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# FOCUS

## President's Message

**Justin Carlson**

Greetings to all ACC South Florida members! In this issue to kick off 2025, we highlight our membership, which I hope is welcome break from the news cycle and the furious pace of change in DC that is keeping so many of us busy with our anxious employers.

Tomorrow, as I write, we will be hosting our annual member appreciation event at Marlins Park to enjoy the Savannah Bananas, the 21<sup>st</sup> century's Harlem Globetrotters. We expect over 70 people to attend, and while this is a tremendous number, it is only a fraction of our over 560 members. For all of you who could not make it, I want to express that you are also appreciated. We could not do what we do without you, because we do it for you!

As part of the member appreciation event, as with some of our community service events, we allowed members to bring a guest, typically a spouse or a child. Our families are a big part of the "why" we do what we do professionally, so we want it to be a part of the "why" you participate in ACC-SFL. It is always a pleasure to spend time with chapter members and learn about personal and professional journeys, and to become friends and share in those journeys.

Everyone has their reasons for choosing which bar associations or other legal extracurricular activities to participate in, whether that is finding cheap, easy or palatable ways to satisfy our continuing legal

education requirements, fulfilling our ethical commitment to pro bono service, networking for future opportunities, or just the free drinks. Hopefully, with our chapter, your answer is "all of the above"!

The chapter, through its 12 dedicated volunteer board members, is focused on our local community and planning memorable events to foster real connections. Our goal is for everyone to think of our events as an exciting opportunity to experience a fantastic venue, have a new experience, learn something actually useful in your job, and to do these things with people who look forward to seeing and come to regard as friends rather than random acquaintances.

And over the recent years, we've done that by averaging nearly 20 events per year, all but one (our CLE conference) of which are free of charge to members. This has included events at highly rated restaurants such as Uchi in Wynwood and Klaw downtown Miami, rooftops like Rosa Sky in Brickell and Rosewater in Delray Beach, activities including axe throwing in south Dade, cocktail making in Broward, and arcade games in Palm Beach. We've hosted community service events which range from packing bookbags full of free school supplies to South Florida public school teachers to providing clothing to women in need to re-seeding local the seabed with shellfish. Our members have provided pro bono service through partners like Broward



Legal Aid and Legal Services of Greater Miami.

We have nearly 300 companies represented in our chapter, with almost 150 general counsels of those companies involved. Our goal this year is for our total membership to reach 600 members for the first time in our chapter's history. I hope you can help spread the word to your colleagues and friends who are not part of the ACC-SFL. The more folks we have under the tent, the more we can do, and the more fun we'll have!

Again, on behalf of our board and our sponsors, thank you for being a member of the ACC South Florida. I'm looking forward to a great 2025 with each of you.

# Key Issues in Corporate Governance in 2025: Navigating Emerging Risks, AI, and Cybersecurity

By Phil Stein, Bilzin Sumberg

Corporate directors and officers always have a tremendous amount on which to focus, including the critical corporate governance responsibilities that their positions carry with them. They must follow company bylaws, be mindful of their fiduciary duties, and stay focused on key company objectives and critical compliance issues pertinent to the company's business operations. 2025 brings some newer challenges to supplement those perennial concerns.

In performing one of their core functions, risk management, boards of directors (and executive officers) now have an even broader and more complex universe of issues to navigate. Those issues, in turn, affect other core functions, such as selection of key management personnel and self-evaluation of board composition and processes. What constitutes an optimal skill set for a director and officer continues to evolve, sometimes now at stunning speed.

The range of issues that boards and officers are expected to oversee has expanded to include high-stakes topics such as cybersecurity risk management, the impact of artificial intelligence on business strategies, and, for some businesses, climate-related disclosures and planning. As a consequence, directors and officers with expertise in these areas are in high demand. But most companies have typically prioritized experience in their industries, or in leadership positions at other companies – rather than expertise in comparatively narrow, emerging

subject matter areas – when selecting or nominating directors.

The expansion of board responsibilities has led to a heightened focus by shareholders not merely on directors' backgrounds and skill sets, but also on how much time they can reasonably be expected to devote to the board of the shareholders' company. "Serial" directors, those who serve in oversight capacities at numerous other businesses, have increasingly faced headwinds in shareholder elections in recent years. Though the wisdom and aggregated experience of directors and executive officers cannot lightly be discounted, the magnitude of various newer challenges – and the types of knowledge needed to help guide a company through them successfully – makes a careful reassessment of board composition advisable.

