

Diversity Committee Draft Minutes
March 14, 2021 noon – 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: Michele Fukawa, Gov. Sunitha Anjilvel (co-chair), Megan Dawson, Raina Wagner, Sharon Sakamoto, Monica Lopez Reinmiller, Janice Langbehn, Luís Beltrán, Maria Mia Little, Gov. Matthew Dresden, Gov. Lauren Boyd

Absent: Nam Nguyen (co-chair), Gov. Matthew Stephens, Shirley Prasad, Mubarak Abdur Raheem, Cory Beetley, Danitza Casselman, SaNni Lemonidis, Christopher Swaby, Gov. Alec Stephens

Law Student Reps: Laine Ellison, Minerva Gomez

WSBA Staff: Diana Singleton, Imani Shannon, Nicholas Mejia, Barbara Nahouraii (observing)

Guests: Kirsten Abel, WSBA Bar News Editor, BOG President Brian Tollefson, Ying Zhang

Meeting called to order at 12:06 pm.

Bar News:

Discussion with Bar News Editor, Kirsten Abel, about writing content for the magazine. There are 9 issues a year, and the editorial calendar is 4-5 months out. Once on editorial calendar, Kirsten will work with you up until the submission deadline. As a WSBA member, people can also write letters to the editor, which must respond to content in the magazine or prior letters to the editor, to provide a range of perspectives and voices in the magazine.

Jan and Feb Minutes

Gov. Dresden moved to approve both Jan and Feb. minutes. Gov. Anjilvel seconded. All in approval, motion passed.

WSBA BOG Updates

A quarterly member engagement survey was sent out to all WSBA members, and some don't believe DEI should be addressed by their bar association.

The BOG unanimously voted for us to submit comments in approval of proposed changes to RPC 8.4 and other general court rules to have inclusive language.

Gov. Anjilvel has been speaking to Michele Su, with KABA, about holding the WSBA BOG accountable. Want to move away from ad hoc approach, and more towards continued and sustained infrastructure, with input from both the Diversity Committee and the MBAs.

At the March BOG meeting, there was an agenda item and motion (not seconded) that WSBA remove vaccine requirement. Motion made and carried that vaccine and booster requirement continue for

volunteers attending in-person WBSA events. BOG won't revisit it until Supreme Court revisits or gives more guidance on the issue.

At-Large Governor Interviews

All questions have been posted, but will only ask 4 or so because of time. Imani will send out survey to all Committee members to rank questions. At April meeting, will have discussion based on results of survey and then vote.

The date of the At-Large Governor interviews, Saturday April 23, conflicts with ETHOS meeting so will not have quorum of BOG members for interview. Will send out another Doodle poll for either Saturday April 16 or Saturday April 30.

WSBA Member Support

Came up at February Law Student and Pipeline Subcommittee meeting that entering the legal profession can be difficult- it is a stressful profession with high rates of addiction and suicidal ideation, compounded by the othering when you are a legal professional from a systemically oppressed group. WSBA has a Member Wellness Program that can assist with mental health (guidance for depression, stress, suicidal ideation), self-care (compassion fatigue, setting boundaries), and addiction (resources and approaches to recovery).

Integrated Bar Structure

In small breakout groups discussed 2 questions: 1. Thinking about our current bar structure, are there aspects of our work that can only be done with the current structure and 2. Does the current structure prohibit aspects of our work?

Because of time, unable to report out to larger group so folks will email Imani with notes from their discussion.

Subcommittee Report Out

Looking for people to join Updating D&I Plan Subcommittee.

Law Student/ Subcommittee has met twice, and determined that their goals are supporting law schools during Covid, supporting current programming. They have met w/UW and in April will be meeting w/SU

Proposed Agenda Items and Announcements

Need to finalize dates for May and September retreats.

Michele Fukawa is part of the Washington Leadership Institute (WLI), and they are hoping to produce a guide for underrepresented law students/new attorneys on what is not taught in law school. Hoping to partner with the Diversity Committee to sustain the project long term.

Next Diversity Committee meeting is Monday April 11 from noon – 1:30 pm.

Meeting adjourned at 1:36 pm.