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Law Firm Diversity Wobbles: Minority Numbers Bounce Back While Women Associates Extend Two-Year Decline

The latest NALP findings on law firm demographics reveal that law firms have made up some but not all of the lost ground after diversity figures fell in 2010. While the representation of minorities increased, more than making up for the decrease from 2009 to 2010, the overall representation of women declined slightly further in 2011 compared with 2010.

In 2011, the percentage of both women and minority partners in law firms included in the *NALP Directory of Legal Employers* was up by a small amount compared with 2010. Among associates, however, representation of women declined slightly for the second year in a row and for only the second time since NALP started compiling this information in the 1990's. The net effect was that, for lawyers as a whole, representation of women overall decreased by a tiny amount and the representation of minority women remained about flat. For minorities as a whole, representation was up slightly. Minorities now make up 12.70% of lawyers reported in the *NALP Directory of Legal Employers*, compared with 12.40% in 2010. Just under one-third of lawyers at these same firms are women — 32.61% in 2011 compared with 32.69% in 2010, both of these most recent years lower than the 32.97% mark reached in 2009. Minority women now account for just over 6% of lawyers at these firms — 6.23% in 2011, comparable to the 6.20% figure for 2010, and lower than the 6.33% figure for 2009.

During most of the 19 years that NALP has been compiling this information, law firms had made steady, if somewhat slow progress in increasing the presence of women and minorities in both the partner and associate ranks. In 2011, that slow upward trend continued for partners, with minorities accounting for 6.56% of partners in the nation's major firms, and women accounting for 19.54% of the partners in these firms. In 2010, the figures were 6.16% and 19.43%, respectively. Nonetheless, the total change since 1993, the first year for which NALP has comparable aggregate information, has been only marginal. At that time minorities accounted for 2.55% of partners, and women accounted for 12.27% of partners. Among associates, the percentage of women had increased from 38.99% in 1993 to 45.66% in 2009, before falling back to 45.41% in 2010 and to 45.35% in 2011. Over the same period, minority percentages have increased from 8.36% to 19.90%, more than recovering from a slight decline to 19.53% in 2010.

Minority women continue to be the most dramatically underrepresented group at the partnership level, a pattern that holds across all firm sizes and most jurisdictions. Minority women make up just over 2% of the partners in the nation's major law firms. At just 2.04% of partners in 2011, this group continues to be particularly underrepresented in the partnership ranks, despite a small increase from 1.95% in 2010. The

representation of minority women partners is only a bit higher, 2.47%, at the largest firms of more than 700 lawyers. Minority men, meanwhile, account for just 4.52% of partners this year, up from 4.21% in 2010. At the associate level, minorities account for 19.90% of associates, up from 19.53% in 2010, and minority women account for 10.96% of associates, a tiny increase from 10.90 in 2010, and still below the 11.02% figure reached in 2009.

These are the most significant findings of NALP's recent analyses of the *2011-2012 NALP Directory of Legal Employers* (NDLE), the annual compendium of legal employer data published by NALP.

"Last year, on the heels of the recession, we saw the figures for women and minority associates dip for the first time since NALP began tracking lawyer demographics at law firms. The 2011 figures reveal that a year later, while the figures for minority associates have bounced back, the overall number of women associates actually declined further. This is a significant finding," said James Leipold, NALP's Executive Director. "As law firms work to redouble their diversity efforts in the wake of the widespread layoffs in 2008 and 2009, we might have expected the representation of women and minorities among associates to bounce back together, but that is not the case. The newest data suggest that the temporary set-back for minority representation has been reversed but that the representation of women among associates has continued to trend downward. The loss of women has slowed, but at a time when far too few women make up the partnership ranks of US law firms, this is not a trend that can be ignored," Leipold concluded.

The representation of women and minorities in the summer associate ranks compares much more favorably to the population of recent law school graduates. According to the American Bar Association, since 2000, the percentage of minority law school graduates has ranged from 20% to 23%, while women have accounted for 46% to 49% of graduates, with the high point coming in the mid-2000's. Women comprise 47.71% of summer associates, minorities 27.11%, and minority women 15.19% of summer associates in 2011. In fact, these percentages exceed overall percentages for law school graduates and are higher than for 2010, even as the aggregate number of summer associates remained relatively steady compared with 2010, and off by over 40% compared with 2009.

