

**Commission on Racial & Ethnic Disparity in
the Criminal Justice System
September 15, 2008 Meeting**

MINUTES

Persons in Attendance:

Judge Harper (Chair), Deborah Fuller (Judicial), Preston Tisdale (OCPD), Mathew Mathew (External Affairs intern), Donald Green (AAG), Ann-Marie DeGraffenreidt (DCF – BJS), Maureen Price-Boreland (CPA), Judith Rossi (OCSA), Hakima Bey-Coon (OVA), Jeanne Milstein (OCA), Chris Arciero (DPS - State Police), Fran Carino (OCSA), Glenn Cassis (AAAC), Werner Oyanadel (LPRAC), Andrew Clark and Aileen Keays (ISCJ).

Meeting commenced at approximately 12:30 pm

I. Welcome – Judge Harper

II. Update on the October 22nd Conference –Deborah Fuller

- Confirmed everyone at the meeting received the Save the Date.
- Commission members were asked to send the Save the Date to members of their respective agencies/departments.
- Hope to have the invitations, with registration information, sent out this week.
- The keynote speaker, Charles Ogletree, confirmed.
- The Conference planning committee has been meeting regularly to form the break-out sessions and lunch time panel.
- The lunch time panel has changed from *The Media and its Role in Shaping Perceptions of Race and Ethnicity to Key Criminal Justice System Players: Dealing with Racial and Ethnic Disparity that is in our Criminal Justice System*. Conference planners wanted the panel to constitute a judge, public defender, prosecutor and Commissioner Danaher.
- We still need a moderator for the lunch time panel, possibly Susan Pease, the Dean of CCSU's School of Arts and Sciences who has done a lot of work in the related field.

Discussion:

- Commission member suggested the DOC be represented on the lunchtime panel since it's part of the system
 - Response: the intention of the panel was to focus on the front-end of the criminal justice system rather than once someone is already in the system and sentenced.
 - Suggested that the title be altered to reflect the intended concentration on the front-end.

- Another suggestion was to invite the police chiefs association since Danaher will not necessarily reflect their position.
 - Someone from a larger municipality

Morning Break-out Sessions

1. The Media and its Role in Shaping Perceptions of Race and Ethnicity
Cities are presented by the media in a certain way, and it's perceived by some to be a conscious decision made by the media. The purpose of this break-out is to have media representatives present to either acknowledge or deny it and possibly explain why it occurs.
 - i. Maureen spoke with Stan Sampson but he's unavailable
 - ii. Maybe get someone from the editorial side, or administration
 - iii. A Latin written media representative would be good.
 1. Werner will provide contact information for someone
2. Urban vs. Suburban Policing
 - i. Chief Tom Sweeney has committed to joining the panel
 - ii. DeLacey Davis – Preston is still trying to contact him
 - iii. Preston will moderate the panel
 - iv. Would it be beneficial to have a police chief solely from an urban environment?
 1. All the major city chiefs are on panel #9
 2. Invite New London police chief, maybe Stamford, Norwich, Meriden, New Britain
3. The Effect of the War on Drugs on Minority Populations
 - i. Erase "Mental Health" from the panel title because having trouble finding a representative to speak on that aspect; will focus on the war on drugs
 - ii. Try to get Peter Rockholz from DMHAS
4. The Educational System's Role in Contributing to Disparity in the Criminal Justice System
 - i. This panel is all set

Discussion:

- What level of education? High school? Elementary?
 - Judge Harper and Deborah Fuller will find out
- Suggestion to have some local juvenile justice expert(s) on the panel since that's where people enter the system.
- Specific examples of what's currently, locally, occurring and solutions in the educational system
 - Dr. George Sugai – doing positive behavioral interventions at UCONN.

5. The Impact of Underlying Social Issues on the Criminal Justice System
 - i. Marc Mauer of the Sentencing Project has not been contacted yet
 - ii. Jeanne Milstein's office, the Office of the Child Advocate, recently released their report "From Trauma to Tragedy: Connecticut Girls in Adult Prison", the pathway of girls to prison
 1. Would like to discuss their study which does discuss some of the underlying social issues that lead to a girl's placement in prison. Either as part of this break-out or in place of this break-out.
 2. Alternate for Marc Mauer will be Jeanne Milstein.
Maureen will get in touch with Marc Mauer
6. Perception vs. Reality – Youth Violence
 - i. Aileen has been in touch with the Executive Director of Youth Rights Media, as well as their Outreach Coordinator, to invite some of the youth to participate in the panel. May also invite the Executive Director to contribute to the panel, as well.
 - ii. Received a voicemail from them this morning. Have not received a confirmation but they sound interested.
7. The Impact of Politics on our Criminal Justice System
 - i. Panelists who have confirmed their attendance are: Senator McDonald and Representatives Walker and Dyson
 - ii. Kissel has an extended invitation but we have not received a confirmation.
 - iii. Representative Lawlor cannot participate
 - iv. Would also like to ask members of the minority caucus
 - v. Commission member pointed out that we should be sure to include both Democrats and Republicans
 - vi. A member also suggested inviting past legislators, such as Representative Peter Metz, Kevin Witkos, Kelvin Roldan
8. The Perception of the Criminal Justice System by the Latino Community
 - i. Professor Ronald Fernandez has been planning this panel
 1. He has two confirmed panelists and is looking for a third
 - ii. It was suggested that Fernando Bettencourt from the Commission take part
9. Innovative Initiatives Spearheaded by Inner-City Police Chiefs
 - i. All set – the Chiefs from Hartford, New Haven, Bridgeport and Waterbury have all confirmed their attendance
10. From Destruction to Construction: Mentoring Young Men of Color
 - i. All set
11. The Power of Choice
 - i. All set

Discussion:

- It was emphasized that every Commission member needs to try to get as many attendees as possible.
- Ideally, we would like to videotape every break-out session, we just need to make sure we have enough cameras
 - Ann-Marie DeGraffenreidt said her agency may have some we could use
- Member asked if the news media would be invited
 - Yes
- Member emphasized the desire to have a diverse audience
 - Asked how we can make sure to avoid overrepresentation from one aspect of the system or the public?
 - By extending an open invitation to all interested parties. Commission members are asked to assist in advertising.
- Member inquired as to whether presentations will be on DVD so the people who did not attend a break-out but were interested in the topic could view the session?
 - Will upload the conference on the REDCJ website
- IS CJ will send each agency an excel spreadsheet, including a write-up on the conference's agenda, goal, etc, so each Commission member can fill-in the persons from their agency that should be invited.
- Member suggested an emphasis on getting local influence, for example Martha Stone.
 - It creates different levels of interest for people
 - Preston reported he was in communication with NCCJ who is interested in attending

III. Other business

Adjourned at approximately 2:15 pm