



My Take: A Look Back, A Path Forward

Community



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Serving on the ACC board of directors has been a highlight of my career. Not only have I had the opportunity to work alongside other extremely talented board members and ACC leadership, but I have grown and learned from so many within the global in-house community as an ACC member. Stepping into the role of board chair of this amazing association has been an immense honor and a very rewarding and fulfilling experience. As the world is still dealing with the implications of a global pandemic, I am proud of the work ACC has done and continues to do, to help our members lead and support their organizations and communities. In fact, in 2022 we celebrate [40 years](#) of doing just that!

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A look back ... and forward

Some of that vital work included continuing ACC's commitment to diversity and inclusion within our profession. We launched the ACC Foundation's [Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion \(DEI\) Maturity Model](#) (MM) last year, and this year expanded its reach and potential through a partnership with Ethisphere. I applaud Team ACC on the many events, roundtables, and articles focused on this initiative that have helped law departments and organizations take a deeper look at their DEI functions and

procedures. Stay tuned for more to come on this exciting model, including an innovative DEI MM Benchmarking Assessment Tool, which will allow legal teams to further access and advance their efforts in this area.

In addition, we released important research like our annual [Chief Legal Officers Survey](#), which offered insights from over 850 CLOs representing 20 industries and 38 countries. The report found that CLOs play a critical role in a company's leadership and as such, have increasing responsibilities in business functions like compliance (80 percent), ethics and privacy, and, of course, risk. Further, the report found that nearly a quarter of those surveyed have responsibilities in their organizations environmental, social, and governance (ESG) efforts. This is an area of significance for me, and I know many of you as well. In fact, I recently published an article for the *China Business Journal*, "[Steering the ESG Shift.](#)" I encourage you to check it out – I'd love to hear [your thoughts](#) on how in-house counsel can lead and support our teams in this important area.

Other notable research included the [Trends in Legal Transformation and Technology Report](#) (in partnership with DISCO), which captures insights from 278 law department leaders and legal operations professionals on how they've engaged transformation within their departments. I have highlighted just a small sample of ACC Research here and encourage you to learn more at [ACC.Com/survey-reports](#). In fact, if you are a CLO and would like to contribute to the conversation by [participating in the 2023 Chief Legal Officer Survey](#), you can do so until Oct. 28; the survey will be published in January!

This year also saw some of us tentatively coming back together again with in-person programming. [ACC Europe held its annual conference](#) in Madrid in May, the [Executive Leadership Institute](#) was held in July in Chicago, and the [Global GC Summit](#) was back in action in Zurich in June — the same month that ACC Foundation hosted its hybrid [Global Women in Law & Leadership](#) program. Again, I can't highlight all the innovative programming that happened this year, but you can peruse coming events on the [Conferences & Professional Development](#) page.

It's all about connections

Connecting our global membership to the resources and educational programming they need to lead their organizations successfully and safely, while also growing professionally via career-focused content and networking opportunities, is what ACC does best. I am proud that during my tenure as chair, this tradition of excellence has grown tremendously. Today, global membership stands at approximately 45,000 diverse members located in more than 100 countries! Knowing that you have access to a global network of thousands is a great benefit of ACC membership. That said, I encourage you to connect with your local [chapter](#) (ACC has more than 60 globally) and to check out the 21 [practice area networks](#) — they offer numerous resources and the ability to communicate directly with your colleagues via forums and more.

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Through my personal experience as a member of the APAC chapter — I became a member of the Australian Corporate Lawyers Association (ACLA) in 2010 — I quickly learned that nothing in private practice prepares you for the challenges of working in-house. That's where ACC came in: An online

search for resources and other in-house counsel led me to ACLA (now ACC Australia). I have met some great people and made lifelong friends through connections made at various ACC in person and virtual events, beginning with my local chapter. This is one of the many wonderful things about ACC membership, the opportunity to meet peers, connect, and expand your professional and support network globally!

