

**DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES**

December 11<sup>th</sup>, 2024 12:00 to 1:30 PM

**Attendance:** Jerry Thomas, Gov. Nam Nguyen, SaNni Lemonidis, Gov. Thomas Ahearne, Raina Wagner, Gov. Matthew Dresden, Sharon Sakamoto, Julien Tarraf, Anthony Rich, Miguel Blancos-Alejo, Milli Cunningham

**WSBA Staff:** Diana Singleton, Elliott Schwebach, Saleena Salango

## Call To Order & Welcome

Meeting called to order at 12:04 p.m. The DEI Council welcomed our new member, Miguel Blancos-Alejo. Members briefly discussed the name of the DEI Council in the current legal and social landscape.

## November Meeting Minutes

Gov. Dresden – corrections to correctly identify them as members and not BOG Liaisons, as well as corrections to SaNni Lemonidis’ name. Upon motion by Gov. Nguyen to approve as amended, seconded by Gov. Dresden, the DEI Council unanimously approved the November 2024 minutes.

## Board of Governors Updates

Gov. Nguyen shared that the next Board of Governors meeting is January 17 – 18<sup>th</sup> at the WSBA Conference Center.

The BOG Legislative Committee met to review their legislative agenda, with key items discussed including a proviso to study the potential for a unified court system as well as funding for public defense services. This year, the WA State Legislature is at a budget deficit that may present challenges to these legislative priorities.

## At-Large Seat Recruitment and Outreach and Interview Prep

Raina Wagner shared the schedule and process for the At-Large Board of Governor position, which the DEI Council vets. The candidate interviews will occur at the next DEI Council meeting on January 8<sup>th</sup>, 2025. This candidate will fill a mid-term vacancy to serve on the Board from January through September 30, 2025. The DEI Council will also vet candidates for the seat terms beginning October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2025.

Gov. Dresden recommended reaching out to BOG members if interested in serving.

## Workgroup Updates

- **Equity and Justice Plan Workgroup** – Sharon Sakamoto reported the progress of the Equity and Justice Plan. The Workgroup has conducted focus groups and surveys with the draft plan for feedback. The Workgroup plans to give a report to the Board of Governors in January with the status of the plan, but they will not proceed with the first read of the draft plan as initially planned. Diana Singleton shared the document that summarizes the types of feedback received, a big theme being to develop more specificity around the strategies. Jerry Thomas expressed interest in assisting with the Workgroup, and recommended creating operational definitions many of the terms within the Plan to ensure consistency. Gov. Dresden and Gov. Ahearne

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expressed concerns around the language, name, and framing used in the Plan and to consider ways to garner broad buy-in. Gov. Ahearne recommended changing the name to a “Roadmap” and the goals as “Guideposts”. The next meeting is Friday, January 3<sup>rd</sup> 2 – 3:30 p.m. via Zoom. Miryam Gordon encouraged members to give feedback including specific edits.

- **Pathways To Profession Workgroup** - Saleena Salango shared that the Workgroup is in the midst of scheduling the first meeting, during which we will determine regular meeting times. Saleena also invited members to consider serving as a co-chair for this group. Saleena also shared information about the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Law Student Employment Retreat on Saturday, January 11<sup>th</sup> and encouraged DEI Council members to serve as a mentor/volunteer to conduct resume review and shared additional info about firm sponsorship.  
<https://forms.office.com/g/WFzJH5cy6T>
- **Outreach Workgroup** – Gov. Nguyen shared the first meeting will be Thursday, December 12<sup>th</sup>. The group will be identifying outreach strategies and talking points for members representing the DEI Council at different events.

## Announcements

- **Affinity Bar Liaisons** – Gov. Nguyen reminded everyone about the affinity bar liaisons roles and encouraged them to attend affinity bar events. Diana asked if member needed talking points to help with communications. Nam reminded everyone that the talking points are basically the Equity and Justice Plan and the Membership Demographic Study. Sharon asked for clarification on the liaison role. Diana explained that the goal of the liaison role is to build relationships with the affinity bars. That relationship-building includes attending events, sending information about what’s going on at WSBA (e.g., at-large seat is open) and joining as a member if they want. Diana reminded members that WSBA can reimburse members to attend events and they should submit reimbursement requests to Andrea.
- **January 8, 2025 Meeting** – Gov. Nguyen reminded everyone that our January meeting will be 2-hours so we can interview candidates.

## Meeting Close

Meeting adjourned at 1:05 p.m.