

WASHINGTON STATE BAR ASSOCIATION

Washington Young Lawyers Committee

Washington Young Lawyers Committee Meeting | Virtual via Zoom

Monday August 18, 2025, | **12:00 p.m. - 1:00 p.m.**

[Via Zoom](#) | Meeting ID: 899 4611 1517 | Passcode 608920 | Call In 888-788-0099

AGENDA:

- 1) **Welcome & Introductions; Approval of July Meeting Minutes** – Mason
- 2) **WSBA Updates** –Chelle, Jordan
 - a) BOG Meeting Updates
 - b) WSBA Updates
- 3) **Bylaw Amendment Update** – Mason
- 4) **Team Updates and Regional Reports** – All
 - a) **Financial Focus CLE** – Chawisa
 - b) **Social Media** – Ariel
 - c) **Legal Lunchbox CLE** - Hanna
 - d) **Mentorship Project Team** – Janta
- 5) **New ideas for Next Meeting** – All
- 6) **Adjournment** – Mason

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**Washington Young Lawyers Committee Meeting
Hybrid at the Marcus Whitman Hotel, Walla Walla, WA & Zoom
Friday, July 18, 2025, | 9:05 – 10:58 a.m.
Meeting Minutes**

WYLC Members Present In-Person: Mason Ji, Alexander Reaganson, Janta Steele

WYLC Members Present Remotely: Stephan Yhann (joined 9:34 a.m.), Ariel Cook, Michelle Hesse, Matthew Rommelmann, Chawisa Laicharoenwat, Steven Brown, Thomas Garvey (departed 10:00 a.m.), Mackenzie Lloyd, Michelle Mendoza (arrived 9:13)

WYLC Members Absent: Adin Johnson (unexcused), Sydney Sherman (unexcused), Aaron Haynes (excused), Bethany Nolan (unexcused), Makenzie Spinks (unexcused); Hanna Harrison (excused)

Board of Governors Liaisons: Jordan Couch (departed 10:30 a.m.), Kari Petrasek (departed 10:29 a.m.), Brent Williams Ruth (arrived 9:14 a.m.)

WSBA Staff: Chelle Gegax – WSBA Member Services and Engagement Specialist (in-person), Vanessa Sweeney – WSBA Member Services and Engagement Program Coordinator (remote), Julianne Unite – WSBA Member Services and Engagement Manager (remote)

Welcome & Introductions; Approval of June Meeting Minutes – Mason

WYLC Chair, Mason Ji, opened the meeting at 9:05 a.m. and welcomed everyone in attendance. On motion by WYLC Member Alexander Reaganson, seconded by WYLC Member Matt Rommelmann, the WYLC approved the June WYLC Meeting minutes (11-0-0).

WSBA Updates – Chelle, Jordan

BOG Updates – Kari and Jordan

Governor Kari Petrasek noted that the Board of Governors (BOG) is meeting today, followed by a dinner with the Law Clerk program graduates. BOG meeting agenda items include the first read review of the FY26 budget, the new license fee policy, review of the fees for the entity regulation pilot project, and the recommendation from Member Engagement to change the fiscal policy to allow alcohol purchase with section funds.

WSBA Updates – Chelle

WSBA Member Services and Engagement Specialist Chelle Gegax shared that the CLE summer sale is live now through end of July, with all on-demand CLEs available for half off regular cost. The next Legal Lunchbox will take place on July 29 with Tyler O'Brien, the Young Lawyer Liaison (YLL) for both the Business Law Section and the Solo and Small Practice Section, presenting on how to build an online presence. Chelle encouraged Committee members to attend if able. The Access to Justice (ATJ) Conference will take place September 18-19, in Yakima. The YLL to Sections program has finished general

marketing and now awaiting final selections from each section. Chelle noted there is a YLL Orientation scheduled for September 25 and encouraged WYLC presence to continue to build connection between YLL and WYLC. Both the Criminal Law Section and Dispute Resolution Section are still recruiting, if Committee members know anyone, please encourage them to apply.

