

# Service, Equality and Inclusion

An Interview with Lilian Vanvioldt, Executive Vice President and Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer, Alliant Insurance Services

**EDITORS' NOTE** *Lilian Vanvioldt is a 30-year insurance industry veteran. As the head of Alliant's Diversity and Inclusion initiative, she leads a company-wide effort focused on promoting diversity and inclusion within Alliant and throughout the broader insurance industry through a focus on awareness, training, mentoring, and career development. In addition to her role as CDIO, Vanvioldt is one of the nation's leading brokers in the education space. She currently leads the Alliant Kindergarten to Community College (K-14) Public Entity program and plays an influential role in setting the program's national business strategy. A proud survivor of stage III breast cancer, Vanvioldt currently serves as Director of the Susan G. Komen Leadership Foundation in San Diego and was the organization's Honorary Breast Cancer Survivor of the Year in 2018. She holds a bachelor's degree in economics and history from the University of California, Los Angeles.*



Lilian Vanvioldt

**COMPANY BRIEF** *With a history dating back to 1925, Alliant Insurance Services (alliant.com) is one of the nation's leading distributors of diversified insurance products and services. Operating through a national network of offices, Alliant offers a comprehensive portfolio of services to clients.*

**How do you define the role of a Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer and how critical is it for the role to be engaged in business strategy?**

We have a profound responsibility as an organization to advocate for diversity and inclusion both in our industry and in the communities where we do business. My goal is to help Alliant stand out as a force for good in the insurance industry, while expanding opportunities for career growth and advancement for individuals with diverse backgrounds and life experiences within our organization. I believe

that diversity and social justice are not only essential to creating a better world, but are also the hallmarks of a healthy and successful business. I am also focused on promoting inclusion across Alliant with the goal of bringing everyone together to help our organization grow and succeed. I look forward to working with Alliant's leadership team to ensure that Alliant is a welcoming and thriving place for employees from all backgrounds to call home.

**What excited you about the opportunity to take on this role and how valuable will your past experience in other leadership roles at Alliant be in this new role?**

This new role presents a unique opportunity for me to bring together my 30+ years of experience as an insurance professional (19 with Alliant) and long-standing background in community service and philanthropy. I am the incoming Director of the Susan G. Komen Leadership Foundation in San Diego and was the organization's Honorary

Breast Cancer Survivor of the Year in 2018. I have always sought to use my voice and influence to advocate for equality in access to health services and remain an active spokesperson for breast cancer education and prevention. In addition to my efforts heading up Alliant's diversity and inclusion initiative, I look forward to continuing to service my national portfolio of public entity clients, focusing on schools, cities, and other public agencies. This broad base of professional and service experience gives me a unique perspective that allows me to champion the causes and issues that are important to the communities we serve.

**Will you provide an overview of Alliant's diversity and inclusion program?**

Alliant's Diversity & Inclusion program was established to strengthen our business and our culture by promoting diversity and inclusion across all levels of our organization and within the insurance industry at large. At the heart of the program is a commitment to education, collaboration, and understanding our responsibilities to the broader community. Our goal is to create an environment where employees with their unique backgrounds and experiences can do great work together and set a course toward a more just and equitable world. At the heart of this commitment is a dedication to doing more than simply recognizing the need for a more diverse and welcoming workplace. It's about inclusion for all. It's about taking action.

**How engrained is diversity and inclusion in Alliant's culture and values?**

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it. The strength and success of our organization is defined by the diverse people who work here. We see this borne out every day as employees with a broad array of backgrounds and life experiences come together to bring unique perspectives on both our business strategy and our overall corporate culture. Alliant is a national organization with employees across North America. Each team member has a unique story and perspective, and each story contributes to making Alliant a leader in our industry and in the communities where we live and work. As a result, Alliant is wholly invested in promoting a diverse and collaborative work environment where everyone's voice is heard.

**How important is it to have diverse perspectives and experiences at the table when making business decisions?**

Having a diverse and multi-talented workforce enriches our culture and empowers us to deliver unique and creative solutions to the challenges we face while serving our clients with empathy and respect. We are dedicated to promoting diversity and inclusion across our organization and throughout all levels of leadership. This is reflected in our recruitment and hiring practices. One way we maintain this commitment to diversity in our hiring practices is by forming strategic partnerships with networks and organizations that promote diverse hiring practices. Our recruitment team uses our resources to reach out to local networking associations for our job openings. Additionally, Alliant attends career fairs focused on veteran hiring. We want Alliant to be an organization that consistently attracts and retains top talent by virtue of having a diverse platform externally.

**How will you engage your employees in Alliant's diversity efforts?**

A central component of my role will be to lead and engage with our Diversity & Inclusion Committee, which is comprised of employees across the nation who are committed to cultivating diversity and inclusion across our workforce. The committee works to educate our employees and ensure that every employee's voice is heard. The program also supports several Employee Resource Groups (ERGs): Women at Alliant, Blacks @ Alliant, All-In (LGBTQ), AAPI (Asian American and Pacific Islander), and ARMS (Awareness, Resources, Mentorship, and Support) for those impacted by cancer. These ERGs create a strong sense of community across our organization and provide resources, relationships, and alliances that are essential to the health and productivity of our workforce.

**Is it critical to have metrics in place to track the impact of Alliant's diversity and inclusion efforts?**

While maintaining an organizational commitment to diversity and inclusion is an important first step, measuring our success is critical to maintaining momentum and progress for this initiative. We will achieve this by regularly assessing our recruitment and hiring practices. We work directly with our Professional Development team to create powerful diversity and inclusion training modules and assess progress via enrollment and response.

**In your role, how valuable is it to have the commitment of Alliant's senior management in the firm's diversity and inclusion efforts?**

The commitment from senior management is essential to the success of our D&I efforts, and our executive team has taken an active stance in ensuring that diversity and inclusion is woven into every aspect of Alliant's operations. Additionally, our Chairman and CEO, Tom Corbett, has pledged both his support and that of Alliant to CEO Action for Diversity & Inclusion™ (CEOAction.com). This pledge is the largest CEO-driven business commitment to advance diversity and inclusion within the workplace across several industries and to commit to change and learning from each other. Our goal is to leverage our individual and collective voices to advance diversity and inclusion in the workplace.

**What are your key priorities as you look to Alliant's continued efforts in regard to diversity and inclusion?**

My key priorities will orbit around our core commitments to awareness, training, and mentoring. Within these key areas, my vision is to give employees from all walks of life an opportunity to realize their full potential by setting a clear path to success via education, training, and promotion. By promoting more diverse voices in leadership, we will benefit greatly from the unique perspectives and fresh ideas that will move our organization forward. Externally, my goal is to solidify Alliant's reputation as an organization that is responsive to the community – both a leader in insurance and a company that is reflective of the clients we serve and the issues that are important to them. I look forward to advancing the conversation about equity and building a culture of service, equality and inclusion. ●

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