



WSBA

Diversity Committee Meeting Minutes FINAL

September 21, 2019
10 AM – 3 PM
In-Person: WSBA Office

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.

In Attendance: Ailene Limric, Chelsea Brisbois, William Locke, Gov. Alec Stephens, Gov. Sunitha Anjilvel, Gov. Dan Clark, Allison Ross, Laura Wulf

Absent: Lisa Mansfield, Nam Nyguen, Gov. Jean Kang, Gov. Athan Papailiou, Andrea Jarmon, Jennifer Cruz

Guests: Yuping Wang, Serena Sayani

Staff: Dana Barnett, Tyler Washington

Call to Order, Welcome and Approval of Minutes – Ailene Limric, Co-Chair

Ailene called the meeting at 10:11 a.m.

BOG Report – Alec Stephens, Co-Chair

Alec provided the BOG report. He informed the committee that Dan Clark has been appointed BOG treasurer Alec will serve as chair of the personnel committee.

Alec provided an update on the Structures Work Group. The workgroup recommended that the WSBA should remain integrated and that D&I are fundamental to work of the WBSA, however Alec believes that issues relating to D&I are often regarded as political and this sentiment will remain in the foreseeable future.

Alec stated that he would like to start working with the committee, and WSBA staff, on a reception with MBA leadership, the BOG and the Diversity Committee.

Alec also informed the committee that the non-relation/conflict of interest policy is up for action at the next BOG meeting but that it will most likely be deferred pending the completion of the hostile work environment investigation.

Alec stated that the MCLE proposal will be discussed at the next BOG meeting. He clarified that the BOG does not take action on the proposal and that final approval is granted by the Supreme Court. However, the BOG states whether or not they recommend the change. After it is discussed at the BOG level, the MCLE board will decide whether to bring it to the Supreme Court for approval.

Dana provided background information on the MCLE proposal. Originally Washington Women Lawyers had proposed one existing ethics credit to be dedicated to diversity. The MCLE board then looked at other state bars and added 3 additional credit requirements, and put out proposal for member comment and there has been a substantial amount of member feedback. Sunitha will reach out to Adelaine Shay to gather statistics on how many members have negatively responded. She stated that it was important to show that diversity training is necessary through numbers and statistics. Roger suggested also including anecdotal examples along with statistics. Dana stated that there is a perception that WSBA staff is driving this initiative, but that this proposal was created by members who are marginalized in the profession, initiated by the WWL and Diversity Committee and supported by 8 MBAs. Sunitha stated that some of the responses have been harmful and threatening towards marginalized people.

The committee discussed how to show support of the proposal during the next BOG meeting. Alec recommended that committee members should reiterate what the purpose of the proposal was and why it was important to the committee. Roger suggested the committee should highlight statistics. Will stated that there is a misconception that inclusion and anti-bias is a political issue, but that the CLE requirements are about the health of the Bar. Serena suggested framing it as an ethical issue and that this effort would go towards fulfilling GR12 guidelines. Serena, Allison and tentatively Laura will attend or call into the BOG meeting. Serena and Allison will work together on a statement of support from the committee. Dana will send the original MCLE proposal and background info to Serena and Allison.

Program Updates and Reports

Legal Pathways Reception – Andrea, Lisa Mansfield

Dana met with the Legal Pathways Director and discussed ways that the committee and program can collaborate. Legal pathways is a new program at UWT that supports students who are interested in a legal career. Will stated this was a one of kind program in the state. Areas of collaboration included potential quarterly mentorship meetings, speed networking, and hosting a committee meeting on campus and inviting students. Dana stated that the committee also works with the Law, Diversity and Justice Program at WWU. Will and Chelsea have met as a workgroup to discuss pipeline programming. The committee will open this up for others to join at the October meeting.

IL programs – Chelsea Brisbois and Laura Wulf

Chelsea explained that the committee runs a diversity fellowship assistance program and have traveled to Seattle University and University of Washington campuses to host panels, conduct mock interviews, and review personal statements and resumes of students. Committee volunteers are needed for the upcoming round of programming. Chelsea is working with Gonzaga University to get a similar program set up. The committee also reviews resumes through email, but have only received around 5 resumes in the past year. Chelsea would like to increase participation and advertise this service better. **Please contact Dana or Chelsea to sign up for the November 4th panel presentation at UW from 12:30 to 1:20. We need 3-5 panelists.**

Legal Lunchboxes – Dana

Dana explained that Diversity programs put on 3 free legal lunchboxes. Topic ideas are generated during the October meeting. Committee members are invited to be involved in CLE development and sometimes serve as

faculty. Diversity Committee members are able to watch the three diversity Legal Lunchbox recordings for free with code, DIVCOM.

Alec asked what the status was for the Hate groups / white supremacists themed CLE. Dana explained that General Counsel has GR12 considerations and has asked to hold off on the CLE until they can complete proper analysis. Alec expressed concern that D&I issues are always considered political and would like to revisit this topic, especially considering the rise of hate groups in Washington State and Oregon. Dana proposed the committee could take this up during the October meeting during the topic brainstorm.

Train the Trainer – Dana

Dana informed the committee that due to staff transitions Train the Trainers session has been cancelled. If there is still interest, an outside facilitator can be hired in the future.

WADA event – Dana

Dana informed the committee that the WSBA hosted Washington Attorneys Disabilities Association (WADA) annual event is on Oct. 24 and the program is currently in development.

IILP Conference – Ailene

Ailene provided a report out for the Institution for Inclusion in the Legal Profession conference. Topics discussed at the conference included international legal profession data, data of representation, and the Harvard affirmative action case. Ailene stated that there was a book of helpful reference material that might be interesting to the committee and would see if it was something that can be shared. Dana suggested that the committee consider aligning themselves with D&I efforts and trends across the state and nationally, perhaps through collaboration with MBAs.

MBA annual events – Dana

Dana explained that the committee is budgeted to send two members to MBA annual events. She encouraged members to sign up by reaching out to her. If the funds are not used, the committee is at risk of losing it. Dana also asked the committee to share feedback of any barriers of attending the events, like lodging costs. Serena stated she was interested in attending LBAW's event. William would like to switch to LBAW as well.

Oregon Bar Update

Ailene shared that in the past, the Diversity Programs Manager was coordinating with the Oregon Diversity Department to put together a joint CLE or summit with MBAs and diversity committees in both states. Dana stated this is something the committee could further explore if there is interest.

Thurston County Bar Diversity Committee

Sunitha shared that Thurston County Bar Association might be creating a diversity committee. Sunitha will follow up with Thurston County and update the committee.

The diversity committee adjourned at 12:13pm

Next Meeting: FY20 Orientation, October 2019

If you need special accommodations contact diversity@wsba.org