

## Item SP12-05 Response Form

### **Title: Strategic Evaluation Committee Report**

The Strategic Evaluation Committee (SEC) was appointed by Chief Justice Tani G. Cantil-Sakauye in March 2011 to conduct an in-depth review of the AOC with a view toward promoting transparency, accountability, and efficiency. The Chief Justice received the report and recommendations on May 25. At its meeting on June 21, 2012, the Judicial Council accepted the report and directed that it be posted for public comment for 30 days. Comments received will be considered public and posted by name and organization.

**PLEASE NOTE that all comments will be posted to the branch web site at [www.courts.ca.gov](http://www.courts.ca.gov) as submitted by the commentator as soon as reasonably possible after receipt.**

### **To Submit Comments**

Comments may be entered on this form or prepared in a letter format. If you are *not* submitting your comments directly on this form, please include the information requested below and the proposal number for identification purposes. Because all comments will be posted as submitted to the branch web site, please submit your comments by email, preferably as an attachment, to: [invitations@jud.ca.gov](mailto:invitations@jud.ca.gov)

Please include the following information:

**Name:** Linda Romero Soles    **Title:** Court Executive Officer

**Organization:** Merced Superior court

**Commenting on behalf of an organization**

*General Comment:*

I wanted to provide you with some comments in support of some of the AOC Divisions of the AOC as a result of the recent SEC report.

Office of Emergency and Response and Security: Prior to coming to the state courts I worked in the federal court in Los Angeles where the level of security provided by the U.S. Marshals was excellent. Upon transferring to the state court system in the central valley, I discovered the level of security was less impressive. You may be thinking that you cannot compare a metropolitan city to a city in the central valley however, security is security regardless of size. When Malcolm Franklin was hired by the AOC, he personally visited my former court to meet with our judges and review our security needs. It was great to be able to speak to a security expert. In addition, he reviewed and commented on a resumption plan that we had prepared after attending a post 9/11 Security Summit. When the court added a new security proximity card system with cameras throughout the courthouse, OERS staff was there to provide their expertise and assistance. When the court was involved in a high profile case that received national attention, OERS was there

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to assist. When four new courtrooms were constructed, in a leased facility, OERS was there to assist with all security requirements.

In April 2011, during my first week at the Merced Superior Court, I noted several security deficiencies. I immediately contacted Malcolm Franklin and Nick Barsetti and within my first month they personally met with our Presiding Judge and me to address our security concerns. They handled all of these security deficiencies in an expeditious manner. Merced Superior Court, as you know, had already experienced a serious security incident. In 2008, a man barged into the new courthouse wielding two ten inch blade knives and entered Judge McCabe's completely filled courtroom. The assailant was shot and killed. Luckily, neither the Judge, court staff or any member of the public were injured. Immediately after that incident, Malcolm Franklin and Nick Barsetti were very instrumental in performing a security audit of the new courthouse. They also provided training to the Judicial officers and court staff. Judge McCabe and Judge Kirihara, who was the PJ at that time were very impressed with the level of attention by OERS. Just last week, a defendant was found guilty of stalking one of our Commissioners and his wife. This same defendant also went to the Assistant Presiding Judges residence. OERS staff were kept apprised of this incident and were ready to assist Sheriff staff. As a result of this and other recent incidences, OERS staff will soon be providing security training to our Judicial officers and court staff.

These are just a few examples of how OERS has helped courts of our size. I wanted to share that Malcolm Franklin, Nick Barsetti and Joe Thims have provided and continue to provide invaluable assistance to the courts. Our Judicial officers have always been impressed with the level of service that OERS provides to our court.

Regarding other divisions of the AOC, we have had the opportunity thanks to Jody Patel, Acting AOC Director to have the AOC Reengineering Team come to our court and assist us in reviewing our current processes in two divisions. The audit summary included some excellent suggestions that we have already implemented. This is a great service to small and mid-size courts that do not have the staff or expertise in these areas.

Other Divisions that have provided invaluable assistance to our court are 1) OCCM. They have provided many needed facility improvements to our court. 2) Human Resources Division: The HR Division has continued to assist our court in the areas of personnel administration and labor negotiations. This past year our court was required to lay off court positions due to budget and Mr. Steven Crooks, Attorney, was very instrumental in providing us legal assistance. We are in contact with him on a monthly basis and depending on the situation sometimes on a weekly basis. In addition, when our court negotiated furloughs during the Thanksgiving and Christmas period, for limited court operations, Debora Morrison, Michael Guevara, Scott Gardner, Darren Matsuda and Tim Emert provided invaluable assistance in ensuring that we met all the required guidelines. 3) Education/CJER; Center for Family/Children and the Courts; Office of Court Research/ Finance: Staff from these divisions have continued to provide our court with assistance. Court staff have benefited greatly with the educational programs

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provided by the Education/CJER Division. We are able to help educate our court staff on site based on the training on-line.

While I support the SEC report and many of its findings, the AOC has staff in several divisions that provide a great service to the small and mid-size courts. If some of these divisions are eliminated this will directly impact courts of our size that depend on the AOC for the aforementioned services. It is my sincere hope that this narrative can be considered before any of the recommended changes from the SEC report are implemented.

Thank you.

*Specific Comment - Recommendation/Chapter Number:*

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