**DEI Council Meeting 12/12/22, 12:00 noon – 1:30 p.m.**

The Washington State Bar Association’s DEI Council 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:** Sharon Sakamoto, WSBA Gov. Sunitha Anjilvel, WSBA Gov. Lauren Boyd, WSBA Gov. Matthew Dresden, WSBA Gov. Alec Stephens, Noelle Chung, Miryam Gordon, Mia Scavella Little, Michael Rhodes

**WSBA Staff:** Diana Singleton, Nicholas Mejía, Saleena Salango, Julie Shankland, Kirsten Abel, Barbara Nahouraii

**Guests:** Sara M. Elper, Immediate Past President Brian Tollefson, Laura Sierra, Ben Kim Garve

**November Minutes:** Motion to approve the November meeting minutes by Miryam Gordon, seconded by Gov. Matthew Dresden. Unanimously approved.

**Definition of Diversity:** Brought the remainder of the council up to speed on what changes have been ` to the definition. SaNni Lemonidis went to the Minority Justice commission for their input where feedback was received. The word geography has been removed from the amended definition. Julie indicated the word “preference” may provide some complexities when interpreting the definition. She mentioned that the change to the verbiage consideration addresses two separate matters at once, a definition and criteria that may be used in decision making. Gov. Alec Stephens suggested the definition be placed in the bylaws. It was noted geography is included, has been mentioned and is represented in multiple areas of corresponding documents. The new language will be proposed and replace the last sentence in section 3.a. of the bylaws. It was stated the council isn’t being asked to choose whether they prefer in terms of rank, but who they would be recommending in advance. Miryam stated that the word geography does not indicate rural or urban, so it is unclear who geography applies to without being explicitly stated. Gov. Matthew Dresden was opposed to having the last sentence in the definition and stated he would like it to be removed. Diana pointed out that there have been many iterations of this definition and many members of the community have been included in the conversation. She stated that there is a recognition that race exacerbates marginalization in a compounding way, which was also recognized by the Gender and Justice Commission. Miryam stated reading a long list is helpful as there is clear recognition of specific marginalized groups of individuals. Gov. Alec Stephens proposed that the last sentence be removed, Gov. Matthew Dresden seconded.

It was asked what the DEI Council’s needed action would be before a bylaw change could be made. Julie Shankland mentioned it is highly likely the DEI Council would need to go to the BOG to enact any policies or amendments. Julie mentioned that there is still a conversation to be had related to how decision making will be documented. Julie mentioned that it was stated that there were commissions and community members that were consulted that recognized the importance of addressing intersectionality within the proposed document. Gov. Alec Stephens made a motion related to placing the language of the last sentence in existing policies of the council and it was seconded. Gov. Matthew Dresden reiterated the importance of including intersectionality and removing the last sentence to the proposed amendment, then create a policy at a later time.

**GR 12 Equity and Disparity Workgroup:**

Laura Sierra presented on behalf of the workgroup. The workgroup is currently working to improve equity within the WSBA. Currently there is an analytical statement advising or informing what sections can do to seek section positions. Sections are preemptively barred from speaking on social and political issues. Many of the issues in the civil rights section are related to these issues. There have been 13 responses to date relating to feedback. The timeline for feedback is shorter but there is no hard deadline.

Gov. Alec Stephens stated that the existing comments have mostly been positive feedback on the noted proposal. Gov. Sunitha Anjilvel stated that it may be important to table this discussion for today and vote on it for the next meeting. The proposal will have the BOG approve and go to the Supreme Court for the consideration of the general rule.

**WSBA Demographic Study:**

The previous study required there to be a demographic study to occur every ten years. Kno-Why are the primary researchers who focus on DEI related studies and are leading this study. The researchers expressed the importance of identity expression based on their research. They currently use a survey methodology and are at the early stages of the surveys. They have spoken to many individuals associated with the organization and looked into what were the most pressing issues and matters to members. The themes developed were four key questions which include “Who are we today?” “How do we describe the WSBA membership?”, “How do WSBA members feel about work in the workplace?” and the comparison between WSBA members and other state’s members and challenges. Ben stated that there were matters such as microaggressions that were higher in some groups than others such as those who were African Americans and Latiné individuals.

There was a motion is to put forward the definition of diversity with a correction to a typographical error and the final sentence struck, being proposed to the BOG for the January Meeting. Motion approved unanimously.

Meeting Adjourned at 1:32 pm