

External Affairs Advisory Board

Minutes of meeting on April 28, 2011

In attendance: Judge Susan Handy (chair), Justice Dennis Eveleigh and Judge Douglas Lavine. (Staffing – Attorney Melissa Farley, Attorney Stephen Ment, Rhonda Stearley-Hebert and Jim Senich)

- I. Judge Susan Handy called the meeting to order.

- II. The minutes from the meeting of September 16, 2010, were unanimously approved.

- III. The recommendations of the External Affairs Advisory Board were reviewed and discussed. Board members unanimously revised or eliminated the following recommendations:

No. 5: This recommendation had required the External Affairs Division to market the Speakers Bureau to the judges. E-mails went to the judges and more of them are participating in the Speakers Bureau. The External Affairs Division suggested that this recommendation be eliminated, as it is duplicative. The board agreed and voted to eliminate it.

No. 7: This recommendation had required the External Affairs Division to send an e-mail to all judges once a year asking them to provide External Affairs with information about the number of groups they have addressed, the topics that were discussed, where the engagements occurred and their comments on how the events went. The External Affairs Division, referring to No. 5, suggested that this recommendation be eliminated, as it is duplicative. The board agreed and voted to eliminate it.

No. 11: This recommendation suggested urging the Chief Justice and Chief Court Administrator to continue their efforts to remind judges that speaking to the community is one of the more important ways to educate the public about what the Judicial Branch does. This recommendation is ongoing. External Affairs suggested that it be eliminated. The board agreed and voted to eliminate this recommendation.

No.12: This recommendation suggested asking members of the Pre-Bench Orientation Committee to inform new judges about the importance of the Speakers Bureau and going out into the community. Judge Handy currently informs new judges about the importance of the Speakers Bureau, as does the Executive Director of External Affairs. External Affairs suggested the elimination of this recommendation; the board agreed and voted to eliminate it.

No. 14: This recommendation suggested cultivating relationships with educational organizations, particularly those involving social studies teachers. This is ongoing, and External Affairs suggested that this recommendation be eliminated. The board agreed and eliminated it.

No. 18: This recommendation involved sending out notices to judges in March of each year, asking if they would speak to high school students in conjunction with Law Day. External Affairs would follow up by making arrangements at the schools for judges who volunteered. The Chief Justice sent out e-mails in 2009, 2010 and 2011, asking judges if they wanted to speak at high schools about Law Day, and the number has increased. External Affairs suggested that this recommendation be eliminated, as it is part of the yearly Law Day-related activities that the division arranges. The board agreed and eliminated it.

No. 19: Regarding this recommendation, External Affairs was to contact every high school in the state and ask the school to designate a liaison who would receive educational materials about the Branch and then distribute the materials to appropriate teachers. External Affairs contacted every high school and received a total of 299 contacts that were included in four electronic mailing lists. External Affairs will continue to update the e-mail addresses. As such, External Affairs suggested that the recommendation be eliminated; the board agreed and voted to eliminate it.

No. 21: This recommendation suggested the establishment of a “regional judge liaison” to work between the court and schools in a particular area. The board voted to eliminate this recommendation.

No. 22: Regarding this recommendation, the workbook for upper elementary students was to be completed. This task was completed in 2009 and approximately 16,000 workbooks have been provided to students. Because this recommendation was completed, External Affairs suggested it be eliminated. The board agreed and voted to eliminate it.

No. 24: This recommendation called for External Affairs to incorporate into every speaking engagement a request, if approved by the judge and the organization, to contact the local media about the event. As these contacts are now regularly made, the board accepted External Affairs’ suggestion to eliminate the recommendation.

No. 25: Regarding this recommendation, judges were to be encouraged to let External Affairs know when they are engaged in an activity that could educate the public about the courts and its programs. This has been done via e-mails to the judges from Judge Handy. External Affairs therefore suggested that this recommendation be eliminated, which the board approved.

No. 27: This recommendation suggested asking the Chief Administrative Judges if they would be willing to write a column for the Connecticut Law Tribune. It also suggested asking judges to take advantage of opportunities to educate the public about the courts and the judiciary through the media. Since External Affairs already encourages judges to take advantage of opportunities to educate the public about the courts and the media, it suggested that this portion of the recommendation be eliminated. The board agreed.

No. 28: This recommendation calls for the continuation of yearly events with judges and members of the media to educate each other about our respective roles. This is to be accomplished with the assistance of the Judicial-Media Committee. The events (Law School for Journalists/Journalism School for Judges) are continuing. As this recommendation is redundant, External Affairs suggested it be eliminated; which the board approved.

No. 29: The recommendation suggested that External Affairs continue monitoring inquiries from the news media and stories about the Judicial Branch. External Affairs does this task as part of its day-to-day duties, and the division recommended that this recommendation be eliminated. The board approved this action.

No. 30: This recommendation suggested that External Affairs continue marketing positive stories about the judiciary and the Judicial Branch to news organizations. As this has been and will continue to be an important responsibility of External Affairs, the division suggested that this recommendation be eliminated. The board approved this action.

No. 31: This recommendation suggested that External Affairs continue contacting editorial boards when necessary to present the Branch's position on an issue. This led to the same suggestion and outcome as outlined in No. 30.

IV. Attorney Melissa Farley, Attorney Stephen Ment and Rhonda Stearley-Hebert updated board members on various outreach/media projects.

V. The meeting adjourned at approximately 3 p.m.