Bylaws Amendment Update – Mason

Mason stated that he, along with WYLC Member Janta Steele, and Alex will be presenting to BOG this afternoon. Alex noted that the primary difference between the last discussion and today is we have some words about potential amendments that may arise, we are anticipating them. Primarily, we knew there may be a possibility of wanting to do a 5-year marker for transfers – international or other state jurisdictions – and while we still clarify that tribal jurisdictions are legitimate and different in structure, they would not count in that transfer guideline. Alex continued, sharing that three options are anticipated with the presentation to the BOG: first, the change may be accepted outright; second, the potential amendment described may be considered; and third, given there are a number of new BOG members since the first read, there is a possibility of a third read. Mason concluded with a special thanks to Janta and Alex for their extraordinary efforts in preparing the bylaw amendment.

PSLA Nomination Review and Decisions - Alex

Alex reminded the Committee where things left off at the last meeting with consensus for Nominee 6 to receive one of the five awards. Based on the vote from the last meeting, it was narrowed down to Nominees 1, 2, 4, 5, 11, and 14. Four awardees are to be decided upon next. Alex opened the floor to the Committee asking if any applicant(s) stand out above the others. No comments were made. Alex continued, identifying Nominees 2, 4, 5 and 11 as stand outs. Voting ensued via the chat, with Committee members sharing their top four selections.

Nominee	Votes
1	0
2	9
4	9
5	2
11	8
14	8

On motion by Alex, seconded by Ariel, and one abstention, the WYLC approved awarding 2025 Public Service Leadership Awards to Nominees 2, 4, 6, 11, and 14 (10-0-1). Next steps involve Chelle notifying the awardees, followed by Alex writing a Bar News article covering each awardee, which will likely be published in September or October.

Project Team Updates

Financial Focus CLE – Chawisa

WYLC Member Chawisa Laicharoenwat confirmed the next Financial Focus CLE will take place on September 11, with one speaker covering the topic of Insurance Basics for Lawyers. WYLC Members are

encouraged to attend; Chelle will distribute the link for it when available. Chawisa noted it is a free CLE for young lawyers.

Janta mentioned speaking to WSBA's Chief Disciplinary Counsel, Doug Ende, and indicated he is interested in presenting at a future WYLC meeting to discuss how to avoid discipline as a lawyer. Mason and Janta will reach out to Doug to extend an invite to attend the September WYLC meeting to discuss possible CLE opportunities.

Social Media – Ariel

WYLC Member Ariel Cook shared social media stats: the "WSBA Young Lawyers Committee (WYLC)" LinkedIn profile currently has only 5 followers, however the Legal Lunchbox post received 387 impressions, and 18 people clicked the link to registration. The WYLC Facebook profile is old, has 1700 followers, with very minimal interaction. Waiting on the WYLC Instagram account, which will take some time to get approved. Ariel noted that any future name changes to social media profiles will need to be managed via the WSBA Communications team.

Janta asked if promoting the upcoming July 30 After Bar Social can be shared among the Committee members who are connected to the law schools. Alex will connect with Gonzaga University, Ariel will connect with Seattle University, and Mason can connect with University of Washington. Chelle is working with the WSBA design team on an event graphic, and will share with Ariel who will add links, the final version will be shared to the WYLC for distribution.

Legal Lunchbox CLE – Hanna

In WYLC Member Hanna Harrison's absence, Chelle noted that the upcoming Legal Lunchbox will take place on July 29 over the lunch hour. Tyler O'Brien will be presenting on the topic of "Build Success with on Online Presence." Chelle confirmed registration is available on WSBA website and encouraged WYLC Members to attend. Janta commented that the registration system appears to be slow. Chelle will investigate with the WSBA IT department and determine if there are potential improvements. Julianne noted the WSBA is in the process of transitioning to a different system within the next year or so. Julianne added, when it comes to live presentations, there will be federal sales tax added effective October 1, 2025, but does not impact free CLEs, and on-demand CLEs are already taxed. Chelle will double check with Rachel to ensure all is covered for the Legal Lunchbox and will notify the Committee if anything is needed.

Mentorship Project Team - Janta

Janta shared that there are no updates at this time and anticipates things to get underway in October. Chelle and Janta agreed to aim for meeting prior to October.

July After Bar Exam Social – Chelle

Chelle has been in contact with King County Bar Association (KCBA) and has a meeting with them on Monday to finalize details. Gov. Couch connected Chelle with someone from Tacoma Pierce County Bar. The Social will take place on July 30 at 7 Seas Brewing in Tacoma from 3:00 – 7:00 p.m. Janta, Ariel, and Mason are planning to attend. Chelle noted that no responses have been received from law schools planning to be present at the event. There are currently 95 RSVPs. It was noted that the Bar exam will take place in Lynnwood next year.

