



FDCC New Member Handbook



Welcome to the Federation of Defense & Corporate Counsel. You are reading this because you are exceptional, both in your professional and personal life. You are now surrounded by a group of colleagues that will soon become some of your dearest friends. And through these friendships you will be provided with opportunities to enhance your professional skills, connect with the best in the business from across the country, and grow your individual and firm reputation. So, ask questions, spend some time on our website, come to meetings, and get involved. Your membership experience will be what you make of it. While cliché, the more you put into the FDCC, the more you will get out of it. Let's get you started with some basic information about who we are, how we govern ourselves, and how you can get involved and stay connected.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Lorell, President
Gordon Rees Scully Mansukhani
March 1, 2020

The FDCC Guiding Principles

Our Why:

To be the inspired community of vetted defense counsel, exceptional leaders and even better people.

Our Mission Statement:

We are the professional trade association of vetted and premier defense and corporate counsel and industry executives, dedicated to leading the profession by advancing the principles of integrity, professionalism, fair civil justice, intellectual capital, and fostering the trust and value of fellowship. We are dear friends that share a passion for our profession and enjoy working with each other. We network amongst ourselves. Because we trust each other, we send business to each other.

Our Vision Statement:

To advance and sustain an equitable civil justice system now, and for future generations, through a community of trusted, leading and innovative industry legal professionals.

Our Value Proposition:

- We afford the privilege of membership to those who have differentiated themselves professionally and personally and whose exemplary reputations have been earned.
- Our strength and sustainability are premised on the exclusively inclusive and diverse membership, through which new ideas, creativity and scholarship are shared, valued and advanced. We provide members with access to unique and relevant opportunities to enhance their skills and leadership through productive meetings, knowledge sharing and active collaboration with their peers.
- We value personal relationships and will tell you about our family before we are likely to tell you about our last case or trial.

Our governance—a meritocracy in action

How we govern ourselves says a lot about who we are as an organization. Most of us have experienced this truism: the more you put into the organization the more you get out of it. We don't do politics. Rather, members that want to get involved and contribute their talents to the organization form relationships that result in lifelong friendships. From these trusted relationships, business flows. Like anything worthwhile, the full value of membership takes time—more than one meeting and more than one conversation.

Our leadership structure consists of a Board of Directors, and an Executive Officer team. These 21 people, all volunteer members, oversee the governance of the FDCC, our programming,

our conventions, our special meetings, and our finances. We are led as well by our Executive Director, Bernie Heinze, himself a former law firm equity partner, litigator, coverage counsel and insurance company chief national litigation counsel. He and his team provide our meeting planning, budgeting, financial stewardship, strategic planning and membership activities and are based in King of Prussia, PA, outside of Philadelphia.

Here is how our member leadership breaks down. We have 9 Directors, each serving a one year term. We have 8 Senior Directors, also each serving a one year term. Our Executive Officer team consists, in ascending order, of a Secretary Treasurer, President Elect, President, and Board Chair, also each one year terms. The Secretary Treasurer, once selected, will roll up through the ranks each successive year, becoming President Elect, President, and then Board Chair. Our board members and our incoming Secretary Treasurer are selected each summer at our Annual Meeting by the Nominating Committee. The Nominating Committee consists of 6 at-large members (selected by the President two weeks before the Annual Meeting) and the immediate five most recent Past Presidents who also attend the meeting.

Any member can stand for election to be a Director. Most members that decide to do so have successfully spent time contributing to one of the substantive law sections, been a section chair, and have been active in programming for that section. Once selected, a Director can serve up to three successive terms and then must move up to a Senior Director position or move off the Board. That pattern is true as well for Senior Directors, who can serve as many as three successive terms and then must either be selected for the Secretary Treasurer position or be off the Board. Under our Bylaws, at least one corporate or industry member must be a Director and at least one must be a Senior Director.

This structure of one-year terms for the 17 Directors and Senior Directors creates a healthy and vibrant Board without any sense of entitlement. There is no room for deadwood. Everyone on the Board understands that each year she or he will be measured by what they have contributed to the organization since the last Annual Meeting. Hence our meritocratic culture and nature.

Our major meetings and events

There are many ways in which to network, contribute and engage within the Federation and your fellow members. Our website and other publications will provide exact dates, but here is the calendar summarizing our major meetings and events, most of which also offer continuing legal education credits:

- Late February/Early March: Our Winter Convention is typically 5 days in length. Our venue for these meetings is intentionally urban and easily accessible. We have programming designed for our corporate members and provide free registration for early corporate registrants. For our defense counsel members, this is a great way to get the new year started in the company of your colleagues to rekindle relationships and form new ones.
- The first weekend in April is when we hold our first of two FedTechU programs—East Coast edition. What is FedTechU? This program, limited to 25 registrants, helps members become better at utilizing technology as part of their presentations and communication.

From the boardroom to the courtroom, we work to be effective communicators and story tellers. This is that safe space for members reluctant to take on technology to learn the basics. For the avid user of technology, this is a place to get better. Beyond the use of technology, attendees get to watch their fellow members—the best defense and corporate lawyers in the country—do their thing as story tellers, demonstrating their individual style. Graduates receive the FDCC title as Technology Master Advocates, a distinction unlike anything offered by any other legal organization in the world. FedTech U is part of our broader initiative called FDCC Evolve, which provides additional tools and resources for FDCC members on its website at fdccevolve.com.

