

NASJE Southeastern Region Meeting Report

August 11, 2008

Philadelphia, PA

The Southeastern Region had a lively and productive meeting at the 2008 NASJE Annual Conference. Members in attendance were:

- Pam Leslie (Florida)
- Rich Reaves (Georgia)
- Marty Sullivan (Arkansas)
- Ben Barham (Arkansas)
- Tom Langhorne (Virginia)
- Carmen Sanfeliz (Puerto Rico)
- Juan Carlos Guzman Baiges (Puerto Rico)
- Cornelia Mews (Ontario, Canada)
- Denise Dancy (Virginia)
- Wally Lowery (Alabama)
- Keith Camp (Alabama)
- Alison Chambers (West Virginia)
- Sherry Carson (Georgia)
- Jim Drennan (North Carolina)
- Lynne T. Winston (Florida)
- Susan Davis Morley (Florida)
- Karl Grube (Florida)
- Susan Leseman (Florida)

Members introduced themselves and then Denise Dancy gave a short presentation about the Judicial Education Project on Victims' Rights sponsored by the Office for Victims of Crime, within the Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice. The project is a curriculum with 19 modules developed for state judicial educators, judges, and victims' advocates. The emphasis of the curriculum is ethics.

Members discussed a variety of topics including current issues in judicial branch education, innovative education programs, distance learning, and judicial branch publications.

Topics included:

1. Budget constraints generally;
2. Difficulty in producing the types of programs needed by constituencies;
3. Judges not having the time to attend education programs;
4. Developing quickly and with limited information legislatively-mandated education programs;
5. No increase in [reimbursable] per diem and hotel rates;
6. Meeting the education needs of new judges who go on the bench much earlier or much later than the time of the new judge education program;
7. Effectively using distance learning technology; and
8. Complying with Section 508 electronic accessibility requirements.

Judge Karl Grube, representing the ABA's Specialized Court Judges Conference and NHTSA, said that the conference produced education programs and that a sampler of the offerings on DVD was available at the conference. He also said that NHTSA wants judges to be in touch with their governor's highway safety representative and he wants states to know that NHTSA training funds are available. Other members told the group about NHTSA program funding assistance their states had received.

The group then had a long discussion about distance learning (dl) and the use of different technologies for programs and meetings. Susan Morley talked about the Section 508 electronic accessibility requirements. Members shared their experiences using various web applications and videoconferencing. Joseph Sawyer of NJC and the Federal Judicial Center were recommended as resources for dl questions.

The group discussed the issue of meeting the education needs of new judges who join the bench too early or too late to attend the scheduled new judges education program. Some suggestions were: 1) assign the new judge a mentor judge immediately; 2) provide regional education programs for these new judges; 3) have special breakout sessions for new judges at judicial education programs; 4) use an interactive educational cd-rom; 5) have "mini-education programs"; and 6) assign mentors and provide written materials, including benchbooks.

Rich Reaves shared with the group that Georgia presented a Spanish language education program for clerks of court and judges. This was an intensive, 6-hour course with five to six practice cd-roms. Florida has done Spanish language education and Arkansas would like to do similar training. A question arose about how to determine the effectiveness of the training. It was suggested that there be communication with the participants before and after the courses, and that evaluations should be done to determine whether skills have been improved or behaviors have changed. One member added that he thinks achievement of proficiency must be rewarded.

The group next briefly discussed the status of education publications in their states or organizations. Most produced some type of electronic and/or hard copy publication(s) (bench book or bulletin). Some members remarked that in their states there was still a preference for hard copies.

The meeting concluded with a discussion about the Southeastern Region's hosting of the 2009 NASJE Annual Conference. The conference will be held in Asheville, North Carolina. Jim Drennan, from the host state, encouraged the members to attend the conference and described Asheville as a wonderful location for the program.