**DEI Council Meeting Minutes
January 9, 2023 - 12:00 noon – 1:30 p.m.**

The Washington State Bar Association’s DEI Council works to advance diversity, equity and inclusion and address the problems of bias, systemic inequities and underrepresentation in the legal profession.

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**Member Attendees:** Raina Wagner, WSBA Gov. Alec Stephens, WSBA. Gov Sunitha Anjilvel, Laine Ellison, Mia Little, WSBA Gov. Matthew Dresden, Mike Rhodes, Noelle Chung, Miryam Gordon, Sharon Sakamoto, Christopher Swaby

**WSBA Staff Attendees:** Diana Singleton, Nicholas Mejía, Saleena Salango, Kirsten Lacko

**Meeting Minutes**: Miryam moved to approve minutes, seconded by Matthew, motion passed.

**Definition of Diversity Update:** SaNni gave an update on what has transpired since the Board last met in December. SaNni explained that since the Council met, the Definition of Diversity Workgroup had decided to take out socio-economic status as Julie Shankland indicated in her legal analysis that including that term may be confusing as some definitions of that term relate to secondary degrees which every member already has. SaNni also shared that they took out sex as Julie pointed out that gender and sex are identified as the same thing.

There was a motion from SaNni which was seconded by Sharon to approve the edited draft definition of diversity (which took out socio-economic status and sex) which was submitted in the materials for the January BOG meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

**Comments to Equity and Disparity Workgroup’s Proposed Changes to GR 12:** Sunitha reminded everyone that Laura Sierra came to our last meeting to explain the proposal to amend GR 12. The DEI Council is being asked to submit any comments to the proposal which will be going to the BOG at their March meeting. The proposal is mostly focused on taking out the language about what activities are prohibited. The proposal would be an enormous protection to DEI work moving forward. The proposal is not time sensitive and will be showcased at the March BOG meeting. The decision will ultimately affect the changing of an official court rule. Sharon stated she was in favor of making a strong statement of support of the change. Miryam asked the question if there was any way this rule change could be used against the WSBA and DEI Council. Gov. Alec Stephens mentioned there should not be any constraints that would be presented by this.

Sharon moved to submit comments in favor of the proposal, seconded by Miryam, Gov. Alec Stephens abstained, motion passed.

Sunitha volunteered to work with others to draft a letter of support for the Council to approve at their February meeting.

**Input to Proposal to Adding Option for Pronouns to Legal Directory:** Saleena Salango shared that they were working on a proposal to give members the option of including their pronouns in the legal directory, noting it would be voluntary. When mew member profiles are created, member would be invited to include their pronouns. For current members, we would need to ask them to update their profile. Diana explained that this potential change would be an operational change and will not go before the BOG but the BOG will be informed about any changes that happen. Saleena mentioned that ultimately the change should center the experience of the individuals which this effects the most, such as those who are part of the LGBTQ+ community.

Gov. Alec Stephens made a motion to support this operational change seconded by SaNni, motion passed unanimously.

**DEI Related Content in the Bar News:** Kirsten Lacko gave an overview of DEI content that’s included in the Bar News magazine. She invited the DEI Council to help with sharing ideas for articles/topics, drafting articles themselves and/or recruiting authors to write articles. She explained that the articles tend to run 1400 - 2000 words, but there is flexibility. Usually, issues are planned out months in advance. Kirsten also mentioned that they do a regular MBA Highlight column and asked for help in recruiting more MBAs. Some commented that MBAs are very busy and also do not have the most beneficial relationship with the WSBA and the BOG but will try to encourage them to share information so the membership can learn about their MBA. Kirsten also mentioned the Letters to the Editors which is another areas members are welcome to write. Miryam volunteered to serve as a point person for the Council and work with Kirsten to get the Council involved.

**Pro Tem CLE Scholarship Selection Workgroup:** Diana explained that the WSBA has historically partnered with the DMCJA to put on a bi-annual two-day CLE on learning how to be a Pro Tem judge. One of the DMCJA’s goals for this program is to diversify the bench so they have been working with the CLE team and the then-Diversity Committee to offer scholarships to members from underrepresented groups. For the last two programs, the Diversity Committee has served as the selection committee for the scholarships. This year’s program will take place on March 17-18 in Tacoma and offers a virtual option. We need DEI Council members to volunteer for this short-term commitment. Diana shared that Mia volunteered and we need at least one more person. Noelle volunteered to be a part of the process. Diana will connect Mia and Noelle with Laura Sanford who is the staff person coordinating the scholarship process. Diana asked everyone to save the date of March 17th to come to the reception which will include members of the judiciary and CLE attendees.

**Recruitment for New DEI Council Members - Formation of a Recruitment Workgroup:** Raina shared that currently there are 3 openings for the DEI Council. Raina requested that the current members engage in recruitment of individuals. The importance of joining workgroups was noted, with Sunitha stating that the pipeline committee also is in need of additional aid, adding that she seeks to join herself. Raina asked people to let her know today or afterward is they want to join the workgroup.

**DEI Plan Group Update:** Sharon and Miryam shared that the workgroup has been working on a timeline for the plan’s creation. Sunitha reiterated the importance of signing up for matters related to the plan.

**Overview of Strategic Planning for the Year:** Sunitha shared that that we will be following up with members related to this.

**Announcements:** Gov. Alec Stephens stated he will be giving the homily at his place of worship at St. Therese and invited others to join if interested.

Diana directed everyone to review the events and dates at the bottom of the agenda and asked everyone to mark their calendars.

Meeting adjourned at 1:36 pm