

# WASHINGTON STATE BAR ASSOCIATION

## DEI Council Meeting Minutes

**Monday, August 14, 2023 from 12:00 noon - 1:30 p.m.**

*The DEI Council advances diversity, equity, and inclusion and addresses the problems of bias, systemic inequities and underrepresentation in the legal profession and legal system.*

**Member Attendees:** Mia Scavella, Noelle Chung, Sharon Sakamoto, WSBA Governor Lauren Boyd, Lilli Douglas, WSBA Governor Sunitha Anjilvel, SaNni Lemonidis, WSBA Governor Matthew Dresden, Mike Rhodes, Miryam Gordon, WSBA Governor Alec Stephens, and Christopher Swaby

**WSBA Staff:** Diana Singleton, Nicholas Mejía, Saleena Salango

Meeting called to order at 12:02 p.m.

### **July Meeting Minutes**

Miryam Gordon made a motion to approve the July minutes. Sharon Sakamoto seconded. Minutes were unanimously approved.

### **Pipeline to Profession**

Mia Scavella gave a brief update relating to the work the committee has been engaged in, which includes consideration of a summit that is planned to occur in the spring of 2024 and changing the committee's name to Pathway to the Profession (to get away from the negative connotations associated with "pipeline" (e.g., school to prison pipeline) and speak the multiple ways people can be part of the legal community). She asked members of the council for their support on the committee. Noelle Chung offered to co-chair the committee.

### **Board of Governors Update**

WSBA Gov. Sunitha Anjilvel shared highlights of the August BOG meeting. It was reported that the BOG unanimously voted to approve supporting the proposed amendments to General Rule 12 which are designed to remove barriers and confusion on what Bar entities can do to fulfill the purpose of the WSBA as described in the General Rules.

Governor Anjilvel also reported that Saleena, Diana, Alec and her facilitated a two-hour, interactive DEI training for the BOG.

Diana Singleton gave an update on the proposed FY 24 budget including funding for additional staff to do DEI work which would include DEI resources for members and members who are underrepresented. The DEI Council voted to write a letter of support to support the addition of an additional employee within the equity and justice team to support DEI goals. SaNni motioned to write a letter of support, Sharon seconded. The DEI Council unanimously voted in favor of writing the letter of support. WSBA Gov. Sunitha Anjilvel and Raina Wagner agreed to draft the letter and submit it for the BOG's consideration.

### **New DEI Council Member Selection**

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WSBA Gov. Sunitha Anjilvel shared that in the course of asking General Counsel for input on the new procedures for new member selection which we voted in favor of in July), we identified a drafting error in the Council's Charter. Diana explained the wording of the charter was based off the other councils and boards within the WSBA and the Council can work on proposing corrected language to present to the BOG at a future meeting. Diana confirmed that General Counsel said that she did not have concerns about the new procedures themselves. WSBA Gov. Sunitha Anjilvel explained that we will move forward with our new procedures (e.g., asking applicants for additional information, redacting names and gathering input from Council members) and follow the appointment process as currently outlined in the Charter.

## **Membership Demographic Study**

Diana shared that the survey has been sent out to members. She asked Council members to encourage their own networks to do the survey. She will send out an email with suggested language.

## **DEI Plan Update**

Miryam shared that the workgroup interviewed the consultants from the Institute for Inclusion in the Legal Profession (IILP) and are close to deciding whether to go with them as the consultant on the DEI Plan planning process. Saleena mentioned there needs to be one additional vote from the DEI Plan workgroup to reach a majority and be able to proceed with IILP.

## **Access to Justice Conference**

Diana mentioned there is funding for members of the DEI Council to attend the ATJ Conference. She also mentioned BOG members have funding through the BOG to attend the conference. She asked that Council members let her know right away.

## **Announcements**

Saleena referenced an email they sent earlier which includes information about upcoming MBA events which DEI Council members are welcome to attend. Sharon shared the Asian Bar Association is having their annual gala scheduled for October 20<sup>th</sup>; Saleena said that they would include that information with the other MBA event information.

WSBA Gov. Alec Stephens gave a potential farewell as it is his last time as a member of the WSBA BOG serving on the DEI Council.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:49 p.m.