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Mansfield Rule 2.0 Aims to Boost Law Firms' Diversity Efforts

By [Meghan Tribe](/author/profile/Meghan-Tribe/) | June 22, 2018 at 11:53 AM

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Last summer nearly 50 law firms signed on to the [Mansfield Rule](https://www.law.com/americanlawyer/almID/1202788981402/) (https://www.law.com/americanlawyer/almID/1202788981402/)—named after the first woman lawyer in the U.S., Arabella Mansfield—in an effort to close the gap in leadership roles for women and minorities in Big Law.

Next up? Most of the same firms, along with some new ones, are signing on next month for the launch of Mansfield 2.0, which broadens the obligations of participating firms and expands the initiative to include LGBTQ+ attorneys.

Adapted from the National Football League's Rooney Rule, which requires NFL teams to interview at least one minority candidate for a head coach or general manager position, the Mansfield Rule was developed after last summer's Women in Law Hackathon, organized by the Diversity Lab and its CEO, Caren Ulrich Stacy.

Law firms that adopt the rule pledge that women or minorities will make up at least 30 percent of candidates for any leadership or governance positions, including lateral hires and equity partner promotions.

In addition to including LGBTQ+ attorneys in candidate pools, under Mansfield 2.0 firms will also be expected to measure the participation of underrepresented lawyers in client pitch meetings, and to make their appointment and election processes transparent to all lawyers in the firm.

"We are enthusiastic about embarking on our second year as a Mansfield Rule pilot firm," Goodwin Procter chairman David Hashmall said in a statement. Goodwin Procter worked with the Diversity Lab to add LGBTQ+ criteria to the Mansfield Rule this year.

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“The Mansfield framework has provided a valuable structure to our talent processes,” Hashmall said.

Forty-four law firms signed up for the inaugural pilot and have worked alongside Stacy and the Diversity Lab to track their progress.

Six months into the implementation, some changes were already evident, according to data collected by the Diversity Lab.

Before adopting the Mansfield Rule, only 20 percent of the 44 law firms tracked the diversity of candidates considered for lateral senior associate and partner positions, and only 30 percent of firms tracked diversity for leadership and governance roles.

Afterward, 95 percent of the firms saw an increase in formal discussions amid law firm leaders on broadening the pool of diverse candidates for leadership positions and lateral hiring. Eighty-three percent of firms have also reported an increase in discussions on broadening the pool for partnership promotions.

“While six months—and even one year—is certainly not enough time to completely uproot old processes and change law firm cultures, these early indicators show that the Mansfield Rule’s discipline and accountability measures are already disrupting dialogues and practices within firms,” said Stacy, who noted that the Diversity Lab is in the midst of collecting year-end data from participating firms.

Once the data has been collected, firms that successfully implemented the rule over the last year will become “Mansfield Certified” and have the opportunity to send their newly promoted women and diverse partners to client forums with participating in-house legal departments such as Abercrombie & Fitch Co., American Express, BASF, Cargill, Google, PNC, CBS Corporation, Target, Compass Minerals, and the Gap.

“We believe in the change that diversity initiatives like the Mansfield Rule help create, and the role corporate legal departments have in driving this work,” said Julie Gruber, general counsel for Gap Inc. in a statement. (The Gap will host one of the client forums in this year at its headquarters in San Francisco.)

The Diversity Lab is also partnering with ALM, parent company of The American Lawyer, to develop a new searchable feature in **ALM Intelligence’s LegalCompass database (<http://legalcompass.intelligence.alm.com/#/home>)**. The database will allow in-house counsel to search for law firms to see if they are “Mansfield Certified” or are “In Progress.”

So far, 35 law firms that signed onto the original initiative have renewed their commitment to the newest version, and 11 law firms, including Baker McKenzie, Hogan Lovells, Pepper Hamilton, Schiff Hardin, Wilson Sonsini Goodrich & Rosati, and Womble Bond Dickinson, have joined the group for the first time.

Orrick, Herrington & Sutcliffe was one of the first to adopt the original rule and is also signing onto Mansfield 2.0. “I am certain that it will take a community conversation and community action for our profession to improve in this area,” said Orrick chairman Mitch Zuklie.

Zuklie said the Mansfield Rule has made the firm more disciplined in the way its looks at and tracks the diversity of candidate pools, which has included the creation of new metrics. He said one of the challenges remains finding a diverse pool of candidates for lateral associates and partners.

“Our commitment to the Mansfield standard has caused us to be more rigorous with our search firms, including a retained search for diverse candidates, and to get more creative in the ways we are connecting with a women and diverse lawyers,” Zuklie said.



Caren Ulrich Stacy



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Other law firms that are also renewing their commitment to Mansfield 2.0 are: Akerman LLP; Arnold & Porter; Blank Rome; Brownstein Hyatt Farber Schreck; Bryan Cave Leighton Paisner; Buchanan Ingersoll & Rooney PC; Clifford Chance; Cooley; Dentons; DLA Piper; Dorsey & Whitney; Faegre Baker Daniels; Fasken; Fenwick & West LLP; Fish & Richardson; Goodwin; Holland & Hart; Holland & Knight; Jenner & Block; Katten Muchin Rosenman; Littler Mendelson; McDermott Will & Emery; Miller Canfield; Morris Manning & Martin LLP; Morrison & Foerster LLP; Nixon Peabody; O'Melveny & Myers; Reed Smith; Seyfarth Shaw; Sheppard Mullin; White & Case; Winston & Strawn LLP; and Vinson & Elkins LLP.

New firms signing onto the Mansfield Rule are: Baker McKenzie; Beveridge & Diamond PC; Finnegan, Henderson, Farabow, Garrett and Dunner; Foley & Mansfield; Hogan Lovells; Husch Blackwell LLP; Pepper Hamilton LLP; Schiff Hardin; Stoel Rives LLP; Wilson Sonsini Goodrich & Rosati; and Womble Bond Dickinson (US) LLP.

Mansfield 2.0 is set to launch July 16. Interested law firms still have until July 6 to sign up.

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Meghan Tribe

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