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INCREASING GENDER PARITY WITH CONSISTENCY & INTENTIONALITY

Our 2024 New Partner Report demonstrates concerning results. The 41.6% share of women in the 2024 new partner class represents a nearly 2% decline from last year's figure of 43.3%. Further, we saw declines across AmLaw 50, 100, and 200 firms, a nearly 3% increase in the gap in the share of new women partners compared to the share of women associates, and a reduction in the new partner class size by an average of 1.3 partners. These data points demonstrate consistency in the reduced share of women in new partner classes across firm sizes, a pipeline challenge at the top, the shrinking of the overall pool of advancement opportunities, and a boomerang effect over the years pointing to the volatility of women promotions.

On a more positive note, we did see certain bright spots. Notably, member firms had an average of 1.6% higher share of women partners in their U.S. new partner classes over the last five years. In addition, a nearly 13% increase existed in the share of firms reporting a 50/50 split or greater in favor of women in U.S. new partner classes over the last two years. We also saw a 2% decrease in the share of firms with no women partners from last year. These bright spots suggest that a number of law firms are making concerted, intentional efforts to address gender imbalances during the partnership promotion process.

Firms need to adopt an intentional, structured and data-driven approach to make consistent progress with gender parity at the top. The Alliance encourages organizations to leverage the data and recommendations from our 2024 New Partner Report along with specific practices discussed with top Talent & DEI leaders from firms with consistent progress regarding gender parity at our 2024 New Partner Summit.

Strategic Pipeline Management: A Critical Priority Law firms must implement systematic processes to develop and retain women and diverse talent, particularly at senior levels. While the legal profession has achieved relative gender parity at junior levels, intentional intervention is needed to maintain this balance through partnership. Forward-thinking firms are now mapping their partnership pipeline two to three years in advance to ensure a robust candidate pool. Key strategic initiatives include:

- Expanding recruitment channels beyond traditional sources to capture exceptional talent from adjacent industries and organizations.
- Engaging client relationship partners to provide high-visibility opportunities to diverse senior associates.
- Creating targeted leadership development programs that give pipeline candidates meaningful experience chairing committees and practice groups, building essential business development skills.

Elevate Diverse Leadership at the Highest Levels The composition of a firm's key governance bodies—Executive Committee, Compensation Committee, and Practice Group Leadership—serves as a visible indicator of its commitment to equity. Firms that demonstrate meaningful diversity in these influential positions send a powerful message about advancement opportunities and establish critical mentorship pathways. This requires moving beyond passive approaches to leadership selection and actively identifying, developing, and positioning diverse partners for these roles.

Build Integrated Support for DEI Initiatives Successful DEI programs require firm-wide integration and resource alignment. Progressive firms are achieving this by:

- Structuring DEI within broader Talent & Engagement frameworks to ensure coordination with HR, Professional Development, and Marketing functions.
- Leveraging Employment Law partners' expertise to frame DEI initiatives within substantive business and legal contexts.
- Using data analytics to create compelling visual narratives that demonstrate the business case for diversity to firm leadership.
- Securing adequate budget and personnel resources through strategic collaboration with other business services teams.

Implement Meaningful Accountability Measures Converting DEI commitments into measurable progress requires robust accountability mechanisms. Leading firms are adopting several effective approaches:

- Including DEI metrics in upward review processes reviewed at the highest levels of firm leadership.
- Incorporating specific DEI leadership expectations into equity partner evaluation criteria.
- Providing billable credit for substantial DEI contributions.
- Conducting regular management/partner discussions focused on concrete diversity leadership actions.

The Alliance is here to help Members continuously build and maintain gender diversity at the top. If you have not already done so, we urge our Members to take time to review our 2024 New Partner Report and view the recording of our New Partner Summit (recording available to members until January 31, 2025). To discuss specific strategic advice/resources, contact Manar Morales.