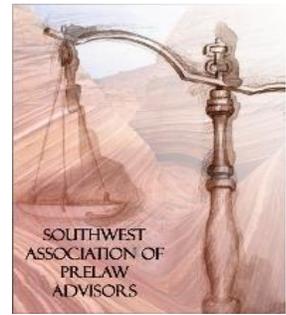


**SWAPLA**  
**Executive Committee Meeting**  
**April 30, 2011**



**Members Present:** Frank Rohmer, Gary Keith, J.D. Gragg, Michelle Payne, Anthony Champaign, Jeff Robb, Jerry Polinard, and Sandy Self

**Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order by Frank.

**I. CARAVAN DIRECTOR**

Cindy Pressley has left SWAPLA due to a change in her employment status. Therefore, we will have to find a new Caravan Director. Members discussed hiring a grad student or staff person to handle the caravan this year. They will have to monitor the website, handle phone calls and emails from the law school reps. They would also serve as the contact person for the law schools and assist the reps with travel arrangements, shipments of supplies, and table placements. We will still need onsite people at each of the Caravan stops, however, and the director will coordinate and assist these people as well.

The reps will arrive in Austin on Sunday October 2<sup>nd</sup>. After the stop in Austin they will travel to San Antonio, then to College Station, they will end up in Ft. Worth and there will be stops at UT Dallas and at TCU. Some of the reps may be seasonal reps and the others are full time reps. Therefore, some of the reps may not participate in all the Caravan stops.

The bus ride from Ft. Worth to UTD will take approximately one hour and a half. However, J.D. pointed out that the reps are used to taking buses during the Caravans. Frank stated that last year they had a good turnout of students in Austin and College Station, but not as good in San Antonio. He suggested that the site management in San Antonio may need improvement.

It was then discussed that some of the reps in New Orleans mentioned that they would like to have more opportunities to interact with the prelaw advisors. It was suggested that this be built into the conference schedule somehow because that interaction is important for both the reps and the prelaw advisors. It was also suggested that we give the reps more opportunities to attend our conference sessions.

Gary stated that he plans to begin the conference registration about 3:00 p.m. on Thursday. Frank suggested that some of the advisors could stop by UTD law fair site on Thursday. Gary suggested that we put it in the conference schedule that advisors are encouraged to visit the UTD site prior to coming to the conference in Ft. Worth. Jerry noted that they sometimes schedule part of the program on the same campus as the Caravan stop, for example a panel discussion could be held at TCU. The participants could be transported via a bus to the site and then given time to attend the law fair after the session. The law fairs usually begin around 10:00 a.m. and end at 2:00 or 3:00 p.m.

Karen had volunteered to replace Cindy as Caravan Director but her boss isn't allowing her to do this. Tony suggested hiring a former student of his, Greg Combs. Greg obtained his PhD recently and Tony described him as quiet, personable, bright and a hard worker. Tony mentioned it to him and he said that he would be willing to take the job. He is going to be teaching as an adjunct therefore he will be in the area and available.

Michelle suggested that another option would be to hire Heather Nichols. Heather is currently working part-time at a law firm. She works with TUMCA (Texas Undergraduate Moot Court Association) during their tournaments and is very highly regarded. Michelle discussed the position with her and stated that Heather indicated that she was interested and excited about the prospect. J.D. said he would be available and willing to take over this position next year but will be unable to do so this year. Since he worked as a law school rep for Texas Tech, he knows the reps and the sites very well.

Members then discussed the amount of money which should be paid to the Caravan Director. Most of the members agreed that \$1000.00 didn't seem like enough money for the amount of work that is involved. Jeff made a motion that we hire Heather for \$2000.00. After a second by Jerry, the motion passed unanimously.

Gary moved that the position be offered to Greg if Heather decides that she cannot take it. After a second by Jeff this motion was unanimously approved.

## **II. CONFERENCE HOTEL**

Jeff stated that he and Gary visited the four prospective hotels and they were all very nice. Jeff noted that the Omni and Worthington are incredibly beautiful, however the Omni requires a \$20,000.00 minimum food/beverage expenditure and the Worthington requires a \$17,000.00 minimum. On the other hand, the Hilton's minimum is \$9200.00 and the Sheraton's is even lower at \$6000.00. Also, the Sheraton has the lowest room rates \$129.00, the lowest parking fee, \$12.00, and is offering free wireless internet.

