

# CONNECTICUT JUDICIAL BRANCH

## ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON CULTURAL COMPETENCY

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March 22, 2016  
2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.  
225 Spring Street, Room 204  
Wethersfield

### MINUTES

Attendees: Justice Richard A. Robinson (Chair), Isabel Alvarez, Troy Brown, Sam Bruder, Karen Chorney, Linda J. Cimino, Juanita Halepas, Esther Harris, Cristina Johnson, Zarin Kapur, Ines Nieves, Daisy Ortiz, Philip Strambler, Shawna Woodard, Alison Zawadski

Absent: Precious Hyland, Ewa Wojewodzki

#### 1. Welcome

The meeting was called to order at 2:15 p.m. Justice Robinson began the meeting with a reminder that committee meetings are an opportunity to recharge the energy used in cultural competency work.

#### 2. Approval of Minutes

The minutes from the meeting held on January 26, 2016 were unanimously approved with one member abstaining due to absence from the meeting.

#### 3. Branch-wide Brown Bag Lunch

Linda Cimino, Cristina Johnson and Ines Nieves met to discuss the next ACCC event, formerly known as a “brown bag lunch”. The event will proceed as a “Lunch and Learn” opportunity and is scheduled for May 16, 2016, from 12:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m. in Wethersfield. In keeping with May as Mental Health Awareness Month, the topic will be traumatized individuals and how involvement with the Judicial Branch may affect them. Also included will be common triggers, tips, and helpful techniques for court personnel. The Lunch and Learn subcommittee has identified an outside presenter who has agreed to present this information without remuneration.

#### 4. Diversity Week 2016

The co-chairs for the Diversity Week subcommittee were identified as Alison Zawadski and Sam Bruder. Serving on the subcommittee with them are Esther Harris, Zarin Kapur, Karen Chorney, Shawna Woodard, Roy Smith (SCOD), Lillian Gonzalez (CSSD), and Michelangelo Palmieri (CSSD). The theme of Diversity Week 2016 will acknowledge the anniversary of the founding of the United Nations and reflect the value of collaboration. Justice Robinson has agreed to be the keynote speaker and will be presenting along the lines of the diversity paradox. The Opening Celebration, to be held on Monday, October 24, has been placed on Chief Justice Rogers’ and Judge Carroll’s calendars. The co-chairs will do the same for Judge Solomon and the Executive Directors. Justice Robinson urged the subcommittee to speak with administration so that a formal invitation is sent encouraging the legislature to participate in this worthwhile program. The first meeting of the subcommittee is scheduled for Tuesday, April 5 at 2:00 p.m. in Wethersfield.

## 5. FCR 100

Isabel Alvarez reported that there are now 8 “solid” facilitators. Start times for classes may be amended to 9 AM to accommodate those commuting from long distances or getting children to school, etc.

FCR 200 was piloted again earlier this month and reported to have received good reviews. It will be offered three more times this year on May 11, September 14 and November 9.

Shawna Woodard confirmed that the Branch’s Learning Management System has been programmed to recognize those Support Enforcement Services employees who completed the unit’s former course on cultural competency. In the interest of uniformity and consistency across the Branch, the ACCC agreed some time ago that it would grandfather those who have taken the SES course, and Support Enforcement Services agreed that any new employees would participate in FCR 100 instead.

## 6. ACCC Logo

This subcommittee (Karen Chorney, Troy Brown, Ines Nieves and Shawna Woodard) met earlier today to review documents received from the Branch’s graphic designer. Requests based on that discussion will be returned to the designer for additional processing.

## 7. ACCC Website

Phil Strambler reported that the ACCC website update is progressing smoothly. Recent equipment updates prompted short interruptions but things are back on track at this time. He also acknowledged that the web designer received the letter of gratitude from Justice Robinson.

## 8. Culture Matters Video

Troy Brown, Shawna Woodard and Karen Chorney met with Steve Marhefsky, Grants Specialist, on March 24, 2016 to provide further details pursuant to the ACCC video project. A follow up meeting will be scheduled.

## 9. What’s Happening

Isabel Alvarez reported that the community events she has been distributing to committee members are the result of an internship being served in her office, and that she will ensure this initiative continues to the greatest extent possible while the intern is still working with her.

## 10. New Business

Troy Brown reported a CSSD office hosting a Black History Month event involving a provocative video clip which uncovered tension in that office. After discussions with his Executive Director and multiple CSSD directors, he met with a group of CSSD employees to better understand the issues. He is considering several options as a plan of action:

- offering a session of FCR 100 specifically for a particular CSSD office
- making FCR 100 available to other CSSD individuals who have raised concerns
- conducting focus groups within CSSD

Committee members mentioned that this undercurrent has been noted throughout the Branch, and is not confined to CSSD. A recommendation was put forth that the ACCC use its next meeting to strategize a resolution to the problem.

## 11. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 3:40 p.m.