

WASHINGTON STATE BAR ASSOCIATION

Washington Young Lawyers Committee

Washington Young Lawyers Committee | WSBA Office, Seattle, WA
Saturday, November 9, 2019 | 10:00 a.m. – 2:12 p.m.
Meeting Minutes

Present In-Person or Phone: Brian Holden, Brian Neuharth, Catherine Holm (arrived at 10:11 a.m., left at 2:03 p.m.), Chelsie Elliott, Esther Hyun (arrived at 10:11 a.m.), Ian McCurdy, Jordan Couch, Kim Sandher, Laura King, Paula Kurtz-Kreshel, Zachary Davison (left at 12:53 p.m.)

Absent: Alixanne Pinkerton (excused), Benjamin Hodges, Brandon Holt, Emily Ann Albrecht, Maha Jafarey (excused), Molly Winston (excused)

WSBA Staff: Julianne Unite, Lisa Amatangel (left at 10:30 a.m.)

Board of Governors (BOG): Russell Knight (arrived at 11:00 a.m., left at 11:30 a.m.)

Public: Shweta Jayawardhan (left at 11:30 a.m.)

Welcome & Introductions

Jordan Couch, WYLC Chair, called the meeting to order at 10:08 a.m.

WYLC members introduced themselves and answered the icebreaker question: “Would you rather be duck or parrot and why?” After introductions, Jordan went over the meeting agenda.

Open Public Meetings Act

Lisa Amatangel from the WSBA Office of General Counsel provided a presentation to WYLC members on RCW 42.30-Open Public Meetings Act. After her presentation, Lisa left the meeting at 10:30 a.m.

Approval of September Meeting Minutes

Ian McCurdy, WYLC member, reported that he was in attendance at the September meeting minutes and should be included in the list of those present. With that amendment, on motion by Jordan, seconded by WYLC members Brian Neuharth (Brian N.), and abstentions by Brian Holden (Brian H.), Esther Hyun, Laura King, and Paula Kurtz-Kreshel by a majority vote approved the September meeting minutes (7-0-4).

Introductions cont.

Jordan continued with introductions by asking WYLC members to answer two questions: 1) Why are you here; and 2) What do you hope to get from this experience on the WYLC?

Esther responded: “I have been involved with the American Bar Association and the local bar associations in Bellingham. I thought it was a natural next step to get involved with the Washington Young Lawyers Committee. I’d like to advocate for issues that matter to me as a new lawyer and issues that may also matter to other new lawyers.”

Brian H. responded: "To help connect new and young lawyers to valuable resources as they begin their journey into the legal field; I hope to network with other attorneys as well as learn more about the resources WSBA has for all attorneys."

Paula responded: "I was invited by Jordan Couch, member of a firm I really respect. Intrigued by the opportunity for involvement. Leadership, networking opportunities, resume cred, importantly - change or alter the name of the committee to be less ageist."

Brian N. responded: "This is lobbying work for the industry and I have opinions about the industry. Make progress on the issues regarding debt and the rural access the justice question. There's a survey to digest, plans to draft for a possible supplemental public service loan forgiveness program, and connecting with rural communities."

Zachary Davison responded: "Be available to help new and young lawyers transition into the practice of law. It's often a daunting process and the easier we can make that, the better off our profession will be and the better service we can provide our clients. Forge a stronger bond with the KCBA YLD and actually cohost an event with them."

Catherine Holm responded: I am part of the WYLC to be part of the Statewide bar association. As I am not a traditional attorney, it is hard for me to feel "connected" with the legal community both in Thurston County and Washington State. This provides me an opportunity to still stay up to date with things going on, network, and help young lawyers as I was recently in their shoes. I felt like I didn't know where to get the resources, so being able to help when I can has been really rewarding and fun. It's really important to me to participate in WYLC due to the fact that I am a non-traditional attorney. It can be very isolating to be doing something totally different than many other attorneys, even though there are plenty of attorneys working in the legislative process like I am. It is important to be a unique voice and to show a different viewpoint while getting to know other lawyers and issues facing our bar association as a whole. I hope that being on WYLC shows me different viewpoints, educates me on a wide variety of topics, and that I am able to help as many young lawyers as I can as they transition to practice. The first five years are so instrumental in your career, and I want to do whatever I can do help others be the best that they can be.

Laura responded: "I've wanted to join this committee for a long time to meet colleagues. I just moved back to the area. I'm excited to expand my professional network and make friends. I hope to make friends and I hope to give back. I moved across state lines three times since passing the bar and so the issue of developing a professional network as a newbie are dear to me."

Kim Sandher responded: "When I first got out of law school, I felt lost and didn't really know where to go to find a job or meet people etc. Getting involved with WSBA helped me meet people and get a job through the people I met. I joined WYLC to help new and young lawyers get through starting their practice and help them know what resources are out there. It's actually been great for networking as well. Finish out my final year and see some of our projects through."

Chelsie Elliott responded: "I am here because I have a passion for helping new attorneys in the community. I want to be able to hear their concerns directly from them, and talk on the state level about how these concerns are being addressed. I hope to be able to better assist the new attorneys in my community, and bring new ideas to the table on what we can do to make the new attorney experience better."

Ian responded: "I joined the WYLC because I think that young/new lawyers collaborating and sharing information in a non-work environment helps create happier lawyers and increases retention rates in the profession. After law school I was a law clerk for state court judge along with 14 other new lawyers who I saw every day. Sharing experiences with them every day was a great way to learn. When I transitioned to private practice my professional life was more isolated and I missed the interactions with young attorneys. My goal is to help other young attorneys in the region find that similar level of engagement. By being a member on the WYLC I hope to continue to learn from other WYLC members and hear about varying approaches to the practice of law and the challenges that face the legal community."

