

WASHINGTON STATE BAR ASSOCIATION

Washington Young Lawyers Committee

Washington Young Lawyers Committee | WSBA Office, Seattle, WA
Saturday, September 14, 2019 | 10:00 a.m. – 1:12 p.m.
Meeting Minutes

Present/Phone: Alixanne Pinkerton, Brian Neuharth, Catherine Holm, Chelsie Elliott, Emily Ann Albrecht, Ian McCurdy, Jordan Couch, Kim Sandher, Maha Jafarey (joined at 10:41 a.m.), Zachary Davison

Absent: Alice Bagirova (excused), Benjamin Hodges, Brandon Holt (excused), Colin McMahon (excused), Mike Mocer, Molly Winston, Nathan Beard

WSBA Staff: Ana LaNasa-Selvidge, Julianne Unite

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

Public: Esther Hyun, Sho Ly

Introductions & Approval of the Minutes

Kim called the meeting to order at 10:06 a.m.

On motion by Jordan and seconded by Brian, the WYLC by a unanimous vote (9-0-0) approved the July meeting minutes.

WSBA Updates

New Member Survey: Ana reported that her team is working on developing a project plan and timeline for the new member survey. Ana reminded that some of the goals of the survey are to help better inform the creation of charter for WYLC, and identify ways to define new and young lawyer, and help WSBA guide new member programming. Emily reported that the ABA Young Lawyers Division (YLD) passed changing the YLD definition to 10 years of practice and removing the age requirement at the ABA Annual Meeting assembly last month and that it most likely will go to ABA Assembly for final approval. Emily also stated that a lot of state organizations are reviewing this same definition issue. Ana reported other groups at WSBA are also interested in helping with the survey. The survey is broader than what the WYLC is concerned with. Ana's team is working on a plan to draft the survey with other WSBA staff and stakeholders and then invite WYLC members to help provide feedback on the draft survey before dissemination. Ana further reported that the plan is to have an initial meeting in November and December and if anyone else is interested in helping, contact Ana by then.

Bar Structures Workgroup: Ana reported that the Bar Structures Work Group (BSWG) report (one majority and one minority report) has been published online. Ana encouraged the WYLC to read the reports and let staff know if there are questions. Ana further stated that if the WYLC wants more discussion on this, the topic can be included on next meeting's agenda. Kim asked for a summary of the report. Ana responded that the majority report recommended that the WSBA stay unified, WSBA evaluate the Keller deduction, encourage BOG to include members of public (already in bylaws), asked the Supreme Court to reexamine Governance Task Force report, and continue to have the Supreme Court boards be administered under the WSBA. Ana further explained that the minority report

recommended that bifurcation should be researched further and considered. Ana stated that both reports will go to WSBA Supreme Court. Julianne provided a brief update regarding the *Fleck* case, summarizing that the 7th Circuit Court of Appeals re-affirmed the decision of the lower courts. Catherine asked if Representative Stokesbary was planning to introduce another bill. Ana replied that the Supreme Court will try to work together with legislature on any changes, but in past years a bill calling for bifurcation has been proposed, thus it wouldn't be a surprise if another similar bill is proposed in future legislative sessions.

FY2019 Wrap-up/FY2020 Begins: Julianne reported that fiscal year 2019 will end September 30 and encouraged WYLC members to submit their expense reports to Julianne by the end of the month. Julianne also reported that the next meeting in November will be an orientation. Ana reported we will receive OPMA training at that meeting. Julianne then presented a new draft fiscal year 2020 WYLC meeting schedule, which proposed meeting in Bellingham in May and Skamania/Stevenson in July.

On motion by Jordan, second by Alixanne, and abstention by Brian, the WYLC by a majority vote (8-0-1) approved to host the July meeting in Skamania. Ian stated he will work on the May meeting location in Bellingham.

BOG Report

None given at this time.

September BOG Meeting

Jordan stated that he will be providing a report to the BOG on student loan debt issues, changing the definition of new young lawyers, drafting a WYLC charter, and getting more involved with law schools and law students. Alixanne reported that at the WSBA listening tour stop in Yakima this year, one of the BOG members claimed that the reason why young lawyers do not go to rural areas is because they can't pay off their student loans in those areas. Alixanne further reported that the BOG members claim is a negative portrayal of practice in rural areas. Emily reported that in response to the BOG member's comments, there are loan repayment plans based on income that help borrowers adjust payment amounts to their income. Brian said another governor talked to him about defunding LLLT program and helping non-profit attorneys to pay of their student loans. Ana said one of the things that she hopes this committee can work on is that there is a lot of misunderstanding between members practicing for a long time about what the student loan debt crisis is. There is a need for education and identifying ways that the committee can do to educate board members and membership at large.

ABA Report

Sho reported that he attended the ABA Annual Meeting and thanked the WYLC for the opportunity. One of the highlights of the meeting was a discussion about the law school debt crisis and brainstormed ideas of how to alleviate costs for law students in the future. Some ideas included 1) a paid externship opportunity, (2) law students fulfilling any remaining credit requirements to graduate to be completed online, (3) partnering with undergraduate students who after their junior year could matriculate into law school, and (4) restructuring law school curriculum itself to be tailored to specific courses based on what the students want to do.

