



WASHINGTON STATE WOMEN'S COMMISSION

Plenary Meeting Minutes | July 14, 2023

9:00pm - 3:00pm | Bellingham, WA & Hybrid

Attendees:

Grace Yoo - Executive Director
Rituja Indapure - Commission Chair
Quinn Dalan - Commission Vice Chair
Vicki Lowe - Commission Secretary
Chris Kobdich - Commissioner
Ann Simons (Virtual) - Commissioner

- *Due to family need, Ann departed the meeting around 11:15am*

Leah White - WSWC Staff
Kate Sowers (Virtual) - WSWC Staff
Deirdre Bissonnette (Virtual) - ICSEW Chair
Rep. Mary Dye (Virtual) - Legislative Advisor

Opening:

The regular meeting of the Washington State Women's Commission was called to order at 9:00am on 07/14/2023 in Unity Care NW, Bellingham, WA by Chair Rituja Indapure.

Approval of Agenda

The agenda was unanimously approved as distributed.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the previous meeting were unanimously approved as distributed.

Open Issues

Meetings Norms

Executive Director Grace Yoo

- Executive Director Yoo shares that this Summer Plenary will have a focus on internal operations or “housekeeping” topics ahead of a stronger emphasis on legislative session planning at the Fall Plenary. The Commission chair and WSWC staff agreed that future Summer Plenaries would be a good opportunity to revisit/confirm internal operations items on an annual basis.
- Executive Director Yoo provided meeting norms for today's meeting. These norms included ways for Commissioners to share feedback if there isn't time to do so during today's meeting, to be sure everything on the agenda is covered:
 - Saving questions for dedicated pauses to ask/answer questions or at the end of the presentation
 - Post-plenary survey
 - “Parking lot” for topics to circle back to
 - Follow up via email, meetings.
- **Chair Indapure suggests a larger discussion in the future with all Commissioners present about future meeting norms.**

Public Comment Session

- No members of the public joined the provided link for today's session; there were no public comments.

Team Building: Enneagrams

Program Manager Kate Sowers

- Program Manager Kate Sowers led the team in an overview of the basic tenets of the personality tool "The Enneagram."
- Commissioners shared their Enneagram numbers after taking an Enneagram test, circulated via email a week prior to today's meeting.
- PM Sowers reviewed, at a high level, the nine different Enneagram types.
- Commissioners & staff shared their responses to learning about their Enneagram numbers, including thoughts about how their team can best support and interact with them.
- Team discussed ways to incorporate our Enneagram numbers in our work as a Commission, including increased self-awareness about our own motivations, and using knowledge of other team members’ communication styles and behavior-driving factors to better understand their perspective, especially in cases of conflict or potential conflict.

Director's Report Summary

Executive Director Grace Yoo

- Executive Director Yoo shared highlights from her first 60 days in her role, including:
 - Outreach trip to Vancouver
 - LGBTQ Luncheon hosted in partnership w/ LGBTQ Commission
 - Trip to D.C. including attendance of the White House’s celebration of the implementation of Pregnant Workers Fairness Act (PWFA) and the PUMP Act
 - Seattle Times Print Ad
 - Fulfilling the strategic goal of increasing our visibility among women & girls in Washington
 - Growth in visitors to our website & followers on our social media accounts:

