



Judicial Council of California
ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE OF THE COURTS

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MEMORANDUM

Date

December 1, 2006

Action Requested

None; For Information Only

To

Members of the Judicial Council

Deadline

N/A

From

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Administrative Director of the Courts

Contact

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Subject

Report from the
Administrative Director of the Courts

In addition to the regular communications that are shared with you, including the weekly e-edition of *Court News Update*, the following information highlights just some of the many activities that have taken place since the last Judicial Council meeting to further the council's goals and agenda for the judicial branch.

Access and Fairness

Updating the 1996 Gender Report

This new study will identify branchwide progress toward eliminating gender bias in the courts based on the impact of implemented recommendations from the 1996 study and will determine whether and what additional strategies are merited. It is anticipated that the results of the study will be released at the 2009 Judicial Branch Statewide Conference.

Adoption Saturday

During Adoption and Permanency Month in November, many courts hosted "Adoption Saturday" to focus attention on the growing need for adoption and other permanency programs in California, with 29,000 children entering foster care each year. Administrative Office of the

Courts Chief Deputy Director Ron Overholt spoke at the Superior Court of Alameda event. Ron shared his perspective as an adopted child and reviewed the priority the judicial branch plans on children's issues.

Justice Corps

The Superior Court of Alameda County, in partnership with the courts in San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara, and the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) launched JusticeCorps in northern California. This program has been successfully piloted these past two years by the Superior Court of Los Angeles County. Justice Ming W. Chin swore in more than 40 Bay Area college students who will provide assistance in local court-based Legal Access Self Help programs. JusticeCorps members help to ensure access to justice for court users while learning first hand about the importance of a fair, impartial and open justice system. The services are designed to remove barriers to court access including lack of money to hire an attorney, confusion and frustration about court processes, and limited English language skills. Students make a 300 hour commitment during one academic year, receive about 50 hours of training, and receive a \$1,000 educational award to be applied to college expenses. These students are potential future lawyers, court staff, judicial officers, and civil servants. Not only does JusticeCorps help our current court users, it educates a "corps" of California citizens and gives them the opportunity to promote public access to justice.

Assigned Judges Program

The Assigned Judges Program Committee discussed how best to address problems with assigned judges related to aging, such as reports from the court about loss of hearing, inability to handle heavy calendars, etc. Staff is working on adding a segment on these issues to the Assigned Judges Orientation Program, which is required for all new assigned judges.

Branchwide Leadership Development

New Judge Regional Meetings

Forty-nine new judges from 21 counties (graduates of the 2006 B.E. Witkin Judicial College), met with Judicial Council representatives and AOC leadership in the third year of three regional meetings designed to orient new judges to issues affecting the judicial branch and to identify potential branchwide leaders from amongst participants. Discussion topics included the local court experience, challenges facing the judicial branch, and group discussions on opportunities for change.

Collaborative Justice

The first statewide Homeless Court Roundtable was co-sponsored with the ABA's Commission on Homelessness and Poverty and Judicial Division and hosted by the Superior Court of Alameda County. Attended by more than 120 judicial officers, court administrators, public defenders, district attorneys, and other justice system partners, including representatives from community programs serving the homeless from around the state, the program provided a forum for identifying best practices and discussing issues such as funding, types of offenses addressed in homeless courts, and implementation models. A former homeless veteran whose life was turned around by the San Diego homeless court system was the keynote speaker. Media coverage included National Public Radio and the *Bar Journal*.

Court Executives Advisory Committee/Conference of Court Executives Meetings

The committee confirmed the membership for two new working groups, the first to review and address the current status of court retirement systems and planning issues such as reimbursement for pension obligation bonds and recruitment and retention of court staff, the second to review trial court financial policies and procedures in partnership with the AOC's Finance Division.