Jordan responded: "I want to give back and 4 years ago it was close to home. I want to use the WYLC to serve the public and new attorneys tangibly (a lot is ethereal)."

Orientation

Julianne Unite, WYLC Staff Liaison, provided the WYLC with an overview about the WSBA and WSBA committees (*see meeting materials p. 61-70*).

BOG Introduction/Update

WSBA Governor Russell Knight, called into the meeting at 11:05 a.m. Governor Knight introduced himself to WYLC members and said if they have questions or concerns about BOG, to email or call him. Governor Knight further stated that WYLC members may contact any BOG member and encouraged contacting the BOG member in their congressional district. Governor Knight reported that the Washington Supreme court made its recommendations from Bar Structures Work Group (BSWG) to leave the WSBA structure basically unchanged. The BOG will be testifying in the House and Senate this fall about whether any changes should be made to the State Bar Act. One change that could happen regarding Bar structure is how the At-large governor positions are elected. Right now, they WYLC has a lot of authority in the process by making appointment recommendations for the At-large young lawyer member on the BOG. The proposal is to make the At-large young lawyer member elected by all young lawyers in the state. Jordan asked what does Governor Knight thinks is the biggest goal of BOG. Governor Knight replied that the past year has been a tumultuous time and what the BOG wants to focus on is consistency and allowing members to have a voice. Governor Knight also said that hopefully a lot of governance questions and law suits are resolved. Jordan also asked if there are projects coming down the line for the BOG. Governor Knight replied that WSBA President Rajeev's goal is to not make any big changes this year, but to restore level of trust with BOG and practice of law in general.

Jordan asked about Bylaws moratorium. Governor Knight replied that it has been lifted and that the only change is that Bylaw changes are subject to review by Supreme Court. Governor Knight further stated that he is unsure if that means Bylaw changes are subject to Court veto, but at least, it means input. Governor Knight also said that he does not expect major Bylaw changes other than giving more autonomy and power to members.

Governor Knight stated that it is important to let the BOG know what the WYLC is doing. Brian N. asked when Governor Knight will be at WYLC meetings going forward. Governor Knight replied he could attend the Jan. 11 meeting and will try to attend them when he can and that his goal is to attend the meetings via phone or in person.

Brian N. asked if there would be opportunity to talk WSBA business with BOG without violating OPMA. Governor Knight replied that as long as there is no quorum, you could have conversations. Jordan encouraged members to attend at least one BOG meeting and that Jordan will try to attend as many as he can.

Catherine asked who knows their BOG representative. Not all WYLC members indicated they knew their BOG representative. Cat said it was a good idea for those that do not know their BOG representative to invite the BOG member to grab a coffee with the WYLC member so that if WYLC attends a BOG meeting, the WYLC member will have an ally.

Orientation

Jordan presented information regarding new and young lawyers, new member programs, and the WYLC generally (*see meeting materials p. 71-78*).

Lunch Break 12:00-12:34 p.m.

Orientation

Jordan continued to lead the discussion regarding WYLC member roles and responsibilities (*see meeting materials p. 79-82*). Jordan then asked WYLC members about potential changes to the Representative Reports template submitted prior to each meeting. Jordan asked WYLC members what should regional representatives roles be, what should at-large members roles be, and how to fulfill those roles. With respect to regional representatives roles, suggestions included attending local/regional young lawyer events, recruitment, spreading awareness of the WYLC, gathering feedback from the community, utilize alumni/law school connections, attend meetings/events at law schools, involvement with swearing-in ceremonies, and coordinating off-date swearing-in ceremonies. Suggestions for at-large member roles included focusing on social media, ABA-related matters, law schools, out of state members, and Limited License Legal Technicians and Limited Practice Officers. Jordan reported he will redraft the report template based on feedback received.

Subcommittee chairs Presentation and Recruitment 1:08 pm

Jordan presented on the WYLC's goals for the year (*see meeting materials p. 83-95*). After discussion, Jordan proposed getting rid of subcommittees. Julianne pointed out that regardless of what you call it, if done does not include final approval by larger WYLC, still subject to OPMA. Brian N. reported that Debt and New Lawyer Benefits subcommittee always brings their recommendations to WYLC before moving forward.

On motion by Brian N. and seconded by Catherine, the WYLC by unanimous vote approved to sunset all WYLC subcommittees and move towards a project-based team approach (10-0-0).

Julianne clarified that as a result of moving to project based teams, all actions recommended by project-based teams must be approved by the full WYLC at a WYLC meeting. Jordan also clarified that the now former subcommittee chairs will serve as project leads for current projects and that discussion about next steps will continue at the next WYLC meeting.

Important dates/deadlines:

Julianne reported on important dates/deadlines for the fiscal year (*see meeting materials p. 94*). Julianne also pointed out that the WYLC Chair-elect application deadline is still to be determined. The WYLC tentatively suggested that Chair-elect applications should be due on Jan. 31.

Catherine left the meeting at 2:03 p.m.

New Ideas for Next Meeting

Jordan introduced a new way of planning for the next WYLC meeting by accepting brief suggestions from WYLC members through rapid evaluation. Two suggestions were proposed:

1. **Courtroom attire:** Jordan reported that Mike Mocerri (former WYLC Chair) had this idea about courtroom attire and asked if the WYLC should schedule time on a future meeting to invite Mike and others to present. WYLC members agreed.
2. **Student Loans:** Brian N. suggested discussing student loan projects for next meeting.

Adjournment

On motion by Brian N. and seconded by Jordan, the WYLC by a unanimous vote (9-0-0) approved to adjourn the meeting at 2:12 p.m.