A second highlight of the meeting was an initiative called “Men of Color Project”. This initiative would support men of color in their first few years of experience towards leadership and career advancement by helping men of color work through obstacles. An inaugural summit will be held in D.C.

The third highlight was a discussion on different scholarship opportunities, which included a legal opportunities scholarship for law students with immigrant backgrounds and the YLD scholars program to promote diversity in legal profession.

Sho concluded that an eye opening experience for him was observing the parliamentary procedures—the introduction of resolutions, presentation by a representative for support, presentation by a representative for the opposing side, and rebuttal by representative in support. One of the discussions at the ABA YLD Assembly involved the definition of young lawyer, which was heavily debated, but eventually adopted. The current definition of young lawyer was 36 years old or younger or less than five years in practice. At the Annual meeting the definition changed to 10 years of practice or less. Sho further reported that the change may have to go to the ABA larger council and then the larger assembly and won't be implemented for a while.

Ana asked if Sho would be willing to write a summary to share on new lawyers list serve. Sho agreed he could write something for NWSidebar blog and/or list serve.

Emily reported that the WYLC needs to make the ABA Delegate a requirement for the scholarship. Emily also suggested giving more people scholarships since recruitment for delegates has been difficult. Kim said that in the past the WYLD gave \$250 for each delegate.

Subcommittees Year End Report Outs

Bylaws and Governance: No report given.

Debt and New Lawyer Benefits: Brian reported that he moderated the Financial Focus CLE in August and that the CLE went well. The CLE this year focused on how to hang a shingle and had about eight people in person and 80 online attend. Brian reported at a WYLC leadership team meeting, they talked about ongoing interest to discuss debt levels in Washington State and hope to include a question about debt in the upcoming new lawyer survey. Brian reported that the subcommittee is working on drafting an article about the WSBA Member Wellness Program (MWP) and was thinking about recruiting Kaelin Brodie to do the write up. Brian also stated that he recently found out one of his law school classmates committed suicide, so maybe Brian will write the article and work with Dan Crystal. Brian further reported that the current MWP offerings are ill-defined and wants to draft a synopsis for the next subcommittee chair to let them know status of the subcommittee's projects. Kim reported that at a WYLC leadership team meeting, they discussed that subcommittee chairs do a write-up to pass onto the next subcommittee chairs for succession planning.

Awards: Emily reported that the Public Service Leadership Award article will be in the October issue of *NWLawyer*.

Outreach: Maha reported that Colin is rolling off the WYLC this year and he wanted to check-in about who is taking his place as subcommittee chair. Maha further reported that Colin is planning a swearing-in ceremony. Kim asked Ian and Catherine to talk about their experience arranging these types of events. Catherine responded that the Thurston County Bar Association has a YLD and always does a swearing in ceremony and gets sponsors for it. Catherine suggested talking to YLD counterparts and ask for ways to sponsor the event. Catherine added that Lewis County does not host a swearing-in ceremony nor do they have a YLD. Alixanne reported that the Yakima County Bar Association hosts a swearing in ceremony. Catherine suggested this is something WYLC members could work with local bars to host a swearing in ceremony. Julianne suggested including a question about swearing in ceremonies in new lawyer survey. Catherine suggested including questions like what type of swearing in do you prefer e.g. someone you know. Ian reported that the Whatcom County Bar Association had a swearing in ceremony up until four years ago and someone contacted him last year asking to organize a ceremony, so Ian and Esther worked together to host a ceremony. Ian further reported that the Island County Bar Association might have a swearing in ceremony. Kim asked how people found out about swearing in ceremonies. WYLC members reported that they went online, contacted local bars, or heard from someone they knew. Ana asked what other pieces are important in swearing in ceremonies e.g. networking, connecting to local community? Alixanne asked if people had jobs lined up prior to attending the ceremonies and the general answer was no. Kim suggested perhaps if present, WYLC members should help with finding jobs for new lawyers at swearing in ceremonies. Ana reported that the reason why WSBA does not host swearing in ceremonies is to support the local bars in hosting those events. Ana further suggested that the WYLC focus efforts on those areas that do not host ceremonies. Maha asked if there are any action steps. Kim replied the next action step could be to include a question in the new lawyer survey to help determine if this is an issue. Zach asked if there is an option just to sign the oath or do something online and not be sworn in because he just got reciprocity in another state and he was able to just sign an oath. Ana replied that we should research to determine if a swearing in ceremony is required.

