

# WASHINGTON STATE BAR ASSOCIATION

## BOARD OF GOVERNORS MEETING MINUTES

Seattle, WA

November 14, 2025

### Call to Order and Welcome

The meeting of the Board of Governors of the Washington State Bar Association (WSBA) was called to order by President Francis Adewale on Friday, November 14, at 9:05 a.m. Governors in attendance were:

Matthew Dresden

Tom Ahearne

Kevin Fay

Kristina Larry

Todd Bloom

Nam Nguyen

Allison Widney

Jordan Couch

Kari Petrasek

Parvin Price

Christopher Bhang

Mary Rathbone

Emily Arneson

Officers and Executive Staff in attendance were President Francis Adewale, Immediate-Past President Sunitha Anjilvel, Executive Director Terra Nevitt, Chief Communications and Outreach Officer Sara Niegowski, Director of Finance Tiffany Lynch, Chief Disciplinary Counsel Doug Ende, Chief Regulatory Counsel Renata Garcia, Director of Advancement Kevin Plachy, Chief Equity & Justice Officer Diana Singleton, General Counsel Laurie Powers, and HR Director & Chief Culture Officer Glynnis Klinefelter Sio.

Also in attendance were Nancy Hawkins, Rex Nolte, Aziza Ozgoren, Jennifer Olegario, Bobby Henry, Catherine Schur, Sanjay Walvekar, Betsylew Miale-Gix, Julianne Unite, Ramana Pendyala, Joseph Terill, Cathy Biestek, Anthony Varona, Jacob Rooksby, Tamara Lawson, Crystal Casey and Michael Chin.

### President's Report

President Adewale opened the first meeting of the 2025–2026 fiscal year by emphasizing the importance of facilitating member and public participation while maintaining efficient Board deliberations. The Board will maintain the current process for public comments, with the President exercising discretion to recognize

speakers. The President also noted a recent visit from the Singapore Ministry of Law and acknowledged WSBA's leadership and national recognition in legal technology.

#### Executive Session

The Board entered executive session at 9:10 a.m. to discuss confidential matters, including proposed changes to the judicial recommendations committee questions and legal advice on litigation against mandatory bar associations. The session concluded at 10:50 a.m.

#### Member & Public Comments

President Adewale opened the session for member and public comments. Mike Chin, Chair of the Access to Justice Board, presented the board's new mission, vision, and values, emphasizing collaboration with the WSBA Board of Governors to achieve equity and justice.

#### Consent Calendar

President Adewale introduced the consent calendar and asked governors if anyone would like to request a removal of an item from it. There being no objection, the items on the consent calendar were adopted by unanimous consent.

#### Executive Director's Report

Executive Director Terra Nevitt referred to her written report and invited questions.

#### Proposed Changes to the Judicial Recommendation

Legislative Affairs Manager Sanjay Walvekar presented proposed changes to the JRC interview questions. The proposals align specific questions with evaluation criteria and allow follow-up questions based on candidate responses. Gov. Petrusek moved to approve the JRC interview questions as proposed. The motion was adopted, with one no vote. Gov. Allison Widney was not present.

#### 2027 License Fees

Treasurer Nam Nguyen and Director of Finance Tiffany Lynch presented a proposal to set the 2027 license fee at \$475, an increase of \$7 from the current \$468 and below the 6% cost of living adjustment that would have set the fee at \$500. The Budget & Audit Committee recommended \$475 to mitigate a projected reserve draw of approximately \$1 million. The Board discussed reserve adequacy, noting the operating reserve balance of \$2.5 million, along with WSBA's other available reserves, has historically been discussed with external auditors without significant concern. Board members also acknowledged the intention to revisit fee levels next year. Gov. Fay moved to adopt the license fee proposal as presented. Motion was adopted, with three no votes. Gov. Widney was not present.