Analyses for the 44 cities with the most attorneys represented in the directory reveal considerable variations in measures of racial/ethnic diversity. Representation of women among partners ranges from between 14 and 15% in Charlotte, NC, Northern Virginia, and Orange County, CA, to almost one-quarter in Denver, Ft. Lauderdale/West Palm Beach, Hartford, Miami, and San Francisco. Percentages for minority partners range from less than 2% in Grand Rapids and Pittsburgh to a high of 23.91% in Miami. The newest NDLE also reveals that representation of minority women among partners varies considerably by geographic location, with firms in Miami reporting the highest level of representation, at 7.66%. This contrasts with seven cities where minority women make up less than 1% of partners. Likewise percentages for women associates ranged from 35-36% in Orange County, CA and Northern Virginia, to about half in Hartford, Minneapolis, Orlando, San Francisco, Seattle, and Tampa. For minority associates the range was from 7.18% in Cleveland to just over 37% in Miami. The range for minority women associates was from 2.46% in Birmingham to almost 20% in Miami.

Among the largest of these cities (those with more than 900 partners represented), Los Angeles and San Francisco show the highest representation of women, minorities, and minority women among both partners and associates. Minorities account for 12.19% and 11.79% of partners in these two cities, respectively, and

women account for 19.28% and 24.72% of partners, respectively. Figures for minority women are 3.68% and 4.02%, respectively. Firms in Seattle and Washington, DC, also exceed national averages on most measures.

Among smaller cities, Miami and the San Jose area generally meet or exceed national averages. In Miami, women account for 24.22% of partners; minorities, many of whom are Hispanic, account for 23.91% of partners, and 7.66% of partners are minority women. Comparable figures in the San Jose area are 19.55%, 14.61%, and 4.04%, respectively.

In many other cities, the picture is considerably different: Cities that are below average on most or all measures and considerably so with respect to minorities include Birmingham, Charlotte, Columbus, Grand Rapids, Kansas City, Nashville, Northern New Jersey, and Wilmington. Numerous others, such as Boston, Cleveland, Cincinnati, Denver, Minneapolis, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, and Portland, OR, are at or above average with respect to women, but lag on minority representation. In still other cities, such as Detroit, Indianapolis, Las Vegas, Milwaukee, Phoenix, Raleigh, and St. Louis, only the percentage of women partners is at or above average. These findings reflect in part considerable contrasts in the population as a whole in these areas. For example, according to recent population estimates from the US Census Bureau, the population of the Grand Rapids and Pittsburgh areas is only about 20% minority (that is, Hispanic or non-White.) In contrast, at over 70% Hispanic or non-White, the population of Los Angeles can be characterized as majority minority. But minority representation within law firms does not always parallel minority representation within the overall population of an area. For example, in the Charlotte area, almost half of the population is minority, but this diversity is not reflected among lawyers working in law firms in that city.

Among summer associates, minorities have the highest representation in Columbus, Miami, Portland, OR, Raleigh/Durham, and San Jose, where 40% or more are minority. Representation of minority women among summer associates is highest in Miami and the Raleigh/Durham area. (See Tables 2 and 3 for the figures for individual cities and metropolitan areas, and for eight other states or geographic areas.)

The direction of change in the representation of women and minorities among partners in the aggregate from 2010 to 2011 has not been the case everywhere. Although exact comparisons with prior years are not possible because of variations in offices listing in the directory each year, a core consistency in office listings allows for some approximate comparisons. In the five largest markets represented in the directory — Boston, Chicago, Los Angeles, New York, and Washington, DC — only in New York and Washington, DC did the representation of women and minorities among partners and associates increase at least somewhat. The other cities saw a mix of increases, decreases, and generally steady percentages. In none of these cities, however, were large changes noted; most of the differentials were much smaller than one percentage point.

Lawyers with Disabilities

The directory also collects information about lawyers with disabilities, though this information is much less widely reported than information on race/ethnicity and gender, making it much harder to say anything definitive about the representation of lawyers with disabilities. The information that is available suggests that partners with disabilities (of any race or gender) are scarce, with less than one-quarter of 1 percent of partners reported as having a disability, a figure that is essentially unchanged from that for 2010. Similarly, associates with disabilities account for a tiny fraction, just 0.17 percent, of associates in law firms, even lower than in 2010. Although the presence of individuals with disabilities among law school graduates is not precisely

known, other NALP research suggests that some 2% of graduates self-identify as having a disability. Disability figures for partners, associates, and all attorneys with disabilities are reported in Table 1.