- Late July/Early August: Our Annual Convention is typically a full seven days. The FDCC is not just “family friendly”, it is family, so many of our members use this meeting as a full family vacation. The venues are more resort oriented.. It is at this meeting where our Nominating Committee selects our board members for the coming year and selects our new Secretary Treasurer, who will rise through the Executive Officer ranks. As with the Winter Meeting, CLE and Substantive Law Section programs, plenary sessions and keynote speakers are in the morning, with the afternoons reserved for on-site and offsite excursions, events or relaxation time.
- Late September/Early October: Our Corporate Counsel Symposium (CCS) is a two-and-a-half-day event held in Philadelphia and featuring programming uniquely addressing the cutting-edge issues facing corporate counsel—hence the catchy name. Registration for our corporate members is free. Our defense counsel members attend this meeting in large numbers in order to stay current on these same issues and network with our corporate members and guests. This is consistently rated as the best legal program for corporate counsel presented anywhere in the country.
- Late October: FedTechU—West Coast edition. Like our April event in Philadelphia, this weekend event is limited to 25 members. We arrive Friday evening, work hard through Sunday noon, and get back to our homes in time to start a fresh week knowing more than we did when we left home. Intense and focused, attendees leave with a new sense of confidence and enthusiasm about how to enhance their presentations and communications with technology.
- Early November: Insurance Industry Institute (“I-3” for short) is a two-and-a-half-day program held bi-annually in New York City. Like CCS, this specialized program focuses on the latest developments of interest to the insurance industry. This great venue, at the heart of the insurance markets, is always well attended by insurance executives as well as our defense counsel members.
- Monthly throughout the year—Webinars are held almost every month by the Substantive Law Sections and the FDCC Evolve committee. Focusing on relevant and forward looking topics, these audio and video webinars are also recorded and made available for viewing in the members only section of the FDCC website’s Digital Newsroom “FDCC on Demand,” and on the fdccevolve.com website with the password: `myfdccdemand`. Check out our library archive of past webinars.

Let's get you engaged

The best way to get involved is to attend our meetings (more on that below) and become active in one or more of our 25 substantive law sections. Joining the sections is easy and a free member benefit. Each of these sections has a Chair and one or more Vice-chairs. The Chairs and Vice-chairs are selected each year by the President. She or he makes these selections with input from the current section chair (most chairs serve for one or two years) and directly from members in the sections who express an interest in being a Vice-chair and eventually a Chair.

The next key to involvement is attending meetings. This is where friendships are developed and enriched, networking and fellowship are emphasized, and that strong sense of trust is formed. It is this organic process that is at the heart of the FDCC and explains how we developed our WHY statement: Why belong to the FDCC? To be part of **the** inspired community of vetted defense counsel, exceptional leaders and even better people.

How to stay connected outside of meetings—our website, our webinars, and our “Friday 5’s”

Our new website, launched in the Spring of 2020, is designed to facilitate easy communication amongst members. It is also designed to make it really easy to find a member in another part of the country and initiate a referral to that attorney. The address for our site is **thefederation.org**.

We have also designed the site to allow members in each substantive law section to stay up to date on latest relevant developments. Any member can post information relevant to any substantive law section. Our goal is to make the substantive law section of the website a living legal community and the first place a member would go to see if there has been a new posting—a new case, a new piece of legislation, etc.

Beyond providing an online community for our members, we collect and make available 24/7 our best past programming as part of FDCC On Demand. We know our members are busy. Not everyone can make every meeting. But the programming we present at our meetings is the best in the industry. So we videotape the best of our programming and make it available at no cost for members to watch anytime on any device. We are also turning these programs into podcasts so that you can listen to them when you are on the run.

We also hold webinars, both as part of FDCC Evolve (mentioned above) and by other substantive law sections. The schedule for these is always on our website.

The website is constantly updated with information on upcoming events, new member profiles, and member successes. Check it out regularly. Post new information when it develops. Be part of the FDCC online community.

Our Executive Director has launched a new weekly email blast called the “Friday 5’s”, featuring 5 things you need to know about what is going on in the FDCC. Each week features a “Member in the VAST Spotlight”, highlighting a member success with a verdict, an appeal, a settlement, or a trial.

Membership Recruitment

Every sustainable organizations needs to continue deepening its bench strength of exceptional members who will ensure the values and objectives of the entity continue being advanced. In the FDCC, we call this campaign “Replace Yourself.” If you know of defense or corporate counsel or industry professional that embody your commitment to excellence, please nominate them by sending their contact details to our Headquarters team. They will then send a nomination form to the nominee and get the process started.

Our publications

The FDCC maintains an online presence in addition to our website on Linked In and Twitter, with regular updates. We also publish each quarter the FDCC Flyer, an electronic magazine providing updates on every aspect of our organization. We have moved our separate substantive law section publications to our website. Finally, we periodically publish scholarly legal articles in our Federation Insights. Collectively these outlets provide opportunities for all of our members, including our newer members, to publish thoughtful commentary and legal updates.

Closing Comments That is enough to get you started. There is a lot of information on our website, including all of our governance documents, our leadership manuals, the full history of our 80-year-old organization, all past newsletters and scholarly articles, and the like. We hope this helps you feel like you understand the basics—who we are as an organization, why we exist, and what we are about. Make your membership experience exceptional. After all, we know you can spend time in any number of professional organizations. We are more than that. We are family. We pride ourselves on being the best. Join us in the ongoing work to keep it that way.

Questions & Comments?

We appreciate hearing from our members. Please contact us with any questions, ideas and feedback you have so we can get right back to you. Welcome Aboard!

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