#### FY 2026 Legislative Priorities

Legislative Affairs Manager Sanjay Walvekar presented proposed FY26 legislative priorities grounded in GR 12.2 and continuing priorities from prior years. Key areas include supporting public defense funding and studying the effects of a non-unified court system, with a focus on addressing inequities in Washington's judicial system. The Board discussed the role of the WSBA in supporting agency budget requests (e.g., OPD and OCLA) and the importance of educating legislators on judicial funding. Gov. Fay moved to approve the legislative priorities. Motion passed unanimously.

### Governance Committee Recommendations

Gov. Fay presented a first-reading of proposed amendments to WSBA bylaws regarding conflict-of-interest policy. The recommended changes would allow governors and officers to engage in political activity in their personal capacities with appropriate disclaimers and would revise the conflict-of-interest policy to focus on conflicts relevant to Board service, including a remedy provision for non-compliance. The Board discussed potential perceptions of bias, the sufficiency of disclaimers, the definition of “material interest,” and authority for determining conflicts.

### Discussion with Law School Deans and Law Clerk Board Chair

The Board held a discussion with the deans of the University of Washington School of Law, Seattle University School of Law, and Gonzaga University School of Law, and with the Law Clerk Board Chair, regarding the transition from legal education to practice and alignment with the profession’s needs. Topics included admission pathways for out-of-state practitioners, the role of law schools in alternative licensure pathways, mentorship and outreach in rural areas, and opportunities for collaboration with academic partners. The Board expressed support for increasing visibility and support for the Law Clerk Program and discussed exploring state-funded scholarships to address legal deserts.

### Proposal to Sunset the WSBA CLE Committee

Gov. Fay and Director of Advancement Kevin Plachy presented a proposal to sunset the WSBA CLE Committee, noting the committee has effectively lost its purpose and has not been active in programming and observing that sections and the CLE operation have been effectively managing CLE activities. Education Programs Manager Shanti Rahu confirmed there was no operational reason to maintain the committee. Gov. Fay moved to sunset the CLE Committee. Motion passed unanimously. Gov. Nguyen and Gov. Widney were not present.

### Admissions & Licensing Recommendations

#### *Pass Score for Nextgen UBE and Suggested Amendments to APR 4(d)(1)*

Chief Regulatory Counsel Renata Garcia presented a recommendation regarding the NextGen Uniform Bar Examination and amendments to APR 4(d)(1). The Washington Supreme Court adopted NextGen UBE, with administration to begin in July 2026. The new exam will have a different scoring scale, which requires adoption of a new passing score. Using the NCBE score mapping, Chief Garcia recommended a minimum passing score of 616, which is equivalent to a score of 266 on the legacy UBE. Chief Garcia noted that the deans of the three Washington Law schools are proposing a passing score of 610, which is equivalent to 260 on the legacy UBE. Following Board discussion which included the potential impact of passage rates in legal deserts, Gov. Jordan Couch moved to adopt a passing score of 616 for the NextGen UBE and the corresponding amendments to APR 4(d)(1). Motion passed with two no votes. The recommendations will be transmitted to the Washington Supreme Court for consideration at its December en banc session. Gov. Nguyen and Gov. Widney were not present.

### Annual Anti-Harassment Training

HR Director and Chief Culture Officer Glynnis Klinefelter Sio introduced trainer Megan McNabb, who conducted the Board's mandatory anti-harassment training. The session was recorded for those unable to attend.

### Governor Roundtable

Gov. Kristina Larry provided an update on the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Council's goals. Executive Director Nevitt highlighted new advisory opinions from the Committee on Professional Ethics. Governor Price announced a CLE event on December 12, 2025. Gov. Mary Rathbone shared outreach efforts, including a mock trial for middle school students.

### Meeting Feedback ([link](#))

The Board gave feedback using the "Rose, Bud, and Thorn" method, introduced by Gov. Larry. Governors expressed appreciation for the meeting's conduct and leadership and highlighted the productive discussion with law school deans. Identified follow-ups included continued work on the conflict-of-interest policy and review of the Access to Justice Board's code of conduct.

### ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, President Adewale adjourned the meeting at 4:50 p.m. on Friday, November 14, 2025.

Respectfully submitted,

*Terra Nevitt*

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Terra Nevitt

WSBA Executive Director & Secretary