**Diversity Committee Minutes**

**June 13th, 2022 12:00 pm - 1:30 pm**

The Washington State Bar Association’s Diversity Committee is dedicated to implementing WSBA’s

Diversity and Inclusion Plan. The work of the committee promotes historically underrepresented groups to enter and stay in the profession of law. The Diversity Committee does this through collaborative relationships and community building activities, which highlight the numerous societal benefits of a diverse law profession.

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**Attendees:** Gov. Sunitha Anjilveel, Nam Nguyen, SaNni Lemonidis, Gov. Matthew Dresden, Monica Lopez Reinmiller, Raina Wagner, Sharon Sakamoto, Maria Mia Scavella-Little, Christopher Swaby, Gov. Alec Stephens

**Law Student Reps:** Absent

**WSBA Staff:** Diana Singleton, Nicholas Mejía, Barbara Nahourii, Imani Shannon, Saleena Salango

**Guests:** ChrisTiana ObeySumner, Paul Darnell

Meeting called to order at 12:06 p.m.

**Equity Assessment Training:** The Committee is being very intentional with their changes when it comes to creating a council, the work of the committee, and how we should be looking at the at large governor positions. Sharon mentioned that with regards to joining the committee, she feels like she has felt she has spent a lot of time trying to catch up and feels like she will have unfinished work when her term ends if she is not appointed to the committee yet again; overall, she is very grateful to be on the committee. It was stated that diversity work will never be finished, and diversity work and its meaning keep changing, which is why Sharon is a constant voice when it comes to furthering equity.

Some goals of the committee include but are not limited to, updating the DEI plan, passing a plan to have non BOG members vote within the committee, MBAs to support bog accountability, have members of the organization take a look at their own DEI efforts and work towards them rather than one committee doing so, and in terms of pipeline work, make a template to create a consistent program that will work year after year.

It may be important more openly discuss DEI among the BOG. It was stated that WSBA is ahead of the other state bar associations when it comes to DEI work. Many of the other Bar associations are reactive whereas the WSBA is a bit more proactive in its efforts relating to equity inside the legal system.

Some committee members feel like some members of the Board of Governors are not reflective of the Diversity Committee in their efforts and are not prioritizing DEI. It was noted that there may be a possibility of even some opposition in some instances.

There are many law pipeline programs in other states and universities such as UW Tacoma and UCLA that the WSBA can look to for reference. When some members of the BOG first joined, the Executive Director had first stated that the pipeline matter wasn’t something that they were going to focus on. It was noted that the duty of the committee is policy work and that it will take a great deal of time, resources, etc. in order to look into the pipeline matter. It was added that it may be beneficial to be cautious about continuing to add tasks for the committee to look into out of caution to not overload the committee.

Noted that EJD has evolved over the years and that the committee and EJD has been partnering with the committee on matters related to DEI.

ChrisTiana stated that they will share a document asking the four additional questions. The projected date for ChrisTiana to present their report is in August. It will be presented to Diana but is encouraged to be shared throughout the organization.

**DEI Council Update:**

This is set to go to a vote by the next BOG meeting. If or once this will get passage, this will go to the supreme court for approval. The 2nd reading will be at the July BOG meeting.

**WSBA BOG updates:**

The MBA proposal was in response to an incident in 2020 where a sitting Governor called out the MBAs. The question “are we as a committee thinking about submitting something in response to this incident” was posed.

**The ARC reception:**

Last year the reception was held online, there were no formal questions. The reception is a chance for students to ask questions about entering law school and after law school as well as a chance for students to network. It was noted Michelle Lucas resigned her position and moved on. The question whether the it would be more beneficial to hold the reception in person or virtually and what barriers may be present in doing so. Feedback was encouraged.

**Meeting Minutes:**

Sunitha Made a motion to approve previous minutes, Alec seconded. Motion voted in favor unanimously.

**Announcements:**

Imani announced on June 30th from noon - 1 o’clock the Equity and Justice Department will be showing “A Crime on the Bayou” and will be having a discussion. Lolis Eli will be at the event virtually, there will be a Q&A regarding the case. It was noted that Raphael Sadik created a great deal of the music that was used in the film.

With regards to structural racism, it was stated that discussions surrounding the topic can be very powerful, moving, and inspiring partly because when you can hear the experiences by someone impacted by someone by the system personally. Discussed that while you may have “paid your debt to society”, this is likely not the case because it may affect you in your hiring, housing, and other areas in your life.

Governor Alec Stephens made an announcement reminding members that Juneteenth will be coming up on June 19th.

Meeting adjourned at 1:34 pm