

Washington State Bar Association Dispute Resolution Section
Executive Committee Meeting on January 24, 2025 (Noon to 1:30 pm on Zoom)

Present: Paula Emery, Jody Leff, Mel Simburg, Jasbinder Dhoot, Chris Casillas, Ted Hunter, and Donna Lurie

Absent: Bob Oberstein, Melissa Fuller, Dee Knapp, Courtland Shafer, Oliver Garrison, Julia Doherty, and Lish Whitson

The Agenda for the January 24 Executive Committee was approved by everyone present.

Meeting Minutes: Ted Hunter will connect with Dee Knapp to finalize and send out the October and November meeting minutes. The Executive Committee did not hold a meeting in December.

Section Elections: Nominations are due February 10, 2025. Chris Casillas, Ted Hunter, and Paula Emery will solicit nominations for officers and any open Board positions. They will recruit a non-voting member to assist with nominations in compliance with WSBA policy.

Treasurer Report: Courtland Shafer will miss a few meetings due to recovery from surgery. Paula Emery reported that the Section is in good financial shape. Paula will provide high-level financial updates to the Executive Committee in Courtland's absence.

Announcements: Paula Emery is working with WSBA to recruit a research intern to assist in some special Section projects, including legislative research.

NW Dispute Resolution Conference: The Conference is scheduled to take place on March 27 and 28, 2025 at the University of WA Law School. Early bird deadline is February 14th. Sponsors so far are the American Arbitration Association, Resolution WA, and Mediate.com. The Committee continues to seek sponsors. A full description of the program is on the Conference website. CLE materials will be submitted next week for approval.

Executive Committee members are urged to use social media to promote the conference and target their messages to their audience. Certain sessions or speakers may be more attractive or interesting to certain groups. Paula posted several links and sample promotions for Committee members to use. Speakers will be given some material to help promote their sessions.

Education: The mini-webinar is set for February 5 at 10:00 am on WSBA's platform. Donna Lurie has recruited mediator Ann Marshall to talk about "Preparing Your Client for Mediation". Over 600 people have registered for this free webinar. We can accommodate up to 1,000 people. Paula Emery will provide technical producing and logistical support. We will promote the NW DR Conference at the webinar. Ann Marshall is one of our Conference speakers.

Scholarship: The Section established a scholarship to honor the work of Professor Alan Kirtley. This scholarship is not restricted to covering the registration fee for the NW DR Conference. Funds can be used to attend ABA or other Bar Association events that further dispute resolution. Julia Doherty has committed to posting the availability of the scholarship and the eligibility criteria on the Section website.

Legislation: The Legislative Committee continues to hold conversations with State Representative Roger Goodman on legislation to provide for early mediation in family law matters. These conversations include consideration of effective screening protocols and adequate training for mediators. Research is needed on the impact of early mediation in family law matters in all 39 counties of Washington. Jody Leff reported that there will be additional Rules of Professional Conduct (RPC) amendments coming up in the near future.

Membership: Jasbinder Dhoot attended the WSBA event on member recruitment and messaging. She noted that the Solo Practice section is quite large and may be interested in working with the DR Section on a collaborative event. Each section has the option of creating a video story to be posted on the WSBA webpage. Both Jaz and Mel are busy posting DR events and information to Section members.

Academic Relationships: Both Seattle University and the University of Washington Law Schools continue to need volunteer judges for their negotiation, mediation, and arbitration competitions. Section members are encouraged to support the next generation of dispute resolution practitioners. Julia Doherty is reaching out to Gonzaga Law School and seeking a connection between their program and the DR Section.

Bylaws Review: Paula posted the Bylaws revisions that were suggested by Ted Hunter and Donna Lurie. Executive Committee members are urged to provide feedback on these suggested revisions by February 7, 2025. Feedback can be entered on the Google document provided by Paula, or feedback can be emailed directly to Ted and Donna. Donna committed to posting some rationale for the revisions in the Google document. Revisions will be discussed and voted on at the Executive Committee's next meeting on February 28, 2025. Our revisions cannot conflict with WSBA Bylaws. Our revisions must be sent to the WSBA General Counsel for WSBA approval after Executive Committee consensus on February 28.

Website Updates: Julia Doherty outlined an email with all of the changes to the Section website. She will email those changes to WSBA and work with WSBA staff to update the Section webpage.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:20 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Donna Lurie (substitute notetaker)
January 25, 2025