In 2025, Generative AI is likely to require boardroom discussions and have an impact on broader corporate operations. Company leaders across a multitude of industries will need to consider their companies' readiness and adaptability in the face of this evolving technology, anticipate forthcoming regulations as best they can, and consider the impact of AI on hiring and retention of employees. Organizations need AI policies that advance the right talent and structure to cultivate this new technology.

Another issue that threatens to outpace companies' ability to respond and protect

themselves, is the explosion of technology-driven financial fraud, including cybercrime. A particular challenge in 2025 will be building a corporate culture that both minimizes the likelihood of a serious data breach and roots out bad actors. This is of course easier said than done, but certainly includes recurring training of employees to take steps that reduce the likelihood of exposure to data breaches and cybertheft, and greater limitations on the numbers of employees, business partners and vendors with access to company systems, much less the company's most sensitive data.

Boards should focus intensely on legal and regulatory compliance practices pertinent to financial fraud issues. A thorough understanding of the organization's compliance and cultural challenges enhances oversight. Collaborating more extensively with top managers at the company on initiatives to combat cybercrime, may become a necessity.

The cost to businesses of breaches of their networks is projected to rise from \$9.22 trillion in 2024 to \$13.82 trillion by 2028. Unprepared organizations could face potentially irreparable damage at the hands of cybercriminals.

In the coming year, and beyond, boards must remain vigilant. Infrastructure and data upgrades of all sizes must be considered high-risk. Business technology consultants recommend that companies implement software and configuration

*continued on page 3*



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changes carefully and strategically in order to prevent widespread disruption or damaging breaches.

On a more positive data-related note, anticipated continued improvements in businesses' data storage, retrieval and retention, will likely enable shorter board meetings and more agile, informed boards and executive management teams.

Outdated reporting structures at many companies have made it difficult for boards to harness and distribute the information company leaders need to make key decisions. Many boards are now embracing a trend in corporate governance: better dashboards, the visual representations of key performance indicators, metrics and critical data points in

a single interface. Centralizing risk data to monitor and mitigate risk frequently has the potential to allow for more proactive boards.

As technology evolves, cybersecurity threatens performance, and geopolitical events causes disruptions and erode predictability, boards and business executives will need to be more than responsive. They need to be resourceful, proactive, vigilant and easily informed. Augmenting leadership and oversight teams with persons with the skills necessary to confront these huge emerging challenges is one way to meet the moment. An upgrade of data infrastructure that improves ease of access to key company performance indicators is another.

#### Author:

##### Phil Stein

Phil is a go-to litigator who shares his clients' sense of urgency and concern. Phil crafts effective litigation strategies by creatively applying tried and true litigation principles and defenses to new legal challenges, and bringing innovative approaches to longer-standing problems. His clients appreciate his unwavering determination and collaborative approach to resolving seemingly impossible stalemates. Phil's experience is wide-ranging, with an emphasis on financial services litigation, corporate governance and partnership disputes, consumer product litigation, and privacy issues.



## Top 5 Takeaways from the 2025 ACC Chief Legal Officers Survey

### By Association of Corporate Counsel

In its 26<sup>th</sup> consecutive year, the ACC Chief Legal Officers Survey Report aims to provide the legal community with insights on the evolving role of the CLO position and how legal departments are positioning themselves to help organizations most effectively adapt to a demanding business environment. By examining the experiences and perspectives of CLOs worldwide, we aim to uncover the challenges, opportunities, and strategic priorities shaping the legal function.

#### 1. The CLO's Influence Over Corporate Functions Outside of Legal is Expanding

Most CLOs oversee multiple functions, with 70 percent managing at least two additional areas such as risk, compliance, privacy, and ethics. This broader scope of responsibility extends to strategic decision-making, with 58 percent of CLOs heavily involved in mergers and acquisitions and other corporate transactions. Furthermore, CLOs play a crucial role in advising the CEO and shaping overall business strategy, as 44 percent of them identified these as their greatest impact on the organization.

#### 2. CLOs Are Taking More Strategic Ownership Across Their Organizations

A global majority (79 percent) of CLOs report directly to the CEO, with the highest percentage in the US (83 percent) and the lowest in Australia (57 percent). This direct reporting structure empowers CLOs to influence key business decisions. Additionally, CLOs are actively seeking greater collaboration with other business units, such as operations (29 percent), finance (18 percent), and sales (15 percent).

