



## *Asian Pacific American Women Lawyers Alliance*

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[www.apawla.org](http://www.apawla.org)

July 22, 2012

The Honorable Tani Cantil-Sakauye  
Chief Justice, California Supreme Court and  
Chair, Judicial Council of California  
455 Golden Gate Avenue  
San Francisco, CA 94102

VIA EMAIL: [Invitations@jud.ca.gov](mailto:Invitations@jud.ca.gov)

RE: **Item SP 12-05**  
Strategic Evaluation Committee Report  
Comments from the Asian Pacific American Women Lawyers Alliance

Dear Chief Justice Cantil-Sakauye and Members of the Judicial Council:

The Asian Pacific American Women Lawyers Alliance (APAWLA) is submitting these comments in response to the Strategic Evaluation Committee (SEC) Report on the Administrative Office of the Courts.

APAWLA was formed to promote the inclusion, empowerment and advancement of Asian Pacific American women, and other underrepresented individuals in the legal profession. We note that while there have been some advances of people in color in the legal profession, increasing diversity in the legal profession is still a very important and relevant goal. With regard to the judiciary, for example, while the population of California is a majority/minority state with 60% of its population being people of color, only 27.7% of our judges are people of color. *Prior Judicial Council surveys have demonstrated that a failure to have a diverse profession and judiciary severely impacts the public trust and confidence in the judicial system and the perception of fairness in court proceedings.*

We commend the Judicial Council for its ongoing efforts to assist in implementing programs and policies focusing on diversity, access and fairness in the courts and justice system. We hope that the on-going efforts in this area, namely through the efforts of the Council's Access and Fairness Advisory Committee, are not diminished when the Judicial Council implements and prioritizes the recommendations of the SEC report. We also support the ongoing CJER education and training on fairness and elimination of bias for judges, judge pro tems and the State Bar Commission on Judicial Nominees Evaluation (JNE). This ongoing support through the AOC entities is critical for the continuation of our collective efforts to support the major goals of APAWLA and other organizations to further build, promote and support a more diverse profession which, of course, includes a more diverse judiciary.

We recognize that the SEC's charge was to conduct a thorough and objective examination of the AOC and that the SEC necessarily focused on areas of concern, rather than areas where the AOC has excelled or had a positive impact. However, we sincerely hope that in implementing the reforms of the AOC the importance of Access, Fairness and Diversity remain foremost in the Judicial Council's mind.

Like many who have commented, we believe it is crucial that the Judicial Council continue to focus on Goal 1 of the Judicial Council's strategic plan and to support the allocation of ongoing resources and qualified staff to ensure the effective implementation of diversity programs and initiatives. If the bench and bar are to maintain the public's trust and confidence in the judicial system, we must strive to do all we can to utilize the best and brightest in our wonderfully diverse state and to build that pipeline into the profession.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment in response to the SEC report. We commend the Judicial Council for being thoughtful and deliberate in its efforts to improve the justice system in California.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K. Anne Inoue', written in a cursive style.

K. Anne Inoue  
President  
Asian Pacific Women Lawyers Alliance