

# WASHINGTON STATE BAR ASSOCIATION

## Washington Young Lawyers Committee

Washington Young Lawyers Committee | Virtual Meeting, Seattle, WA  
Saturday, May 9, 2020 | 10:07 a.m. – 1:12 p.m.  
Meeting Minutes

**Present In-Person or Phone:** Alixanne Pinkerton, Brian Neuharth, Catherine Holm (joined at 11:40 am), Chelsie Elliott, Emily Ann Albrecht, Esther Hyun, Ian McCurdy, Jordan Lee Couch, Kim Sandher, Laura King, Zachary Davison (joined at 10:08 am)

**Absent:** Benjamin Hodges, Brandon Holt, Brian Holden (excused), Maha Jafarey (excused), Molly M. Winston, Paula Kurtz-Kreshel (excused)

**WSBA Staff:** Chelle Gegax – Member Services and Engagement Administrative Assistant, Julianne Unite – Member Services and Engagement Specialist/Staff liaison

**Board of Governors (BOG):** Russell Knight

**Public:** None present

### **Welcome & Introductions/ Approval of March 2020 Minutes**

Jordan Couch, WYLC Chair, called the meeting to order at 10:07 a.m.

On motion to approve by Brian Neuharth (Brian N.), WYLC Chair-elect, and seconded by Laura King, WYLC member, the WYLC by unanimous vote (10-0) approved the March minutes.

### **BOG Update & Discussions**

Governor Russell Knight reported that law schools requested diploma privilege, but this was rejected by the Board of Governors (BOG) and the Deans of law schools. The Washington State Bar Exam will be offered in two locations; Spokane and Tacoma if possible. The exam would also be offered in September in addition to July, to aid in comfortability of people taking the exam, less people taking at once, and to allow for social distancing. Governor Knight also reported that at the next (June) BOG meeting the Board of Governors will be electing an At-large member. Finally, Governor Knight updated the WYLC on the meeting between Jordan, Julianne Unite, WYLC staff liaison, and others with the BOG Executive Committee, with feedback from the presentation. Governor Knight said the information was well received and they represented the WYLC very well, and that the projects that WYLC are taking on are well supported by the BOG.

Governor Knight reported that the BOG is looking at extending the time period for Rule 9 Interns.

Ian McCurdy, WYLC member, asked to clarify whether the July/Sept. bar exams were contingent on Governor Inslee's orders allowing group meetings. Governor Knight confirmed, but since courts are essential, committees that support are also considered essential, so bar exam would fall into that category.

### COVID-19 & WSBA Updates

Julianne reported on COVID-19 updates. WSBA formed a COVID task force, comprised of WSBA staff and leadership and community members. WSBA has been distributing weekly messages regarding COVID-19 announcements to WSBA-administrated list serves. Most WSBA staff are working remotely. The Governor Inslee's orders limit committee discussion to COVID related matters only. Julianne also reported that she has been in contact with Skamania Lodge, who has been closed since mid-March. She stated that Skamania Lodge has been planning to reopen in time for the next meeting, but it will depend on what phase of reopening the state will be in. BOG is scheduled to meet at Skamania at the same time, and whatever is done by the BOG would likely be extended to the WYLC.

Jordan reported on the task force, who meets weekly to discuss what WSBA should be doing for lawyers, how to transition, what can they do to help lawyers as they're coming out of the COVID pandemic, and how to create materials and CLE's. Jordan also discussed the back log of court cases that will be coming up as we emerge from the pandemic and requested that if anyone has thoughts or ideas, please email Emily Ann Albrecht, WYLC member, or Jordan.

Emily reported on a CLE about tips and tricks on working remotely. CLE will be available at no cost online.

### Representative Reports

- Jordan reported that there was limited items to report on. Most meetings have been simple updates on postponed and/or cancelled events.
- Chelsie Elliott, WYLC member, reported on the Virtual Legal Clinic – first come first serve, offered every Thursday and has been very successful with involvement from her entire firm. Jordan asked about the set-up of the clinic and Chelsie responded that potential participants sign up through a website, attorneys log on, find a time and potential client receives confirmation email with time. They are using a client called “Navigate” who connects the potential client to the attorney.
- Laura reported that she participated in a law school class geared toward opening a new practice. She stated it was a good opportunity to interact with people in her region. Jordan asked how it was received. Laura responded that she felt it was moderately received, but it was hard for people to understand the challenges for those who have gaps in their work or outside factors impacting them. Jordan made note for future meetings to discuss the idea of handling gaps in resumes for new/young lawyers.
- Emily reported that the spring ABA meeting and annual meeting will be virtual. Emily also reported that Oregon is in need of volunteers due to flooding, for pro bono work and encouraged those licensed in Oregon to reach out. Jordan asked about whether we are still offering scholarship to ABA meetings due to being virtual instead of in person. Emily responded that the WYLC would need to meet to discuss whether they should still be awarded. Other conferences have waived fees to encourage remote attendance, but unsure if ABA has done this as of yet. Julianne reported that the annual meeting is free to ABA members. Jordan asked how many scholarship applications we currently had. Julianne reported that the WYLC has two applications, which were included on page 30 of meeting materials. Instead of offering full scholarship, due to COVID restrictions, WYLC is encouraging both applicants to attend virtually, with same support from WYLC as scholarship recipients. WYLC will offer reimbursement for ABA membership if applicants are not already a member. Jordan moved to approve scholarships to

both applicants and cover any expenses they occur to attend the ABA meetings. On motion by Jordan and seconded by Emily, the WYLC approved by unanimous vote (10-0) to award scholarships to both applicants. Julianne requested language from Emily and Jordan to send to scholarship recipients. Emily will send to Julianne.