- As of 7/7, gained 103 followers. We also lost 14 followers for a total net growth of 89 followers, or +15.5%. We reached a total of 359 accounts and engaged 67 accounts.
 - 4,954 website visits since last plenary (April 15), including a significant spike in website visits between 7/2-7/9 following Seattle Times ad.
- Executive Director Yoo shared that her first 60 days included a higher degree of travel & activity in large part because of a budget variance of approximately \$90,000.
 - WSWC staff worked closely with OFM Accounting, Contracts, & HR teams to make sure all spending was in compliance with our RCW & any other guidelines.
 - Spending was with the goal of advancing our strategic goals & creating room for the 2023-2024 fiscal year to fund future projects.
 - A full report of our end of fiscal year spending will be provided to staff by OFM Accounting in August. The largest spending costs were:
 - Seattle Times Ad (\$10,000)
 - YWCA Spokane Event Sponsorship (\$5,000)
 - El Centro de la Raza Event Sponsorship (\$5,000)
 - CWD Event Sponsorship (\$5,000)
- Commissioner Simons raised a concern about the Commission's recent spending – that "giving away money" doesn't look good for the Commission, and that such spending might reflect poorly on us, especially with legislators who are predisposed to be adversarial with regard to our work. She also expressed being disappointed that she wasn't informed about such spending, particularly regarding the Seattle Times ad.
 - Executive Director Yoo offered some context & explanation regarding Commissioner Simons' concern:
 - The Executive Committee was consulted and informed throughout decision-making and implementation for this spend down of surplus funds.
 - Program Manager Kate Sowers had intended to send a Communications update email to Commissioners specifically to share a heads-up about the Seattle Times ad (so those interested could purchase a copy of the upcoming Sunday paper) but wasn't able to due to health reasons.
 - Commission staff and the Executive Committee will continue to inform Commissioners of relevant information and updates as needed, through established platforms and rhythms of communication such as:
 - Quarterly Plenary Meetings
 - Director's Reports
 - Executive Committee Share-outs
 - Comms Update E-mails
 - Biennial Strategic Plans & Progress Reports
 - Committee Meetings
 - Executive Director Yoo asked if other Commissioners have thoughts or concerns.
 - Commissioner Indapure expressed that the Executive Director has the authority and responsibility to make certain decisions according to our bylaws, and these spending decisions fit that description. As the Commission Chair, she supports every decision that was made.
 - Commissioner Indapure emphasized that Commissioner Simons' concern had been heard previous to the Plenary, first by the Executive Committee and with the Director and staff, and has now been shared with the full Commission. Commissioner Indapure

acknowledges the importance of the political lens, and offered to speak with any legislators who have expressed concern to correct any misunderstandings about the legality or ethics of the Commission's recent spending.

- Vice Chair Dalan highlighted the difference between serving as a Governor's appointed commissioner and serving on a non-profit board. Unlike on most nonprofit boards, Commissioners do not oversee budget or hiring.
- Other updates:
 - Commission staff has been in contact with the U.S. State Department regarding the upcoming APEC (Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation) Women and the Economy (WEF) Summit in Seattle, WA August 18 – 20.
 - WSWC is in conversation with the State Department about hosting a digital side panel event on the topic of Women in STEM/Digital Spaces; more information to come
 - Director Yoo has submitted the Commission's Supplemental Budget Request, including raises for Program Managers Leah White & Kate Sowers to bring their salaries to the level of their counterparts at peer commissions, and funding for a third FTE Executive Assistant position, which would allow Leah & Kate the capacity to focus on Legislative/Operations and Communications/Outreach, respectively.
 - Chair Indapure asked Director Yoo whether she is following a 30/60/90-day checklist/evaluation and can share her progress. Director Yoo explained that she is using the Strategic Plan and quarterly Director's Reports as the team's primary way of tracking progress, and that all deliverables expected before the 2023 Summer Plenary Meeting (today) have been accomplished and are listed at the bottom of the Director's Report

WSWC Operations

Executive Director Grace Yoo

Program Manager Leah White

- Roles & Responsibilities
 - Director Yoo shared the division of roles & responsibilities for 3 groups – Commissioners, Executive Committee, and Director/Staff – as outlined in the Commission's RCW & Bylaws. Key highlights include:
 - Commissioners shall NOT act unilaterally on behalf of the Commission without consulting the full Commission, Commission Chair, Executive Committee, or Executive Director/staff.
 - The Executive Committee has the longest list of responsibilities, and is also designed to be in constant conversation with the Director/staff.
 - The Executive Director & staff are the public-facing and internal-government-facing members of the Commission team.
 - Next time we update our bylaws: consider adding agency operations to the list of Director/staff responsibilities
- Committee Structure & Cadence
 - Dates and Deadlines presented on slide to be shared via e-mail, next step is for all three committees to firm up and publish their Charters on the WSWC website
- Modeling Excellence
 - Preview of next plenary – maybe spend time with a facilitator to define as a team what our norms and expectations are for working together