#### 3. The Volume, Cost, and Complexity of Disputes and Investigations Are Increasing for Many CLOs

Forty-two percent of CLOs report an uptick in litigation volume, while 44 percent have seen a rise in internal investigations. External investigations have also increased for 24 percent of CLOs. This increased legal activity comes with growing complexity. Thirty-eight percent of CLOs find litigation to be increasingly complex, followed by internal investigations (31 percent) and external investigations (21 percent). More complexity results in higher costs, with 60 percent of CLOs experiencing increased litigation expenses.

#### 4. CLOs Rank Operational Efficiency as Their Top Strategic Initiative

Thirty-five percent of CLOs globally identified operational efficiency as their department's top strategic initiative for the next year. Technology implementation is the second most frequently cited initiative (14 percent). This emphasis on efficiency and cost-cutting may be linked to the fact that 41 percent of law departments received a cost-cutting mandate from their organization in the past year.

#### 5. Being Understaffed is the Biggest Barrier Legal Departments Face

When asked about the biggest barriers facing their legal departments, respondents identified understaffing as the primary challenge. Thirty percent of CLOs plan on increasing the number of lawyers they hire this year and nearly half plan to do so in larger companies. Other barriers include regulatory uncertainty (23 percent), lack of strong processes in place (18 percent), and lack of budget (14 percent).

[Go beyond the top takeaways and read the full report »](#)

## NEW BOARD MEMBER SPOTLIGHT



### Steven Blickensderfer

Global Privacy, Compliance & Litigation - Lead Privacy Counsel at KRAFTON

#### How long have you been an ACC South Florida member?

I joined in 2021 when I transitioned to an in-house role.

#### Why did you join the ACC?

To connect with and learn from other in-house counsel in the area.

#### What is a typical day like for you at KRAFTON?

My day starts with reviewing emails that came in overnight, followed by meetings and legal work throughout the day. I have calls with colleagues in Korea in the evening, as there are only a few overlapping work hours between our time zones.

#### What do you most enjoy about being in-house?

I enjoy learning about the company's products and services, as well as helping the company navigate legal challenges to advance

its business objectives. Since KRAFTON develops and publishes video games, my work sometimes requires me to log into a game and experience various features firsthand—which is definitely a unique perk of the job!

#### When you're not working, where would we find you?

Walking around Bayfront Park with my toddler and Pomeranian, or cruising on my Vespa.

#### What's your favorite quote right now?

"You miss 100% of the shots you don't take."

#### Tell us something that might surprise us about you.

I can make a mean pour-over coffee—probably better than your local barista.

## Welcome New Members!

### Sean Boddicker

Gartner, Inc.

### Allison Cannella

Vertical Bridge REIT, LLC

### Ana-Paola (AP) Capaldo

TD SYNEX

### Beth Crews

The GEO Group, Inc.

### Priscilla Debar

Acoustic, L.P.

### Alina Denis Jarjour

Axiom

### Jason Franko

University of Miami

### Amalia Gonzalez

Universal Property & Casualty Insurance Company

### Robert Goodall

Gartner, Inc.

### Jeffrey Grill

Restaurant Brands International US Services

### Amani Kancey

Hims & Hers

### Marco Leyte-Vidal

Assurant, Inc.

### Robert Maxie

CSC ServiceWorks, Inc.

### Ed McCarthy

Boomi

### Eusebio Peralta Martinez

Hard Rock Cafe International

### Lorene Piatt

Document Storage Systems, Inc.

### Guilherme Recena Costa

Barrick Gold Corporation

### Ronnell Robinzine

DLP Capital Partners

### Nakia Ruffin

Universal Property & Casualty Insurance Company

### Shelby Smith

Sonos, Inc.

### Blaine Templeman

Cartography Biosciences

### Christina Varela

Jushi

### Juan Velez

ERM

### Winnie Yeung

Neutron Holdings Inc. dba Lime



## EVENT PHOTOS

### Palm Beach Holiday Party – Presented by Barnes & Thornburg



### Miami Dade Holiday Party – Presented by Cozen O'Connor





## Mixology Class – Presented by Nelson Mullins



## Cooking Class – Presented by Bilzin Sumberg



We're Getting SOCIAL!

