



# TWIN CITIES Diversity in Practice

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TWIN CITIES DIVERSITY IN PRACTICE  
ANNUAL REPORT  
APRIL 08, 2015

## **Organizational Overview**

Twin Cities Diversity in Practice is a non-profit member association of 30 law firms and 16 corporate legal departments with a mission to attract, recruit, advance, and retain attorneys of color in the Twin Cities legal community. *Diversity in Practice* is also dedicated to promoting the Twin Cities of Minneapolis/St. Paul as a great place for attorneys of color to develop professionally and personally.

*Diversity in Practice* was formed in 2005 out of discussions among the major Twin Cities law firms about how they must take a leadership role to attract, recruit, advance, and retain lawyers of color in Minnesota's legal community. Across America, employers are being challenged to increase diversity. Our law firms and corporate legal departments recognize that they must hire and retain a diverse team of lawyers, which reflects the global market place in which we work, to remain competitive.

*Diversity in Practice* is unique in that it has both law firm members and corporate legal departments from across the Twin Cities. We have continued to grow our membership. *Diversity in Practice* now has 30 law firm and 16 corporate law department members. Our member organizations range in size from 10 attorneys to more than 300 attorneys.

### **Corporate Members**

3M  
Best Buy  
Boston Scientific Corporation  
Cargill, Inc.  
Ecolab Inc.  
General Mills  
Land O' Lakes, Inc.  
Medtronic

SurModics  
Target Corporation  
Thrivent Financial  
Travelers  
UnitedHealth Group  
US Bank  
Wells Fargo & Company  
Xcel Energy

### **Law Firm Members**

Barnes & Thornburg LLP  
Best & Fanagan LLP  
Bowman and Brooke LLP  
Briggs and Morgan, P.A.\*  
Dicke, Billig & Czaja, PLLC  
DLA Piper  
Dorsey & Whitney LLP\*  
Faegre Baker Daniels LLP\*  
Felhaber, Larson, Fenlon & Vogt, P.A.  
Fish & Richardson, P.C.  
Foley & Mansfield, PLLP  
Fredrikson & Byron, P.A.\*  
Gray Plant Mooty\*  
Greene Espel P.L.L.P  
Hamre, Schumann, Mueller & Larson, P.C.

Larkin Hoffman Daly & Lindgren, Ltd.  
Larson•King LLP  
Lindquist & Vennum LLP\*  
Littler Mendelson, P.C.  
Merchant & Gould, P.C.  
Moss & Barnett, P.A.  
Nilan Johnson Lewis PA  
Norton Rose Fulbright  
Oppenheimer Wolff & Donnelly LLP  
Robins Kaplan L.L.P.\*  
Sapientia Law Group, PLLC  
Stinson Leonard Street  
Stoel Rives LLP  
Winthrop & Weinstine, P.A.  
Zelle Hoffman Voelbel & Mason LLP

\* denotes an incorporating member

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*Diversity in Practice* is a 501(c)(6) non-profit association. Membership is open to private law firms and corporate legal departments in the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area that are committed to advancing diversity in the legal community. *Diversity in Practice* is funded by its members, based on the number of attorneys of the member organizations in the Twin Cities metro area and is governed by a Board of Directors made up of our members' leadership. *Diversity in Practice* has a full-time Executive Director and a full-time Executive Administrator whom report to the Board.



Twin Cities Diversity in Practice Board Members (2014)

