



Supreme Court of Maryland

Robert C. Murphy Courts of Appeal Building
361 Rowe Boulevard
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Gregory Hilton,
Clerk

(410) 260-1500
(800) 926-2583

April 8, 2025

VIA EMAIL

Douglas T. Shima
Clerk, Appellate Courts of Kansas
301 SW 10th Avenue
Topeka, KS 66612

Re: *Spring 2025 Strategic Planning Committee Report*

Dear President Shima:

On behalf of the Strategic Planning Committee, I am pleased to submit this the Spring 2025 Strategic Planning Committee Report.

The committee, consisting of myself, Tracie Lindemann (AZ) (vice-chair), Colette Bruggman (CA) (ex officio), Josh Shasserre (NE), Tiffany Wagner (VA), Steve Lancaster (IN), Jenny Kitchings (SC), Deana Williamson (TX), Scott Mitchell (AL) (EC liaison), has not met since its last meeting. We will hold a meeting shortly in advance of the annual meeting.

As you recall from our October report (attached), we had a robust conversation about the timing of our annual meeting, at least commencing with the 2027 or 2028 annual meeting and the usage and development of the Education Fund. We also had a brief discussion about the timing of the awards event at the annual meeting. This latter point is recommended to the program committee to consider in this and future years. It is, perhaps, less strategic than tactical.

Still to be done are:

- (1) a meeting with the Education Fund Committee to discuss the usage of the Education Fund; and

(2) the creation of a survey, if that is the Executive Committee's desire, to gauge the NCACC's membership's interest in having a more flexible meeting time in light of our difficulty in finding more affordable meeting locations and, more pressingly, the back pressure of our members with school aged children and the ever earlier end of summer.

We appreciate the opportunity to present this report to the Executive Committee and we await any further direction from you while we continue to work on your charge. We are ready to immediately circulate the survey, probably through multiple channels (listserv, Teams, email) to ensure we get the greatest response possible.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gregory Hilton". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent "G" and "H".

Gregory Hilton
Committee Chair

Copy to: All committee members.

President's Charge to the Strategic Planning Committee

1. Review the Bylaws and Operating Guidelines for your committee. If you have any changes you'd like to recommend, please notify Megan Scanlon, chair of the Bylaws committee, no later than April 1. Megan's email address is mscanlon@vacourts.gov.
2. There has long been talk of moving the conference to a different week. The Site Selection Operational Guidelines state, "normally, the conference will be held from Sunday through Friday of the first full week of August." I charge the committee to consider the best way to survey the members about whether moving the annual conference to the first full week after July 4th would be a more favorable time, specifically July 10-15, 2027. Florida has already been selected for the site of the 2027 annual conference, but the contract negotiations are still in initial stages and it might be possible to consider moving the conference date for 2027. If possible report back to the Executive Committee by October 7, 2024, whether changing the meeting to July 10-15, 2027 would be favorable.
3. The Education Fund has reached approximately \$100,000. Set up a meeting with the Education Fund Committee, Brian Cotta, chair, brian.cotta@jud.ca.gov to brainstorm ways the Education Fund can be used to further the interests of the NCACC and its members.
4. There is a designation page on the Website for this Committee. Ask Larry Royster RoysterL@courts.mi.gov to upload all committee materials to the designated page on the NCACC website for this committee.
5. Any other work the committee deems appropriate to carry out these charges and the purpose of the committee as set forth by the Bylaws and Operating Guidelines. I have intentionally not attached the Bylaws and Operational Guidelines in hopes that you will go onto the NCACC website and find them there (and explore all the other great stuff on the website).

Proposed Survey Questions

The NCACC's President has charged the Strategic Planning Committee with exploring holding the annual meeting at a time other than the first full week in August. With an eye toward encouraging more participation at the meeting, the Committee would like your input. Please answer the questions posed in the following Survey. After answering the questions, we encourage you to make any other input you wish.

1. Does your State/Court pay for your travel to the annual meeting? (Y/N)
2. Does your State/Court require you to take leave to attend the annual meeting? (Y/N)
3. Does your local school schedule impact your attendance at the annual meeting? (Y/N)
4. Would moving the annual meeting to another time increase or decrease your likelihood to attend? (Y/N) If so, why?
5. Ordinarily, the annual meeting is held in the first full week of August each year.