The *2011-2012 NALP Directory of Legal Employers* includes attorney race/ethnicity and gender information for almost 124,000 partners, associates, and other lawyers in 1,349 offices, and for over 5,300 summer associates in 765 offices nationwide. Information on disability status was reported for not quite 99,000 of these lawyers. Table 1 provides information on lawyers with disabilities; because of the small numbers involved, only nationwide figures are presented. Table 2 presents the most recent findings on the representation of women and racial/ethnic minorities among partners and associates at law firms. Table 3 presents analogous information for summer associates and for all lawyers. For purposes of the figures in these two tables, minority attorneys include those whose race or ethnicity is Black, Hispanic, American Indian/Alaskan Native, Asian, Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander, and those of multi-racial heritage, as reported by the law firms in the NDLE. The partner numbers include both equity and non-equity partners.

The *2011-2012 NALP Directory of Legal Employers*, which provides the individual firm listings on which these aggregate analyses are based, is available online at www.nalpdirectory.com.

Table 1. Reporting of Lawyers with Disabilities — 2011

	ALL FIRMS		FIRMS OF 250 OR FEWER LAWYERS		FIRMS OF 251-500 LAWYERS		FIRMS OF 501-700 LAWYERS		FIRMS OF 701+ LAWYERS	
	# Reported	% of Total	# Reported	% of Total	# Reported	% of Total	# Reported	% of Total	# Reported	% of Total
Partners	109	0.23%	36	0.19%	21	0.22%	23	0.36%	29	0.24%
Associates.....	68	0.17	11	0.10	21	0.27	8	0.13	28	0.17
All lawyers	219	0.22	61	0.18	53	0.27	38	0.26	67	0.21

Note: Figures for lawyers with disabilities are based on 1,121 offices/firms reporting counts, including zero, in all lawyer categories. Counts of individuals with disabilities, including zero, cover 98,949 lawyers. Because so few summer associates with disabilities were reported (4 total), they are not included in the table.

About NALP: Founded in 1971, the National Association for Law Placement, Inc.[®] (NALP) is dedicated to continuously improving career counseling and planning, recruitment and retention, and the professional development of law students, lawyers, and its members. NALP maintains an online archive of press releases at www.nalp.org/pressreleases. For additional information about NALP research, contact Judith Collins (jcollins@nalp.org), Director of Research, or James G. Leipold (jleipold@nalp.org), Executive Director, at 202-835-1001. Mailing address: National Association for Law Placement, 1220 19th Street, NW, Suite 401, Washington, DC 20036-2405.

