



Paragon Legal Engagement and Impact 2024

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By the Numbers 2024

Paragon Legal is pleased to present our 2024 Engagement and Impact Report. This report highlights the accomplishments of our Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging Council which was founded in 2020 to deepen our commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging at Paragon and beyond. The work of our DEIB Council is carried out by Paragon's dedicated Corporate Team members who advance the Council's goals throughout the year through the committees they have chosen to join.

Paragon Legal's Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging Council Goals

Paragon Legal's DEIB Council has three overarching goals, which both define our purpose as well as guide our efforts and measure our progress.

1

To support diversity within our own team by continuing to provide equal opportunities within Paragon and for our candidate pool, and to ensure that candidate vetting and presentation are done in an unbiased manner.

2

To cultivate a spirit of inclusiveness and a feeling of belonging at Paragon by encouraging frequent and candid conversations around the issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion.

3

To advance opportunities outside of Paragon for individuals committed to diversity, equal opportunity, and inclusion through our Career Connect program, mentoring, and education.



CAREER CONNECT

Now in its fourth year, our groundbreaking Career Connect Program continues its successful partnerships with Santa Clara University School of Law and William & Mary Law School to connect recent law graduates with leading industry clients. This initiative provides graduates with invaluable in-house legal experience as they embark on their legal careers.

In 2023, Career Connect alumni [Ashim Bhandari](#) and Rebeka Seleshi completed their program participation and are now generously sharing their insights and experiences with incoming participants, helping them navigate the program and prepare for their journey ahead.

In 2024, we are proud to have placed Tatiana Sanden (SCU Law) and Charlene Alexander (W&M Law) with in-house corporate partners who are committed to mentoring and guiding them through the responsibilities and complexities of in-house legal roles.



[Tatiana Sanden](#)

“Paragon remains proud of our commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging in the legal community,” said Trista Engel, CEO of Paragon Legal. “Our Career Connect Program exemplifies this commitment by offering unique access and opportunities to both highly deserving law graduates and values-aligned companies.”



[Charlene Alexander](#)

Throughout the program, Paragon offers continuous support to participants as they engage in client projects. Our attorney development team provides coaching and training that mirrors the experience of all Paragon attorneys working with clients.



CAREER DEVELOPMENT FOR ATTORNEYS

In 2024, we set our sights on creating meaningful career development opportunities for early-career attorneys and accomplished this goal through a variety of activities.

First, we developed a resource booklet for job seekers. This guide features two of Paragon’s most popular attorney resources - the Paragon Resume Guide and the Paragon Interview Prep Guide, along with curated resume samples. When we brought it to the October annual Association of Corporate Counsel meeting in Nashville, every single one of the copies we printed was claimed within just two days! In October, we also provided this resource to the Career Center at the Santa Clara University Law School, and to a group of first-generation law students at UC Law San Francisco.

Due to the success of our first edition, we are producing a new edition of the booklet to share with law school career centers and affinity groups, empowering even more early-career attorneys on their professional journey.

Second, our Senior Director of Recruiting, [Anna Armstrong](#), spoke with law students in the Tech Edge group at the Santa Clara Law School. During the discussion, she shared from her deep knowledge about opportunities to work in-house and the Bay Area in-house legal landscape.

Finally, we connected with career services teams at two law schools, laying the groundwork to participate in future interview training sessions. Members of our Recruiting and Sourcing team will be helping to prepare law students from Arizona State University's Sandra Day O'Connor College of Law in a series of mock interviews.



CONVERSATIONS: INTENT vs IMPACT

Providing opportunities for our Corporate team to learn and grow is equally important. In 2024, a small group of dedicated team members researched and created a series of discussions on the significance of Intent versus Impact. *The goal was to bring awareness to the difference between intent and impact, specifically their connections to assumptions, power, and trust.* Through role-plays designed specifically for our team, we explored real-life examples where misunderstandings occurred due to assumptions shaped by our own perceptions and applied tools to address these situations. These tools included using “I” statements, asking for support, listening to understand, and taking accountability for the impact. This work has helped us recognize and navigate the gap between how our actions are intended and how they are received, ultimately fostering better communication and stronger relationships within the team. These conversations were the highlight of our DEIB Council meetings this year.

