

DEI Council Workgroup
March 12th, 2025 Meeting Notes

Present: Jerry Thomas, Gov. Nam Nguyen (Co-Chair), Raina Wagner (Co-Chair), SaNni Lemonidis, Vivica Burnette, Sharon Sakamoto, Miryam Gordon, Gov. Tom Ahearne, Gov. Matthew Dresden, Anthony Rich, Judge Andrea Jarmon, Gov. Mary Rathbone
Absent: Alec Stephens, Miguel Blancas, Milli Cunningham, Lynette Jenkins
Guests: Gov. Chris Bhang, Liz Johnson
WSBA Staff: Andrea Agrella Clemente, Diana Singleton, Saleena Salango
BOG Liaison:

Meeting called to order 12:05 pm

February Meeting Minutes

Raina Wagner made a motion to approve the minutes. Viveca Burnette seconded the motion. 8 number of members voted in approval, 0 declined, 0 abstained.

Board of Governors

The Board of Governors is having a meeting on March 21-22, 2025. There is also an executive session that is not open to the public regarding the executive order affecting Perkins Coie. Viveca Burnette brought forth the perspectives of law students graduating hoping to go into DEI work. Anthony Rich brought forth potential for changing the name of the DEI council. Judge Andrea Jarmon shared that the supreme court of Washington has set a model that diversity, equity, inclusion, anti-bias, and anti-racial bias are the cornerstones of core competencies that are required in the legal profession. Thus, the council should not spend time/energy on litigating names.

Interview Process for At-Large Candidates

The time has been set for April 30th at 3:00-4:30 tentatively. If the number of candidates increases, then the time will also have to increase. The council will be sending at least 3 candidates to the Board of Governors.

Volunteer Recruitment for the DEI Council for FY26

Three members of the DEI council are rounding up on their final terms. There will be 4 positions guaranteed to be open and there are potentially 3 more positions that could possibly be open. Applications for the DEI council will be open at the beginning of May and end on the 31st. The council has maintained a very open policy for members, members can include members of the public, law students, DEI professionals, judicial members and many others. Please review the charter for criteria.

Motion – Diversity Equity and Inclusion

Sharon Sakamoto put forth the motion to refer to the DEI Council use the full term 'Diversity, Equity and Inclusion' as opposed to the acronym 'DEI' while conducting the work of the council. Tom Ahearne seconded the motion. 12 members voted in the affirmative, none declined, and none abstained.

DEI Council Retreat Scheduling

The council hopes to have a meeting early summer and another one in October. Diana Singleton asked the council if they would like to meet on a weekday or a weekend? The timeline for the retreat will be

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between May 9th and June 9th. The Equity and Justice Team will be sending out polling times. Next meeting the council will discuss location

Equity and Justice Plan Workgroup Update

Sharon Sakamoto updated the council that the workgroup will be presenting to the Board of Governors for the first reading of the plan. Nam Nguyen, Raina Wagner, Miryam Gordon, Sharon Sakamoto and Sunitha Anjilvel will be presenting the plan to the Board of Governors.

Motion – Equity and Justice Plan

Nam Nguyen moved to approve the changes made to the plan to be adopted. Sharon Sakamoto seconded the motion. There were 10 voted in the affirmative, 0 abstentions, and 0 dissents.

Pathways to the Profession Update

Julien Tarraf updated the council on the creation of the charter for the workgroup. The group discussed their goals in regard to the law school alternatives and admission changes that align with the promotion of diversity. A team project has been created, spearheaded by Jerry and Saleena, to create a guide on legal guidance for legal advocates.

Community Updates

Tacoma Pierce County Bar Association representative Liz Johnson came to speak about how the TPCBA does not have a DEI Plan or a DEI section. As such, they would like to make a concerted effort to assess the diversity equity and inclusion taking place within the TPCBA. This is done with the aim to increase representation and creating thoughtful CLE's and marketing materials. Thurston County Bar and KCBA have

Meeting adjourned at 1:30 pm