedicated to helping new parents have a successful transition back to work following parental leave; and mental wellness resources with Spring Health, the firm's employee assistance program. The firm also provides gender-neutral restrooms/facilities, offers health insurance plans that provide equitable benefits for employees and dependents, provides an opportunity for employees to share their pronouns, uses gender-neutral terminology in its policies and materials, and non-discrimination policy explicitly includes gender identity and expression as a protected category. At this time, we have gender-neutral restrooms in our Redwood City/Silicon Valley, Ann Arbor, New York and Los Angeles offices. The firm has evaluated and addressed issues of accessibility in firm buildings, workspaces, and parking facilities, has a clear and well communicated process for attorneys to request accommodations or raise other workplace concerns and the non-discrimination policy explicitly includes disability as a protected category.

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.

The Women's Affinity Group Mentoring Pod Program is intended to provide support by fostering connections and creating pathways for attorneys to share candid experiences, strategies for success, tips for overcoming obstacles, and best practices. The Return to Work Mentorship Program is designed to ease the transition from parental leave to working parent; provide a built-in support system and network for quick advice, knowledge and resource sharing based on similar shared experiences; and to ultimately retain more parents at our firm. The Career Accelerator Playbook (CAP) is a program designed to foster deeper connections and sponsorship relationships between partners and a group of senior associates/Of Counsel. The program offers CAP participants a unique opportunity to build their networks, sharpen their business development and presentation skills, and receive valuable small-group and one-on-one feedback from experienced Gunderson partners to help them succeed in the next phase of their careers.

- **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?

Upon joining the firm, every first year or lateral associate receives a partner mentor assignment. Partner mentors are purposefully assigned within the new hire's practice group and are asked to do the following:
• Meet with assigned mentees on a weekly basis for their first month then on a monthly basis moving forward
• Staff and/or advocate for mentees on work assignments and firm projects
• Identify training needs and other resources to enhance their mentee's professional development and career growth
• Coach mentees by providing advice, guidance, and feedback
• Make introductions to colleagues in their relevant office and practice group, as a means to support mentees with integrating into their office and the firm
• Set practice expectations with mentees

The partner mentor role was formed for many purposes, including to help bridge generational and/or cultural differences, share perspectives and skills with new hires, and foster a more inclusive culture.
Some practice groups have also incorporated "mentor pods" which consists of junior, mid-level and senior associates, as well as partners. In addition to the above list, group members also engage in practice specific trainings together. Some of our smaller groups have found this method successful in creating an inclusive environment.

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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.

We have an Associates' Committee in our two largest offices, New York and NorCal. The Associates' Committee provides 3-4 associate representatives with leadership opportunities by joining forces with partners to raise and help address "associate-life" and firm culture concerns with firm management. The Associates Committee also serves as thought partners and collaborates closely with firm leaders and provides their insights and influence on firm policies, training programs and initiatives in vital areas related to retaining, developing and advancing associates. The committees also work with partners to organize the firm's annual Mentorship Week programming, which focuses on building connections and career development through various aspects of mentoring.

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

The firm training curriculum is designed to introduce and continuously sharpen the substantive legal and professional skills of our junior attorneys. In addition, initiatives such as our Buddy Program and First-Year Academy are core programs geared for junior associates with a targeted focus on firm and practice integration.

The firm offers partner and client panel discussions, workshops, trainings, and focus groups for affinity group members that intend to build on skills that equip attorneys with the tools needed to meet a variety of challenges and achieve success in their careers. The Women's Affinity Group Mentoring Pod Program, which fosters connections among attorneys within the group is a great example of this opportunity. This program aims to facilitate sharing of candid experiences, strategies for success, tips for overcoming obstacles, and best practices to support their professional growth. The firm also sponsors attendance at annual industry leading conferences, such as the National Asian Pacific American Bar Association (NAPABA), South Asian Bar Association (SABA), Charting Your Own Course (CYOC), and AfroTech. Another example is the Career Accelerator Playbook (CAP), designed to foster deeper connections and sponsorship relationships between partners and a group of senior associates/Of Counsel.

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.)?

Gunderson has strengthened its recruitment process by providing interviewer training focused on consistency and reducing bias, and by revamping interview evaluation forms and procedures to support more inclusive decision making. The firm also relies on recruiting committees and structured behavioral interviews so that each candidate is assessed against shared, job related criteria and a fuller picture of their experience and potential is considered.

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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?

Gunderson Dettmer offers a 2L ECVC Diversity Fellowship for law students interested in emerging companies and venture capital work. 2L ECVC Diversity Fellows participate in our full 10 week summer associate program, receive a paid summer associate position, and are paired with an attorney mentor for the duration of the program. In addition, Fellows are eligible for a scholarship of up to $50,000. Gunderson welcomed three fellows to our 2026 summer associate 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.

