

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

# Leadership Council on Legal Diversity and Coqual Survey Shows Gaps in Support for Diverse Attorneys

### *Leadership Council on Legal Diversity Launches Leaders at the Front Initiative*

**Washington – October 22, 2020:** A new survey from the Leadership Council on Legal Diversity found that a vast majority of diverse lawyers face disparities in their careers, including gaps in sponsorship, visible representation in leadership, and pathways to success.

The study commissioned by LCLD and conducted by Coqual (formerly Center for Talent Innovation), a nonprofit think tank that studies diversity and inclusion in the workplace, found that the problem is not just about increasing the number of diverse attorneys within an organization, but removing the impediments to success that diverse lawyers face. Those impediments according to the Coqual research include:

- Limited diversity in law firm and legal department leadership.
  - Only 49% of survey respondents believe that senior firm/company leadership is inclusive -- creating challenges to advancement, relationship-building, and belonging.
  - Only 43% of women attorneys see role models for themselves within their organization's leadership. For Black attorneys, that number is 33%, with one respondent noting "no one else I can go to who looks like me to talk about what it was like to walk in my shoes."
- Leadership aspirations that seem unattainable despite ambition.
  - 78% of men and women want to become a leader at their organization, but only 53% of women feel like that will happen, compared to 67% of men.
  - Only 28% of attorneys think that quality of work product matters most in advancement.
- Lack of access to crucial networking and sponsorship opportunities.
  - 85% of respondents believe that senior leadership's support matters most in advancement to senior roles; but, only 22% have sponsors.
  - 59% of respondents believe that race/ethnicity plays a role in who gets sponsorship from leaders at their firm/company, while 58% believe gender plays a role.
  - 47% of Black attorneys feel excluded from informal networks at their organizations, compared to 35% of white attorneys.

In addition to the survey results, LCLD announced today that it has launched a new initiative called Leaders at the Front. The initiative aims to dismantle systemic barriers preventing underrepresented attorneys from achieving the highest levels of leadership within law firms and corporate legal departments.

"Recent events in the U.S. have placed the LCLD's core mission of diversity and inclusion front and center in the national conversation," said Robert Grey, president of LCLD. "There is an urgency to these issues that gives us a historic opportunity to create deeper institutional change."

Through the Leaders at the Front initiative, LCLD is asking its more than 300 members, who include corporate chief legal officers and law firm managing partners, to make personal commitments to DE&I and implement organizational changes that are specific, meaningful and measurable. These leaders' pledges are public on LCLD's Leaders at the Front [website](#). The LCLD will

also provide resources to help its members create impactful pledges and a platform for leaders to share plans and best practices so that a collective voice across the industry will create transformational change.

“LCLD has fostered diversity in the legal profession for more than a decade through its outstanding leadership development programs. The Leaders at the Front initiative responds directly to what we have heard from our diverse talent about the lack of representation, sponsorship, and paths forward for diverse lawyers,” said [Ellen Dwyer](#), chair of the LCLD Board and chair of Crowell & Moring’s executive committee. “Our recent survey results confirm the importance of visible role models in senior leadership and that there remains a significant deficit in sponsorship of diverse lawyers. We know that good intentions are not sufficient to change the trajectories and experience of our diverse lawyers. As leaders, we need to make a personal commitment to use our power to change the systems that have impeded the advancement and retention of our diverse lawyers. LCLD intends to inspire and drive that critical change forward.” Dwyer’s commitment is available [here](#).

Kim Rivera, Chair Elect, LCLD Board; and President, Strategy and Business Management and Chief Legal Officer for HP Inc., said, “It’s time for all of us, particularly leaders in a notoriously homogeneous field, to step up and use our influence, voices, and personal capital to bring about defining change.” Rivera’s commitment letter is available [here](#).

### **About the Leadership Council on Legal Diversity**

The [Leadership Council on Legal Diversity](#) is an organization of more than 320 corporate chief legal officers and law firm managing partners—the leadership of the profession—who have dedicated themselves to creating a truly diverse U.S. legal profession. Our action programs are designed to attract, inspire, and nurture the talent in society and within our organizations, thereby helping a new and more diverse generation of attorneys ascend to positions of leadership. By producing tangible results in the lives of talented individuals, we work to promote inclusiveness in our institutions, our circles of influence, and our society, with the ultimate goal of building a more open and diverse legal profession.

### **About Crowell & Moring LLP**

Crowell & Moring LLP is an international law firm with approximately 550 lawyers representing clients in litigation and arbitration, regulatory, and transactional matters. The firm is internationally recognized for its representation of Fortune 500 companies in high-stakes litigation, as well as its ongoing commitment to pro bono service and diversity. The firm has offices in Washington, D.C., New York, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Orange County, London, Brussels, and Shanghai.

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