

Debevoise
& Plimpton

Diversity and Inclusion

“We are committed to creating and sustaining a community that fosters full inclusion of diverse talent at all levels of the firm.”

Michael W. Blair, *Presiding Partner*





Diversity, Inclusion and Community Drive Our Firm

Our clients come to us for the finest legal advice and service. We provide that service by bringing to our firm the best and most diverse talent and working to build and sustain an inclusive community – one in which our diverse group of lawyers can grow, thrive and work as a single team, weaving together the power of the many different perspectives and experiences they bring.



“Diversity and inclusion lie at the core of our promise of talent and service. We recruit with a lens wide open to the range of young lawyers who can make us better and we provide an environment in which they can reach their full potential. We seek to build teams that can work effectively across difference, both internally and with our clients.”

Michael Gillespie
Corporate Partner and Co-Chair of Diversity & Inclusion



“Diversity and inclusion are an inherent part of the work environment. This includes ensuring that diverse associates see a career path for themselves at Debevoise.”

Tigist Kassahun
Associate, Class of 2015

Community and Connection

One of the greatest strengths of Debevoise & Plimpton is our community. This has been true throughout the history of the firm. More recently, we have built upon that strong foundation with specific community-building initiatives and firmwide events:

Diversity & Inclusion Advisory Council. We instituted a new Diversity & Inclusion Advisory Council, a 40+ lawyer group that works with our D&I Leadership Team to encourage dialogue on important issues affecting diversity and inclusion at Debevoise.

Associate Liaison Committee. We revamped our associate liaison committee, which works with partners and senior firm administrators on a range of topics and programs important to all lawyers at the firm.

Advising Program. Through our advising program, associates have the opportunity to discuss their career development with an assigned advising partner. We reshaped the program, with the goal of ensuring that each associate has advising relationships with three partners over the course of their first four years.

Town Halls. In the wake of the racially charged shootings in the summers of 2015 and 2016, we held two town halls and group meetings. We invited the entire firm – lawyers and administrative staff – to have an open facilitated discussion of the many different ways members of our community were impacted by these horrific events. These gatherings established a supportive environment in which to exchange perspectives and were attended by several hundred members of our firm. The overwhelmingly positive response led us to replicate these town hall meetings in the aftermath of social, political and other events of significance to our community.

Open Houses. We have in recent years gathered together in various groupings to discuss a range of topics relating to talent and career development in the spirit of transparency and dialogue. As an example, earlier this spring we held an open house to discuss the firm's advising process, informal feedback program and our evaluation process, including its structure, process and goals for associates.

Affinity Groups. Our Affinity Groups – Asian, Black Lawyers, First Generation Professionals, Jewish Lawyers, Latin@, LGBTQ+ and Women's Resource Group – are open to all interested attorneys and play an integral role in the firm, providing an invaluable source of community. Just this spring, our Women's Resource Group and Debevoise Affinity Groups co-sponsored a panel discussion on "Authenticity in the Workplace," featuring alumna Melissa Tidwell, General Counsel of Reddit.

Diversity Speaker Series. Our Diversity Speaker Series draws to the firm senior legal executives from different fields and diverse backgrounds who come to speak with our lawyers about their professional experiences and career paths. Recent programs have featured general counsel and other senior executives from Blackstone, Goldman Sachs, Home Depot, JPMorgan Chase & Co., MetLife and Xerox, senior lawyers from Lambda Legal and the Transgender Legal Defense & Education Fund, as well as federal judges.

Debevoise Women's Review. The Debevoise Women's Review, a first-of-its-kind platform among law firms, was developed to inspire the legal and business communities to engage in discussion and collective action around gender diversity. Unlike a traditional marketing platform, the content is developed and the editorial process managed almost entirely by lawyers at the firm, most of whom are associates, allowing for an authentic, first-person perspective.



“Our goal is to be the very best place for talent, and that means creating inclusive teams that give everyone the opportunity to grow and to shine.”

Maeve O'Connor
Litigation Partner and Co-Chair of Diversity & Inclusion



“When I arrived at Debevoise, I was relieved to realize that I had found a community that strives to support all of its members. Any concerns I had as a member of the LGBTQ+ community about not fitting the stereotype of a typical ‘Big Law attorney’ quickly subsided.”

Margo Watson
Alumna, Class of 2017



Lawyer, Team and Firm Development

We have embedded diversity and inclusion within all elements of the firm's broader talent development work.

- **Diversity & Inclusion Leadership Team**

Our Diversity & Inclusion Leadership Team is chaired by two senior leaders of the firm who are former Management Committee members, Maeve O'Connor and Mike Gillespie, who work with Marc Grainger, our Global Director of Talent. Mike formerly headed hiring at the firm, and Maeve is currently co-chair of our global Talent Initiative, thereby increasing the integration between talent and diversity and inclusion.