**2014 Board of Directors**

Caryn Boisen, Larson King  
Coré Cotton, Wells Fargo Bank  
Ken Cutler, Dorsey & Whitney  
Daniel Gilchrist, Lindquist & Vennum LLP  
Trevor Gunderson, General Mills,  
Andrew Humphrey, Faegre Baker Daniels LLP  
Kim Lowe, Corporate Secretary, Fredrikson & Byron  
Jennifer Miernicki, Faegre Baker Daniels LLP  
Christine Meuers, Wells Fargo & Company Law Department  
Dan Millea, Treasurer, Zelle Hofmann Voelbel & Mason LLP  
Cornell Leverette Moore, Dorsey & Whitney LLP  
Bruce Mooty, Gray Plant Mooty  
Kathlyn Noecker, Faegre Baker Daniels LLP  
Chris Pham, Lindquist & Vennum LLP  
Bryan Phillips, Surmodics  
Barbara Portwood, Stinson Leonard, Street  
Denise Rahne, Robins Kaplan  
Roshan Rajkumar, Bowman and Brooke LLP  
Mary Ranum, Co-Chair, Fredrikson & Byron, P.A.  
Eric Rucker, Briggs and Morgan, P.A.  
Steven Schumeister, Robins, Kaplan, Miller & Ciresi L.L.P..  
Sara Stenberg, U.S. Bank National Association  
Michael Sullivan, Gray Plant Mooty  
Becky Thorson, Robins Kaplan L.L.P.  
Scott Wilensky, Xcel Energy  
Laura Witte, Co-Chair - Cargill, Inc.



## **Executive Director's Message**

Valerie M. Jensen, Executive Director

Welcome to the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of our organization. Diversity in Practice in Practice was started by the brave leadership of several men and women who were willing to ask the hard questions and to acknowledge the difficulty the profession is having with Diversity. As we celebrate 10 years by looking back at our inception we also need to look at where we are and where we still need to go. While we have a lot to be proud of we still have a long way to go. Diversity and Inclusion work is a journey and we must keep moving forward. At each stage of the journey we learn something new. We have lived through the great recession but are still adjusting the "new normal". Many of our members have changed as well. And in order for us to stay relevant we must continue to search for new and innovative ways to lead.

In 2014 we had priorities identified by the Board and supported by you the members of Diversity in Practice. Without your help we could not have accomplished what we set out to do. We launched a new website that brings us into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century and coordinates all our communication efforts. We realize that in order to effectively communicate in the 21st Century to our diverse constituencies we needed a tool that would allow us to work with our limited human resources in a more efficient and proactive way. Without Lily Shaw and Magistrate Becky Thorson we would not have been able to complete such an undertaking both on time and on budget!

In 2014 we also began a very extensive Sponsorship Pilot Program. We are very fortunate to have the leadership of Eric Rucker in both the working group and pilot program. He has been a champion for both and has been willing to ask the hard questions and challenge the traditional ways of doing things. We have fourteen Sponsor/Protégé pairs. These individuals have participated in training, surveys, focus groups and feedback loops that allow us to measure and tweak the program before we roll it out to our broad membership.

We will spend 2015 analyzing and honing our Diversity Metrics so as to better inform the Board and our Member organizations on what we should be doing and trying to determine which efforts are having the biggest impact. With your support we will continue our current programming, support our up and coming Diverse attorneys as well as our leaders in their efforts to Advance the mission of Diversity in Practice.

As we move forward in 2015 we are focused on three key Initiatives:

- 1) Metrics
- 2) Social Media
- 3) Many Faces of Diversity

We will be counting on our committees and the Board leadership to continue the journey forward.

Our committees work very hard year round to ensure that we can meet our objectives. Thank you!

**Marketing Committee**

(Chair) Heather Kliebenstein-Merchant  
Gina Sauer – Oppenheimer  
Kim Walker – Faegre  
Leonard Clay – Faegre  
Nadia Martyn – Dorsey

**Membership Committee**

(Chair) Roshan Rajkumar – Bowman  
Cornell Moore – Dorsey  
Dan Gilchrist – Lindquist  
Jennifer Miernicki – Faegre  
Lee Hutton – Zelle  
Mary Ranum – Fredrikson  
Miko Hernandez – Faegre

**Professional Development  
Committee**

(Chair) Gulzar Babaeva – Target  
Liz Kniffen – Zelle  
Jim Simonson – Gray Plant  
Jihan Jenkins – Cargill,  
Sara Reisdorf – Fredrikson  
Liz Kniffen – Zelle

**Metrics Working Group**

(Co-Chair) Laura Witte – Cargill  
(Co-Chair) Kathy Noecker – Faegre  
Ken Cutler – Dorsey  
Kim Lowe Fredrikson  
Marlon Cush – UnitedHealth  
Mike Sullivan – Gray Plant M  
Tracy Johnson – Cargill