“The role plays were tremendous -- and I am not a fan of role playing, but I do think [it] was super accessible and well structured this year!”

To further our internal education, we researched, created, and shared content throughout the year to recognize celebrations like [Pride Month](#), [National Disability Employment Awareness Month](#), and the [International Day for Tolerance](#). This work is essential in helping us build a workplace where individuals feel seen, heard, and respected, ultimately strengthening our team dynamics and fostering a culture of inclusion and belonging.

Tools to use when misunderstandings result from assumptions made based on our own perceptions

Impacted Person

- Check in with yourself and the other person to make sure it is a grounded space to talk about the misunderstanding.
- Consider what you hope to get out of sharing the impact.
- Share “I” statements and be specific. Implicitly or verbally assume positive intent while explaining the impact.
- Set a boundary or invite a behavior change.
- Ask for support.

Impacting Person

- Listen to understand. Attempt to understand the other person’s perspective.
- Center their feelings, not yours. De-center yourself.
- Validate their experience.
- Take accountability for the impact. Offer a straightforward apology (without any caveats).
- Reflect in hopes of gaining at least some understanding (however marginal) of the harmful impact.
- Remember; defensiveness may only add insult to injury. And a lack of awareness is not an excuse!



MEDIA CLUB

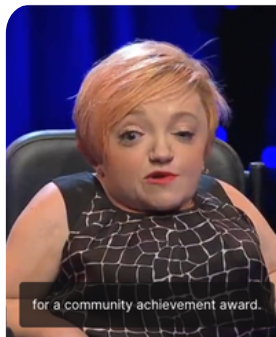
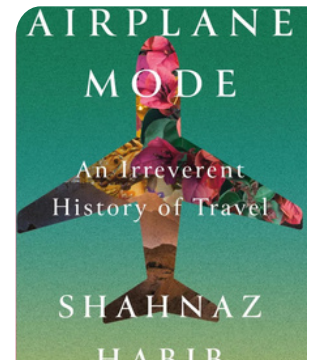
In 2024, our ever evolving Book Club became our Media Club in an effort to broaden accessibility and diversity of thought. Volunteers from the Corporate team selected a piece to share and lead discussions on:



I'm a proud Black Irish Dancer - This video explores the inspiring journey of Morgan Bullock, a 20-year-old Irish dancer from Richmond, Virginia, and one of the few Black Irish dancers she knows of. Morgan shared her determination to challenge norms. "You don't make history by staying inside a box." Her journey captivated audiences as she redefined what it means to belong in the world of Irish dance, celebrating her identity while excelling in a traditionally homogenous space.



Can you ethically travel the world? - The ways in which travel, especially to vulnerable parts of the world can impact the host communities. In her book *Airplane Mode*, author Shahnaz Habib reflects on "passport privilege" and asks, "What does it mean to feel entitled to the world?" She suggests that travel often reinforces our preexisting ideas rather than challenging them, especially for those who can move freely from country to country while others feel like perpetual interlopers. Travelers could approach the world more mindfully, respecting local cultures and acknowledging the inequalities tied to global mobility.

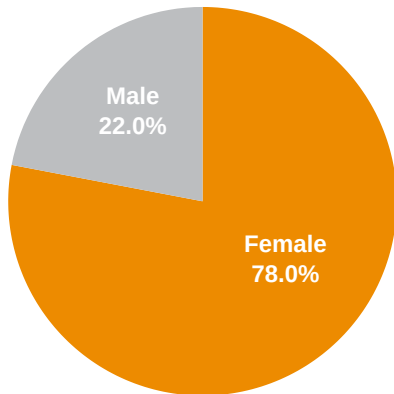


I'm not your inspiration - How living with a disability is not exceptional and how disabled people are objectified for the non-disabled. Comedian and journalist Stella Young challenges society's habit of turning disabled people into what she calls "inspiration porn." As she puts it, "I'm not here to inspire you. I'm here to live my life." She explains how this objectification diminishes the lived experiences of disabled people, reducing them to feel-good stories for non-disabled audiences.

