

Technology Committee Meeting  
*Update on the Legal Professionalism Committee*

NC Commission on the Administration of Law and Justice

NC Judicial Center

May 20, 2016

# LP Committee Charge:

relevant excerpt:

*“The Committee will explore ways to address structural challenges that affect access to justice, including the barriers that create a lack of affordable legal services for large segments of the population, the costs and debt associated with a legal education, and the challenges of developing and sustaining a legal career.”*

# Legal Professionalism Subcommittees (6)

1. Regulatory. What kinds of structural and regulatory reforms could help North Carolina deal with the rapid changes and growing innovation in how legal services are delivered?
  - defining “the practice of law” (who defines scope and how)
  - relationship between NC Supreme Court and the NC Bar
  - how to frame any new structure and supervision

# Legal Professionalism Subcommittees

2. Legal Services Supply Chain. What are the impediments to (a) pursuing a career in legal and law-related services; (b) providing services to those whose needs are not currently being met; and (c) persons who need legal or law-related services obtaining service from persons who have the ability to deliver the needed services?
  - current and future rules for out of state lawyers, nonlawyer providers of law-related services, and **online only providers**

# Legal Professionalism Subcommittees

3. Doing the Business of Legal Services Provider. What methods could North Carolina use to improve the interaction of supply and demand for legal services?
- Public sector and other non-profit options for the provision of legal services, current and future;
  - New business models for the private sector provision of legal services and legal-related services (e.g., internet based and corporate (v. lawyer partnership) structures)

# Legal Professionalism Subcommittees

4. Technology Related. How can North Carolina make and use technological improvements to help the public get greater and more efficient access to law-related information.
  - use of electronic technologies based in public spaces for all instances of consumer interaction with counsel and/or the courts
  - develop further comprehensive state wide self-help resources for consumers, such as the use of a “legal kiosk” (physical and virtual: a web enabled database with a user friendly interface)

- look to other states that are working with such enhanced access programs (Utah, California, Louisiana)
- Greater use of virtual legal offices by lawyers to expand scope of coverage and increase network of access by clients in under-served areas of the state
- Develop a set of NC standard forms for civil and criminal practice (for use by both *pro se* consumers and lawyers and accessible electronically at public locations) accepted by clerks in all 100 NC counties.

# NCCourts.org functionality: examples

- Improve on the NCCourts.org website the functionality for NC consumers to access and interact with various court offices via mobile technology, for example,
  1. *Ability to accept secure payments, such as for traffic violations and other uncontested fines and fees.*
  2. *Schedule appointments with parole officers and other court personnel*
  3. *Respond to email correspondence from the courts*
  4. *All other appropriate consumer interactions with the courts*

# NCCourts.org functionality

- We recognize that this is a long-term initiative focused on best practices, and should be a collaborative effort with various stakeholders involved, namely, the AOC, the NC Supreme Court, the NC State Bar, the Clerks of various counties, Legal Aid and other organizations that provide services to indigent NC consumers, and interested members of the Bar.

# Legal Professionalism Subcommittees

5. Public Access – Public Resources. How can North Carolina use existing state resources in different ways to help the public get access to law-related information?
- physical locations: public libraries, community colleges, law schools, and courthouses
  - expand the use of collaborative law services to offer consumers an additional avenue for conflict resolution, problem avoidance and legal redress.
  - consider the merits of publicly-funded legal call centers for consumer guidance on identifying the kind of legal matter and the related resources available; how to finance and staff?

# Legal Professionalism Subcommittees

6. Education. How can North Carolina use educational methods to improve awareness and knowledge of law-related information?
- Targeting the community of legal services and law-related services to educate the service providers on the use of technology and web-based resources to deliver legal services: law schools, CLE certified topics, paraprofessional training programs.
  - Targeting the public and community of consumers and potential consumers with coherent guidance on the legal system and its service providers; reducing the complexity for a non-technical audience.
  - Technology, in terms of web-based resources, can and will play a significant role here.

# For Discussion: Possible Committee Intersections and Practical Issues

- What data analytics already in the scope of Berry Dunn project overlap with the Legal Professionalism work (as described here today).
- E-Courts: possible to use one county, e.g., Wake, as a benchmark to gather, as a sample case, specific data on barriers to the use of counsel: does the party have counsel, how counsel was chosen, and if no counsel, the reasons therefor?
- The specific technology projects to emerge in the Commission recommendations will need stakeholders, planning and execution, and funding.
- Consider the value of a liaison with the Technology committee prior to creation of the first draft Commission report.
- Others?

Thank you . . .

Rick Minor

Legal Professionalism Committee