**Recruiting Committee**

Angie Roell – Gray Plant  
B. Wong – HSML  
Caryn Boisen – Larson  
Rachel Cobb – Larson K  
Curt Okerson – Fredrikson  
Liz Kniffen – Zelle  
Claire Forsmark – Dorsey  
Kristin Manikowski – Fish  
Gina Sauer – Oppenheimer

**Recruiting Committee Cont.**

Jodi Schmidt – Gray Plant  
Kristine McKinney – Faegre  
Greta Larson – Fredrikson  
Lisanne Weisz – Lindquist  
Martha Gentilini – Gray Plant  
Meghan Friedrich – Merchant  
Martha Capper – Robins  
Mariel Piilola – Larkin  
Patty Sachs – Winthrop  
S. Dean – Nilan Johnson  
Sara Idle – Cargill  
Sara Gorajski – Littler  
Shari Tivy – Bowman  
Sandy Ricci – Winthrop W  
Stephanie Sarantopoulos –  
Littler Trisha Selden – Faegre  
Christine Kim – Briggs  
Trudy Halla – Briggs

**Sponsorship Point People**

Christine Kim – Briggs  
Claire Forsmark – Dorsey  
Kristine McKinney – Faegre  
Loan Huynh – Fredrikson  
Curt Okerson – Fredrikson  
Jodi Schmidt – Gray Plant Mooty  
Mariel Piilola – Larkin Hoffman  
Lisanne Weisz – Lindquist  
Sara Stenberg – US Bank  
Coré Cotton – Wells Fargo  
Dan Millea – Zelle Hofmann

**Young Lawyers Group**

(Co-Chair) Jen Miernicki – Faegre  
(Co-Chair) Chris Pham – Lindquist  
(Co-Chair) Brandon Vaughn – Robins  
Adine Momoh – Stinson  
Amber Kroger – Fredrikson  
Cassie Fortin – Bowman  
Catherine Amundsen – Gray Plant  
Chris Okoroegbe – Cargill

**Young Lawyers Group Cont.**

Damien Bass – UnitedHealth  
David McKinney – Larson  
Erik Detlefsen – Dorsey  
Janine Wetzel – Greene Espel  
Katie Muller – Merchant  
Marlon Cush – UnitedHealth  
Nadia Martyn – Dorsey  
Mikiesha Mayes – Littler  
Victor Chan – Norton Rose  
Benjamin Keller – Fish  
Malika Kanodia – Best Buy  
Elizabeth Kniffen – Zelle  
Bobbi Leal – Dorsey  
Bryan Smith – Faegre  
Patel Roshini – Merchant G  
Tessa Mlsna – Littler  
X. Kevin Zhao – Greene Espel

**Pipeline Committee**

Kristine McKinney – Faegre  
Claire Forsmark – Dorsey  
Liz Kniffen – Zelle

**Young Lawyers Group Book Club**

Jen Miernicki – Faegre  
Damien Bass – United Health  
Amber Brown – Fredrikson  
Adine Momoh – Stinson  
Mikiesha Mayes – Bowman  
Cassie Fortin – Bowman

**Corporate Members Group**

(Chair) Laura Witte – Cargill  
Karin Nelsen- Cargill  
Sara Stenberg-Miller - US Bank  
Kevin Rhodes -3M  
Core Cotton- Wells Fargo  
John Crimmins - General Mills  
Apur Patel – United Health  
Scott Wilensky – Excel  
Bill Underwood -Target  
Brian Phillips –Surmodics

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Every year, each organization receives a detailed member profile, giving them an outline of what we have to offer and who within their organization is participating in our events and programs. As a membership association, we must continuously ask whether we are serving our members and being good stewards of our resources. I believe the programs that we coordinate and the connections we facilitate serve our members well – both organizations and individuals – but there is always room for improvement. *Diversity in Practice* and its Board will continue to improve efforts to communicate and engage members in a way that is meaningful to all parties involved.