The information, education, and networking we need

Many of us have come together to learn and network for the first time in almost three years, but I am most excited about joining those of you who can make it in Las Vegas for our first in-person [Annual Meeting](#) (AM22) since 2019! I remember walking into my first ACC Annual Meeting in Boston in 2015, at the start of my first-three-year term as a board member, and being impressed by the scale of it! This year promises to be just as spectacular with programming covering everything from ESG, cybersecurity, global compliance, risk, and employee management, to DEI, leadership-focused content, and much more. There's even a timely keynote session featuring Iuliia Mendel, former press secretary for Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky.

This year promises to be ... spectacular with programming covering everything There's even a timely keynote session featuring Iuliia Mendel, former press secretary for Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky.

This Annual Meeting showcases the ongoing innovation and evolution of ACC events and member services, you will have the opportunity to choose your learning path. AM22 will also feature spectacular virtual programming, including a full day of virtual content accessible by members and nonmembers worldwide on Global Day for FREE! Please share with your networks as this is a wonderful opportunity for them to learn what you already know – that ACC provides the best educational content for in-house counsel!

Discover the [three ways you can experience](#) this year's Annual Meeting and if you'll be in-person in Las Vegas this month, I look forward to seeing you there.

In addition to events, ACC's robust [Online Education](#) offerings provide you with discussion and insights into top-of-mind topics. A recent example includes the [Agile Leadership Series](#) that began this September and is a "leadership academy for law department executives." Also, panelists discuss the role that transformation can play in aligning the business function and driving value in the webinar that explores the findings of the [Trends in Legal Transformation and Technology Report](#) (mentioned earlier).

ACC is committed to providing you with hands-on resources that help you address the issues of the day. Examples of this include resource collections focused on the [Ukraine Conflict](#), [ESG](#), and more recently the implications of the [US Supreme Court's decision in Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization](#). And you can read many timely articles, resources, and pieces that will help you grow in your career from Day 1 to leadership, found within the *ACC Docket* which are often [authored by you](#).

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I am a passionate supporter of ACC as it continues to strive to provide our members with the education, information, and networking opportunities you've come to expect from the premiere global, in-house bar association — be it via your computer screen or at a live event.

The amazing ACC staff are passionate, dedicated, and resourceful in their pursuit to create a fantastic member experience; however, they cannot do it alone. Our membership is broad, diverse and engaged on contributing to the success of ACC through volunteering time, resources, effort, be it through leadership at the chapter or practice networks, content contribution or attendance at ACC events and the sharing of ideas and discourse on issues of the day facing in-house counsel. Thank you for contributing your ideas, feedback, content, and time. Because of your input, we can offer top-of-mind programming, resources, and networking opportunities to help you and your colleagues tackle whatever crosses your desks.

A continued commitment to the in-house community

In 2014, I became president of the ACLA Queensland Chapter, and I was also lucky enough to serve on the national board as a director representing my Queensland chapter. I attended my first ACLA board meeting and I recall being warmly welcomed by Adrian Goss, current general counsel at Audio and Publishing UK, who was the ACLA board chair. He gave me an extremely helpful introduction to the board and issues of the day. As I reflect on this initial meeting and prepare to pass the proverbial torch to Adrian, who will serve as your new [ACC Board Chair](#), I'm struck by how things often come full circle.

It is now my turn to introduce him to you all – although I am sure many of you are familiar with Adrian and his proven commitment to advancing the role of in-house counsel. I am confident that he will support and advise ACC the same way he did for me all those years ago, as well as during our joint time on ACC Australia's national board. In fact, I believe he will expand upon the great work of the current board and leadership, helping us forge a path forward as we all figure out the “new normal” of our work and homes lives. We are entering into our new Strategic Plan, and under Adrian and [ACC President & CEO Veta T. Richardson's](#) leadership, ACC will continue address and anticipate the ever-evolving needs and wants of in-house counsel.

It is often said that change is good. I agree, but there has been an awful lot of change over the last few years. Luckily, ACC's commitment to you and the global in-house community at large has not changed, as we continue to work in support of your ability to handle whatever comes next. I look forward to continuing in service of this wonderful community as your immediate past chair, colleague, and friend. Thank you for a wonderful year.

[Learn more about Stewart as well as other ACC Professional Development Coaches, and sign up for a complimentary 30-minute session! While you're there, access career-related resources and more.](#)

[Mike Madden](#)



Board Chair

Association of Corporate Counsel