

Minutes

Public Service and Trust Commission Advisory Committee on Cultural Competency

The Advisory Committee on Cultural Competency met at 99 East River Drive, East Hartford, in Room 707 on February 18, 2011.

Those in attendance were: Hon. Richard A. Robinson (Chair), Desiree Biggs, Troy Brown, Carl Cicchetti, Travis Claxton, Rena Goldwasser, Esther Harris, Precious Hyland, Richard Loffredo, Donald Logan, Eileen Meehan, Ines Nieves, Robyn Oliver, Phil Strambler, Shawna Woodard.

The meeting was called to order at 10:14 a.m. by Judge Robinson.

1. Judge Robinson informed the committee that Dalia Panke and Eugene Allen had resigned from the committee for work reasons. Judge Robinson welcomed new members to the Committee, Rena Goldwasser and Troy Brown, both from CSSD. Laura DiFelice from CSSD has also joined the Committee; however, she was unable to attend today's meeting.
2. The minutes from the meeting on December 17, 2010 were unanimously approved.
3. Judge Robinson reported on the meeting he had with the Chief Justice, the Chief Court Administrator, the Deputy Chief Court Administrator and the Chair of the Public Service and Trust Commission. The charge of the committee was clarified: the Advisory Committee on Cultural Competency will set the policy concerning cultural competency for the entire Branch. Each division will have autonomy to customize their activities to respond to its own needs. For example, a division such as CSSD has more one on one contact with the general population than Administrative Services, so the needs are quite different. The Committee, however, will be responsible for a unified approach to cultural competency for the Branch as a whole.
4. The Chief Justice recommended that the Committee use the Conference of State Court Administrators Listserve to gather information on what other courts are doing in terms of cultural competency. Judge Robinson asked the Survey/Focus Group Subcommittee to provide four or five questions to use in this questionnaire.
5. Judge Robinson stated that it was important that the definition of Cultural Competency developed by the committee be disseminated in a bold manner, to make the Judicial Branch a culturally competent institution. The members of the committee also expressed the need to develop and maintain momentum. It was felt that pursuing the survey, with the 'working definition' of Cultural Competency should go forward.

6. Judge Robinson also stated he would send a request to the Judicial Web Board to move the Committee's internal cultural competency website forward.
7. Judge Robinson discussed the impact the State's finances would have on the Committee's work. He stated that although it would be hard to plan programming within the expected financial constraints, the Committee would still have to do it. All agreed that creativity and significant effort would be needed to overcome this limitation.
8. Rena Goldwasser and Troy Brown were asked to discuss CSSD's program. They described not only the program, but also the process CSSD has gone through, with recommendations to the larger committee as to the steps which may take advantage of CSSD's learning curve. Troy Brown noted a program offered by the National Multicultural Institute which will focus on trainers and facilitators. This information will be distributed to all members of the Committee. Troy and Rena also provided Judge Robinson all of their training materials, which are being compiled and scanned for distribution to the Committee. They also emphasized their and CSSD's enthusiasm and commitment to Cultural Competency and their enthusiasm and commitment to the Advisory Committee and its Branchwide mission.
9. The Committee brainstormed ideas for gathering information and identifying resources. Members of the committee agreed to research websites and call other states' Judicial Branch administrations and also universities and colleges which may be doing research. Possible grant opportunities were discussed and will be researched further, as well as contacts with other state agencies.

The next meeting will be March 18, 2011.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:46 a.m.