2014 1L Welcome Reception



2014 Summer Social



2014 Minnesota Minority Recruitment Conference



2014 Ambassador Program



2014 Professional Development Series



2014 In House Roundtable

## Year in Review

In 2014 Diversity in Practice sponsored the following programs and initiatives for our members:

### ATTRACT/RECRUIT

1L Summer Clerkship  
Flying Squads  
Ambassador Program & Mapping Pathways  
Minnesota Minority Recruitment Conference  
& Employer Reception

### ADVANCE/RETAIN

Professional Development Series  
Sponsorship Pilot Program  
Young Lawyers Group  
Leadership Breakfast  
Summer Social

### Program Highlights



"Leading with Excellence: Being Sponsor Worthy"



"Addressing the Elephant in the Room: Unconscious Bias & Blindspots in the Legal Environment"

### Professional Development Series

We kicked off our fourth professional development series in 2014, created by the *Diversity in Practice* Professional Development Committee (PDC). While the programming was targeted at attorneys with 0-9 years of experience, much of the programming was chosen to give a broad spectrum of skills and was open to all attorneys, both minority and majority. The Professional Development Series had over 214 attorneys participate in some or all of the programs set forth below:

#### **October 9, 2014**

"Addressing the Elephant in the Room: Unconscious Bias and Blindspots in the Legal Environment" Ritu Bhasin

2.0 MN CLE Elimination of Bias | Course Number: 197415

Thank you Fredrikson & Byron for hosting the event!

#### **September 9, 2014**

"Focusing Complex Topics for Maximum Efficiency" Chris Carlson

1.0 MN CLE Professional Development | Course Number: 196338

**July 8, 2014**

"The Practice of Genuineness" Chris Carlson  
1.0 MN CL Professional Development | Course Number: 194032

**June 25, 2014**

"How to Use Social Media to Market Yourself and Your Organization" Guy Alvarez  
2.0 MN CLE Credits – Law Office Management | Course Number: 193605  
Thank you to Faegre Baker Daniels LLP for hosting this event!

**May 14, 2014**

"Leading with Excellence: Being Sponsor Worthy" Tanya M. Odom, Ed. M.  
2.0 MN CLE Credits – Professional Development | Course Number: 191777  
Thank you to Robins Kaplan for hosting this event!

**February 13, 2014**

"Building an Inclusive Culture: Understanding Unconscious Bias" Tanya M. Odom, ED. M.2.0  
MN CLE Credits – Elimination of Bias | Course Number: 188510

**1L Summer Rotation Clerkship**

The 1L Summer Rotation Clerkship was, once again, quite successful in 2014. This clerkship program offers first year law students of color a unique opportunity to combine a traditional law firm clerkship with experience working in a corporate legal department.

- Students spend 5-7 weeks with a participating law firm, and then spend a rotation with a corporate legal department, lasting 3-4 weeks.
- Member organizations hosted 16 clerks in 2014.

The following firms and corporate law departments are participating in 2015:

**Barnes & Thornburg LLP | 3M**  
**Briggs and Morgan, P.A. | Xcel Energy**  
**Dorsey & Whitney LLP | UnitedHealth Group**  
**Dorsey & Whitney LLP | Thrivent**  
**Faegre Baker Daniels LLP | 3M**  
**Faegre Baker Daniels LLP | Boston Scientific**  
**Faegre Baker Daniels LLP | Cargill, Inc.**  
**Faegre Baker Daniels LLP | Target Corporation**  
**Norton Rose Fulbright | Thrivent**  
**Gray Plant Mooty | US Bank**  
**Larkin Hoffman | General Mills**  
**Stinson Leonard Street | Cargill, Inc.**  
**Oppenheimer, Wolff & Donnelly LLP | Ecolab Inc.**  
**Robins Kaplan L.L.P. | Best Buy**  
**Stoel Rives | Land O'Lakes**

We thank all these members who have made the 1L clerkship one of the most sought after clerkships each summer!



## **In Summary**

In 2015 we will continue to provide high quality programming, support our members in their Diversity efforts and measure all that we are doing for impact. Again, without your help Diversity in Practice cannot succeed we need you, all of you, to become Diversity Champions in your own organizations in any way that you can. Diversity and inclusion efforts require effort person to person, attorney to attorney.



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