

COMMITTEE OF BAR EXAMINERS OPEN SESSION AGENDA ITEM

AGENDA ITEM: June 2014 – O-302

DATE: June 16, 2014

TO: Subcommittee on Operations and Management

FROM: Greg Shin, Director, Operations and Management

SUBJECT: **ADMISSION CEREMONIES**

BACKGROUND

During its April 25-26, 2014 meeting, the Committee of Bar Examiners (Committee) requested that Staff review the recent attendance and cost figures for the Admission Ceremonies conducted twice per year in June and December. This request came as a follow-up to the discussion regarding the assignment of Committee members to the various June 2014 Admission Ceremonies.

DISCUSSION

The Admission ceremonies are currently administered at eight locations throughout the state of California. The ceremonies held at larger venues like hotels and convention centers incur a facility rental cost while there are no facility costs for ceremonies conducted at courthouses. All of the scheduling and planning for these ceremonies are handled by Admissions Staff and all of the costs are charged to the Admissions Fund. Recent figures for attendance and costs can be seen in the table below:

Admission Ceremony Site	Number of Participants			
	Jun-12	Dec-12	Jun-13	Dec-13
Oakland	136	216	129	210
Sacramento	49	26	44	32
Fresno	10	20	10	27
Ventura	21	20	16	19
Pasadena	115	180	148	150
Orange County	57	81	69	71
San Diego	128	276	100	279
San Bernardino/Riverside	10	24	23	18
Total	526	843	539	806
Total Cost	\$32,260.68	\$30,647.95		
Cost/Participant	\$59.85	\$38.02		

Historically, these ceremonies were administered/managed by Admissions as a direct follow-up to the recently administered Bar Examination. These ceremonies are certainly “feel-good” events and one could make the case that there are some public relations benefits for the State Bar/Admissions to administer these events. In terms of participation, only 2-3% of the total number of applicants that passed the Bar Examination during the last four administrations participated in Admission ceremonies. This is undoubtedly due to the fact that Law Schools often times hold their own ceremonies and successful applicants can take the attorney’s oath on their own in front of a judge, notary public, etc.

The expense associated with paying for the Admission ceremonies is covered by the fees collected for other activities, such as applying for the bar examination or filing a moral character determination application. As a result, not only do the non-participating applicants help pay for the ceremonies, unsuccessful applicants – some of whom will never be able to participate in one – are helping to pay for them as well. If you take the budget as a whole, however, the cost related to the Admission ceremonies is fairly minimal.

If the Subcommittee is interested in exploring alternatives to the current process, there are a few options that the Subcommittee might recommend to the Committee :

1. Explore elimination of some or all of the ceremonies; or
2. Explore cost-sharing arrangements with other departments within the State Bar, such as Membership Services; or,
3. Explore having organizations or companies, such as Bar Associations or commercial MCLE providers, subsidize the events

RECOMMENDATION

If the Committee wishes to continue with the process as it is currently, it is recommended that this report be received and filed and no further action be taken. If the Committee wishes to pursue possible alternatives, a motion to direct staff to do so would be in order.

PROPOSED MOTION

Pending