



Supreme Court of Illinois

December 29, 2015

ILLINOIS SUPREME COURT FORMS JUDICIAL COLLEGE

The Illinois Supreme Court has announced the creation of a judicial college to provide comprehensive and multidisciplinary educational programs and professional development training to the state's judges and Judicial Branch employees.

Under the authority and governance of the Supreme Court, the Illinois Judicial College will consist of a seven-member Board of Trustees and six standing Committees. The formation of the Judicial College will take effect January 1, 2016.

In coordination with the Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts (AOIC), the Judicial College Board will be charged with drafting the College's bylaws, guiding educational principles, and policies and standards, including the identification of core competencies for Illinois' 950-plus judges.

"I have long been a strong supporter of continuing education for Illinois judges," Chief Justice Rita B. Garman said. "The law is not static. Legal rules change over time as a result of legislation and court decisions. In addition, new issues are constantly arising as a result of social change and new technology."

"By establishing the Judicial College, we will ensure that all judges throughout the state in both the circuit and appellate courts will have access to the most current information, taught by the most highly-qualified faculty. In addition, our commitment to continuing education extends beyond members of the bench to other professionals involved in the court system. I thank Committee chairs and members who participated in the planning of this milestone accomplishment and look forward to Illinois' Judicial College serving as a model for other states."

The Judicial College will build upon the work of numerous Supreme Court committees, particularly the Illinois Judicial Conference Committee on Education, which was created to identify the educational needs of Illinois judges and design programs to meet those needs.

Last year, the Supreme Court asked the Committee on Education to examine and propose a model for an Illinois Judicial College, recognizing that the need for comprehensive and multidisciplinary educational programs and professional development training could outgrow the Committee structure.

The Court also identified the need to expand collaborative training already provided under the auspices of the Committee on Education that involve judges and non-judges learning together, such as seminars that have taken place with judges, probation officers, trial court administrators, and Circuit Court Clerks.

Following review of the Committee's recommendations, the Supreme Court, during its September 2015 Term, approved an overall governance structure of the Judicial College, including the creation of the Board. During its November Term, the Supreme Court appointed seven judges to serve on the Board for staggered terms that will take effect January 1, 2016.

MORE

SC Forms Judicial College Add One

Justice Mary Jane Theis, as the Supreme Court liaison to the Committee on Education, will serve as an ex-officio member of the Board, along with AOIC Director Michael J. Tardy.

"For many years Illinois judges have participated in high quality judicial education programs," Justice Theis said. "The Judicial College will provide opportunities for even richer learning experiences."

Cook County Circuit Judge Thomas M. Donnelly will serve as Chair of the Judicial College Board. He currently serves as Chair of the Judicial Conference Committee on Education.

"I am grateful to the Illinois Supreme Court for allowing me this opportunity to serve. I hope the Judicial College will advance and strengthen our courts, expanding educational opportunities through the system and building a team approach," Judge Donnelly said. "Only with all the court staff working together can we effectively enhance access to justice for all of our citizens. Effective administration of justice requires a shared understanding of the problems and solutions together with mutual respect and collaborative spirit. The College will strive to build that understanding and develop that spirit."

Justice Lisa Holder White of the Fourth District Appellate Court in Decatur will serve as Vice Chair.

The other members of the Judicial College Board are: Justice Cynthia Y. Cobbs of the First District Appellate Court in Chicago, Circuit Judge Daniel B. Shanes of the Nineteenth Judicial Circuit in Waukegan, Circuit Judge Colleen F. Sheehan of the Cook County Circuit Court in Chicago, Associate Judge Christy Solverson of the First Judicial Circuit in Murphysboro, and Associate Judge Lisa Y. Wilson of the Tenth Judicial Circuit in Peoria.

The Judicial College will serve as the primary vehicle for the planning, development, and provision of all educational programs and training on behalf of the Supreme Court, which will create consistency and uniformity while making the process more efficient.

The Supreme Court's charge to the Judicial College Board also includes making recommendations on the appointment of members to the Judicial College's six standing committees, taking into consideration diversity of experience, leadership, position, race, age, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and geography.

In addition, the Judicial College Board will consult with the AOIC regarding projected program expenditures and file Fiscal Year reports of activities and events with the Supreme Court. The first Fiscal Year report will address the Board's activities between January 1, 2016, and June 30, 2016.

Cyrana Mott, assistant director of Judicial Education for the AOIC, and John Meeks, vice president of the Institute for Court Management at the National Center for State Courts, will assist the Judicial College Board in meeting its charge.

—30—

**FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT: Bethany Krajelis, senior communications specialist
to the Illinois Supreme Court, at 312.793.0870.**