Diversity on the Bench

Thirty judicial branch leaders, State Bar leaders, legislative and AOC staff convened to consider ways in which the judiciary can assist the Governor in increasing the diversity of judicial appointments as well as to discuss how to attain maximum reporting of gender and ethnicity from justices and judges to assist in complying with the judicial demographic reporting requirements of Senate Bill 56. The Chief Justice George intends to appoint a statewide steering committee within the next 30 days to follow up on proposed strategies and programs, including:

- Judicial outreach and team building for the recruitment and mentoring of potential applicants for judicial appointment, including court commissioners.
- Supporting the Chief Justice's suggestion to the Governor that the judicial appointment application place greater emphasis on courtroom experience, alternative dispute resolution, and other practice areas, to attract well-qualified lawyers from diverse backgrounds, as compared to the current focus on trial experience.
- Having judicial leaders encourage all judges at their courts to complete the soon-to-be distributed survey to obtain information needed to comply with demographic reporting requirements.

Family Law

The AOC and the Legal Aid Association of California sponsored a two-day training for family law practitioners serving low-income and modest means clients. Legal services advocates, family

law facilitators, self-help center staff, and pro bono attorneys participated in sessions on the work of the Department of Child Support Services; the treatment of complex property in dissolution cases; enforcement in domestic violence cases, including contempt issues; the ethics of unbundling; joinders and pensions; military issues in family law cases; how to handle move-away custody cases; immigration; and new bankruptcy rules.

Interbranch Relations/Advocacy

AOC executives met with the State Department of Finance leadership to review critical funding and policy issues (e.g., facility funding, limitations of the State Appropriations Limit (SAL) and the need for separate funding for new policy initiatives (e.g., interpreters), growth in security costs that exceed SAL and implications for courts and sheriffs, and policies for funding the appellate courts and the assigned judges program).

Outreach to Justice System Partners

National Level

Several Judicial Council members and AOC executives joined court leaders from across the country for the presentation, by Chief Justice John Roberts, of the William H. Rehnquist Award for Judicial Excellence to Wisconsin Judge Edward R. Brunner. (Three California jurists are previous recipients of the award.) The California court representatives also met with the U.S. Administrative Office of the Courts to learn about the organization's structure and services to the federal courts including facilities, security, and budget, and the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) on court facilities issues including funding, the design and building of courthouses, and a review of GSA's design excellence program. I also participated in a meeting of the National Center for State Courts.

State Level: California State Association of Counties Annual Meeting

Chief Deputy Director Ron Overholt, Office of Governmental Affairs Director Kate Howard, and County Counsel representatives participated in a panel discussion on court facilities at the association's Administration of Justice Policy Committee meeting. Topics included an overview of SB 10 implementation, specifically the need for continuing collaboration and responsiveness from all parties involved (AOC, Department of Finance, counties), counties retaining liability when transferring a level V facility, and process improvements to expedite and simplify transfer agreement documentation and county facilities payments.

Technology

Appellate Court Case Management System

The Court of Appeal, Sixth Appellate District joined the First District in using the new Appellate Court Case Management System. The system is hosted by the California Courts Technology Center. Rollout to the Fifth District is scheduled for December. Target dates are set for the remaining division rollouts in 2007.

Judicial Branch Information Security Summit

Developed at the request of the courts following last year's information technology conference, this summit focused on the security architecture designed and implemented at the California Courts Technology Center for courts statewide. Topics included trends in information security, encryption, wireless, remote access, authentication, and threats and vulnerability management. The summit was attended by court executive officers, information technology managers, and technical staff from 38 trial courts; system administrators from the 6 district Courts of Appeal and the Supreme Court; AOC technical staff; and vendor business partners. Follow-up action items include exploring options for ongoing security awareness training for branch personnel (e.g., standardized on-demand training for end users; integration with CJER courses; court network security, and state and local justice partner security); and ways to maintain branchwide communication on security issues, concerns, and alerts (e.g., secure e-discussion board; Serranus and e-mail; ongoing technology/security conferences).

Trial Court Presiding Judges Advisory Committee Meeting

The committee focused on how the fiscal year's legislative successes can be sustained in the future. Several presiding judges (PJs), especially immediate past chair Judge Sharon Waters (Riverside) and Judge Frank Dougherty (Merced), have actively participated in educating legislators on the local impact of legislative proposals on the courts and the public in their constituencies. The committee will explore expanding the Joint Legislation Subcommittee to 20 members, 10 PJs and 10 court executives, to ensure that adequate feedback is given to the AOC's Office of Governmental Affairs and that information is passed on to the courts.

