

WSBA Board of Governors Discussions on the Governance Task Force Final Report

The Washington Supreme Court has asked the Board of Governors for a response to the Task Force's Final Report. The Board is discussing sections of the report as noted below and final action will be taken by its September 17-18, 2015, meeting. Member feedback is welcomed throughout this process by emailing governance@wsba.org.

I. THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS AND THE WSBA (September 2014 BOG meeting)

1. Clarify the duties of the Governors in the WSBA Bylaws and other relevant materials.
2. Change the name of the Board of Governors to the Board of Trustees and change the name of the Washington State Bar Association to "The State Bar of Washington."
3. The Board of Governors should provide governance training to new Governors and adopt practices that help to define the respective roles of the Board vis a vis WSBA staff and provide opportunities for self-reflection and self-improvement.
4. The Board agenda should focus on strategic goals.

II. ORGANIZATION AND SELECTION OF THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS (November 2014 & January 2015 BOG meetings)

1. Increase the Governors terms to four years and permit former Governors to serve a second term at a later date.
2. The WSBA President should be selected from the Board of Governors and continue to serve as a voting member of the Board.
3. Two public, non-attorney members and one LPO/LLLT member should be added to the Board of Governors. These three members should be appointed by the Supreme Court.
4. To accommodate the additional Governors, the number of elected positions on the Board of Governors should be reduced to nine. The three current "at-large" positions should be retained to ensure participation by a "young lawyer" and members that reflect historically under-represented groups. This would provide for a Board of 15 persons, one of which would be the President.
5. A Search Committee, appointed by the Board of Governors, should solicit qualified candidates for the Board.
6. The WSBA should provide more information regarding candidate qualifications.
7. Establish an Executive Committee to address routine and non-strategic matters on behalf of the Board of Governors.
8. Establish a permanent process designed to reduce Governor workload.

III. SUPREME COURT AND THE WSBA (March 2015 & April 2015 BOG meetings)

1. The Supreme Court should meet with representatives of the Board of Governors and the WSBA Executive Director at regular and frequent intervals during the year to discuss priorities and ongoing projects.
2. Amendments to the WSBA Bylaws should be approved by the Supreme Court.
3. The dismissal of the Executive Director or the Chief Disciplinary Counsel should be subject to veto by the Supreme Court.
4. The Supreme Court should re-evaluate the placement of certain Boards under the WSBA as well as their funding. For those that remain under the WSBA, the Court should help ensure adequate funding.

IV. STATE BAR ACT (June 2015 BOG meeting)

1. Repeal most provisions of the State Bar Act, with that statute then serving simply to create the WSBA as an agency "within the judicial branch" under the Supreme Court's control.