Table 2. Women and Minorities at Law Firms — Partners and Associates — 2011

	PARTNERS				ASSOCIATES				# of Offices
	Total #	% Women	% Minority	% Minority Women	Total #	% Women	% Minority	% Minority Women	
Total	56,599	19.54%	6.56%	2.04%	52,786	45.35%	19.90%	10.96%	1,349
By # of Lawyers Firmwide:									
100 or fewer lawyers	6,305	19.98	6.50	2.25	3,648	42.41	15.38	8.25	229
101-250 lawyers	13,340	19.51	4.65	1.33	7,968	45.02	15.05	8.04	212
251-500 lawyers	11,213	19.85	6.26	2.14	8,863	45.66	18.21	9.82	269
501-700 lawyers	7,928	19.21	7.39	1.93	7,631	44.73	19.07	10.67	221
701+ lawyers	17,813	19.35	7.82	2.47	24,676	45.97	22.99	12.79	418
Offices in:									
Atlanta	1,401	18.06	6.64	1.86	1,213	47.57	17.31	10.39	34
Austin	354	22.32	7.91	3.11	294	42.18	19.05	7.14	16
Baltimore	427	19.67	2.81	0.47	248	41.94	10.89	5.24	8
Birmingham	455	17.58	2.42	1.54	203	37.44	8.87	2.46	7
Boston area	1,775	20.45	3.21	1.01	2,003	47.13	14.98	8.84	35
Charlotte	524	14.50	4.39	1.15	397	39.04	12.34	7.81	15
Chicago	3,891	19.56	5.89	1.88	3,115	44.30	17.01	9.47	64
Cincinnati	363	19.83	2.75	1.10	205	45.37	11.22	6.34	10
Cleveland	574	19.69	3.14	1.05	376	46.28	7.18	3.19	12
Columbus	537	16.57	4.84	0.37	276	45.29	12.68	6.16	13
Dallas	1,326	17.57	6.26	1.51	1,299	39.88	16.24	7.85	35
Denver	730	24.93	5.89	1.92	548	45.44	12.96	6.75	27
Detroit area	828	21.50	4.83	1.57	375	41.60	10.67	5.60	13
Ft. Lauderdale/W. Palm Beach	155	23.87	3.23	2.58	128	43.75	16.41	10.16	10
Grand Rapids	448	15.63	1.79	0.22	146	45.89	10.96	6.16	10
Hartford	153	24.18	2.61	1.31	107	52.34	16.82	11.21	6
Houston	1,267	16.18	7.66	2.05	1,263	39.35	19.79	8.79	41
Indianapolis	744	20.03	3.09	0.94	324	42.90	13.89	6.79	11
Kansas City, MO	649	18.18	2.77	0.62	390	42.05	11.54	5.64	7
Las Vegas	166	21.69	4.82	1.81	169	40.24	12.43	7.10	11
Los Angeles area	2,256	19.28	12.19	3.68	2,667	48.37	28.91	15.94	77
Miami	640	24.22	23.91	7.66	424	47.41	37.03	19.58	19
Milwaukee	662	19.94	3.93	1.36	380	42.37	9.47	5.00	9
Minneapolis	1,276	22.26	5.02	1.18	732	49.73	13.25	6.69	22
Nashville	341	17.89	2.64	1.17	225	40.89	12.89	7.11	8
New York City	7,152	17.30	6.66	2.32	13,177	44.66	24.04	13.35	127
Northern NJ/Newark area	1,078	17.53	4.55	1.39	955	46.49	14.87	8.27	22
Northern Virginia	293	14.33	6.48	1.71	264	35.23	16.67	7.95	15
Orange Co., CA	598	14.88	11.20	3.18	674	36.05	24.04	10.24	28
Orlando	205	19.51	3.90	0.00	118	50.85	16.95	11.86	7
Philadelphia	1,021	19.20	3.82	1.18	1,002	47.11	13.37	8.28	16
Phoenix	694	22.33	5.62	1.73	427	40.05	15.93	7.49	17
Pittsburgh	534	19.48	1.69	0.37	374	46.26	8.82	6.42	10
Portland, OR area	518	20.27	3.67	1.74	260	47.31	15.38	10.00	17
Raleigh/Durham	296	21.62	2.36	1.35	187	44.39	11.23	5.88	14
Richmond	314	15.61	4.46	1.59	249	42.17	10.04	7.23	6
San Diego	393	20.36	8.91	1.78	437	44.39	18.54	8.24	22
San Francisco	1,493	24.72	11.79	4.02	1,689	50.92	26.76	15.75	52
San Jose area	890	19.55	14.61	4.04	1,429	43.95	36.32	17.56	45
Seattle area	968	22.52	8.47	2.89	567	49.56	21.16	11.46	29
St. Louis	835	21.56	3.59	1.20	467	42.83	11.13	5.35	9
Tampa	372	18.28	8.33	2.42	210	50.00	14.29	10.00	12
Washington, DC	5,396	20.33	8.10	2.54	5,862	46.42	21.10	12.09	122
Wilmington	315	18.10	3.81	1.59	355	38.87	8.73	3.94	11

(continued)

(Table 2, continued)

