



## **Board Chairs Change, But ACC's Commitment to You Stays the Same**

**Community**



When I began my tenure as ACC chair, I was excited to continue the work that ACC's board, staff, and members have done to make ACC the premier global association dedicated to the needs of the in-house bar. My goals as chair included expanding your network through membership growth, supporting your practice by contributing to (and championing) the essential resources and research you need, and most importantly advancing the [Seat at the Table](#) initiative by broadening the discussion to include all levels of the legal department.

## Growing connections

As we endured a second year of a global pandemic, the importance of connecting to and growing our networks became even more critical. Luckily, we belong to an organization whose global membership continues to grow, with approximately 45,000 diverse members located in more than 85 countries. I've talked about the significance of joining your local chapter, recalling [my own journey at ACC](#), which led to becoming a founding member of the [Singapore Chapter](#). Again, I encourage you to connect to your local [chapter](#) (ACC has more than 50 throughout the world) and to check out the 21 [practice area networks](#) that offer numerous resources and the ability to communicate directly with your colleagues via forums and more.

## Championing Diversity & Inclusion in the profession

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In addition, we continued the important work we began last year, fighting racial injustice and supporting diversity and inclusion (D&I) within the legal community. The [ACC Foundation](#), through its [I.D.E.A.L.](#) initiative, produced several programs and resources at both the national and chapter level over the last year. For example, the foundation partnered with the Association for Law Firm Diversity and Thomas Reuters Institute on a [survey](#) and subsequent panel discussion, “[Pandemic Nation – Understanding Its Impact on Underrepresented Communities](#),” which looked at COVID-19’s unique impact on professionals from marginalized communities.

[The Belonging Project](#) is another incredible partnership formed last year. Based on “ubuntu”, the idea that humanity works best with collective responsibility, the project brings together a collective — including the law firm of Seyfarth Shaw and other diverse bar associations — committed to improving inclusion and diversity in the legal profession, and building community among diverse law students, attorneys, and allies.

Outside of our growing partnerships, there are many articles, webcasts, and more in the featured resources section of the [I.D.E.A.L. site](#). Further, check out the recently released [DE&I Maturity Model](#) which will help your team gauge the maturity of your diversity, equity, and inclusive functions. There are plenty of opportunities to get involved, and these resources can inform your own company’s policies and help your team implement change and growth in this area.

## The information you need

We’ve all had to figure out new ways to do our jobs and, in many cases, simply go about our daily lives, due to the lingering effects of COVID-19. I am immensely proud of all of the timely, on-trend resources that ACC produces, through the contributions of members like you, but I am especially impressed with the [COVID Resource Center](#). There, you will find everything from webcasts featuring the latest information in-house counsel need to be aware of; forums where you can discuss those issues; region- and topic-focused resources; as well as career tips, updates on upcoming programming, the latest news, and more. This content is updated frequently, including curated resources like [this one](#) for multinational employers seeking guidance on return to work.

In addition, ACC continues to release [research](#) that informs our decision-making on everything from compensation to advancing our place within the C-suite. A couple highlights include the [2021 Legal Technology Report](#) launched just this month, the [Law Department Compensation Survey](#) ([download key points](#)), and the annual [2021 Chief Legal Officers Survey](#). (Head to [acc.com/clo2022](#) to participate in next year’s survey now.)

## Securing our collective seats

ACC’s [Seat at the Table](#) initiative is one I’ve championed since its inception. According to the *2021 CLO Survey*, 78 percent of CLOs surveyed report to the CEO. While this is great progress, ACC is striving to get this number to 100 percent. During my time as chair I wrote several [articles](#) and participated in discussions — including this [webinar](#) on the *CLO survey* results — around this important initiative. I’ve worked with ACC staff to create resources geared toward helping all levels of the legal department achieve their rightful position at the table.

For example, in an interview entitled, “[Find Your Seat: Earning the Role of Strategic Business Partner](#),” I spoke on the evolving role of the modern in-house lawyer and offered strategies on how to become a partner to the business, while also leveraging that role to put you in a better position to

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earn your seat at the table. In my upcoming role as immediate past chair, I look forward to continuing this work and furthering this conversation, especially as it relates to CLOs globally. Learn more about the strides we made to broaden this discussion at [acc.com/governance/claiming-your-seat](https://acc.com/governance/claiming-your-seat).

## **Committed to the in-house community**

As my tenure comes to an end, I say thank you to my fellow board members and the entire ACC staff for working with me to address the unique challenges associated with in-house practice.

ACC, with contributions from members like you, continues to produce the global resources we need to tackle the ever changing (and growing) issues that cross our desks daily. And resources are just the tip of the iceberg: I'm sure many of you attended this month's virtual [Annual Meeting](#), where you were able not only to participate in discussions on critical and on-trend topics, but also to tap into a global network of in-house peers. Further, with initiatives like ACC's [Credentialing Institute](#) and [Online Education](#) programming that includes offerings like [Business Education for In-house Counsel](#), ACC is not only addressing your needs, but anticipating them.

I have no doubt that this great work will continue and grow under the leadership of your new ACC Board Chair, Mike Madden, head of group legal, commercial, and procurement, at [Hyne Group \(Hyne Timber and Xlam Australia & New Zealand\)](#), headquartered in Queensland, Australia. Mike brings a tremendous amount of ACC Board and in-house leadership experience to this role, as well as prior service to the Australia chapter, which is one of ACC's largest. I look forward to working with him and the rest of the board to continue advancing the stature and position of in-house counsel globally.

Change is good, but one thing that never changes is ACC's commitment to you, the global in-house community. I couldn't be more grateful to have had the opportunity to serve ACC as its board chair, and I can't wait to see what we do next!

[Jo Anne Schwendinger](#)





Chief Legal & Compliance Officer & Secretary

II-VI Incorporated

Jo Anne Schwendinger is the chief legal, compliance officer, and secretary of II-VI Incorporated. She serves as the chair of the ACC Global Board of Directors.