



Access to Justice Board Meeting Minutes

February 14, 2020, 10:00 am – 11:30 am

Washington State Bar Association, 1325 4th Ave, #600, Seattle, WA 98101

Call: 1-866-577-9294; Access: 52140#

Present: Sal Mungia, Judge Laura Bradley, Esperanza Borboa, Hon. David Keenan, Michelle Lucas, Mirya Muñoz-Roach, Hon. Frederick Corbit, Terry Price, and Lindy Laurence

WSBA Staff: Diana Singleton, Carolyn MacGregor

Guests: Dainen Penta, Dean Jacob Rooksby, Debi Perluss, Jim Bamberger, Nick Larsen

Center for Justice: Dainen Penta of the Center for Justice in Spokane shared about the history of the Center and how he landed there, as well as some of the work they do. Jim Sheeran founded the Center in 1999, funding it with his inheritance, and offering re-entry and relicensing programs. The Center is an LFW grantee, and is currently looking for broader support and to build its individual giving program. According to Jim, “community building is a noun and a verb.” With six full-time staff and a few part-time attorneys, the Center is located in a building that shares space with other community organizations and grew to inhabit adjacent buildings on block as well. Also home to a cooperative grocery, the street is known as Social Justice Sesame Street.

Programs and services include:

- Direct service: housing justice, criminal justice and reentry, and driver’s relicensing, including women’s relicensing (empowerment) class.
- Policy advocacy: they sued the city for cleaning up a tent city. They work closely with the office of the police ombudsman; the police guild pushes back. Not very much progress has been made on the Blueprint for Reform; they are watching that.
- Advocacy: working to reform criminal justice system, opposing jail, and customs stops at the Greyhound station.
- Environment: the Center is a fiscal sponsor for Spokane River Keeper.
- Monthly walk-in legal clinic utilizes volunteer lawyers.

January Minutes: The minutes were approved without edits.

Gonzaga University School of Law: Dean Jacob Rooksby presented an update on equity and justice programs and education at the school. Gonzaga was one of the first law schools in the country to have a clinical legal education program; two new clinics, immigration and LGBTQ rights, have developed since 2018, with the latter opening in fall of 2020. The others are in elder law, federal tax law, environmental law, Indian law, and land use. They also started an incubator program focused on elder law representation, helping new graduates move into private practice.

There is a public service requirement for all law students, part of the social justice culture of the school. He would like to have a pro bono requirement. The Moderate Means program is entirely volunteer: this year 47 students out of 350 are involved, and they filled 42% of requests, 73% of referrals. The program has a

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dedicated space that sits within the Center for Civil and Human Rights, with a focus on racial equity. The school also offers the Thomas More scholarship program which has been around for many years. The scholarship offers a full ride to recipients who are committed to social justice and bring diverse perspective/experience. One spot is reserved for a student from Eastern WA University.

With regard to Inclusivity on campus, there is work to do. They have created all-gender restrooms, and become more thoughtful about the stories that a building tells moved photos of past deans to a side hall. They have worked on accessibility and created a DEI committee. They're working on student body diversity. To help retain students of color, they are looking into starting a mentorship program.

Jim Bamberger asked whether law school is engaging with community. Dean Rooksby said that their programming is publicized outside of GU. They also hope to reach all students, not just those in law. They have 22 fulltime faculty, of which 5 are ethnically diverse including the associate deans. In hiring, the dean has stepped outside of the normal hiring process in order to hire a diverse candidate.

Espy suggested that they offer a legal literacy program in the community. Response: they have touched on that but want to consider doing more.

Terry asked about LGBTQ clinic and what kinds of cases they will handle. Response: the clinic's donor was not satisfied with work other organizations were doing, so asked about getting law students involved. They will work on ID changes, policy, amicus briefs, employment issues, and awareness. Fortunately, the law school did not receive intra-institutional pushback when the clinic was proposed.

Espy asked if the school is involved in youth issues. Response: they are involved with a juvenile records-sealing process, and a street law program for K-12 schools.

ATJ Board Support for substitute HB 2567: Sal Mungia moved that Board send letter to the bill's prime sponsor Rep. Thai. Espy seconded the motion. There is a short window for comment on the bill which seeks to remedy the situation regarding access to justice around the courthouse. While primarily affecting POC individuals it also impacts the whole community.

Dave shared that the Superior Court Judges Association is having a difficult conversation around this. There is no money designated for training of courthouse security staff, and the bill may give a false sense of security to folks as it doesn't seem enforceable. Dave himself is in favor, along with GR38.

Jim testified at the House hearing and noted that the judicial branch did not speak with a common voice. The VJA is neutral and the SCJA supports with reservations. The bill is meant to send a message. Proponents of the bill think it's well-grounded in law but the Federal government does not. Jim is in support.

Terry said that the vote count is split along party lines and it's more important to get the message to the Senate. Espy said that it makes the statement letting all those affected know that people with power are taking their position and have their backs. It will create a sense of empowerment for those communities. Sal is also concerned about enforceability, but agreed that the statement is important. The motion carried unanimously.

Conferences of Chief Justices and Court Administrators' Resolution in Support of Implementation of Clear Communications and Streamlined Procedures: Sal Mungia shared that the former Chief Justice sent the Board a letter asking if the Conference of Chief Justices' resolution in Support of Implementation of Clear Communications and Streamlined Procedures in the Courts is part of ATJ's plain language work. The Board discussed the technology assisted forms (TAF) project, creating a Turbo Tax platform for plain language family law forms. The Board agreed it should let the current Chief Justice know about the TAF work and will align with the resolution.

Flame of Justice Award for Deborah Perluss: Sal spoke of her being a warrior of justice. She ruffled feathers when necessary to get the job done and was on the cutting edge of pushing for access to justice with regard to civil rights, disability, and much more. Sal mentioned that it's rare to give out awards but the Board unanimously agreed to present this award to Debi. Fred noted that Debi's work was in the details and that what folks saw was just the tip of the iceberg. Jim saw NJP grow and says that it is the organization it is today in almost every part due to Debi's leadership, vision, tenacity, and assertiveness, and that NJP's existence is great recognition of that.

The meeting adjourned at 11:20 am.