ICSEW Updates

Chair Deirdre Bissonnette

- ICSEW (Interagency Committee for State Employed Women) Chair Deirdre Bissonnette shared ICSEW updates, including:
- An Executive Order being signed by the Governor soon will make it easier for more state-employed women to participate in ICSEW meetings.
- ICSEW is working in collaboration with BRGs on a book club (reading *So You Want to Talk About Race*); details to be shared
- A current priority goal for ICSEW is reaching more entry-level women; currently their membership trends more middle career. Upcoming objectives to reach that goal include in-person mock interview opportunities, HR panels, and a slew of resources for women starting their careers. ICSEW aims to roll out such events & materials in early 2024.
- ICSEW is also developing materials to be shared by their outreach team at career fairs.
- ICSEW will host their first in-person meeting since before the pandemic Tuesday, July 18th. The meeting will include a celebration of ICSEW's 60th anniversary, awards presentations to outstanding board & subcommittee members, and a presentation on WSWC by Program Manager Leah White.
- ICSEW is hosting an Executive Board Retreat/Meeting August 15th which will include a presentation by the Recruitment Lead from Fish & Wildlife about ways to build personal/professional and organizational brands using LinkedIn. Program Manager Kate Sowers will attend the presentation.
- ICSEW's next General Meeting will be held in October, and will include:
 - Celebration of Hispanic Heritage Month, and a presentation from the Office of Administrative Hearings about their new expansion in to offering hearings in Spanish
 - Tentative presentation by Hilary Franz, Commissioner for Public Lands & Candidate for Governor
- ICSEW will also host their annual virtual conference in October with a theme of amplifying efforts in allyship, anti-racism & intersectionality.
 - **Presentations:** Executive Director Yoo will be a presenter. Other presentation topics will include reproductive healthcare, gender-affirming care, childcare, elderly care, recognizing home care for the value that it represents, cost of caregiving, and DSHS's Universal Basic Income Feasibility study.
 - **Registration:** In ICSEW efforts around inclusion, they have noted that registration can be a barrier, especially for those in entry level positions where they don't have the same flexibility in their schedules. They are working to secure more sponsorship funds than they have in the past to allow for free or low cost tickets to this year's conference. Primary sponsors are agencies, but they also have the power to solicit or receive funds from private entities. Deirdre welcomes suggestions for additional sponsors.
 - Commissioner Lowe made Dierdre aware of an in-person women of color conference the American Indian Health Commission (AIHC) is working on with the Office of Equity. Dierdre will follow up with her connection at the Office of Equity.
 - Responding to Dierdre's information about the ongoing development of a book club, Vice-Chair Dalan recommended some guidelines/discussion questions (*Leah White forwarded during Plenary break*)
 - Executive Director Yoo shared a resource for a potential venue for the book club or other ICSEW – a group called that “Women Painters of Washington”. WSWC was

connected with them as they purchased some art for the office and was made aware of a space in downtown Seattle that is free for us to use.

Strategic Plan Activation

Commission Chair Rituja Indapure

- Executive Director Yoo thanked the Commission for beginning this process approximately a year ago in July 2022 and for dedicating many hours of work into drafting the Plan. She then shared that a few updates have been made since then, including formatting and adding additional time-bound, SMART deliverables that have been since reviewed by the Executive Committee and shared as pre-read with all Commissioners ahead of the Plenary earlier that week.
- Director Yoo has learned that our office suitemates Results WA are a resource for us for reviewing our Strategic Plan and for facilitating the creation of our next Strategic Plan in 2025. Director Yoo will meet with Results WA in the coming weeks and will work to better understand what that process looks like
- Related to our Strategic Plan: The Governor’s Office will be meeting with all agency heads in October to more clearly define each agency’s mandate ahead of the Governor transition.
- Director Yoo then directed in-person participants to the printed/digital copy of the Strategic Plan distributed for review and opened up the discussion for questions and feedback regarding the Plan.
- In response to Director Yoo’s ask for feedback, Chair Indapure and Secretary Lowe commented that an important aspect of a strategic plan is making sure we have really clear priorities. Commissioner Lowe added that the goal "We will be the primary voice for women & girls in Washington" feels strong and a great goal to inform and inspire our work.
- **Include a “Strategic Plan Update” session each plenary to update Commissioners on our progress.**
- Director Yoo adds that another great way to capture our progress is through our Biennial Report.
- Chair Indapure reminds staff that Commissioners can contribute actively to accomplishing certain deliverables – as an example, Commissioner “Instagram Takeover Days” to help us reach our goal of 1,000 Instagram followers.
- Commissioner Kobdish requests that we define what we mean by "young women." Program Manager Kate Sowers suggests using 16-30 – the group the Commission used for its “What Young Women Want” listening series & report. Program Manager Leah White highlights that our communications data shows that this is an age range with low engagement.
- Chair Indapure requests clarity on how plenary meeting action items are recorded, acted upon, and reported back to the Commission. This prompted a discussion about the action items from the most recent past plenary meeting – April 14th in Olympia, WA. As today’s plenary was ahead of schedule, attendees took 10 minutes to review those actions items to confirm completion or create a plan for future action. Those action items were:
 - Creating a WSWC Code of Ethics/Code of Conduct
 - **Action To Be Taken:** WSWC staff to reach out to Kate Reynolds at the Office of Ethics re: templates.
 - **Action To Be Taken:** Gain clarity of use of official Commissioner e-mail addresses, including what is required to be in compliance with our RCW and the Office of Ethics. One specific question to ask is whether we are in compliance if Commissioners receive communications to their wswc.wa.gov email address by are cc’d with their personal email addresses. Once we have clarity, Executive Director Yoo suggests including these guidelines in our code of conduct.

