**Diversity Committee Meeting Minutes**

**February 14, 2022 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.

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**Present:** Gov. Lauren Boyd, Nam Nguyen (co-chair), Raina Wagner, Luis Beltrán, Gov. Matthew Dresden, Megan Dawson, Maria Mia Little, Cory Beetley, Gov. Alec Stephens, Sharon Sakamoto, Janice Langbehn, Shirley Prasad, Gov. Sunitha Anjilvel (co-chair), SaNni Lemonidis

**Absent:** Christopher Swaby, Michele Fukawa, Mubarak Abdur Raheem, Danitza Casselman, Monica Reinmiller

**Law Students:** Mariah Welch, Laine Ellison, Minerva Gómez

**Guests:** President Brian Tollefson (BOG President), Julie Seidenstein (MAMA), Trent Hargrove (Chief Diversity, Equity, Inclusion Officer, Pennsylvania Bar Association)

**WSBA Staff:** Dominique Shannon, Diana Singleton, Julie Shankland (General Counsel- for presentation only), Terra Nevitt (Executive Director), Nicholas Mejia, Barbara Nahouraii (observing)

Meeting called to order 12:06 pm.

**Integrated Bar Structure:**

Presentation from ED Terra Nevitt on the history of our integrated Bar structure and current questions that are being posed by Chief Justice Gonzalez. Presentation included information on: Bar Associations having 2 models (voluntary or mandatory model). Voluntary or agency model is mainly in the NE, and regulation is through the State Supreme Court or an agency under the Supreme Court. WSBA has been a unified bar for 90 years, and has been following Keller for 30 years.

WA State Rule GR 12.2 outlines general purposes and activities not authorized, including taking positions on political or social issues which do not relate to or affect the practice of law or the administration of justice.

State Supreme Court asked WSBA to look at structure again. In 2018, the Supreme Court formed a workgroup to analyze WSBA’s structure in light of developments. At that time, it was recommended we retain integrated bar structure. The structure being examined again because litigation continues.

Want to think about how this may or may not affect the Diversity Committee. Thinking about our current structure: are there aspects of our work that can only be done with the current structure? Or are there aspects of our current structure that prohibit our work?

Board will meet 8 times to examine bar structure. April 23 and Jul 23 dedicated to public comment

**Committee Structure:**

Discussion about how the bylaws were not changed when the merger of the BOG Diversity Committee and internal WSBA Diversity Committee happened in 2012. After BOG made decision to fuse 2 committees together, each and every President and each and every Board recognized the intent and acted accordingly. Consistently every year since that time the WSBA President has appointed BOG members and WSBA members to the Committee. General Counsel joined discussion and recommended that we comply with bylaws to greatest extent we can. Committee members can weigh in, but only BOG members of the Committee will vote.

Have workgroup looking at structure, options for becoming a council, changing bylaws. Email Sunitha if interested in joining.

**January Minutes:**

Will approve minutes at the next meeting.

**At-Large Governor Interviews:**

Committee discussed whether or not interview questions should be provided to candidates beforehand, and if the equitable approach would be to send them out to everyone give that some need longer to process than others. There are only 15 minutes per interview, so even if all questions are provided beforehand, candidates will not necessarily know which questions from the list will be asked

Gov. Dresden made motion to vote, Gov. Anjilvel seconded. Passes unanimously to provide interview questions beforehand.

**WSBA BOG Updates:**

Disciplinary Committee

Gov. Brent Williams-Ruth joined meeting. He is the chair of the Disciplinary Committee, and they’re looking for more diverse volunteers to be hearing officers. Gov. Williams-Ruth provided his contact email in the chat.

Commenting on Supreme Court Rules Changes

The draft memo will be sent out to Committee members for comment by Wednesday, special meeting w/BOG voting members scheduled for Thursday 2/17 at 5 pm. It will then be sent to General Counsel Shankland for a risk analysis afterwards.

**DEI Plan: Current and Future:**

There was a discussion about beginning the work to update the Diversity and Inclusion Plan. Heard more information from ED Nevitt about the process used by the ATJ Board when updating their race equity plan. Will be thinking about what problem are we trying to solve? What does success look like? How will we know when we’ve been successful and what strategies will we use?

We can perhaps have a representative from each stakeholder group, and work with stakeholders to develop D&I Plan.

Will create workgroup to update D&I Plan, Sharon will be spearheading effort.

**Subcommittee/Workgroups Report Out**

Will discuss at next meeting