You can find updates, event information and more at:



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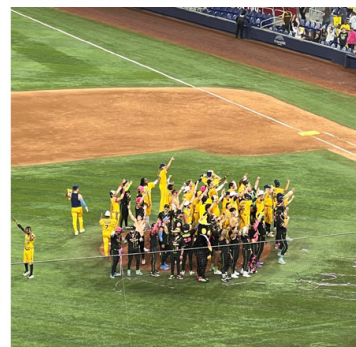


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**in-house professionals**



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FTI Consulting  
Jackson Lewis  
King & Spalding  
Saul Ewing Arnstein & Lehr LLP  
Shook Hardy and Bacon, LLP  
TCDI

### Bronze

Chane Socarras PLLC  
Fox Rothschild  
Heise Suarez Melville PA  
Hodgson Russ LLP  
Jones Walker LLP  
Latitude  
Robert Half Legal  
The Law Offices of Stephen James  
Binhak, PLLC  
White & Case LLP

### Miami-Dade Progressive Dinner

Shook Hardy and Bacon, LLP (Premier)  
DLA Piper (Dinner)  
Carlton Fields (Dessert)

### Social Event

FTI Consulting

### GC/CLO Dinner

Shook, Hardy and Bacon, LLP  
Carlton Fields

### Social Event + CLE

DLA Piper  
Squire Patton Boggs

### Mini MBA

Foley & Lardner

### Women's Event

Fisher Phillips

### Holiday Party

Barnes & Thornburg (Palm Beach)  
Cozen O'Connor (Miami)

### Newsletter Article

Barnes & Thornburg  
Pavese Law Firm

## ACC South Florida Upcoming Events

### APRIL

#### APRIL 10

Pickleball + CLE Seminar  
Presented by Squire Patton Boggs

#### APRIL 15

Pro Bono:  
Advanced Directives Clinic  
Legal Services of Greater Miami

#### Week of APRIL 28

Social Event  
Presented by Fisher Phillips

### MAY

#### MAY 8

Pro Bono:  
Broward Legal Aid  
Clinic

#### MAY 15

Miami-Dade  
Progressive Dinner –  
Presented by Shook,  
Hardy & Bacon, DLA  
Piper, Carlton Fields

### JULY

#### WEEK OF JULY 21

Women's Event  
Presented by Fisher  
Phillips

### SEPTEMBER

#### SEPTEMBER 5

SAVE THE DATE!  
15<sup>th</sup> Annual  
CLE Conference  
at the Seminole Hard  
Rock Hotel & Casino

Be on the lookout for  
calendar updates!



The largest global gathering  
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## Chapter Leadership

### President

**Justin Carlson**

CLO / General Counsel, Velocity Solutions, LLC

### Immediate Past President

**Aline Drucker**

General Counsel, Invicta Watch Group

### Treasurer

**Warren Stamm**

General Counsel, Newgard Group

### Secretaries

**Steven Blickensderfer**

Lead Privacy Counsel, Krafton

**Andres Mayor**

Senior Counsel, Otis Elevator Company

### Sponsorship Co-Chairs

**Lucas Kurtz**

Vice President of Legal Affairs  
United States Sugar Corporation

**Christopher Aird**

Assistant General Counsel, MasTec, Inc.

### Communications Chair

**Sharaine Sibblies**

Vice President, General Counsel,  
Southeast Toyota Distributors, LLC

### Community Outreach Co-Chairs

**Nikki Setnor**

Managing Senior Counsel, ADP Total Source Inc.

**Eve Perez Torres**

Senior Attorney, International Legal & Regulatory  
Affairs, FedEx Logistics, Inc.

### Membership Co-Chairs

**Maritza Gomez**

Senior Counsel, Employment, Gap, Inc.

**David Brill**

Managing Director, FTI Consulting

### Executive Director

**Christina Kim**

Christina Kim  
Executive Director

## Executive Director Note

### Dear Members,

Ever since moving to Florida from NYC, winter has quickly become my favorite season. I traded in the frigid temperatures and those deceptive, bottomless, icy slush puddles of the city for a balmy sea breeze and trips to the beach in January. Winter has also become a great time to have events and here at ACC, we've been keeping busy with so many awesome activities including our Member Appreciation event where we saw the Savannah Bananas take on the Party Animals at loanDepot park in a private suite. Our members came out with their families to share in this special experience and the Chapter is glad to have been able to show our appreciation to all of you!



Christina Kim & Family

Looking ahead past pollen season, and the heat and humidity of summer, please be sure to save the date for our 15<sup>th</sup> Annual CLE Conference taking place on Friday, September 5 at the Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino. There are many events going on between now and then so please check out our "Upcoming Events" section.

Sincerely,

**Christina Y. Kim**

Executive Director, ACC South Florida