

DEI Council Meeting Minutes

Monday, July 10, 2023 from 12:00 noon - 1:30 p.m.

The DEI Council advances diversity, equity, and inclusion and addresses the problems of bias, systemic inequities and underrepresentation in the legal profession and legal system.

Member Attendees: WSBA Gov. Alec Stephens, Miryam Gordon, Lilli Douglas, Christopher Swaby, Mia Scavella Little, Laine Ellison, Noelle Chung, Sharon Sakamoto, Raina Wagner, WSBA Gov. Sunitha Anjilvel, Gov. Matthew Dresden

WSBA Staff: Diana Singleton, Nicholas Mejía, Saleena Salango

June Meeting Minutes

Miryam Gordon moved to approve the minutes with the addition of adding her to the list of attendees, Sunitha Anjilvel seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

Board of Governor Update

Gov. Sunitha Anjilvel mentioned the level of engagement related to the trainings was relatively high. Diana mentioned due to logistics the training was started later and as a result the third training video was not covered, but the BOG took the opportunity to discuss DEI in depth. The next day the BOG followed up with the Washington Leadership Institute.

Gov. Sunitha Anjilvel, Gov. Alec Stephens and Diana shared about how the DEI training for the BOG went in June. Alec noted that all of the governor-elects were at the training adding there was anonymous polling in the training that was really helpful to allow people to open up and suggested the Equity and Justice Team continue doing so.

Regarding the recent BOG election, Tom Ahearne was named as the new governor elect for the At-Large governor seat and was present at the previous bog meeting.

Relating to the budget, the first draft for the budget was drafted in June and the second draft will be presented in August. Diana proposed two additional staff members. Gov. Sunitha Anjilvel mentioned it is extremely important to continue focusing on the pipeline work and she would like to be able to institutionalize the work in the future, adding a dedicated person to the work. She reiterated it is challenging to continue to actively engage in pipeline work on a volunteer basis. Gov. Alec Stephens mentioned it may be important to look at what funding is coming from the Bar Foundation to support DEI efforts.

DEI Council New Member Selection Process

Raina mentioned there were more applicants than position openings on the DEI council. The council will now have to go through the selection process to choose the candidates.

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It was mentioned that adding another step may ensure those who apply are truly interested in the positions.

Gov. Anjilvel mentioned it may be important to bring any new proposed changes in the future to general counsel to ensure that no legal issues arise. Miryam mentioned it may be worth asking what individuals seek to accomplish during their time on the council and ask if they are looking to serve on a particular subcommittee while they are on the council.

Diana mentioned by asking distinct questions there may be a more uniform process for selection than there previously has been. She also mentioned there could be a 600 word limit for answers on applications.

Sharon motioned to advance the questions to general counsel. The motion was seconded by Gov. Sunitha Anjilvel. All voted in favor.

ARC Reception Planning and Engagement Update

Nicholas stated the details of the reception, including that it will be hosted at the WSBA office, food will be served, as well as the fact that there were students and mentors that were currently signing up. He encouraged members of the DEI Council to attend if they could. Gov. Alec Stephens mentioned it may be beneficial to use the term “legal professionals” instead of mentors as not to confuse people due to the connotations of a long-term commitment that the word mentoring carries.

Membership Demographic Survey Update

Diana gave an update that the consultant is dealing with technical issues but hopes to send out the survey soon.

Law Student Pipeline Workgroup Update

Mia stated the workgroup was not able to meet the last meeting but will be meeting in mid-July to continue discussions relating to the work the workgroup can engage in.

DEI Plan

There have been three proposals that have been accepted. The committee is determining what further action needs to be taken relating to selection(s).

Planning for Remaining FY23 Meetings

Raina mentioned that she will not be able to be in attendance for the next meeting. Miryam mentioned that she feels it is required that there has to be a meeting on the 14th because there is a deadline that must be met.

September Retreat

As it relates to the September retreat, a date conflicts with Rosh Hashanah. They are looking to have the outgoing individuals and incoming individuals come to a retreat that may occur in October.

Announcements:

It was noted that for MBA events the WSBA will cover costs. There was a clarification it is the DEI Council member's cost that will be covered and no additional individuals.