	PARTNERS				ASSOCIATES				# of Offices
	Total #	% Women	% Minority	% Minority Women	Total #	% Women	% Minority	% Minority Women	
States:									
Other areas in Connecticut	278	22.66	2.52	0.72	184	54.89	16.30	10.33	9
Other areas in Florida	189	19.05	5.82	2.65	106	45.28	12.26	7.55	12
Kentucky	418	19.38	1.20	0.48	190	49.47	9.47	4.21	5
Louisiana	401	20.70	5.99	2.00	246	51.63	10.16	6.50	8
Mississippi	173	15.03	8.09	2.89	108	41.67	12.04	4.63	6
Other areas in New York State	685	18.25	2.92	0.73	370	44.59	10.00	5.95	14
Other areas in Ohio	348	18.68	2.87	0.86	182	40.66	8.79	3.85	10
Other areas in Texas	227	18.06	7.49	0.88	142	38.03	19.01	7.75	10

Source: The NALP 2011-2012 NALP Directory of Legal Employers. Some city information includes one or more offices in adjacent suburbs. Orange County includes offices in Costa Mesa, Irvine, and Newport Beach. The San Jose area includes offices in Menlo Park, Mountain View, Palo Alto and E. Palo Alto, Redwood Shores/Redwood City, San Jose, and Sunnyvale. The Northern New Jersey/Newark area includes offices in Newark, Roseland, West Orange, Florham Park, Hackensack, Morristown, Parsippany, Westfield, Bridgewater, and Woodbridge. Northern Virginia includes offices in Falls Church, McLean, Fairfax, Reston, Vienna, and Alexandria. State figures exclude cities reported separately. For multi-office firms that reported only firmwide figures, the information was attributed to the reporting city if at least 60% of the firms lawyers are in that city.

Table 3. Women and Minorities at Law Firms — Total Lawyers and Summer Associates — 2011

	TOTAL LAWYERS					SUMMER ASSOCIATES			
	Total #	% Women	% Minority	% Minority Women	# of Offices	Total #	% Women	% Minority	% Minority Women
Total	123,912	32.61%	12.70%	6.23%	1,349	5,305	47.71%	27.11%	15.19%
By # of Lawyers Firmwide:									
100 or fewer lawyers	11,002	28.42	9.54	4.44	229	375	49.07	22.67	12.00
101-250 lawyers	24,098	29.50	8.18	3.68	212	773	52.26	23.42	13.45
251-500 lawyers	23,170	32.13	11.65	5.55	269	909	46.42	25.96	14.74
501-700 lawyers	17,858	32.78	12.77	6.08	221	723	45.64	29.60	15.35
701+ lawyers	47,784	35.32	16.20	8.32	418	2,525	47.17	28.59	16.32
Offices in:									
Atlanta	2,994	32.63	11.69	6.01	34	80	56.25	31.25	20.00
Austin	726	32.09	12.26	4.96	16	27	48.15	14.81	7.41
Baltimore	786	29.64	5.98	2.54	8	17	41.18	11.76	0.00
Birmingham	717	23.29	4.32	1.81	7	58	53.45	15.52	13.79
Boston area	4,148	35.49	9.19	5.01	35	200	49.50	26.00	15.50
Charlotte	1,049	26.60	8.20	4.29	15	20	30.00	10.00	10.00
Chicago	7,649	31.10	10.52	5.19	64	233	45.06	24.46	12.45
Cincinnati	659	30.50	5.31	2.73	10	20	55.00	20.00	15.00
Cleveland	1,114	31.78	4.67	1.80	12	34	41.18	23.53	14.71
Columbus	933	28.30	7.40	2.47	13	31	54.84	41.94	25.81
Dallas	2,918	29.13	10.83	4.56	35	167	45.51	26.95	11.98
Denver	1,460	33.77	8.42	3.84	27	53	47.17	20.75	11.32
Detroit area	1,374	27.80	6.48	2.77	13	32	46.88	37.50	21.88
Ft. Lauderdale/W. Palm Beach	332	34.34	9.04	6.02	10	—	—	—	—
Grand Rapids	733	21.83	3.41	1.50	10	28	53.57	14.29	7.14
Hartford	303	35.31	7.26	4.62	6	—	—	—	—
Houston	2,860	29.55	13.50	5.59	41	235	48.51	26.81	15.74

(continued)

(Table 3, continued)