The firm has implemented several measures to help create equal opportunities for all attorneys. Our staffing coordinators work with Staffing Partners to review work assignments, statistical reports, and the allocation process to ensure work is distributed in a fair and equitable way. Attorneys are also actively encouraged to voice any concerns they have regarding the assignments process, including any perceived biases in the distribution of work. Attorney Development collaborates with the Diversity & Inclusion team to conduct awareness trainings on best practices for delivering feedback and writing performance reviews.

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

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

The Of Counsel role at the firm is flexible and includes senior attorneys who may continue on the path to partnership, while others may remain in the Of Counsel role for the duration of their career at 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.

No formal flex-time policy. Yes, formal reduced-hours policy. There are a variety of factors that are considered in the partner promotion process, including the tenure, skill development and experience of candidates. An alternative work arrangement may be another factor for consideration in determining whether an individual meets the partner promotion criterion. Historically, Gunderson Dettmer has promoted partners who utilized an alternative schedule during their career at the firm.

- **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.

Up to 100 hours can be counted as billable credit for work spent on firm-approved activities in firm citizenship areas such as diversity, equity and inclusion, mentoring, recruiting, training, knowledge management, as well as other special projects as designated by the firm.

This year, the firm provided eligible attorneys with up to 50 additional investment hours for time spent on the development, adoption, and effective use of artificial intelligence ("A.I.") tools. These hours are intended to support innovation and skill development by:
• Developing and refining prompts, workflows, or processes that improve drafting, research, review, or knowledge management;
• Documenting and sharing relevant workflows, templates, vaults, and other firm and practice-related use cases and resources with firm colleagues; and
• Participating in firm-sponsored A.I. pilots or structured testing initiatives.

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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?

Affinity Group Initiatives: We have fully inclusive affinity groups that are open to attorneys, professional staff, and allies. In 2026, our affinity groups continued to advance inclusion through professional development, client engagement, cultural programming, and community service opportunities. Highlights included the Black Affinity Group's multi-day Juneteenth Workshop, affinity group-sponsored client events, speaker programs, and heritage month initiatives. These efforts support the growth, development, and success of our people while fostering a culture of inclusion and belonging.

Global Heritage Month Programs: Our firm has celebrated Global Heritage Months with community-building and professional development opportunities such as community service initiatives, community dinners and lunches, and speaker events fostering cultural understanding and appreciation.

Mentorship and Sponsorship Programs: The Women's Affinity Group Mentoring Pod Program is intended to provide support by fostering connections and creating pathways for attorneys to share candid experiences, strategies for success, tips for overcoming obstacles, and best practices. The Return to Work Mentorship Program is designed to ease the transition from parental leave to working parent; provide a built-in support system and network for quick advice, knowledge and resource sharing based on similar shared experiences; and to ultimately retain more parents at our firm. The Career Accelerator Playbook (CAP) is a program designed to foster deeper connections and sponsorship relationships between partners and a group of senior associates/Of Counsel. The program offers CAP participants a unique opportunity to build their networks, sharpen their business development and presentation skills, and receive valuable small-group and one-on-one feedback from experienced Gunderson partners to help them succeed in the next phase of their careers.

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

Professional Development and Career Growth
We will continue partnering with our Attorney Development team to provide professional development opportunities that support career growth, strengthen leadership capabilities, and help our attorneys and professional staff thrive at every stage of their careers. Through programs focused on skills development, leadership, and career advancement, we aim to create pathways for long-term success across the firm.

Fair and Consistent Talent Practices
We will continue to strengthen our performance management, feedback, and advancement processes by incorporating inclusion best practices and providing training that promotes consistency, transparency, and accountability. Our goal is to ensure all attorneys and professional staff receive meaningful feedback, equitable access to opportunities, and the support needed to reach their full potential.

Data-Informed Inclusion Strategy
We will continue to leverage data and feedback to assess the effectiveness of our inclusion efforts, identify opportunities for improvement, and measure progress over time. By using data to inform decision-making, we can better understand the experiences of our people, increase transparency, and ensure our initiatives are delivering meaningful impact.

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?

Connect with attorneys to learn more about their experience at firms that interest you and to understand how an inclusive environment feel in practice. Ask a variety of questions such as: what does your firm do to promote inclusion? Are there any programs your firm provides to support its attorneys? How involved are partners? Pay attention to not only what people say, but also whether your questions are welcomed and answered. During your interview process, consider asking to be connected to someone with a similar background to hear their perspective.

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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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