

LCLD Alumni Class of 2011 Feature Series: John Cu



1. Who was the first person you met in your 2011 Fellows class?

[Vanessa Sutherland](#). She is currently the Chief Legal Officer of Norfolk Southern. Oh and before that, she served in the Obama Administration. No bigs.

2. What were some of your first impressions of the LCLD Fellows Program?

I was part of the 2011 LCLD Fellows Program, which is the year the program launched, so I wasn't sure what to expect, but I was excited to take part and pave the way for future classes. My immediate reaction to some of our first meetings together was how electric and energizing it was to be surrounded by peers who, like myself, strive to make an impact, to be engaged in their communities, and to create opportunities for those coming after us to succeed. Our class was small compared to today, about 90 Fellows. We all did not know what to expect, but you can tell we immediately recognized the impact and responsibility we had being the first Fellows class. We focused on continually empowering one another every day since. After all, you need the support of the collective behind you to affect positive change.

3. What are some of your favorite LCLD memories?

I'll never forget our collective reaction after the very first day of our Fellows meeting. We all just bought in, and as a result, we bonded. I've said this many times, but I have forged some very close friendships through LCLD, from my Fellows class in particular. From going to a Justin Timberlake concert with [Kamran Khan](#), [Waqas Durrani](#), and [Margaret Chase](#), to visiting Chicago and having dinners with [Diane Webster](#) and her husband, to talking hockey with [Alana Bassin's](#) dad. A few LCLD fellows even crashed my honeymoon; to this day, they maintain that I invited them. I didn't.

I'm also very close to Fellows from other classes. LCLD affords that opportunity.

4. How has the LCLD Alumni community impacted your career over the last 10 years?

It has been amazing to have peers and colleagues across the country to receive and to give fresh perspectives, empower one another, share thoughts, share strengths and create a network that is founded on diversity, opportunity, and lifting one another up. The LCLD program has connected me with the top impact players in organizations nationwide and I feel grateful and inspired every day in my career to be part of a network like this.

5. What is your vision for the LCLD Alumni experience over the next 10 years?

My hope for the LCLD Alumni experience over the next decade is that it will continue to grow and we will continue to see an influx of diverse leaders rise through the ranks in organizations nationwide. There is much work still to be done on a large scale throughout the country in terms of diversity and equity, but achieving any of it starts with every one of us and the other leaders and colleagues at our organizations. We all need mentors who are willing to listen, colleagues who are willing to hear and learn, and ideas from those outside our immediate organization to help us see new perspectives, and that's why being an LCLD Alumnus is so valuable. I look forward to making more connections with other Alumni and hearing about their journeys, ideas, and sharing mine as well. It's great to come from the beginning Fellows class and to see a program like this grow.

6. Do you have any advice for current program participants and new Alumni?

No one advances meaningfully through their career alone—identify mentors who you trust and colleagues you can learn from. Always remember to trust in yourself and be authentic to your values. And don't be afraid to ask for help from those you trust and whose opinions you value.

7. How do you believe LCLD has moved the needle on diversity since 2011?

It has provided a platform, a network, and a community in which to share, build support and a voice. It makes a difference as a young attorney to have a mentor, a colleague, or someone to look up to who looks like you, sees the world similarly to you, and understands your life experiences. LCLD brings a community of professionals together that likely would not all be in the same room together at another place, and that is a powerful thing.

8. Tell us about your career since 2011. What are you doing now? Have there been any surprises along your path?

Since 2011, I've grown my litigation practice and achieved several favorable results for my clients. I have also held several leadership positions both at my firm and in the community. In 2016, I was elected to the Board of San Francisco's Chamber of Commerce and presently serve as its General Counsel and sit on its Executive Committee. I also currently serve as Chair of Hanson Bridgett's Financial Services Litigation Section. Prior to that, I proudly served as Chair of the firm's Diversity and Inclusion Network.

I've been fortunate to work at a firm that values diversity and lives up to its goals surrounding it. The firm and leadership at all levels understand the merits that diversity brings to the table and continually bring more chairs to that table and create opportunities for equitable success. I am proud to be part of that and to have watched that aspect grow throughout the years in my career here.