

Nirva Kapasi Patel
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PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Brooks McCormick Jr. Animal Law & Policy Program, Harvard Law School

Executive Director (September 2023 – September 2025), Cambridge, MA

As Executive Director, I oversee the strategic direction and daily operations of the Brooks McCormick Jr. Animal Law & Policy Program. I lead initiatives that foster innovative research, policy, and advocacy to improve the treatment of animals through the legal system. My role involves executive management, building partnerships, and representing the program both nationally and globally. I work closely with faculty, students, and fellows to advance scholarship in animal law and develop practical solutions to protect animal rights.

Animal Law & Policy Clinic, Harvard Law School

Clinical Instructor (September 2024 – January 2025), Cambridge, MA

As Clinical Instructor of the Animal Law & Policy Clinic, I play a vital role in advancing animal welfare through legal advocacy and hands-on student mentorship. I guide students in various projects that involve litigation, policy and advocacy under laws that include the Animal Welfare Act and the Endangered Species Act. I am currently leading a project on Religious Freedom as it applies to federal food policy programs.

International Anti-Poaching Foundation (Akashinga)

Board Member (March 2023 – September 2023), Harare, Zimbabwe

During my tenure as a board member, I contributed to strategic decisions focusing on long-term financial stability and conservation initiatives. I leveraged my expertise in nonprofit organizations to enhance the foundation's efforts in combating wildlife poaching, particularly through community engagement and sustainable conservation practices.

Farm Sanctuary

Chair of the Board of Directors (October 2019 – September 2023), New York, NY

Led the Board during a period of critical transformation for Farm Sanctuary, an organization focused on combatting the abuses of factory farming and promoting plant-based living. I managed significant organizational changes, including executive leadership transitions, financial restructuring, and the development of DEI and sustainability initiatives. Under my leadership, Farm Sanctuary expanded its reach and amplified its advocacy for institutional reforms and ethical food systems.

Harvard Law School

Senior Global Policy Fellow (January 2022 – September 2023), Cambridge, MA

As a Senior Global Policy Fellow at the Brooks McCormick Jr. Animal Law & Policy Program, I conducted in-depth policy research and analysis on animal law, with projects focused on live markets in India and federally funded animal research in the U.S. I worked closely with

clinic students on high-profile animal advocacy cases, using legal strategies like litigation, legislation, and administrative practice to advance animal protection efforts.

Massachusetts Fur-Free Coalition

Successfully passed local ordinance ban on sales of fur in Weston, MA, 2021

Successfully passed local ordinance ban on sales of fur in Lexington, MA, 2023

International Vegan Film Festival

Board Member (January 2021 – December 2022), Toronto, CA

Served as a board member, helping to promote the festival's mission of inspiring positive change for animals through creative storytelling and documentaries about veganism and environmental sustainability.

The Game Changers (Documentary Film)

Executive Producer (February 2018 – February 2019)

Played a pivotal role as Executive Producer of *The Game Changers*, a groundbreaking documentary showcasing the benefits of plant-based diets through the experiences of elite athletes and leading scientists. The film became a global success, ranked #1 on iTunes and Netflix, and brought greater awareness to plant-based nutrition.

Nishith Desai Associates

Associate, Nonprofit Practice (2009 – 2010), Nariman Point, Mumbai

Managed the firm's nonprofit practice, providing legal counsel to international nonprofit organizations. I helped expand the firm's presence in the nonprofit sector and advised clients on matters of compliance, tax regulations, and charitable giving.

Nixon Peabody LLP, Boston, MA

Associate, Technology & Intellectual Property Group (2005 – 2006)

Worked with Fortune 500 companies, startups, and academic institutions, providing legal counsel on a range of business transactions, including mergers, acquisitions, and intellectual property agreements. Focused on biotech and health care clients, advising on venture capital deals and technology transfer.

Pfizer (formerly Wyeth Pharmaceuticals)

Communications Manager & Legal Contract Analyst (2000 – 2004), Cambridge, MA

Managed corporate communications for Discovery Research and analyzed legal contracts for partnerships and licensing agreements. Supported strategic initiatives for the development of new pharmaceutical products.

EDUCATION

Tufts University, Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine

Master of Science in Animals and Public Policy (2020)

GPA: 4.0, Selected Commencement Speaker for all graduate programs

New England School of Law

Juris Doctorate, Concentration: IP & Patent Law

Cum Laude, Winner of Women & the Law Academic Award

Boston University

Bachelor of Science, Biomedical Engineering (2000)

July 19, 2023: [Featured in Alumni Magazine](#)

June 27, 2024: [Featured in BU College of Engineering Magazine](#)

Advisory Board Member, College of Engineering (2023 – Present)

Court & Bar Memberships

- Member of the Massachusetts Bar (2004)
- Member of the United States Patent and Trademark Association (2004)
- Member of the United States Circuit Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit (2024)
- Member of the United States Circuit Court of Appeals, D.C. Circuit (2024)
- Member of the United States Circuit Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit (2024)

SKILLS & EXPERTISE

- Executive Management
- Policy Analysis & Legal Research
- Nonprofit Leadership & Governance
- DEI & Sustainability Initiatives
- Legislative Advocacy & Grassroots Campaigns
- Strategic Planning & Financial Restructuring
- Public Speaking & Fundraising
- International Law & Public Health

Articles

- Nirva Patel. “Compassion for All Creatures,” Boston University, ENGINEER, Spring 2024. 59 Animal Law & Policy Program | Harvard Law School | Year in Review 2023–24
- Aarthi Kannan, Apoorva, Shreya Padukone, and Vivek Mukherjee with additional research and editing by Jayasimha Nuggehalli, Nirva Patel and Shashank Vura. “Animal Markets and Zoonotic Disease in India,” Harvard Law School’s Brooks McCormick Jr. Animal Law & Policy Program, July 2024.

Works in Progress

- “Legislative History of Animal-Based Research,” Moving Toward Non-Animal Approaches in Medical Research and Testing, Elsevier Publishing, forthcoming 2025.

- “Jainism,” *The Oxford Handbook on Global Animal Law*, eds. Anne Peters, Kristen Stilt, and Saskia Stucki. Forthcoming Oxford University Press.
- *AMA Journal of Ethics*, “Nonhuman Animal Use in Surgical and Procedural Skill Development,” forthcoming March, 2025

Papers, Presentations, Panels

- “Strategies for High Impact Films in the Vegan Movement,” 2nd China Vegan Summit, Nov. 17, 2023.
- “Animals, Advocacy and Fur Bans,” Study Weekend, Harvard University Center for Hellenic Studies, Nafplio, Greece, June 14, 2024.
- “Animals & Advocacy,” Jain Student Delegation at Harvard Law School, June 12, 2024.
- Moderator, Food For Thought Festival, Harvard University, April 12, 2024.

Guest Lectures

- “Animal Welfare Act (AWA): Animals in Research: A case study on experiments at Harvard Medical School,” Harvard Law School, March 5, 2024.
- “Advocacy for Animals at Harvard Law School,” The Salata Institute for Climate and Sustainability, *The Great Food Transformation: Food Systems and Politics*, April 16, 2024.
- “Advocacy in the Animal Rights Movement,” Purdue University, April 4, 2024.

Professional Training

- The OpEd Project, April, 2024
- *Leading Mindfully*, currently enrolled in 12-week program
- *Harvard Law School Executive Education, Impactful Leadership, Enhancing Your Strategic Influence*, planned for April, 2025