

AGENDA ITEM

701 September 14, 2014

DATE: September 8, 2012
TO: Members, Board of Trustees
FROM: Craig Holden, President
SUBJECT: Mentoring for New Lawyers

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The President, with the approval of the Board of Trustees ("Board") or Board Committee on Operations may appoint ad hoc or special committees to handle special assignments, any such committee to automatically cease to exist upon completion of its assignment. Board of Trustee's Policy Manual ("Board Book") at Tab 9, Article 1, Section 3 (b) (1) (2) (3). Pursuant to the Board's direction at the recent planning session, the President seeks authorization to create a Special Committee or Task Force to promote mentoring and practical entry-level education programs for new lawyers.

BACKGROUND

There is a tremendous demand by young or new lawyers to find mentors in the legal profession. Various groups within the State Bar have explored potential mentoring initiatives but the efforts have not been coordinated or collaborative. For example, the Business Law Section launched a mentoring program with CYLA in 2012 and found that there was a tremendous demand by new lawyers for mentoring, but the mentoring program was disbanded after two years due to lack of promotion, which resulted in lack of mentors as well as a lack of resources and support. There is a strong demand for the creation, resumption and coordination of mentoring programs or mentoring best practice guides through the Sections, CYLA and the Council on Access & Fairness. Mentoring programs can range from informal to formal, and potentially include educational webinars or apprenticeship opportunities offered by willing mentors to new or young lawyers to help them increase competency, professionalism and ethics in the practice of law.

Pursuant to Board policy, the President may appoint an ad hoc or special committee, with approval of the Board. Board Book at Tab 9, Article 1, Section 3 (b) (1).

ISSUE

The authorization of any Ad Hoc Committee must be based upon a written charge setting forth the tasks to be carried out, and must not include any task that is expressly delegated by the Board Book to any standing committee or to the Board as a whole. Board Book at Tab 9, Article 1, Section 3 (b) (2). The proposed charge of this special committee is as follows.

CHARGE OF SPECIAL COMMITTEE OR TASK FORCE

Over the last several years we have seen a number of rapid and dramatic changes in the legal marketplace, including a dearth of employment opportunities for young lawyers as well as more young lawyers starting their own solo law practice directly out of law school, without the benefit of getting any training, experience or mentoring. Yet there is a strong demand by young lawyers to find mentors to help them improve their competency, professionalism and ethics as they enter the profession. Helping these young lawyers become better lawyers is part of public protection.

This special committee will be designed to bring together the Sections, CYLA, the Council on Access & Fairness and the Board of Trustees to encourage the exploration, creation and development of mentoring programs and initiatives for young or new lawyers. The committee will help coordinate the past and present efforts of each group, and explore and promote best practices that can be implemented in mentoring programs. The aim of the mentoring of young or new lawyers is to increase competency, professionalism and ethics amongst these lawyers. Further, the committee will also endeavor to find funding for this effort, but funding is not required to support it. The activities of the committee will be funded with voluntary sources of revenue.

The Board has not previously delegated this task to another standing committee or to the Board. The Special Task Force will report back to the Committee of Bar Examiners and the Board. The Board will ultimately adopt any recommendation made by the Task Force.

FISCAL / PERSONNEL IMPACT:

Staff time and meeting costs will result in some fiscal impact, but the fiscal impact is unknown at this time. The activities of the committee will be funded with voluntary sources of revenue.

RULE AMENDMENTS:

No anticipated impact on or amendment to rules.

BOARD BOOK IMPACT:

No Board Book impact is foreseen.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Board Executive Committee approve the creation of a Special Committee on Mentoring for Young or New Lawyers, with up to 15 members who may be appointed by the President, from the Sections, CYLA, COAF, the Board and the public. If the Committee so authorizes, the President will thereafter form the group, hold meetings or hearings, and make a report to the full Board of Trustees during the course of the board year.

PROPOSED BOARD COMMITTEE RESOLUTION:

Should the Board of Trustees agree with the above recommendation, the following resolution would be appropriate:

RESOLVED, that the Board of Trustees authorizes the creation by the President, of a special committee to design, promote or implement mentoring programs for new or young lawyers; and it is

FURTHER RESOLVED, that President Holden present proposed committee appointments for the new committee to the Board of Trustees at its November 7, 2014 meeting; and it is

FURTHER RESOLVED, that the activities of the special committee will be funded with voluntary revenue.