### Project Updates/Work

- **Awards:** Emily reported about PSLA award having historically low number of nominations for the PSLA, which is suspected to be due to COVID situation. Emily A. discussed the option to extend the deadline and vote at next meeting, per conversations with Julianne, WYLC needs to take a formal vote to extend the deadline. Not celebrated until September, so could be extended to July meeting to vote on. **On motion, by Emily and seconded by Brian N., by unanimous vote the WYLC supported extending the PSLA award deadline to July 15.**
- **ATJ/RRR:** Alixanne Pinkerton, WYLC member, reported on the RRR project, and how they can help WSBA with the rural outreach plan. In a recent meeting, they went over the WSBA project and discussed how the WYLC could assist and contribute. WSBA would like WYLC to assist in research gathering. Julianne prepared a proposal for the WYLC to review with guidelines of how they can assist in the WSBA rural outreach project. WYLC encouraged to focus on what will help new and young lawyers in those areas. WSBA would like to focus WYLC on how to get young lawyers into those rural communities. Julianne reported on the action plan that she proposed for the WYLC. Currently in phase 2 of the project, which is research for overall project plan. Julianne also reported that ATJ Board is working on research for recruiting Rule 9 interns and Rule 6 law clerks in rural communities. WYLC can connect with other groups who are already researching or involved with rural community outreach, to gain information helpful to the issue of legal access in rural communities in Washington State. WYLC could help identify who those entities are that WSBA should be connecting with who have information helpful to rural outreach project.
- **Debt:** Brian N. reported on the LRAP debt projects. Phone call with legislative affairs about moving LRAP bill forward, wanted substantive debate about content of the bill, but Julianne advised WSBA general counsel states that action on this item is currently prohibited by Open Public Meetings Act (OPMA) proclamations by Governor Inslee due to COVID. Brian N. is hopeful to present the proposed bill to WSBA BOG at the November meeting, then present during next legislative session. Brian N. suggested presenting drafted bill for the BOG to consider regardless of budget items, but said that this is not something that needs to be decided on at this time. The draft bill is in the meeting materials on page 35. A declared interest in practicing in a rural community by applicants of LRAP bill could potential join efforts with the rural outreach project.
- **Dress code:** Jordan reported on the dress code initiative. Jordan sent proposed amendments to stakeholders for review via email for the code of judicial conduct.
- **Bylaws and Governance:** Zachary Davison, WYLC member, reported on bylaws and charter updates – change new lawyer definition from five to 10 years and removed age requirements. Next action item is to draft WSBA Bylaws amendment and circulate for discussion. Zach will be working with Paula Kurtz-Kreshel, WYLC member, to draft something to work on at next meeting.
- **New Member Survey:** Julianne reported on the new member survey WSBA is sending out and, thanked WYLC for feedback. Julianne received great information from Brian N. for questions to include on the survey about student loans. Julianne asked when WSBA should send out the survey given the current pandemic and if we should wait until the fall or later. Zach responded that we may get more participation if send now due to people facing these issues more head on currently due to the pandemic. Catherine Holm, WYLC member, stated that we should just send it

out because it has been so long, people's feelings are still valid and their feelings won't end by waiting another year. Esther Hyun, WYLC member, stated that effects of pandemic are unknown, and doesn't make sense to delay due to that, but could add a question about the pandemic to the survey if possible.

- **Budget:** Jordan reported that FY2021 budget draft is finished and has been sent to BOG for approval.

### **Break for Lunch: 12:02 p.m.**

Jordan called the meeting back to order at 12:35 p.m.

### **Project Updates/Work Cont.**

- **Trello:** Jordan reported on Trello board he has set up for the WYLC. Ideas can be put on Trello board for discussion and tracking. Jordan asked that those who do not have a Trello account to create one before next meeting.

### **Recruitment & Engagement Updates**

Jordan reported that they received no applications for North Central Region set. The North Central region continues to be an issue to fill. Jordan brought this up at the meeting with the BOG Executive Committee. Jordan proposed coordinating with the BOG on recruitment, due to comparative need, which was well received by the BOG. The WYLC discussed turning a regional position to an At-large position if they cannot fill the regional vacancy, or possibly extending the position to someone who practices in that region, but doesn't necessarily live there. It was suggested that the WYLC reach out to firms in the North Central region to see if there were any possible candidates that they could suggest. Julianne will reach out to BOG to see if it's possible to open up that position to someone who is not in that region.

### **Rapid Eval: New Projects**

Jordan reported on three potential new items for the WYLC to consider.

1. First, possibly doing a joint meeting with the Senior Lawyers Section to connect and bridge the gap between more experienced lawyers and the WYLC/new members. The WYLC agreed to discuss at the next meeting as an agenda item.
2. Second, Jordan reported that it was suggested by Board of Governor At-large member Alec Stevens to build connections with the minority bar associations (MBAs). The WYLC agreed to also put this on the next meeting's agenda.
3. Lastly, Jordan suggested discussing the impact to the legal community post COVID-19. What will happen to a lot of lawyers regarding employment issues? What can the WYLC do to assist in helping law students to find employment post COVID, or minimize negative impact following the pandemic? Brian N. feels this is a very serious issue and supports putting it on the agenda which was supported by Kim Sandher, WYLC Past Chair, and Cat. Kim suggested that the WYLC could possibly speak at law school graduations, and to find ways of creating that connection earlier. The WYLC agreed to include this as an agenda item for the WYLC's next meeting.

### **Adjournment**

On motion by Brian N. and seconded by Kim, the WYLC by a unanimous vote (11-0) agreed to adjourn the meeting at 1:12 p.m.