

## Recap: “Innovating for Social Impact”

By Olivia Poppens, J.D. Candidate 2019 | October 12, 2016

On October 3, the Berkeley Center for Law, Business and the Economy ([BCLBE](#)) held a speaker series entitled “Innovating for Social Impact.” The center welcomed three leading attorneys in social entrepreneurship and nonprofit legal strategy: Joel Beck-Coon, Nancy McGlamery and Will Fitzpatrick.

Joel Beck-Coon, a graduate of Berkeley Law, is the Associate General Counsel of Humanity United, a foundation known for its investments in human rights innovation. NYU Law graduate Nancy McGlamery is a principal at Alder & Colvin, one of the few firms in America that specializes in nonprofit law. Will Fitzpatrick is the principal at his philanthropic company, Will Fitzpatrick PC, and additionally serves as general counsel and secretary on the board of Omidyar Network. The group discussed their various efforts within their respective workplaces to promote impact investing, acquire and maintain 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status, and navigate the changing landscape of nonprofit law.

Mr. Fitzpatrick’s work with [Omidyar Network](#) stemmed from his friendship with Pierre Omidyar, the founder of eBay. Omidyar structured the venture to combine a for-profit company with a private foundation. Omidyar Network functions as a venture capital firm and invests in for-profit companies and nonprofit organizations. As one of the pioneers of impact investing, Omidyar Network aims to drive innovation that benefits the world and makes grants to organizations focusing on diverse causes such as independent media, education, health, and public policy.

Ms. McGlamery is a principal at [Alder & Colvin](#), where she advises non-profit organizations in developing a basic legal structure and obtaining 501(c)(3) status. Her practice initially focused on tax law, which has helped immensely in her career at a nonprofit-focused law firm. Ms. McGlamery works frequently with Mr. Fitzpatrick and has assisted in a few of Omidyar Network’s endeavors, including a new, unbiased media company called [“The Intercept.”](#)

As the Associate General Counsel of [Humanity United](#), Mr. Beck-Coon provides the organization with a variety of legal services, including helping it obtain compliance with complex tax and grantmaking laws. Humanity United functions under the umbrella of the Omidyar Foundation and is composed of a variety of entities. The unique structure of Humanity United allows it to function as a 501(c)(3) private foundation and a 501(c)(4) social welfare organization.

The work of these three attorneys highlights the role of social innovation within the evolving nonprofit sector. Newly popular vehicles, such as impact investing, have transformed the paradigm of philanthropic donation, while also bringing additional challenges for attorneys navigating complex and ever-changing nonprofit laws.