For the 2027 annual meeting, would you be more likely to attend the annual meeting if it were held July 10 through July 15, 2027?

6. For the years after 2027, would you be able to attend the annual meeting in late June or the middle weeks of July (the weeks excluding the Fourth of July and the week of bar exams)?

Would attending during these times be preferable to attending the meeting as it is currently scheduled?

7. What factors do you consider when deciding whether to attend the annual meeting? Select all that apply: Cost – Location – Educational Programming – Time of the Conference – Who Else is Attending – Other.



Supreme Court of Maryland

Robert C. Murphy Courts of Appeal Building
361 Rowe Boulevard
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Gregory Hilton,
Clerk

(410) 260-1500
(800) 926-2583

September 7, 2024

VIA EMAIL

Douglas T. Shima
Clerk, Appellate Courts of Kansas
301 SW 10th Avenue
Topeka, KS 66612

Re: *Fall 2024 Strategic Planning Committee Report*

Dear President Shima:

On behalf of the Strategic Planning Committee, I am pleased to submit this the Fall 2024 Strategic Planning Committee Report.

The committee, consisting of myself, Tracie Lindemann (AZ) (vice-chair), Colette Bruggman (CA) (ex officio), Josh Shasserre (NE), Tiffany Wagner (VA), Steve Lancaster (IN), Jenny Kitchings (SC), Deana Williamson (TX), Scott Mitchell (AL) (EC liaison), met via Zoom on September 19, 2024.

Our agenda for September 19 included a general review of your charge to the committee and a more detailed discussion of a few of the items. Starting with the two easy topics, we will be conducting a general review of the bylaws and operating guidelines under Megan Scanlon's direction, and we will upload committee documents (including this letter) throughout the year.

On the more difficult topics, I have the following to report:

1. Moving the 2027 conference to July 10 – 15, 2027. The committee was a bit divided on this topic. While there was substantial agreement that it would be good to get a sense of the organization on whether to move the date of the conference or not, some on the committee felt that the decision to move the date should be decided by the membership at the annual meeting, that is after a decision on a meeting site for 2027.

Others disagreed that moving the meeting should be decided by the membership or at the annual meeting.

As your charge notes, we did find that to move 2027 would require a decision very soon so as not to impede negotiations on the 2027 contracts. Related discussions were had on whether we were reaching too far into the future for site selections. It was reported that many organizations similar to ours are working on shorter planning guidelines (i.e. planning 2026 meetings this year). Relatedly, Scott Mitchell is arranging a meeting with Sirena Kestner and Maritz to discuss approaches to future planning. Later, we will report on the outcome of those discussions.

All members believed that a survey of the membership would be appropriate even as we proceed with 2027 planning to gauge the sense of the membership. After the meeting, proposed survey questions were circulated and received no objections. The questions are contained in the attachment.

On the point of taking a survey, paragraph 3 of Site Selection Committee's operating guidelines state that "normally, the conference will be held from Sunday through Friday of the first full week of August. If these dates are unavailable, the membership may be polled as to other available dates and the Executive Committee shall make the final determination." This language gives the EC the authority to move the dates if the first full week of August dates are "unavailable." The guidelines do not define "unavailable" and to whom the week is unavailable – the conference site or us. I suspect it is the conference site, but that isn't the only interpretation. Still further, the guidelines do not require a survey if we assume that "may" is given its normal connotation of permissive rather than mandatory.

In the end, the committee is divided on whether and how to explore moving the annual meeting without first assessing the will of the membership. That said, it seems that it is practically possible to pick a different week for the 2027 annual meeting because we don't yet have a contract (as far as I am aware as of this writing) and a quick survey may be beneficial to that decision if there is time.

Options for the Executive Committee are, then:

- a. Keep the 2027 annual meeting in the "first full week of August" time frame; or

- b. Explore whether the 2027 annual meeting could be held the week of July 10 – 15, 2027 (i.e. availability of hotels during that time frame) before committing to either the August week or the July week and then make a decision;
- c. In conjunction with a or b, conduct a survey of membership as to whether the “first full week of August” time frame remains appropriate for a majority of members. If option b is selected and time permits, this survey should be conducted immediately. If the Executive Committee could review and approve the proposed survey questions, that would facilitate immediate distribution to the membership if it is needed.

Please let me know the Executive Committee’s decision on this point.

