

WASHINGTON STATE BAR ASSOCIATION
LAW CLERK BOARD

Public Minutes
April 3, 2026

Law Clerk Board (Board) Members in Attendance

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|--|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Christell Casey, Chair | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Jaime Cumming |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tracy Finnegan | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ling Zhuang |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Jack Range | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sarah Propst |
| <input type="checkbox"/> John Meyers | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Annemarie Weiss |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Leone Reinbold | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Gary Epperley |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Heather Derenski | |

Staff and others in attendance for some or all the meeting

Cathy Biestek, Managing Regulatory Counsel and Katherine Skinner, Law Clerk Program Lead were also in attendance for some or all the meeting.

Public Session

Approval of Meeting Minutes

The February 6, 2026, public meeting minutes were approved.

Outreach and Updates

Katherine shared that the Board of Governors Nomination Committee was unable to reach quorum at its most recent meeting. The committee is scheduled to meet again on April 30 to review the two recommended Board applicants.

Katherine also reported on her visit to the Color of Justice event at Grays Harbor County Superior Court, where she served on a panel discussing law school pathways with 8th, 9th, and 10th grade students. She highlighted the Law Clerk Program as an alternative route into the legal profession. She noted that even students who are not currently considering law school benefit from learning about programs like this exist, as it broadens their understanding of possible futures.

The second annual Law Clerk Reception was held on March 6. Five law clerks were recognized and each shared reflections on their experience and appreciation for the program. Planning has already begun for the 2027 reception, and additional details will be shared at a future meeting.

Christell provided an update on the Bar News article. Noting that while the program regularly provides outreach to law clerks, there is a need to address misunderstandings and myths about the tutor role. Christell is drafting an article to help clarify expectations.



Leone delivered an update on Alternative Pathways. The steering committee has submitted proposed changes to the Supreme Court, and these should be released for comment soon. Leone suggested that the board take time to review its responsibilities as liaisons and consider how it wants to approach this role moving forward.

Public Comments

There were no public comments.

Fiscal Year 2027 Chair Nomination

The Board voted for Sarah Propst to serve as Chair for Fiscal Year 2027.

AI Policy – First Reading

The workgroup reminded the Board who participated in its meetings and the original purpose of developing guidance. Members acknowledged that the use of AI is widespread and touches all aspects of legal education and practice. Some liaisons have already observed possible AI use in book reports.

The workgroup aimed to avoid discouraging AI altogether, recognizing its prevalence, while still drawing clear boundaries. The consensus was to limit permissible AI use to non-generative tools, meaning AI should not be used to draft book reports or assignment answers. The goal was to offer clarity on acceptable and unacceptable uses while acknowledging that AI continues to evolve.

One challenge identified by the workgroup was that the Board does not currently have authority to act when there is suspected AI misuse. This limitation prompted discussion about submitting proposed language to the Board of Governors to amend the regulations.

The board discussed establishing a good faith standard. If significant concerns arise, the Board wants the ability to bring matters forward and, if necessary, take appropriate action. Christell asked the Board to consider the procedures for worst case scenarios, including termination, and emphasized that clerks must have the ability to appeal. She raised questions about how the Board would document misuse, what standards the Board should rely on and whether resources exist to verify or detect AI usage.

After further deliberation, the Board agreed that the most appropriate next step is to incorporate the AI policy into the APR 6 Regulations rather than adopting it as a standalone policy. Katherine will work with the Board to pursue submitting proposed language to the Board of Governors.

Jurisprudence List Review

The Board voted to remove the following titles:

“John Adams“

“Assata: An Autobiography“



Board Liaison Responsibilities

Katherine provided a “Guidelines for Liaisons” document, offering an initial framework the board can refine.

Evaluation Checklist

Katherine presented a checklist for board members to use during law clerk evaluations. She explained that the intent of the checklist is to ensure that each required element is addressed so that all law clerks receive consistent feedback and information.

In the discussion that followed, board members expressed support for the checklist as a helpful tool based on current practices. Leone commented that the Board should evaluate its overall evaluation process more broadly. The Board agreed to proceed with today’s evaluations as usual. Leone will draft an email outlining the issues she has observed, with the goal of presenting further thoughts at a future Board meeting.

Executive Session

Approval of Meeting Minutes

The February 6, 2026, confidential meeting minutes were approved.

Requests

The Board approved one fourth year proposal

The Board denied two jurisprudence book request for not being substantially related to the practice of law

The Board approved three jurisprudence book requests

The Board approved six requests for a leave of absence

Applications

The Board approved six applications for enrollment in the Law Clerk Program beginning when the final confirmation letter is sent.

The Board deferred one applications for enrollment in the Law Clerk Program to be reviewed at the June Board meeting.

Evaluations

- The Board conducted six first-year evaluations and approved continuation in the program upon successful completion of all remaining first year coursework and book reports.
- The Board conducted eight fourth-year evaluations and approved completion of the program upon successful completion of all remaining fourth-year coursework and book reports

Respectfully Submitted,

Katherine Skinner, Law Clerk Program Lead

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