- **Management Committee Sponsorship Program**

In 2016, we launched our Management Committee Sponsorship Program to foster the advancement and promotion of diverse talent. Members of the firm's Management Committee and departmental leaders are paired with top-performing mid- and senior-level diverse associates to promote and support their careers through opportunity generation, profile raising and internal leadership.

- **Addressing Implicit Bias**

We have instituted implicit bias training in all aspects of our talent cycle – recruiting, advising, staffing, evaluation – and for all levels of lawyers.

- **Practice Group Leadership**

We have put structures in place to ensure that all practice group leaders are responsible to firm management for successful implementation of D&I goals.

- **Informal Feedback**

To enhance career development for our lawyers, we launched our Informal Feedback Program. Lawyers are taught a number of simple yet effective feedback techniques, and meet regularly to discuss their experiences in giving more frequent feedback. All U.S. lawyers have now been through the program, which is being rolled out globally.

- **Centralized Staffing**

We apply a centralized approach to staffing our junior lawyers, with the objective of ensuring an equitable distribution of responsibilities and opportunities.

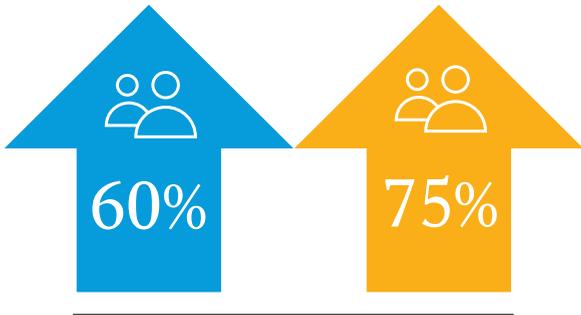


“I wouldn’t be where I am today without the support, guidance and mentorship of my Debevoise colleagues. As a firm, we remain committed to providing our diverse lawyers with the training, the opportunities, and the platform to thrive in their careers.”

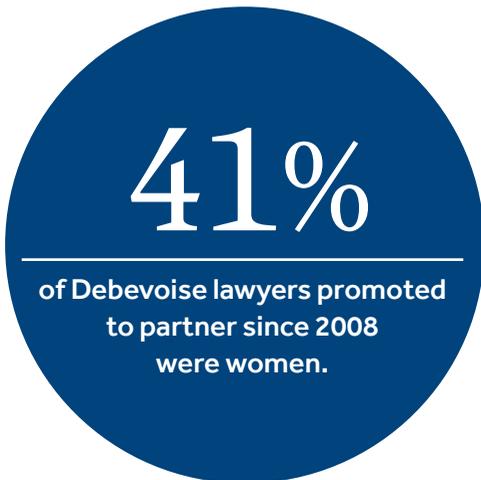
Natalie Reid
Litigation Partner



Moving Forward: By the Numbers



From 2013 to 2018, the representation of lawyers of color at the firm increased by over 60% for U.S. associates and 75% for U.S. partners.





“As an Asian woman in the M&A field, where a lot of people often don’t look like me, what has been most meaningful to me is simply that I feel supported in a way that doesn’t have to do with being Asian or being a woman.”

Jennifer Chu
Corporate Partner



It Starts With Recruiting

As part of our expansive efforts to recruit diverse talent, we reach out as early as possible in the educational pipeline by sponsoring, supporting and participating in programs that improve the educational outcomes and career paths of students of color, beginning with high school students and continuing through to new firm hires:

- **Law MENTOR Program.** Debevoise is a charter member of Law MENTOR program, which provides high school students with exposure to law-related activities.
- **Prep for Prep.** This program prepares New York City’s academically gifted students of color for placement at independent schools in the city and boarding schools throughout the Northeast. Partner Sue Meng serves on the Board of Trustees.
- **New York State High School Mock Trial Team.** Each year, Debevoise coaches a mock trial team from the High School for Law and Public Service, a public high school with a large diverse student body, which competes in the city’s annual mock trial tournament.
- **Sponsors for Educational Opportunities (SEO) Law Fellowship Program.** The SEO Law Fellowship Program serves to link talented, underrepresented incoming law students to global law firms. We welcome several SEO Fellows into our summer program each year.
- **Diverse Law School Student and Affinity Groups.** We sponsor diverse student groups at law schools across the country, including affinity groups such as:
 - › National Black Law Students Association (NBLSA)
 - › National Asian Pacific American Law Student Association (NAPALSA)
 - › Latino Law Students Association (LaLSA)
 - › OUTLaw (LGBTQ+)
- **Diverse Job Fairs.** We recruit for candidates at job fairs such as:
 - › Northeast BLSA Job Fair (NEBLSA)
 - › Hispanic National Bar Association Job Fair (HNBA)
 - › Lavender Law Career Fair (LGBTQ+)
- **Connection with Diverse Debevoise Lawyers.** To provide guidance to diverse candidates during our recruiting process, we connect each of them with diverse Debevoise lawyers.
- **Debevoise Diversity Reception and Social Events for Offerees.** We host a Diversity Reception and social events for diverse offerees, allowing them to make meaningful connections with future colleagues and each other.
- **Engagement between Debevoise Affinity Groups and Summer Associates.** Our affinity groups host a variety of programs for summer associates. Members also act as informal advisors for summer associates of diverse backgrounds.

