



Board of Governors Meeting Recap

Nov. 7–8, 2024

A summary prepared by the WSBA of the Board of Governors meeting held Nov. 7-8 in Seattle. The agenda, materials, and video recording from this Board meeting are posted online. The next regular meeting is Jan. 17-18, 2024, in Seattle. The Board is the WSBA's governing body charged with determining general policies of the WSBA and approving its annual budget. To subscribe to the Board Meeting Notification list, email barleaders@wsba.org.

TOP TAKEAWAYS

- **Finances: 2026 and Beyond.** As you renew your license for 2025, it will be the sixth consecutive year with no fee increase — [even as inflation rates have grown by more than 8% annually in recent years](#) — thanks to careful and prioritized financial planning. Looking ahead, the Board has been discussing how to implement a “soft landing” for members— that is, avoiding one major fee hike in the future by using smaller, gradual increases over several years to align with the actual cost of business. Toward that end, the Board voted to increase the 2026 license fee by \$10 (from \$458 to \$468 for a full active license); the Washington Supreme Court will now review that recommendation for reasonableness. Why \$10? Read the [November issue of Bar News](#) for an explanation and an in-depth look at the strategic financial decisions that have kept fees flat for so long. ([See page 24.](#))
- **You Asked, We Listened:** New License Statuses. Based on much member feedback, several changes to WSBA license-status options were approved for implementation, pending Court approval: Allowing members to choose “retired” as opposed to “voluntarily resigned” when they leave the profession; changing the name of honorary status to emeritus; decreasing the number of years needed to qualify for honorary (emeritus) status from 50 to 40 (and allowing active years in other jurisdictions to count); allowing inactive emeritus and pro bono members to volunteer on WSBA entities; and allowing certain senior members to qualify for pro tempore judicial positions or a hardship reduction of the active license fee. ([See page 30.](#))

OTHER BUSINESS

Governor At-Large Vacancy. Governor Brent Williams-Ruth resigned his At-Large position at the conclusion of the meeting. The Board voted to appoint someone to fill the remainder of Governor Williams-Ruth's term, through September 2025, as soon as possible. The Board requested that the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Council make initial recommendations to the Board regarding candidates. If you are interested in applying (see [requirements for the At-Large position](#)), look for more information to be sent member-wide soon. The next regular election for a full term for this seat will occur in spring, to begin in October 2025.

2025 WSBA Legislative Agenda. In addition to WSBA's legislative goal — to monitor and act on legislative proposals related to the practice of law and administration of justice — the Board approved a proclamation to advocate for a comprehensive study of any inefficiencies and inequities created by local court rules, technology, and funding (i.e., a de-unified court system). Several legislators are committed to convening a task force for such a study, and the WSBA wants to be part of the effort, specifically when it comes to gathering experiences and information from members about adverse impacts to the public. The Board stipulated it will seek to meaningfully engage all WSBA members, especially those in rural counties, in the study. ([See page 112.](#))

The Board also:

- Discussed the state of the legal pipeline with the deans of Washington's law schools and the chair of the Law Clerk Board. Topics covered included growing enrollment numbers, with a record-high number of diverse students; innovative clinical offerings; and the cost of tuition.
- Approved an amendment to Comment 6 to RPC 1.5 (expanding contingent fee prohibition to domestic partnerships and committed intimate relationships and wider range of family law matters) suggested by the Committee on Professional Ethics; the proposal will now go to the Court for consideration. ([See page 107.](#))
- Began its process to institute a 3-year strategic planning process, starting with 2026-2029. ([See page 103.](#))
- Received its annual antiharassment training. ([See page 65.](#))