

CONNECTICUT JUDICIAL BRANCH

ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON CULTURAL COMPETENCY

July 15, 2020
2:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.
Video-Conference

MINUTES

Attendees: Chief Justice Richard A. Robinson (Chair), Isabel Alvarez, Juana Brown, Troy Brown, Sandra Cardone, Patrick (PJ) Deak, Juanita Halepas, Esther Harris, Zarin Kapur, Meghan Korn, Ines Nieves, Michaelangelo Palmieri, Felix Rodriguez, Philip Strambler, Spiro Uyar, and Shawna Woodard

Absent: Samuel Bruder, Cristina Johnson, Daisy Ortiz, and Ewa Wojewodzki

The meeting was called to order at 2:22 p.m.

The minutes from the January 15, 2020 and May 20, 2020 meetings were unanimously approved.

Diversity Week 2020

Felix Rodriguez reported that the Subcommittee meets once per week. The proposed theme, ***Racial Justice: Where We Have Been and Where Do We Go From Here?*** was approved by Chief Justice Robinson. Felix went on to discuss what the five days may look like with panel discussions and other educational activities. The Chief approved of the proposed theme. Shawna Woodard will contact the Chief's assistant to arrange for a meeting between Adam Foss and the Chief that will include Felix Rodriguez, Michael Palmieri, and Isabel Alvarez.

ACCC Response to Current Events

Chief Justice Robinson reported that he shared the committee's concerns with Chief Court Administrator Judge Carroll. He was very supportive of these ideas and wants to meet with the Chief to discuss further:

- **ACCC statement to Branch employees**

We, the Advisory Committee on Cultural Competency, are committed to supporting the interests of justice by increasing cultural awareness and responsiveness. We will continue working to foster awareness and address contemporary issues. In light of current events, we would like to offer you the following resources.

- Diversity Week 2019 Keynote Speaker: [\[LMS Link here\]](#)
- [4 tips for talking with your team about racial injustice](#)
- EAP Resources: www.theEAP.com/TotalCare-EAP - click on the National Protests alert at the top of the page

If you want to share your thoughts or experiences, please contact us at JBACCC@jud.ct.gov.

- **Funding for a racial trauma expert**

We want to pursue offering a virtual forum/workshop/presentation with a facilitator who has credentials in racial trauma – such as Dr. Akbar or Dr. Brown-Dean. We know this will cost money, but we think it is important to offer.

Dr. Akbar charges about \$5,000 for 3 hours for 50 participants. Below is a link to Dr. Akbar's website and her work on Urban Trauma. She provided an extremely interactive and informative training for CSSD on Urban Trauma. We could ask her to customize something for us if we can secure the funding. Because she is a Psychologist, she may be best suited to address the concerns/feelings/thoughts of Judicial Branch employees and can speak directly to racial trauma. She is also already approved through Purchasing, so, that will not be an impediment.

<http://www.maysaakbar.com/about.html>

Chief Justice Robinson remarked that we may find a racial trauma resource within EAP. He will investigate this further and get back to us.

- **Proposal to establish an office for diversity**

Shawna Woodard will forward Chief Justice Robinson the draft proposal along with an article about Illinois courts to hire a diversity and inclusion officer. The Chief remarked that the Division of Criminal Justice recently established a new role in the Office of the Chief State's Attorney to foster diversity and inclusion in the Division.

New Business

Troy Brown recommended Lia Cestaro as a new member of the ACCC. Lia is the coordinator for the CSSD Multicultural Affairs Unit. Several members spoke highly of Lia having worked with her on other projects. Chief Justice Robinson asked that Troy confirm with CSSD Executive Director Gary Roberge Lia's ability to commit her time to the ACCC. Troy will also invite Lia to our next meeting in September.

The next regular meeting is scheduled for September 16, 2020.

The meeting adjourned at 3:23 p.m.