	TOTAL LAWYERS					SUMMER ASSOCIATES			
	Total #	% Women	% Minority	% Minority Women	# of Offices	Total #	% Women	% Minority	% Minority Women
Indianapolis	1,238	28.76	6.46	2.67	11	39	35.90	20.51	5.13
Kansas City, MO	1,301	30.59	5.61	2.31	7	28	57.14	17.86	17.86
Las Vegas	355	30.70	8.45	4.23	11	12	41.67	16.67	16.67
Los Angeles area	5,503	35.14	20.77	10.01	77	256	46.09	28.13	15.63
Miami	1,160	34.22	29.66	12.76	19	34	47.06	58.82	29.41
Milwaukee	1,127	29.10	5.94	2.66	9	30	50.00	26.67	16.67
Minneapolis	2,272	32.61	7.97	3.30	22	89	51.69	29.21	15.73
Nashville	620	27.74	6.45	3.39	8	30	40.00	6.67	6.67
New York City	22,806	35.14	17.43	9.12	127	1,475	47.46	30.17	17.08
Northern NJ/Newark area	2,397	31.41	9.05	4.38	22	52	48.08	15.38	9.62
Northern Virginia	628	25.00	11.78	4.62	15	21	33.33	23.81	14.29
Orange Co., CA	1,352	27.37	18.20	7.47	28	91	47.25	30.77	15.38
Orlando	355	31.55	8.17	3.94	7	—	—	—	—
Philadelphia	2,309	33.56	8.23	4.59	16	72	52.78	31.94	16.67
Phoenix	1,222	29.71	9.82	4.17	17	43	53.49	18.60	13.95
Pittsburgh	1,028	31.52	4.47	2.82	10	33	48.48	3.03	0.00
Portland, OR area	845	28.88	7.10	4.26	17	25	52.00	40.00	24.00
Raleigh/Durham	528	32.01	5.87	3.03	14	15	46.67	46.67	26.67
Richmond	647	30.29	6.34	3.86	6	12	58.33	16.67	16.67
San Diego	921	33.66	14.12	5.54	22	33	36.36	18.18	0.00
San Francisco	3,567	38.74	19.15	10.06	52	169	50.30	30.77	19.53
San Jose area	2,521	35.14	27.33	12.02	45	169	41.42	41.42	22.49
Seattle area	1,712	32.89	12.44	5.84	29	53	45.28	37.74	20.75
St. Louis	1,457	29.24	5.90	2.61	9	29	55.17	10.34	10.34
Tampa	627	29.82	11.16	5.26	12	12	33.33	16.67	8.33
Washington, DC	13,279	34.38	14.55	7.40	122	587	45.49	24.87	13.80
Wilmington	720	29.58	6.67	2.92	11	43	48.84	11.63	6.98
States:									
Other areas in Connecticut	506	36.36	7.51	4.35	9	22	40.91	27.27	18.18
Other areas in Florida	319	29.47	8.15	4.39	12	—	—	—	—
Kentucky	716	29.47	3.91	1.82	5	13	53.85	7.69	7.69
Louisiana	780	34.23	7.18	3.46	8	19	47.37	26.32	10.53
Mississippi	327	26.30	8.26	3.06	6	23	43.48	13.04	4.35
Other areas in New York State	1,179	28.24	4.92	2.37	14	40	50.00	22.50	7.50
Other areas in Ohio	570	26.32	4.74	1.75	10	10	60.00	10.00	0.00
Other areas in Texas	446	28.25	10.31	3.14	10	27	62.96	25.93	18.52

Source: The 2011-2012 NALP Directory of Legal Employers. Some city information includes one or more offices in adjacent suburbs. Orange County includes offices in Costa Mesa, Irvine, and Newport Beach. The San Jose area includes offices in Menlo Park, Mountain View, Palo Alto and E. Palo Alto, Redwood Shores/Redwood City, San Jose, and Sunnyvale. The Northern New Jersey/Newark area includes offices in Newark, Roseland, West Orange, Florham Park, Hackensack, Morristown, Parsippany, Westfield, Bridgewater, and Woodbridge. Northern Virginia includes offices in Falls Church, McLean, Fairfax, Reston, Vienna, and Alexandria. State figures exclude cities reported separately. For multi-office firms that reported only firmwide figures, the information was attributed to the reporting city if at least 60% of the firms lawyers are in that city.

Note: The number of offices reporting one or more summer associates, including demographic information, was 765. Dashes in the summer associates columns indicate that fewer than 10 summer associates were reported for that city.