Access To Justice (ATJ)/Recruitment Retention Retiring (RRR): Jordan reported this year, the subcommittee did a lot of things. They worked on identifying the landscape of Washington State to see the impact of retiring lawyers, lack of new lawyers, and impacts on the public. The main thing the subcommittee is working on is hosting the RRR summit w/ Oregon. The ABA has a fund for YLD events like these and applications opens September. The dates they are considering for the summit would be next spring in Oregon. Washington will plan and Oregon will sign off. The goals of the summit are to bring stakeholders to help recruit people to rural areas to provide ATJ to the public, make people understand there may be more opportunities in rural areas, and encourage pro bono work. Emily responded that the WYLC has been trying to do things with Oregon for years and it seems like Washington always has to take lead to get things done. Emily suggested that the WYLC make it easy for Oregon and host the summit in Portland. Ana responded that the WYLC originally planned for a spring summit but it stalled in past because Oregon was going to apply for ABA scholarship and missed the deadline so there was no funding. Another challenge is there is no clear understanding of the goal, outcome, why, who needs to come, etc. and Oregon had different goal at the time. Ana further explained that part of the goal was to bring together external stakeholders e.g. local county YLDs, ATJ

community and problem solve, but they were having a hard time recruiting other stakeholders from other states. Emily said she has really good relationships with the Multnomah YLD and suggested working with other local Oregon YLDs. Ana also said since WYLC is meeting in Skamania in July, it would be a good way to connect with Oregon. Ana suggested depending on the goals, maybe it's better working with local counties to host a networking event to attract people to come to those areas. Alixanne said most people are not going to want to move, but rather, they should focus on convincing urban attorneys to go to rural areas. Catherine asked how to get people to think about those jobs outside urban areas. Emily responded that it could depend on practice. Alixanne responded that if a lawyer is in private practice in rural counties, they would have to be jack of all trades. Jordan reported that the subcommittee has data, but the data does not show a correlation between the number of attorneys and representation. Ana suggested inviting stakeholders in rural communities to WYLC meetings when they travel out of Seattle.

ABA: Report previously given under ABA Reports.

FY20 Subcommittee Chair Appointments

Bylaws and Governance Chair: Zachary

Awards Chair: Emily

Debt and New Lawyer Benefits Chair: Brian

RRR/ATJ Chair: Alixanne

Outreach: The WYLC discussed whether outreach should be a subcommittee. Jordan stated that he thinks it does not need to be a subcommittee and the social media person could be a point of contact for outreach events. Maha suggested that the entire WYLC do outreach. Kim reported that there is no dire need for a subcommittee to meet all the time to do outreach and that the WYLC could have outreach planning discussions at WYLC meetings. On motion by Brian and seconded by Alixanne, the WYLC by unanimous vote (9-0-0) approved to sunset the Outreach subcommittee.

ABA: Kim suggested combining Awards and ABA into Awards subcommittee. On motion by Emily and seconded by Brian, the WYLC by a unanimous vote (10-0-0) approved to combine the ABA and Awards subcommittees into the Awards subcommittee.

Julianne requested that at the next WYLC meeting in November the subcommittee chairs come prepared with a draft schedule of the subcommittee meetings for the year.

Law School Student Involvement

Jordan reported that he hopes the WYLC can look at things to address the student loan problem. Julianne suggested bringing in the law student representatives in the discussion. Kim reported that the WYLC discussed visiting the law schools. Alixanne asked what would the WYLC talk to law students about? Emily replied that the WYLC can talk to students about WSBA. Catherine asked if there is

something WSBA does with law schools and could the WYLC work together with WSBA on that? Maha suggested extending the invitation to other student types e.g. masters students. Kim replied the WYLC could explain that the WYLC exists and what WSBA provides to get the information out there. Maha suggested working on mentorship or a more hands on project to serve as a resource for experiential training. Brian asked if that is the role for career services offices? Brian further said mentorship programs are often difficult on both sides. Alixanne asked for further clarification about what law student involvement means. The WYLC discussed information sharing and mentorship opportunities. As for next steps, the Debt and New Lawyer Benefits subcommittee will continue discussion and report back to the WYLC.

Public Service Project and Brainstorming Next Year

Kim reported that she and Jordan discussed ways the WYLC could serve the public. Brian responded that the Tacoma Pierce County Bar Association encourages members to volunteer at clinics. Catherine recommended that public service did not need to be legal related e.g. volunteer at a food bank. Julianne reported that the BOG does volunteer service projects like clean up trash when they travel for meetings. Brian responded that he would prefer to do something legal related since everyone cannot be an attorney and WYLC members are uniquely trained to provide legal services. Maha suggested that since there are a lot of legal clinics that exist that are in need of volunteers, the WYLC could collaborate with existing clinics. Catherine suggested that depending on where the WYLC is meeting, the WYLC works with whatever legal clinic is in the area and help staff the clinic. Brian suggested that if that if volunteering at a clinic is not possible, the WYLC could then volunteer at a food bank or something similar. Catherine also suggested partnering with the BOG on their service projects. Kim suggested other activities e.g. hosting a wellness event like yoga. Emily suggested reaching out to local bars to get ideas. Alixanne reported that one of most popular events at the Yakima County Bar Association is ski day. Brian asked who would be in charge of these public service projects. Kim clarified that the discussion would go to the larger WYLC, then to the leadership team to discuss and identify who needs to be involved.

End of Year Social

Kim requested help for the check-in table at the end of year social. Emily volunteered. Kim thanked everyone for all their work this year. WYLC members thanked Kim for her leadership.

Adjournment

On motion by Catherine and seconded by Emily, the WYLC by a unanimous vote (10-0-0) approved to adjourn the meeting at 1:12 p.m.