

**SCWLA Board Meeting Minutes**  
**January 27, 2017**

Members present: Sheila Bias, Emily Boatwright, Stephanie Burton, Ariail Kirk, Molly Cherry, Amie Clifford, Kelly Jolley, Kristen Nichols, Bhumi Patel, Sima Patel, Laura Paton, Mary Beth Pfister, Ayesha Washington, Amanda Williams, Marguerite Willis, Elizabeth Zeck

Members absent: Lisa Claxton, Ashley Cuttino, Karen Huelson, Lynsey Kmetz, Sarah Leverette, Nancy Olah, Tara Shurling, Suzanne White

Also attending: Low Country Regional Representative Hannah Gallagher, Membership Committee Chair Mary LaFave, Executive Director Mikki Lindler

**I. Call to Order and Introductions**

Molly Cherry called the meeting to order at 1:10pm. Those attending introduced themselves.

**II. Treasurer's Report**

Amie Clifford presented the proposed budget for 2017 and explained some items, including that the budget shortfall in 2016 was due to the organization's not pursuing the usual amount in sponsorships for its conference because of the rescheduling and scaling back of the conference as a result of the 2015 flood. Amie highlighted changes, which included a base appropriation for each region of \$2000 with an additional \$1000 per region for each 100 members. She clarified this funding is to be used in 2017 and does not "roll over" into 2018 if not used by the region.

There was a motion and a second to approve the budget, and the motion carried.

**III. President's Report**

Molly outlined her theme for the organization in 2017: SC Women Lawyers Rock. She also said that her goal for the year is engagement of our membership. She announced Board meetings will be held at noon on the second Friday every other month beginning March 10. Other meetings will be held in May, July, September, and either late November or early December. Executive Committee will meet monthly, specific dates and times TBD.

Molly asked that reports continue to be submitted in advance of board meetings to increase the efficiency of those meetings and that reports be in a standard format. Mary

LaFave volunteered to prepare a template for reports and circulate that by mid-February. Ayesha Washington recommended that the reports indicate if there are any action items that require a board vote or discussion to ensure those items are addressed.

The sustaining membership's role and benefits were discussed. It was agreed it should be used more effectively. The Membership Committee will look into this issue.

#### **IV. Committee Reports**

**Media/Communications** – Chair Sima Patel will be the liaison to Jay, who maintains our webpage, for posting content. All agreed an increased social media presence is desirable but noted concerns about messaging. Some of the issues for this committee in 2017 will be clearly delineating who can post on behalf of SCWLA, how we will increase our presence, and how we will control our social media content, as well as addressing the fundamental communication issue of our emails not going through to all members.

**2017 Conference/Awards Reception** – Chair Jennifer Howe previously gave a complete report on conference planning at the initial meeting of the Board on January 21, 2017 in Greenville, so there was minimal discussion of the conference except that the date will be September 29<sup>th</sup>, with the awards reception to be held September 28<sup>th</sup>.

**Bissell Award** – Sheila Bias will be chairing the award committee this year and reported she hopes to begin the nomination process earlier.

**Toal Award** – It was noted this is a Board-nominated award that will not be given out every year necessarily. Kelly Jolley will chair the award committee this year.

**Bylaws** – Chair Ayesha Washington thanked all who worked on the bylaws amendments in 2016 and reminded the Board that it still needs to vote on numerous other proposed amendments. She will propose voting on approximately 5 items per meeting to ensure the process moves forward while not using all meeting time for discussion of bylaws changes.

**Community Outreach** – no report

**Membership Committee** – Chair Mary LaFave reported the committee has the names for approximately 750 inactive members and would like to target membership efforts first at this group by contacting them to encourage them to renew. This initiative will show

whether we have current email addresses and enable the committee to clean up the member records as needed. The committee would like to follow up with those who do not respond to the initial solicitation, but the exact method will have to be determined when there is more clarity about the size of this group. The committee's second priority will be to target "active" members who are not engaged in a committee or otherwise actively involved and develop a plan to engage them. Its third priority is targeting new members through outreach efforts at the law schools and elsewhere.

**Professional Development** – Sheila Bias reported the committee's big initiative will be selecting an Emerging Leader award recipient who SCWLA will sponsor for Leadership Columbia. Kerri Brown Rupert will chair this committee.

**Supreme Court trip** – Chair Amie Clifford reported the next trip will be in 2018. She plans to advertise the trip well in advance to try to solicit a larger group to attend.

**Long Range Planning** – Chair Mary Beth Pfister reported on the committee's plans to complete implementation of the committee's recommendations made at the end of 2015 in light of the bylaws amendments adopted November 30, 2016, including establishing a plan and timeline for transitioning to the new method of electing board members and officers at the end of 2017, assisting the regions in establishing chapters by ensuring the drafting of form chapter bylaws and identifying initial slates of officers, and bringing greater clarity to the roles of each committee and what should be handled at the state versus regional level. Discussion was held about whether this responsibility should instead lie with the Regional Activity Committee chaired by Kelly Jolley. Kelly indicated her intention and willingness to manage this transition through her work with the regions. In light of this discussion, it was agreed the LRP Committee should instead focus on scheduling a strategic planning session to formulate the next long-range plan for SCWLA. Mary Beth and Sheila will work on scheduling this session as soon as possible.

**Regional Activity** – Chair Kelly Jolley said her committee's goal would be to help the regions establish chapters and she will be leading this initiative.

**Military Subcommittee of Membership Committee** – no report

**Ad Hoc Model Rule 8.4(g) Committee** – Chair Laura Paton reported the results of the member survey on the proposed rule change. It was discussed the organization should continue to monitor legislation affecting women lawyers as well as facilitating and

encouraging more women to seek public office as judges and legislators. In light of this discussion, Laura volunteered to continue to lead this committee but to shift and expand its goals in 2017. The new committee will tentatively be called the Public Service Committee.

**SCWLA Foundation** – Liz Zeck reported that the Foundation will no longer plan events as fundraisers because the costs did not justify the returns. They will instead seek individual donations. The board discussed the intersection of the Foundation and the sustaining membership and the need to have clarity for those who wish to support SCWLA of what the benefit is of donating to the Foundation (i.e., what those donations support) and of becoming a sustaining member (which the Membership Committee will explore).

#### **V. Regions Activity**

Those board members who serve the less populated regions, including Emily Boatwright and Bhumi Patel, discussed the challenges they face with participation and finding activities of broad interest. The board discussed the need to facilitate communication among the regions of the programming that is ongoing and to share successful programs.

#### **VI. New Business**

Molly Cherry reminded the Board of the need to be mindful of our Executive Director's time and the fact she is primarily expected to support the organization as a whole rather than any specific region. The board agreed it should provide greater clarity as to its expectations for the Executive Director and its priorities for her work.

Molly also noted the mid-year ABA meeting will be in Miami February 1-7, 2017. The NCWBA is a co-sponsor of a luncheon at the meeting. Karen Scanlin is our liaison with the NCWBA Board.

#### **VII. Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 3:50pm. The next Board meeting is March 10<sup>th</sup> at noon.