- Executing an "Allow Us To (Re)Introduce Ourselves" communications campaign.
 - **Action To Be Taken:** WSWC staff to determine the best time for such campaign, and to consult with Executive Committee before the launch of said campaign about ways Commissioners might support/be included.
- Logging our successes.
 - **Action Taken:** Director's Report, sharing our work on social media
 - **Action To Be Taken:** Continue to develop processes for amplifying both our work & the work of other women and women's organizations.
- Chair Indapure called a motion to adopt the Strategic Plan as written; Vice- Chair Dalan seconded; four Commissioners were present and voted "aye".
- **Strategic Plan Activation vote passed unanimously.**
 - *The Women's Commission currently has 8 Commissioners, as Michelle Merriweather's term ended 6/30/23 and the seat has not yet been filled. Therefore, 4 Commissioners present make up quorum.*

Appointments & Vacancies

Executive Director Grace Yoo

- Commissioner Vacancies
 - The Commission has one current vacancy, as Michelle Merriweather's 2nd term ended 6/30/23 and her spot has not been filled.
 - One Commissioner's 1st Term has ended (Anna Franklin 6/30/23); Executive Director & Executive Committee have unanimously agreed to recommend Anna for reappointment & this has been communicated with Ambar Algera of the Office of the Governor.
 - As previous discussed during the Strategic planning retreats in 2022, the Commission would like to consider expanding our number of Commissioners, with a goal of representing the diverse communities of Washington; to do so involves collaboration with the Governor's Office and a bill to be introduced to the legislature.
 - Two urgently needed voices on the community based on population: SW WA & Latina women.
 - Chair Indapure raises one concern re: expanding the Commission – in her experience, has found that a larger group can hinder the Commission's ability to be action-oriented. Chair Indapure requests that as staff meets with other Commission Directors, they ask about their experience working with Commissions of different sizes.
 - Chair Indapure also asks what the timeline of seeking to expand the number of Commissioners would be.
 - Executive Director Yoo states that as the WSWC was established with the support of Governor Inslee, we may want to consider introducing the bill in the upcoming legislative session.
 - Chair Indapure requests language that Commissioners can share with their representatives to advocate for this ahead of the Legislative Session.
 - Commissioner Lowe asks that the Commission consider the risks involved in introducing a bill.
 - Commissioner Kobdish suggests that we consider an odd number when choosing the number of Commission positions we are asking for to have a tie breaker.

- **Action Item: Executive Director Yoo will reach out to peer Commissions for their experience and perspectives about the most effective number of Commissioners.** Information gathered about the process will be covered in the Fall Plenary/Directors Report, and Commission will reach consensus on whether to introduce a bill, and the number of additional Commission positions to be requested in that bill, at that meeting. **WSWC staff will consult Legislative Advisors to seek their advice on next steps if the Commission decides to move forward with advocating for an increase in the number of Commissioners.**
- Leg. Advisor Appointments
 - Staff received clarity on Legislative Advisor appointments and terms. Legislative Advisors serve two year terms, but can be reappointed indefinitely. The Commission isn't able to request appointments of specific legislators, but we can share our thoughts/have conversations with the House & Senate leadership.
- Candidate List for Boards & Commissions
 - Our RCW requires us to keep a list of women candidates for Governor-appointed boards & commissions. We are awaiting clarity from the Governor's Office about whether this applies to all Governor-appointed boards & commissions, or just those directly involved in issues affecting women.
 - Staff will get answers to the above, and will begin the process of creating a list, starting first with names gathered from Commissioners via the Spheres of Influence Exercise.