Other Notable Activities/Meetings in October and November

Meetings

- CJER Governing Committee
- Collaborative Justice Courts Advisory Committee
- Court Executives Advisory Committee: Subcommittee on Payment Policies for Contract Court Interpreters

Members of the Judicial Council

December 1, 2006

Page 6

- Court Accounting and Reporting System (CARS): Grants Management User Group
- Court Accounting and Reporting System (CARS): Fixed Assets User Group
- New Judge Education Committee
- Probate Conservatorship Task Force

Education

- Court Staff Regional Training: Civil Courtroom Procedures
- Court Staff Regional Training: Trial Procedures
- Court Security
- Fall Continuing Judicial Studies Program
- HR Professionals: Family/Medical Leaves of Absence
- Labor Relations Forum
- New Judge Orientation
- Probate and Mental Health Institute
- Qualifying Judicial Ethics Training

Attachment

Current Judicial Vacancy Report

WCV/tc

**JUDICIAL COUNCIL OF CALIFORNIA
ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE OF THE COURTS
JUDICIAL VACANCY REPORT (8011)**

Number of Judgeships Authorized, Filled and Vacant as of October 31, 2006

TYPE OF COURT	NUMBER OF COURTS	NUMBER OF JUDGESHIPS				
		Authorized	Filled	Vacant	<i>Filled (Last Month)</i>	<i>Vacant (Last Month)</i>
Supreme Court	1	7	7	0	7	0
Courts of Appeal	6	105	104	1	104	1
Superior Courts	58	1498	1477	21	1480	18
All Courts	65	1610	1588	22	1591	19

JUDICIAL VACANCIES: APPELLATE COURTS

Appellate District	Vacancies	Reason for Vacancy	Justice to be Replaced	Last Day In Office
First Appellate District, Division Five	1	Retirement	Hon. Lawrence T. Stevens	02/28/06
TOTAL VACANCIES	1			

JUDICIAL VACANCIES: SUPERIOR COURTS

County	Vacancies	Reason for Vacancy	Judge to be Replaced	Last Day In Office
Alameda	1	Elevated	Hon. James A. Richman	02/22/06
Los Angeles	7	Dis Retirement	Hon. Barbara Lee Burke	10/23/06
Los Angeles		Dis Retirement	Hon. Hugh C. Gardner III	10/23/06
Los Angeles		Retirement	Hon. Marion J. Johnson	10/17/06
Los Angeles		Resigned	Hon. Dzintra I. Janavs	10/05/06
Los Angeles		Retirement	Hon. Charles G. Rubin	04/30/06
Los Angeles		Retirement	Hon. Paula Adele Mabrey	04/28/06
Los Angeles		Retirement	Hon. Michael E. Knight	02/20/06
Orange	1	Retirement	Hon. Robert H. Gallivan	08/01/06
Riverside	1	Retirement	Hon. H. Dennis Myers	05/09/06
San Bernardino	2	Deceased	Hon. Roberta McPeters	05/18/06
San Bernardino		Retirement	Hon. Douglas Alan Fettel	03/17/06

(Vacancy Removed from Report when Replacement Appointed or Elected)

San Diego	2	Retirement	Hon. Laura P. Hammes	06/11/06
San Diego		Retirement	Hon. Joe O. Littlejohn	04/06/06
Santa Clara	3	Deceased	Hon. Robert Lawrence Ambrose	10/20/06
Santa Clara		Retirement	Hon. Nazario (Tito) Gonzales	07/25/06
Santa Clara		Retirement	Hon. Leonard P. Edwards	05/31/06
Santa Cruz	1	Retirement	Hon. Thomas E. Kelly	03/25/06
Sonoma	1	Retirement	Hon. Raymond J. Giordano	05/01/06
Stanislaus	2	Retirement	Hon. Michael Richard Cummins	08/29/06
Stanislaus		Retirement	Hon. John E. Griffin, Jr.	08/13/06
TOTAL VACANCIES	21			