

# **COMMITTEE OF BAR EXAMINERS OPEN SESSION AGENDA ITEM**

**AGENDA ITEM:** June 2015 – O-302

**DATE:** June 12, 2015

**TO:** Subcommittee on Operations and Management

**FROM:** Greg Shin, Director, Operations and Management

**SUBJECT:** **ADMISSIONS CEREMONIES UPDATE**

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## **BACKGROUND**

During its June 2014 meeting, the Committee of Bar Examiners (Committee) reviewed the recent attendance and cost figures for the Admission Ceremonies conducted twice per year in June and December. This review came about as a follow-up to the discussion during the April 2014 meeting regarding the assignment of Committee and Board of Trustee members to the various 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. While a lot of the scheduling and planning for these ceremonies are handled by Admissions staff, the programs are generally set by the Court staff involved; all of the costs, however, are charged to the Admissions Fund. Recent figures for attendance and costs can be seen in the attached table.

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 a fraction of the total number of applicants who passed the Bar Examination during the last six administrations participated in Admission ceremonies. This is undoubtedly due to the fact that many of the law schools 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.

The Subcommittee explored several alternatives to the current process including:

1. Eliminate 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

With respect to #2 and #3, a meeting was held with Carol Madeja and Leanna Dickstein from Bar Relations Outreach and while they didn't rule out the possibility that external organizations might be open to subsidizing the events, that would depend entirely on what the fee would be. The Committee's Counsel also expressed some potential reservations about how the fee would be determined and who would be charged. For background information, the following organizations participated in the recent June 2015 Admissions ceremonies:

#### **San Diego**

San Diego County Bar Association, California Women Lawyers Association, The Family Law Section of The State Bar of California, San Diego Law Library, Bar Journal

#### **Pasadena**

California Women Lawyers Association, The Family Law Section of The State Bar of California, Daily Journal

#### **Sacramento**

California Women Lawyers Association, Sacramento County Bar Association, The Family Law Section of The State Bar of California, The Recorder

#### **Orange County**

Orange County Bar Association, Daily Journal, The Family Law Section of The State Bar of California

#### **Oakland**

Alameda County Bar Association, CEB, Bar Association of Silicon Valley (Santa Clara City Bar Assoc.), Amer. Assoc. for Justice, California Women Lawyers Association, SF Trial Lawyers Association, SF Bar Association, Cal Bar Connect, The Family Law Section of The State Bar of California, Women Lawyers of Alameda County

## **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

Admission Ceremony Site	Number of Participants - June		
	Jun-12	Jun-13	Jun-14
Oakland	136	129	145
Sacramento	49	44	49
Fresno	10	10	8
Ventura	21	16	18
Pasadena	115	148	168
Orange County	57	69	61
San Diego	128	100	124
San Bernardino/Riverside	10	23	21
<b>Total</b>	<b>526</b>	<b>539</b>	<b>594</b>
<b>Total Cost</b>		<b>\$32,260.68</b>	<b>\$38,028.88</b>
<b>Cost/Participant</b>		<b>\$59.85</b>	<b>\$64.02</b>

Admission Ceremony Site	Number of Participants - December		
	Dec-12	Dec-13	Dec-14
Oakland	216	210	175
Sacramento	26	32	30
Fresno	20	27	23
Ventura	20	19	23
Pasadena	180	150	146
Orange County	81	71	64
San Diego	276	279	234
San Bernardino/Riverside	24	18	24
<b>Total</b>	<b>843</b>	<b>806</b>	<b>719</b>
<b>Total Cost</b>		<b>\$30,647.95</b>	<b>\$39,790.04</b>
<b>Cost/Participant</b>		<b>\$38.02</b>	<b>\$55.34</b>