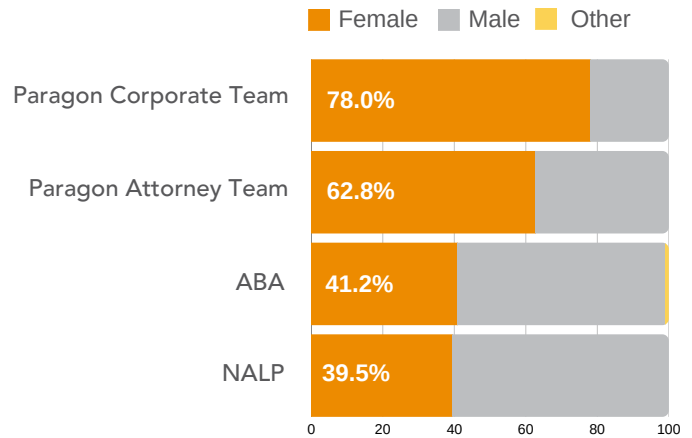


By the Numbers 2024

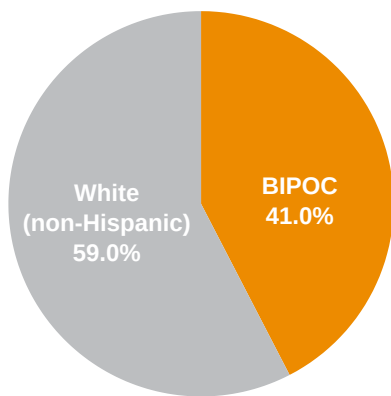
**Paragon Gender Representation:
Corporate and Attorney Teams**



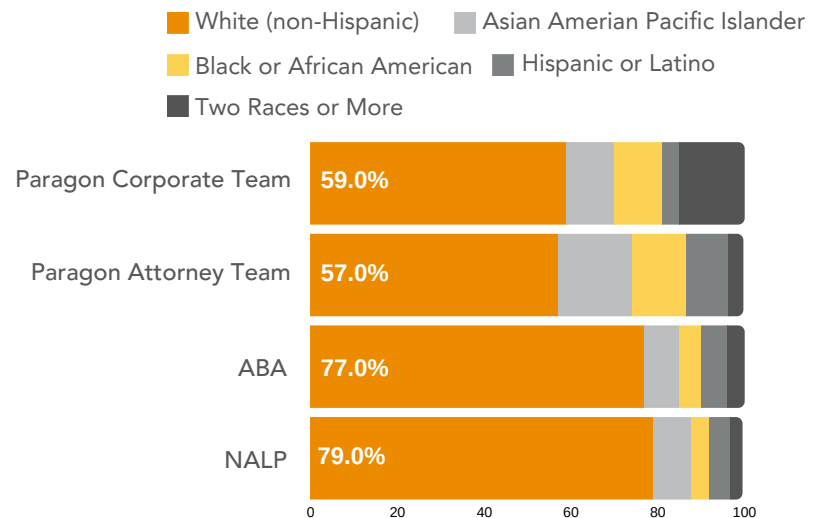
Gender Breakdown Comparison



**Paragon Black, Indigenous and People
of Color Representation:
Corporate and Attorney Teams**



**Black, Indigenous and People of Color
Breakdown Comparison**



* ABA: American Bar Association

** NALP: National Association for Law Placement



To be one, to be
united is a great thing.
But to respect the right
to be different is
maybe even greater.

- Bono

Paragon's Diversity Statement

At Paragon Legal, we put **people first** and cultivate an inclusive environment where everyone is **welcomed, supported, and celebrated** as individuals. Diversity has always been a valued part of our culture. It is our heritage and our legacy. We define excellence as the continued commitment to doing right by our people. We believe that the best way to deliver the highest quality talent and service is to **embrace our differences**.

Diversity

Diversity at its core, is not simply about race, ethnicity, religion, gender, or any other group or class of individuals. True diversity also requires embracing differences in perspectives and experiences to foster greater understanding, adaptability, and decision-making. It's about driving progress through maximizing and leveraging those unique attributes to create something that is greater than the sum of its parts.

Equity

Equity can only exist where the playing field is level. Equity is equality of access, opportunity, and treatment, regardless of race, ethnicity, religion, gender, or identity.

Inclusion

Inclusion is about more than the presence of unique individuals. It's embracing their uniqueness, celebrating their differences, and ensuring that their unique voices are heard.

Belonging

Belonging is the intended outcome of our DEIB efforts where people across the organization feel valued for who they are and for their contributions to the growth and success of the Organization.