Diversity and Inclusion in the Broader World

The work of creating a more diverse and inclusive firm connects us to clients and others outside the firm.

- Externally, our senior lawyers and firm leaders routinely speak at diversity events, including Bloomberg BNA’s Big Law Business “Diversity & Inclusion Summit.”
- Many of our lawyers – including women and other lawyers of diverse backgrounds – have served in senior leadership positions at prominent bars and other professional organizations, and in a variety of public service roles. Just a few examples include the following:
 - › Senior Government and Political Positions – Mary Jo White (former SEC Chair and U.S. Attorney, S.D.N.Y.), Catherine Amirfar (State) and Jim Johnson (a former U.S. Treasury undersecretary, now Special Counsel to review Atlantic City, NJ state takeover)
 - › New York City Bar Association: Retired partner Barbara Paul Robinson was the first female president of the New York City Bar Association (1994-1996). She joins partner John S. Kiernan, who is immediate past president, and two other Debevoise partners who have led the Bar Association. Debevoise is a signatory of the NYC Bar’s three diversity statements.
 - › We have nine alumni serving as federal judges – an incredible number – including the following:
 - Hon. J. Paul Oetken
 - Hon. Lorna G. Schofield
 - Hon. Laura Taylor Swain
 - Hon. Gregory H. Woods



“When I first joined the firm over five years ago as an SEO summer intern, I was apprehensive. I had just graduated from college and didn’t really know anything about law firms – I hadn’t even started law school yet. What I came to learn was that I was quite fortunate to be placed at Debevoise, and that’s why I continued to return each summer and as a full-time associate. Debevoise was an integral part of the early years of my legal career, and I truly view the firm as my Big Law home.”

Daniel Pedraza
Alumnus, former Litigation Associate, Class of 2016



Our lawyers hold leadership positions in a range of organizations dedicated to improving the diversity of the legal profession.

- **Leadership Council on Legal Diversity (LCLD).** We take a leading role in LCLD, which provides mentoring and training of next-gen leaders with more than 300 corporate chief legal officers and law firm managing partners. In 2018, Debevoise was named to receive both “TOP” and Compass Award badges, recognizing the firm for going above and beyond to participate and support LCLD’s mission. Presiding Partner Michael W. Blair serves on the Executive Committee of the Board and as Treasurer.
- **Catalyst.** In 2017, Debevoise joined more than 40 leading global businesses to launch Catalyst CEO Champions for Change, which recognizes CEOs and industry leaders who support and drive diversity and inclusion. Partner and Co-Chair of Debevoise’s litigation department, Mary Beth Hogan, is a long-standing member of Catalyst’s Board.
- **National Association of Women Lawyers (NAWL) Challenge Club.** Debevoise is a member of the NAWL Challenge Club, and in partnership with the Club, we designate high-potential women associates on the path to equity partner to network with in-house counsel, gain pitch experience and participate in mentorship sessions. Partner Elizabeth (Beth) Pagel Serebransky is a member of NAWL’s Board.



“We have seen again and again that the quality of our work product is higher, and the firm and our clients benefit, when the voices of lawyers from diverse backgrounds contribute to solving our clients’ most difficult challenges.”

Jonathan Lewis
Tax Partner



Recognition

#1

For the 2nd consecutive year, we ranked 1st in the *Chambers Associate* "Best Law Firms for Diversity" list.

Ranked
11th of 225

in the 2019 AmLaw Diversity Scorecard

53%

of Debevoise women litigation partners were among the "Top 250 Women in Litigation" in the U.S., according to *Benchmark Litigation 2018*.

Recognized as one of the "60 Best Law Firms for Women" by *Working Mother*.

Our Commitment

The recognition and awards you see in this brochure demonstrate the considerable success we have had in hiring diverse lawyers and law students. We are deeply proud that the quality of our practice, and the culture and people who form our firm, attract such great talent.

We also know that the work of building a truly diverse and inclusive firm cannot be measured just by these accolades, and that numbers alone do not fully tell the tale. It is our job at Debevoise to create a professional environment in which all our lawyers can thrive and succeed.

We are deeply committed to driving change in our partnership and in the legal profession. That requires not only good intentions but effective initiatives and practices, including those outlined in this brochure. We welcome the opportunity to speak with you in more detail about our plans and practices in the course of our interviews and time with you.



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To learn more about Debevoise, our people and what makes us tick, follow us on [LinkedIn](#) and [Twitter](#).

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