

Diversity Committee Meeting Draft Minutes

February 9, 2021 – 12:00 PM to 1:30 PM

The Washington State Bar Association's Diversity Committee is dedicated to implementing WSBA's Diversity and Inclusion Plan. The work of the committee promotes historically underrepresented groups to enter and stay in the profession of law. The Diversity Committee does this through collaborative relationships and community building activities, which highlight the numerous societal benefits of a diverse law profession.

Present: Carly Summers, Michelle Fukawa, Danitza Casselman, Andrea Jarmon, Gov. Sunitha Anjivel, Nam Nguyen, Monica Reinmiller, Serena Sayani, Shirley Prasad, Laura Johnson, Gov. Alec Stephens, Christopher Swaby

Absent: Luis Beltran, Janice Langbehn, Gov. Hunter Abell, Gov. Lauren Boyd, Mubarak Abdur Raheem, Yuping Wang

Guests: Mynor Lopez (SU), Roderick Morris (SU), Ben Hofmeister (Alaska Bar Association President)

Staff: Diana Singleton, Tyler Washington

Welcome and Introductions

Meeting called to order at 12:05pm.

Minutes

On motion by Laura, and seconded by Monica, the Diversity Committee approved the January meeting minutes.

WSBA Governor Update

Sunitha provided the BOG update. The next BOG meeting is in March and updated everyone on the BOG elections. Sunitha is running again and encourages other committee members to run and spread the word about the elections to their networks. Alec added that executive director contract has been approved.

Student Pipeline Report

Diana provided context explaining that at the last meeting we had talked about wanting to better understanding of what efforts law schools are taking to diversify student body and what they are doing to make sure underrepresented thrive.

Roderick Morrison, senior associate director from Seattle U Law School, talked about their admission work, recruiting for specific demographics going to events like the black and latinx prelaw conferences and serving on panels at those events. Seattle U is involved with the Minority and Justice Commission, serving on the planning committee for the youth and law forum and doing outreach at the middle schools.

Monica asked if it was possible to get a compilation of all the pipeline work happening across the state.

Roderick also shared about their work to increase more equitable diversity scholarships and also provide adequate support to succeed in law school. Current student body is really involved with community outreach work on their own, doing pipeline work in high schools in Tacoma and working with the undergraduate faculty on summer programs for high school students.

Mynor Lopez who works with Roderick is a 2L and talked about the Hybrid Flex program which allows more flexibility for people to take classes online and during the evenings. He pointed out that many individuals from disenfranchised backgrounds who don't have luxury of taking off work for school so this provides an option.

He shared how SU has been doing listening circles so as to identify how SU is really advancing DEI; they are looking at ow faculty/staff can better reflect the needs of the students. SU Professor Bob Boruchowitz mentored a small coalition of students who are focused on public defense and criminal legal system in conjunction with how the law school is involved with pipeline programs. He shared he's on the Seattle Journal for Social Justice, an they are planning an upcoming symposium on the intersectionality of employment and COVID and its impact on the black and brown community.

Sunitha asked how the Diversity Committee can help with SU's efforts. Roderick shared that he would welcome help with recruiting efforts and if the Diversity Committee had its own pipeline programs, SU would be happy to collaborate.

Michelle Fukawa, Diversity Committee member and Associate Director of Gonzaga U's Center for Civil Rights, asked if she could invite their admissions staff to our next meeting. She did report that Gonzaga has made concerted effort to increase diversity; they now have 27% diversity in 1L class right now which is a big improvement from years past. She shared about upcoming efforts like creating new full ride scholarships that will require diversity as a factor,

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and a more targeted effort for recruiting more diverse applicants with different types of scholarships.

She also shared about their new clinics including their immigration and LGBTQ clinic. In addition to helping clients, the clinics also help prospective students know that GU is a place that supports DEI. She also shared they're trying to create pipeline for Native American students.

Alec asked for each law school to share baseline demographics of the student body both aggregate and by class, as well as the demographics of faculty, and information about the applicant pool – who is accepted and who is not.

Carly asked if we could create more access to current members of the bar who volunteer for moot court at schools. We would help streamline the recruitment. MBAs might find this list helpful and Roderick affirmed the law schools would appreciate that kind of information.

Pro Tem CLE Scholarship Selection Update

Michele shared that she and Dani reviewed the applications for the Pro Tem CLE scholarships. They used a rubric which helped with the process.

Diana shared that the applications almost tripled from the last time the scholarship was offered. In recognition of the increased interest, the CLE team increased the scholarships from 10 to 15 and Diana requested funding from the WSBF who gave funding for 5 more scholarships so we could offer 20 scholarships. It would be good in the future for this committee to increase more scholarships and also consider giving discounts members of MBAs.

Alec suggested that the Committee suggest contributing toward the scholarship the next time the CLE is offered.

Diversity Committee List Serve

Suntiha gave background of list serve discussion and asked for feedback on what stakeholders are wanting out of the list serve.

Diana shared that they sent out a survey to get feedback on the purpose and use of the list serve. Various Committee members shared their views and agreed that we will wait to see the results from the survey and add our additional feedback to staff as the list serve is managed and owned by the staff, not the committee.

Christopher shared his experience on the WA Defense Attorneys listservs and shared they send out reminders once a month on the rules and temporarily remove people from the listserv if they don't follow the rules.

Communications (Bar News)

Kristen Abel, the Editor of WSBA Bar News magazine, joined the meeting and shared her feedback on the Committee's idea to bring back the "What Lawyers look like" feature. She shared that her team was thinking it sounded very similar to the Beyond the Bar Number feature and they were thinking of just using that space but be more specific about underrepresented members.

Andrea asked if we could do both features as there's a lack of content about diversity and members from underrepresented communities. Kristen mentioned that they are thinking of continuing the regular feature they started with Past President Majumdar where they did a highlight on various MBAs. Andrea liked that idea and encouraged the Committee to consider helping with drafting content for articles as not all underserved members are part of MBAs.

Kirsten suggested that interested Diversity Committee members should meet with her Editorial Advisory Committee so we can collaborate.

DEI Legal Lunchbox

Diana gave an update about the DEI CLE Planning meeting and shared they are moving forward with a Legal Lunchbox on Structural Racism. Diana asked for any volunteers to help identify speakers or have any other role.

Meeting adjourned at 1:30 p.m.