

Minutes of Meeting
MSBA Planning Committee
September 24, 2009 -- 6 p.m. to 8 pm
Columbia, Maryland

Welcome and Introductions

Those attending were: LaKeecia Allen, Robert Anbinder, Henry Dugan, Marianne Hendricks, Debra Schubert, Michael Siri, and Karen Federman Henry. The meeting was called to order at approximately 6:30 p.m. (traffic delayed several members' arrival).

Goals for the year and potential topics for consideration

The Chair described the activities of the Committee during the past two years to provide context for some of the topics in store for the coming year. The prior Committee served a two-year term and studied 4 major areas: CLE (mandatory or voluntary); access to justice; technology; and relevance of the bar.

For the coming year, the MSBA President has asked the 2009-2010 Committee to continue the work of the prior group regarding relevance of the Bar Association. This would include evaluating the needs, interests, and benefits of the Association for small firms, solo practitioners, government practitioners, and public interest lawyers. It will be up to the sub-committee to decide whether to conduct interviews, to use a survey, or focus groups to obtain information. Elements to consider include strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and trends. Before the sub-committee begins work, the proposed plan should be discussed and agreed upon by the full Committee.

In addition, the MSBA President has asked the Committee to evaluate whether Maryland should certify lawyers for certain specialty practices. This study may be a bit of an update of the evaluation of mandatory CLE to the extent that many of the jurisdictions that have certification programs also have mandatory CLE programs (or at least for the certification there are mandatory courses). Again, the approach should be agreed upon by the full group prior to beginning the work so that there is not a disconnect when the group finishes its work. [I have some materials that might serve as a useful starting point for this project.]

In light of the required areas of study, the group discussed what additional topics it should consider for the year. Among the issues identified on the agenda, some were viewed as too broad or not directly related to ensuring the long-range view of Bar Association activities. As the

discussion evolved, it became apparent that two additional areas would be appropriate for the Committee's efforts:

- website renovations and electronic filing issues—this would include ideas for updating the existing website to serve the membership better, while keeping in mind the range of abilities of the membership; electronic filing issues may include methods of assisting less technology-savvy members as they find themselves having to work with electronic filing and other technological challenges; also, the group can evaluate existing systems in the region and identify anticipated electronic filing systems; and
- member development in the sense of guiding members through the organization of the MSBA in a meaningful way—this differs from membership generally in that it focuses on facilitating participation of members once they join so that they learn about all levels of responsibility within the Association.

Future meetings—the next meeting has not been scheduled, but will be addressed through email communication; meetings will occur approximately every 6 to 8 weeks, which should accommodate time for the sub-committees to meet and work on the projects selected. Some meetings may be by conference call to facilitate participation, but it will depend on the issues to be addressed at the particular meeting.

Adjournment—the meeting adjourned at approximately 8 p.m.