- 2. Use of the Education Fund. While discussing the use of the education fund, Collette Bruggman and Steve Lancaster discussed the history of the education fund’s creation and its intent. They reported that the initial goal of the fund was to reach one million dollars. Initially there had been a development plan, but it concluded before reaching the one million dollar goal. The discussion on this topic concluded by agreeing to form a sub-committee to collaborate with the Education Fund committee in consideration of increasing the size of the education fund and identifying appropriate uses of the larger sized fund (i.e. covering the increased costs of audio-visual support at meetings, obtaining desired speakers who ask for honorarium/travel). As of now the subcommittee consists of Colette Bruggman, Steve Lancaster, and me. We haven’t scheduled a subcommittee meeting or a collaborative session with the education fund as of yet. On this topic, no action by the Executive Committee is needed at this time.

Finally, in the category of “other things,” Steve Lancaster raised a concern about the timing of the awards recognition event at the annual meeting. Specifically, Steve is concerned that placing the awards recognition on the last day means that some recipients aren’t able to be present for the recognition and others aren’t there to show their support for the award. This discussion draws in the consideration of having vendors and a vendor show or not. We will continue this discussion and ask that the current program committee find an appropriate place in the schedule to have the awards recognition.

We appreciate the opportunity to present this report to the Executive Committee and we await any further direction from you while we continue to work on your charge. We are ready to immediately circulate the survey, probably through multiple channels (listserv, Teams, email) to ensure we get the greatest response possible.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gregory Hilton". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'G' and 'H'.

Gregory Hilton
Committee Chair

Copy to: All committee members.

President's Charge to the Strategic Planning Committee

1. Review the Bylaws and Operating Guidelines for your committee. If you have any changes you'd like to recommend, please notify Megan Scanlon, chair of the Bylaws committee, no later than April 1. Megan's email address is mscanlon@vacourts.gov.
2. There has long been talk of moving the conference to a different week. The Site Selection Operational Guidelines state, "normally, the conference will be held from Sunday through Friday of the first full week of August." I charge the committee to consider the best way to survey the members about whether moving the annual conference to the first full week after July 4th would be a more favorable time, specifically July 10-15, 2027. Florida has already been selected for the site of the 2027 annual conference, but the contract negotiations are still in initial stages and it might be possible to consider moving the conference date for 2027. If possible report back to the Executive Committee by October 7, 2024, whether changing the meeting to July 10-15, 2027 would be favorable.
3. The Education Fund has reached approximately \$100,000. Set up a meeting with the Education Fund Committee, Brian Cotta, chair, brian.cotta@jud.ca.gov to brainstorm ways the Education Fund can be used to further the interests of the NCACC and its members.
4. There is a designation page on the Website for this Committee. Ask Larry Royster RoysterL@courts.mi.gov to upload all committee materials to the designated page on the NCACC website for this committee.
5. Any other work the committee deems appropriate to carry out these charges and the purpose of the committee as set forth by the Bylaws and Operating Guidelines. I have intentionally not attached the Bylaws and Operational Guidelines in hopes that you will go onto the NCACC website and find them there (and explore all the other great stuff on the website).

Proposed Survey Questions

The NCACC's President has charged the Strategic Planning Committee with exploring holding the annual meeting at a time other than the first full week in August. With an eye toward encouraging more participation at the meeting, the Committee would like your input. Please answer the questions posed in the following Survey. After answering the questions, we encourage you to make any other input you wish.

1. Does your State/Court pay for your travel to the annual meeting? (Y/N)
2. Does your State/Court require you to take leave to attend the annual meeting? (Y/N)
3. Does your local school schedule impact your attendance at the annual meeting? (Y/N)
4. Would moving the annual meeting to another time increase or decrease your likelihood to attend? (Y/N) If so, why?
5. Ordinarily, the annual meeting is held in the first full week of August each year.

For the 2027 annual meeting, would you be more likely to attend the annual meeting if it were held July 10 through July 15, 2027?

6. For the years after 2027, would you be able to attend the annual meeting in late June or the middle weeks of July (the weeks excluding the Fourth of July and the week of bar exams)?

Would attending during these times be preferable to attending the meeting as it is currently scheduled?

7. What factors do you consider when deciding whether to attend the annual meeting? Select all that apply: Cost – Location – Educational Programming – Time of the Conference – Who Else is Attending – Other.