

Cooley, Uber and LCLD Discuss Diversity

San Francisco – August 16, 2016 – Challenging the status quo, building more dynamic teams and acknowledging the pervasiveness of the diversity problem — as Cooley CEO Joe Conroy put it, “It’s a matter of our survival.” His words reflected the urgency underpinning the August 9 Leadership Council on Legal Diversity Q&A session. Cooley co-hosted the event with Uber General Counsel Salle Yoo in San Francisco. The event brought together 14 diverse private practice and in-house lawyers participating in LCLD’s leadership development program. They were joined by a Cooley team for discussion and brainstorming on some of the most vital issues facing diversity in the legal profession.

Conroy and Yoo shared their own stories of becoming diversity champions, detailing their growth and leadership, challenges, successes, commitments and goals. Throughout the session, they encouraged questions and facilitated active participation and feedback.

Yoo, who was a litigation partner at Davis Wright Tremaine prior to joining Uber, discussed her path to becoming one of the few minority partners at her former firm – an achievement that cemented her passion for helping other committed lawyers to break through barriers and take the legal workforce forward.

As part of Uber, Yoo explained that she sees firsthand the impact of a top-down management style that places diversity front and center: “Diverse leaders make diverse teams.” Yoo also emphasized that the time has come for law firm clients to stop asking for diverse teams and to instead expect diversity and, if it’s not present, boldly counter with “Why not?”

Conroy described his “extraordinarily impatient” efforts to build a “workforce diverse in opinions and perspectives.” He highlighted three elements essential to Cooley’s diversity commitment: willingness to acknowledge weaknesses; meaningful tactics to promote diversity; and repetition to drive home the importance of the issues.

Cooley attendees, all of whom are active participants in the firm’s diversity and inclusion initiatives and who work closely with Uber, included current LCLD fellow Reuben Chen, Jamie Leigh, Michelle Schulman, Samantha LaPine, Brittany Jones, Tammy Weng and Chantal Hwang.



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