Vault Law Firm Culture & Inclusion Questionnaire

Firm Information

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

Lightfoot Franklin & White

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.

Wes Gilchrist-Managing Partner
Bill Wos-CFO

- **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.

Edgar Harper-COO and Chief Inclusion Officer

- **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?

We do have affinity groups. WOLF-Women of Lightfoot Franklin. The firm proivides immense support for this group, the group holds events often and is a big part of the firm.

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

- **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 closes for all federal holidays and gives recoginition on those days/months.

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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.

My experience has been that the firm is a welcoming and inclusive environment for women, people of color, LGBTQ+ individuals, people with disabilities, and parents/caregivers. The firm is generous with parental leave, has the Women of Lightfoot Franklin affinity group, and is all around an inclusive place to work.

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 firm offers extensive mentorship. Every associate is given two mentors they can go to for all kinds of things. The mentors also check in periodically to make sure the associate is progressing/is doing okay. The mentorship program does not stop after year 1 either, but extends throughout your entire time as an associate.

- **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?

Due to the nature of Lightfoot's work and strucutre of the firm, younger attorneys are regularly in contact with senior attorneys on cases and at firm events.

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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.

The firm does have an associate committee that consults with partnership. The committee has regualr meetings and can bring anything discussed to the partnership.

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

Professional development is a key aspect of being a Lightfoot attorney. The firm regularly holds professional development training lunches, and it is something that is always on the forefront of the firms mind. They start that as soon as you become an associate, so that it is not something you only start thinking about once you become a partner.

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.)?

The firm takes recruitment very seriously, and is very focused on making that an inclusive process. We have attorneys of all genders and races involved in the recruitment process, and we also have a diversity program scholarship recipient given to a summer associate.

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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?

The Firm has a very well developed summer associate program. It includes giving substantive work to the summer associates and putting on thoughtful social events to get to know the summer associates even better. Almost all (if not all) of the 2L summer associates received an offer to work at Lightfoot, with many of them accepting the offer.

- **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 does a good job in work allocation. Because we do not have practice groups, there is not bottle-necking of work in certain practice groups, the work gets spread around and anyone with capacity can easily seek out and get more work in whatever type of cases are coming in. Performance reviews happen yearly, but the partners you work for on a day to day basis are usually good about giving feedback. The partner track is now 6 years.

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

I believe you do one year as a non-equity partner before becoming an equity partner.

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

There are attorneys at Lightfoot that are counsel, and they have chosen to go that route instead of the partnership route.

- **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.

I do not have as much experience with this, but I believe there are times when the fiurm does offer reduced hours options, depending on many different factors.

- **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.

Those hours would not necessarly be counted as "billable" but participation in recruitment, business development, or other efforts are looked on very favorably by the firm.

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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?

I think one is the amount of women in our firm speaks to that. The amount of attorneys and amount of partners who are women in the firm is high and speaks to the firms efforts from the very beginning of its founding to be an inclusive place.

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

1) How we recruit associate candidates
2) Continue supporting in-firm affinity groups
3) Continue with the diversity program in summer associate recruiting

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?

I think you should ask if they have certain affinity groups and ask how many partners are minorities, women, LGBTQ+, etc.

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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.

Lightfoot is an inclusive environment that provides immense opportunities for it's associates. The mentorship is unparalled.

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