Spheres of Influence Exercise

- Staff provided Commissioners with a worksheet on which they provided names of people & organizations in their "spheres of influence" that the Commission may consider partnering with.

Legislative Advisor Updates

Rep. Mary Dye

- Rep. Mary Dye shared updates on her work in the legislative interim, including:
- A focus on building a strong economy in all, which has been her focus throughout her career;
- Navigating & negotiating environmental policies and how they affect communities that are natural resource dependent, worldwide;
- The effects of policies on energy abundance v energy poverty for women worldwide, including caution with regards to our state's renewable energy portfolio;
- Prioritizing energy-dense projects that have less of an environmental footprint;
- Working in partnership with the National Conservation Service on their efforts in the Columbia Basin;
- Prioritizing the needs of minority communities in her district, including the two counties in her district that are majority minority, particularly regarding issues of economic activity surrounding irrigation agriculture;
- Prioritizing economic opportunities for 1st generation immigrants moving to her district;
- Prioritizing a "circular economy" that reuses wastewater;
- Cleaning up and mitigating future water pollution in the Puget Sound;
- Bringing a Men & Boys Commission to Washington (The AMA has expressed support, and the American Psychiatric Association is considering supporting).
- Rep. Dye also shared a few points of celebration for her district, including Heinz's recent commitment to putting a new tomato paste plant in either Moses Lake or Othello

- Chair Indapure asked Rep. Dye about her previous work with bringing broadband to rural Washington, as it had been a policy priority for her in the past. Rep. Dye shared that bills were passed the last couple of sessions that have created a successful program that is currently being funded, and that broadband access has been significantly expanded into many rural communities. However, there are aspects of the work that still need to be codified, and funding at the federal level precludes some organizations that would best serve their communities. She plans to consider introducing one or more bills to address these areas for improvement in the upcoming legislative session.

Recap of Action Items

- Chair Indapure requests that going forward, Commission staff share action items shortly after each plenary meeting (minutes can come later).
- From today's meeting, the action items Chair Indapure recalls are:
 - Fill open Commission vacancy
 - Execute strategic plan
 - Clarify & share with Commissioners process for communicating Commission work, including the completion of action items & strategic objectives, to the rest of the Commission
 - Executive Director Yoo suggests that the quarterly Director's Report will list strategic objectives due each plenary, and will include a checkmark for objectives completed on time, or an explanation/update for objectives not completed by the stated due date in the strategic plan. Chair Indapure and other Commissioners present agreed with this approach.
 - Follow up on all action items related to yesterday's Stakeholder Meetings, including requests for introductions to other organizations, and following up on Whatcom County DV Commission's current work taking turning qualitative stories into data (something we'd like to consider for our next Biennial Report).
 - Update Commission on our list of candidates for Governor-Appointed Boards & Commissions, including sharing clarification on what is required.

Post Plenary Survey

- Commission staff have sent a post-plenary survey to Commissioners, and request their feedback by Friday, July 21.

Next Plenary Look Ahead

- Tentative presenters include:
 - Legislative Advisors
 - WSWC Committee Chairs
 - Results WA
 - Office of Equity
 - Dontae Payne | Office of the Governor
 - External facilitator to help form some team norms around how we interact w/ each other & how we show up to our peers & other stakeholders.
- Chair Indapure expressed her thanks to Commissioners who joined in person, and encourages Commissioners to attend future plenary meetings in-person if possible, with the understanding that some interruptions can't be avoided. Chair Indapure reminds Commissioners that WSWC is

a cabinet-level commission, and thus Commissioners' commitment to the work is particularly valuable and appreciated.

Adjournment:

Commissioner Kobdich made a movement to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Lowe seconded. The meeting was adjourned by Chair Indapure at 3:10 pm.

The next plenary meeting will be held at 9:00am on October 6th in Spokane, WA.

Minutes submitted by: Kate Sowers | Program Manager, WSWC