

CONNECTICUT JUDICIAL BRANCH

ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON CULTURAL COMPETENCY

July 17, 2024
2:00 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.
CSSD, 455 Windbrook Drive, Glastonbury, CT

MINUTES

Attendees: Chief Justice Richard A. Robinson (Chairman Emeritus), Judge Norma Sanchez-Figueroa (Chair), Isabel Alvarez, Troy Brown, Lia Cestaro, PJ Deak, Esther Harris, Brian Hill, Meghan Korn, Daisy Rosado-Hack, Michael Snyder, Philip Strambler, Spiro Uyar, and Shawna Woodard.

Absent: Derik Rodriguez

Judge Sanchez-Figueroa called the meeting to order at 2:09 p.m.

Judge Sanchez-Figueroa opened the meeting by thanking Chief Justice Robinson for his leadership and guidance. The Chief will be missed in his retirement. The Chief echoed how proud he is of the committee and the work we have done. He added that the Connecticut Judicial Branch is “the gold standard” in this area.

The minutes from the March 15, 2024 meeting were unanimously approved.

Cultural Competency Training for the Guardian ad Litem (GAL) Standing Committee

Troy Brown reported that the DEI Unit will provide this training to the new GALs this September. Troy and Lia Cestaro will co-facilitate the course. PJ Deak asked if the course could be offered to the existing GALs and offer continuing education credits. Troy will contact Damon Goldstein, the support staff for the GAL Standing Committee, to pose the question.

Diversity Week 2024

Lia reported that Dr. Shiva Rezvan, a professor at Albertus Magnus College, agreed to be our keynote speaker. Akeia Gomes from Mystic Seaport is another speaker Troy is considering for a workshop. Chief Justice Robinson recommended Nzngia Metzger, an anthropologist from Florida A&M University, as a possible speaker.

The 2024 theme will be “Cultivating Cultural Intelligence.” The theme will focus on an individual’s journey – how they show up in the world and how they interact with others. Lia is working with the Branch’s graphic designer for the save the date. The save the date will be emailed this week, and the entire Diversity Week schedule will be emailed by the end of August.

ACCC Membership Subcommittee

Troy Brown distributed the draft proposal of the Subcommittee. Subcommittee members included PJ Deak, Daisy Rosado-Hack, and Meghan Korn. A discussion ensued about the recommendations, particularly how to keep subcommittee members who are not ready to leave, or what to do if there isn’t an interested person to fill a vacancy. Troy added that Emeritus status was created for this purpose. The Subcommittee will consider voting rights for Emeritus members. Several other comments were shared. In the interest of time, Judge Sanchez-Figueroa suggested that we schedule another Subcommittee meeting to further discuss these comments.

Updates from the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

- Distributed the LGBTQ+ inclusive language guides. DEI hopes the cards will be kept accessible by clerks, marshals, and other front-facing employees, including Appellate and Supreme, to easily refer to. Judge Sanchez-Figueroa recommended that we make a larger version for the judges to keep on the bench. Meghan Korn recommended that the cards be included in the new employee orientation folder.
- The Unit is working with judges' education and Judge Bozzuto to make some of the DEI courses available to judges.
- The Unit is running close to capacity on all trainings. Impressed with the participation of employees from all divisions.
- Implemented a QR code to launch course evaluations using Microsoft Forms. Worked with Materials Management to obtain some Wi-Fi enabled smartphones for anyone who is unable to use their personal phone to launch the course evaluation.
- Microsoft Forms is also being used for the pre- and post-test in FCR 100.
- Selected a vendor for the culturally responsive facilitator RFP. The process is currently with Legal Services.
- The Unit meets weekly with ITD to develop the public-facing DEI web page.
- Collaborating with Hartford Legal Aid and the Attorney General's Office. The Unit would like to expand their outreach efforts to more groups in Connecticut.
- Working with Judicial Human Resource Management to come up with standard DEI interview questions.

New Business

None

Announcements

- Next week, some members of the ACCC will pilot the *Uncommon* course provided by a professor from the University of New Haven. The training will be held at 99 East River Drive in East Hartford.
- DMHAS will sponsor another cultural competency cohort. They want to identify more male participants.
- Governor Lamont signed an order to establish the Connecticut Office of Equity and Opportunity. The new office will be responsible for leading Connecticut's efforts to ensure that state government is a leader in equity and inclusion.

The next regularly scheduled meeting of the Advisory Committee on Cultural Competency will be September 18, 2024 at 2:00 p.m. via video-conference.

The meeting adjourned at 4:07 p.m.