

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 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

Please include the following information:

Name: Richard Huffman **Title:** Associate Justice

Organization: Court of Appeal

Commenting on behalf of an organization

General Comment: I have read the entire report. I recognize that many hours of work went into its preparation.

In general I agree that the AOC could benefit from a more streamlined organizational structure. I wonder if such major reorganization should await the appointment of a new administrative director. Regardless of scheduling, I agree there should be a Chief Operating Officer who is in charge of the daily operations of the AOC.

I doubt the validity of the generalized recommendation to "significantly downsize the AOC" since it is largely based on perceptions and surveys. That said, the 2012-2013 budget requires significant reduction, so the overall question of downsizing seems moot. My specific concerns are the recommendations as to the various divisions of the AOC. My review of the report indicates those recommendations are largely based again on perceptions and surveys. While those are important tools, they do not really provide sound guidance as to the value, and efficiency of any specific division. Each division of the AOC should be subjected to close scrutiny, based on their workload, the importance to the entire court system, not just the trial courts, and the source of their funding. For example, the recommendation to cut staff of a division, where the reductions would be to grant-funded staff makes little sense. Again, where the recommendation is based on

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perceptions and surveys, it should be considered, but much more in-depth analysis should be used before specific programs are eliminated or staff reductions made, based on perceptions.

I suggest the Council immediately begin a process of directing review of each division, having in mind the SEC recommendations. In the meantime budget necessity will undoubtedly require fast action, even if not fully informed action. To the extent possible, however, the Council should avoid wholesale adoption, or rejection of the SEC recommendations regarding the various divisions of the AOC>

Specific Comment - Recommendation/Chapter Number _____:

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