



Board of Governors Meeting Recap

March 10, 2016
Olympia

At its March 10 meeting in Olympia, the WSBA Board of Governors recognized two local heroes, provided updates on the Section Policy and WSBA Bylaws Workgroups, heard testimony on the Escalating Cost of Civil Litigation (ECCL) Task Force recommendations, and considered a proposal regarding the WSBA Legislative Committee's membership.

Local Heroes

Bar members from in and around Thurston County attended a luncheon on Thursday where two Local Hero Awards were presented. Judith Luther-Shiflett was nominated by the Thurston County Bar Association for her longtime service to the Thurston County Volunteer Legal Service office. She has volunteered weekly for many years at the Olympia Family Support Center, and also monthly at the legal clinic in Shelton. The Government Lawyers Bar Association recognized Michael Young for his work with the pro bono committee at the Attorney General's Office (AGO) and his coordination of the AGO mentorship program which ensures all incoming assistant attorneys general are provided a mentor.

Sections Policy Workgroup

The Board heard an update from the Sections Policy Workgroup, which reported that five section leaders will join the Workgroup following a nomination and election process. The Workgroup will reconvene in April and meet through September, when the Board is scheduled to take action on its various recommendations.

WSBA Bylaws Workgroup

In response to the 2014 Governance Task Force report, the Board formed a Bylaws Workgroup. This workgroup is drafting proposals to amend the current Bylaws consistent with the Task

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Force recommendations adopted by the BOG, and expects to have its final proposals to the Board in September.

ABA Model Regulatory Objectives (ABA Resolution 105)

WSBA Executive Director Paula Littlewood updated the Board on this ABA Resolution, which the Board voted to support in November 2015. The resolution urges state supreme courts to provide guidance and a framework for regulation in a quickly-changing legal services delivery market. The Board discussed asking our Supreme Court to adopt such a set of regulatory objectives.

WSBA Legislative Committee

Governors Philip Brady and Jill Karmy with WSBA Legislative Affairs Manager Alison Grazzini discussed a proposal to reduce the number of members on the WSBA Legislative Committee and restructure its format. Currently the committee has 33 members with no term limits. The proposed changes reset committee membership to 16, and term limits (coinciding with the state's two-year legislative cycle) would be followed consistent with other WSBA entities and in line with Board-adopted strategic goals. The new committee structure will enable the Bar to be more responsive to inquiries from the Legislature, and streamline the process for evaluating Bar-request bills and providing WSBA support for proposed legislation. There was discussion about sunseting this committee, as much of its work overlaps with the Board's Legislative Committee. The WSBA Committee on Mission Performance and Review will review this issue during its annual review of all committees and boards, and will report back to the Board in July for first reading. The Board approved a motion to reduce the number of members on the WSBA Legislative Committee to 16 and to institute term limits.

ECCL Recommendations

The Board heard the ECCL Task Force Report and Recommendations, as they have done for the past few meetings. The task force was formed in 2011 to assess the costs of civil litigation in Washington state courts, and to propose recommendations for reducing costs. The report was presented by Russ Aoki, ECCL Task Force chair, and Isham Reavis, of Aoki Law. At this meeting, the Board heard information on three recommendations: Presumptive Discovery Limits, E-Discovery, and Motions Practice.

Testimony was heard from members and stakeholders. Board members also had questions for those providing feedback. The next three recommendations of the ECCL report will be taken up at the Board's April meeting in Bremerton.

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