

Oregon State Bar
Special Open Session of the Board of Governors
March 17, 2017
Minutes

President Michael Levelle called the meeting to order at 8:57 a.m. on March 17, 2017. The meeting adjourned at 9:39 a.m. Members present from the Board of Governors were John Bachofner, Jim Chaney, Chris Costantino, Eric Foster, Rob Gratchner, Guy Greco, Ray Heysell, John Mansfield (by telephone), Eddie Medina, Tom Peachey, Per Ramfjord, Kathleen Rastetter, Liani Reeves (by telephone), Julia Rice, Traci Rossi, Kerry Sharp, and Kate von Ter Stegge. Not present were Vanessa Nordyke and Elisabeth Zinser. Staff present were Helen Hirschbiel, Amber Hollister, Dawn Evans, Kay Pulju, Susan Grabe, Catherine Petrecca, Judith Baker, Dani Edwards, Kateri Walsh and Camille Greene.

1. Call to Order

2. Public Policy Statements on Controversial Issues

Mr. Levelle and Ms. Hirschbiel led a discussion of the question “How might the bar respond to controversial political issues that could have (or are having) an adverse impact on the judicial system?” The intent of the discussion was to engage in a generative discussion that explores some of the issues that have arisen recently. Mr. Levelle also sought perspectives and concerns of the board members related to controversial issues so he can keep those perspectives in mind when speaking on behalf of the BOG. The discussion centered around the implications of the ICE round-ups and disparagement of judges. Bar staff gave the board examples of statements it had issued in the past in support of the judiciary and actions it has taken recently to help inform the public of rights and responsibilities under the law.

The board reached general consensus that any bar statement or action regarding these issues should focus on their effect on the integrity of the judicial system and the equitable administration of justice. Members agreed that statements should focus on the principles, not the politics. By way of example, several board members pointed to the recent statement issued by the Chief Justice of the California Supreme Court. Board members mentioned not only the need to be mindful of *Keller* restrictions, but also of the bar’s commitment to inclusion. Finally, board members felt it important to reach out to courts and the Oregon Supreme Court Chief Justice, when possible, prior to issuing any statement in order to ensure that the bar is supporting the judiciary and coordinating its educational efforts.