

Minutes of Citizens Advisory Committee on Jury Selection
Friday, June 19, 2009
Brookens Administrative Center, Jennifer K. Putman Meeting Room
1776 E. Washington St., Urbana, Illinois

Call to Order: Chair Ammons called the meeting to order at 5:35 pm.

Roll Call: Seven members appointed from the general public were present: Aaron Ammons, Patricia Avery, William Brown, Brian Dolinar, Barbara Kessel, Jennifer Putman, Ken Turner. Two members appointed from the general public were absent: Lorraine Cowart, Joan Miller. One member arrived after roll call: Patrick Thompson. Two Court or Elected Officials were present: Justice & Social Services Committee Chair Matt Gladney, County Board Chair Pius Weibel. Three Court Officials were absent: Judge Thomas Difanis, Courts Administrator Roger Holland, Public Defender Randy Rosenbaum. Others present: University of Illinois Law Professors Steven Beckett and C.K. Gunsalus.

Approval of Agenda: The agenda was approved by unanimous consent.

Approval of Minutes: The minutes of the May 15, 2009 meeting were approved as circulated.

Announcements and Communications: Chair Ammons clarified that livingsoul@sbcglobal.net is the e-mail address at which he prefers to receive CACJS-related messages.

Public Participation: None.

Presentation/Discussion of 2008-09 Courtwatching Report: Professor Gunsalus began with an overview of the Fifth Annual Courtwatching (CW) Report by the Champaign Co. League of Women Voters (LWV) and UIUC College of Law (report given to CACJS members at May meeting). Professor Beckett supplemented Gunsalus's summary, emphasizing that CW reports provide a snapshot, only (based on trials observed exclusively in September through December), and that student observers are sufficiently trained to judge when attorneys may be misusing peremptory challenges. Gunsalus and Beckett took questions and provided answers; members' discussion led to the following conclusions and possible actions:

- If enough additional volunteers could be recruited and trained, active CW observation could continue from January through August (the months when College of Law Trial Advocacy class is not taught).
- Professors Gunsalus and Beckett have proposed a study that would correlate with Census tracts (1) the addresses to which all summonses are mailed; (2) the addresses of summonses returned, marked "Undeliverable"; and (3) the addresses of jurors who report for jury duty. Such a study would help assess the effectiveness of current lists and mailings and contribute to understanding ways to improve the process. Gunsalus and Beckett have not been successful to date in securing necessary funding for this study.
- CACJS has a goal of analyzing the addresses of several years' returned (i.e., undelivered) Juror Qualification Questionnaires and Summonses for correlation with maps of Census tracts.

- Gunsalus will provide a blank CW observers' questionnaire to the CACJS.
- It is believed that annual CW reports are read by attorneys and judges, and CW reports are publicized via presentations to civic groups. (In addition, the annual CW report is announced at a public press conference.)
- To "improve" the list of prospective jurors, CACJS suggests supplementing the names furnished by the County Clerk and Secretary of State (which are the names of registered voters, licensed drivers, and persons possessing state I.D. cards) with other names, for example, those of persons claiming unemployment insurance or Medicaid benefits, or whose phone numbers are published in a telephone directory.
- CACJS proposes that names of qualified jurors who are willing to serve be added to any other list of prospective jurors used by the Clerk of the Circuit Court (provided that the addition of such names of "the willing" will not detract from the randomness required in the compilation of lists).
- CACJS suggests that the printed Juror Qualification Questionnaire be revised to delete Questions 8–13 (concerning prospective jurors' or family members' criminal history, experience as a victim or as a party to a lawsuit, and record of auto accidents, probation, or parole), reserving these questions to be asked in open court.
- CACJS recommends that the one-page, optional Jury Representation Survey provided by Paula Hannaford-Agor, National Center for Jury Studies, be put in use as soon as possible in courts in Champaign Circuit Court.
- A once-per-year drawing of names to comprise the list of prospective jurors is unworkable in such transient communities as Champaign and Urbana, where a substantial percentage of residents moves each August. CACJS advised to consult with Circuit Clerk Linda Frank and with Courts employee Kirk Bedwell to better understand the timing of the drawing(s) of prospective jurors' names.
- Prof Beckett's Spring 2009 letter to all C-U high school social studies teachers, inviting their students to participate in a mock court experience, received positive response from teachers at Urbana High, St. Thomas More, and Judah Christian schools. CACJS members hope to build on Beckett's outreach to educators as the awareness campaign takes shape.

Recess of Meeting: Following the sounding of Tornado Alert Sirens, Ammons declared the meeting recessed; members took cover at approximately 7:15 pm in the basement of the Brookens Administrative Center.

Schedule Next Meeting: Chair Ammons will poll members to determine the date and time of the next meeting.

Adjournment: Chair Ammons adjourned the meeting at 7:30 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted, Jennifer Putman