

THE
AMERICAN LAWYER

Faegre Drinker Boosts Bottom Line Nearly 20%, Passing Half Billion Mark

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March 12, 2026

What You Need to Know

- Faegre Drinker Biddle & Reath saw double-digit increases across all its financial metrics in 2025, closing in on \$1.2 billion in gross revenue and surpassing half a billion dollars in net income.
- The firm's head count also increased, with a dip in the equity tier balanced out by increases in the nonequity partner and associate tiers.

Faegre Drinker Biddle & Reath surpassed half a billion dollars in net income in its sixth year of existence in 2025, a nearly 20% increase year-over-year.

The firm, a product of a 2020 merger between Faegre Baker Daniels and Drinker Biddle & Reath, saw 19.3% growth in its bottom line, which hit just under \$507.3 million in 2025. Gross revenue grew by 12.5% to \$1.19 billion, with firm chair Gina Kastel attributing the firm's strong performance to high demand across practices as well as rate increases averaging above 10%.

"All of our major areas of practice were busy. Our litigation, our regulatory and transactional work was all busy. There was a lot for our clients to address and absorb," Kastel said in an interview. "[Our performance] was a combination of strong pricing, as well as prudent expense management...We also improved our leverage last year. It was all three—top line growth, expense management, and also getting some additional associates in the mix."

The largest financial increase for the firm was in



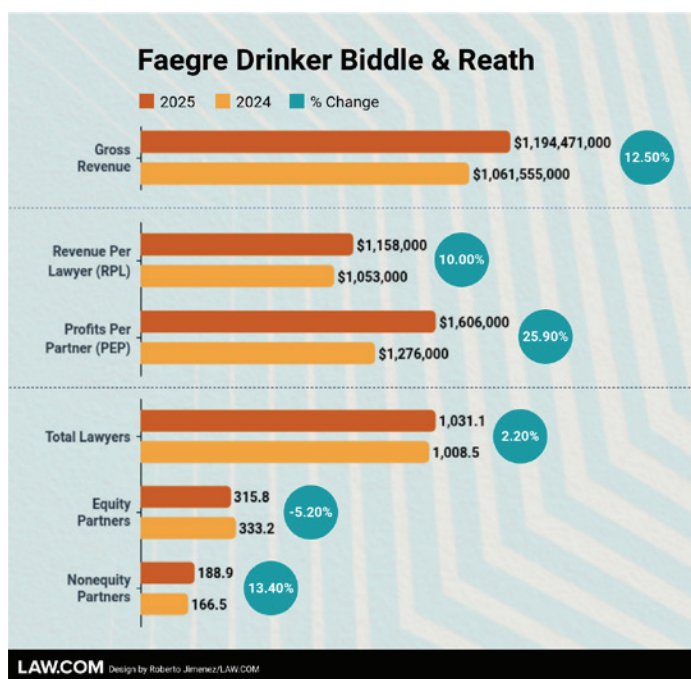
Courtesy photo

Gina M. Kastel of Faegre Drinker.

its profits per partner, which grew by 25.9% year over year from \$1.27 million in 2024 to just over \$1.6 million in 2025. That spike was influenced by 5.2% dip in the firm's equity tier, the equivalent of roughly 18 attorneys.

Alongside that decline in equity partner head count, Faegre Drinker's nonequity tier surged by 13.4%, the equivalent of 22 attorneys, to reach 188.9 full-time-equivalent nonequity partners, although Kastel denied that shift was part of a concerted talent management strategy.

"We are happy to have as many partners in our ranks as are contributing to our clients and our firm as partners. What we saw is some fluctuation in the ordinary course, people who retire, people who move on to do other things, so there was nothing



unusual in the past year about the partner ranks,” Kastel explained, noting that the firm hired partners in California, New York, Pennsylvania, Minneapolis, Washington, D.C. and London. “Where we did see more growth than we have recently is in the associate ranks.”

The firm’s leverage, year over year, increased from 2.03 to 2.26, a consequence of expanded associate hiring efforts across all of the firm’s offices. Kastel attributed that strategy to a desire for more bench strength to service clients.

“We want to continue to have a great pipeline of attorneys all throughout the ranks,” Kastel said. “After the pandemic, like many firms, we were doing a little bit less hiring in that space. And so we saw an opportunity to build our bench strength, and that turned out to be a positive for us.”

In addition to investing in talent, Kastel and the firm also focused on investing in technology.

“It was an interesting year. We’ve seen a real shift, both internally and externally, with increasing enthusiasm about using AI,” Kastel observed, adding that the firm had introduced its own generative AI

assistant and had further developed its governance structure. “We’re definitely seeing more clients [asking about AI use in the firm] and more often, they are interested in how we’re doing that.”

Kastel added that the firm in October hired chief technology officer Scott Angelo, who arrived from Buchanan Ingersoll & Rooney.

While Kastel noted that the firm had seen a shift towards using more alternative fee agreements, she said that the firm’s technology use did not impact its pricing model.

“If you use AI, you have to consider how you might price your services a little bit differently,” Kastel said. “Whenever we’re doing work for clients, we always think about what’s an appropriate way to price this, given the work and services that we’re delivering for the client...[but] AI is not directly, yet, driving how we’re pricing the work.”

Kastel foresees the firm’s forward momentum continuing into 2026, citing ongoing demand in several practices in the wake of widespread regulatory, economic, and geopolitical uncertainty. The firm is looking to grow its M&A, litigation and regulatory practices and remains open to mergers, although Kastel added that the firm was not planning any new offices in the coming year.

“The regulatory and economic and geopolitical uncertainty does mean that clients need good advice and help with things. We have a great customs and trade team, we have a great federal contracting team, and there’s a lot of companies out there that are having to try to navigate rapidly changing circumstances in those spaces,” Kastel said. “It was a good year in 2025 and we’re pleased that it was a good year following a couple other strong years. The momentum [of the firm] over the last three years has just been energizing.”

The 2025 financial figures reported in this story are preliminary. ALM will report finalized data for the Am Law 200 on The American Lawyer in April and May.