WYLC Member Michelle Mendoza, who serves on the Yakima County Bar Association (YCBA), noted that the YCBA would like to partner with the WSBA for a local event. Michelle inquired on whether WSBA funding is available to cover event costs or does it need to be covered by the local bar. Chelle confirmed that FY25 funding is not available, but there are possibilities for events scheduled in October or later in FY26. Chelle advised, Michelle can draft a plan and share to the Committee. Julianne added, the FY26 budget includes \$5000 for Outreach events, inclusive of after bar exam social events. In the past, when the WYLC traveled to other parts of the state, there was a social event tied to a meeting. Gov. Petrasek added, scheduling events closer to other bigger events such as the STAR Summit and the ATJ Conference can be beneficial. Alex asked if the WYLC would like to try to arrange a social event during the ATJ Conference (September 18-19) and determine if there is a possibility to obtain sponsorship from county bars. It was suggested that local firms would very likely agree to sponsor. Julianne advised a first step is contact the ATJ team to ensure there is no schedule conflict with the conference schedule and programming.

New Ideas for Next Meeting – All

Gov. Couch spoke about ‘unreasonable requests and extraordinary offers’ and looking ahead with the WYLC. Gov. Couch encouraged the WYLC to think of ‘shoot for the stars’ ideas and proposals on how best the WYLC can help new and young lawyers, make a list; the worst that will be is a ‘no.’ Gov. Couch added, there is a significant benefit in attending BOG meetings in person, and if there is anything Gov. Couch can do to assist in helping Committee members attend whether it be budgetary, or seeking support from the employer, please reach out. Janta expressed interest in more frequent engagement opportunities with the BOG and asked if another conjoined event can be scheduled. Gov. Couch will schedule something and speak to Francis today. Gov. Petrasek noted the STAR Council Young Lawyer seat will be coming available soon, if anyone know someone who may be interested, please encourage them to apply, it is going to be an appointment.

Alex added, after the participation struggles the WYLC experienced during the pandemic, it is nice to see the Committee coming together, bringing new ideas, and would like to see the momentum and growth continue.

Julianne mentioned the STAR Council is partnering with Northwest Justice Project to host a Rural Day of Service clinic in September. The clinic will offer simple estate planning services, and volunteer hours may qualify for MCLE credit. If any WYLC members are interested in participating, please reach out.

Stephan raised a question regarding student loan debt repayment. Changes are coming to student loan repayment, particularly for income-driven plans, including eligibility rules and payment options, especially with the passage of the recent budget bill. Comments can be offered on how these changes may affect the practice of law, especially in rural counties where there is shortage of lawyers. The House and Senate have essentially taken the position that regardless of a borrower’s debt level or location, payments will be calculated as a percentage of gross income. Stephan feels action is needed to address the debt crisis and would like to propose distributing a survey to law students about PSLF, student loans, and the potential impact of these changes. If there is no objections, Stephan would like to discuss this further with Chelle.

Chelle shared that there is a survey (via internal Future Lawyers Workgroup) scheduled for the fall, to better understand how the WSBA can engage with future lawyers. Chelle advised that this survey can

include PLSF questions, and it would be great for the WYLC to review. Janta asked if the WYLC could contribute a section, and Alex suggested sending it to new members as well. Stephan noted that while federal programs are being reduced, there are still things to consider at the state level. Gathering data through a survey would allow us to offer informed analysis to our state representatives. The first step will be to survey existing members. Stephan will draft some questions, and circulate them to Alex, Mason, and Chelle for review. Chelle added that, looking ahead to FY26, utilizing the time that remains in the current fiscal year could be used to lay the groundwork for next year's efforts.

Alex mentioned the WYLC Chair-elect position remains open, if interested follow up with Chelle, and for any questions, ask Alex or Mason.

Janta encouraged WYLC Members to attend the BOG meeting via Zoom to show support during the Bylaws presentation portion. Mason also encouraged folks to jump in and provide answers as many questions are anticipated from BOG members.

The August WYLC meeting agenda will include time to discuss 'outrageous asks'. Ariel mentioned the idea of distributing a survey to 2024 law school graduates as a 'one year post graduation retrospective.' Chelle mentioned the benefits of having a photobooth at a social event, possibly offering new lawyers the opportunity of obtaining a headshot.

Adjournment

Alex adjourned the meeting at 10:58 a.m.