Frank stated that he shared Jeff's opinion from looking over the information that Karen sent about the hotels. Frank expressed concern about filling the rooms due to the fact that the law school reps often choose to stay in the hotels that give them points, for example a lot of them choose Marriott hotels. The Worthington is a Marriott hotel. Gary said that in 2009 SWAPLA reserved 175 rooms but only used 67. In New Orleans we reserved 160 and only used only 88. There were less than half the advisors than expected.

After a significant amount of discussion, Sandy moved that we utilize the Sheraton for the conference, and Jeff seconded the motion. The discussion continued when Jerry noted that the Hilton people have been very nice and it was suggested that we ask if they would be able to match the Sheraton's offer. Jeff suggested that the motion be amended to allow the Hilton to compete with the Sheraton's offer. The discussion continued, however it concluded with a unanimous vote in favor of the Sheraton after consideration of all of the costs involved and the short time frame we are working with.

## **III. CONFERENCE SUBSIDY**

Frank asked Michelle, the new SWAPLA treasurer, if she has received all of the banking information as of yet. Michelle said that she has been unable to obtain this from the bank despite numerous attempts. She estimated that there will probably be around \$35,000.00 to \$38,000.00 in the SWAPLA account after all the outstanding bills and reimbursements have been paid. She has decided that she will have to go to the bank to get this accomplished. Frank stated that he will go with her to the bank if need be.

Jeff suggested \$150.00 for the subsidy amount to all prelaw advisors attending the conference provided that they remain through the business meeting at the end of the conference. Gary stated that last year it was \$200.00 plus \$50.00 for one additional meal. Jerry noted that historically there has usually been less than 30 advisors who have stayed through the business meetings.

The number of rooms that should be reserved at the Sheraton was then discussed. 40 to 50 rooms was the general consensus. No more than 50. Most of the law school reps will leave and not stay on Friday night.

It was suggested that we only reserve 40 rooms on Friday night and 50 on the other nights. Also, we would only need 10 at the most on Saturday night. J.D. said that he doesn't think that 50 rooms will be enough for the law school reps if they stay at the Sheraton. He thinks that Wednesday night will be a busy night.

Michelle suggested that we check the Texas Motor Speedway schedule to see if there is any event scheduled that weekend. This is because hotel rooms are difficult to book during those weekends. We also need to check on the Cowboy football games and the TCU home football games. J.D. volunteered to check into these events and to also look for other entertainment options in Ft. Worth that weekend.

Gary made a motion that we set a \$250.00 registration fee for the conference with \$25.00 membership included, and a \$150.00 subsidy for the advisors who attend the entire conference through the business meeting on Saturday. After a second by Michelle the motion was unanimously approved.

Jeff asked if the Caravan fess will remain the same this year. Gary suggested that the Caravan fee be set at \$400.00 and that the institutional membership at \$40.00. J.D. made a motion that we set the following fee scale:

- 1 Caravan stop \$200.00 + \$125.00 for the Conference
- 2 Caravan stops \$250.00 + \$125.00 for the Conference
- 3 Caravan stops \$300.00 + \$125.00 for the Conference
- 4 Caravan stops \$350.00 + \$125.00 for the Conference

After a second by Gary the motion was unanimously approved.

#### **IV. CONFERENCE PROGRAM:**

*The following potential schedule was discussed:*

Thursday –

- Registration mid afternoon
- Law Fair at UTD
- Workshop 4:00 - 5:30
- Reception at 6:00 and dinner at 7:00

Friday –

- Texas Wesleyan law school tour and Breakout Session at the law school
- Breakfast at the law school
- Lunch and Law Fair at TCU + Breakout Session

*Substance: the following potential topics were discussed -*

- Advising students on what courses to take
- Advising from career services offices
- Building a website
- Studying for the LSAT
- Applying to law school
- New Advisor Workshop
- Mock admissions
- Personal Statements
- Diversity
- PLANC Convention in DC
- Law school debt vs. getting a job
- Truth in advertising to students

National Association of Legal Professionals  
J.D. asked if the “Jurist” could send a speaker  
Michelle suggested – law school session “What I Wish My Prelaw Advisor Had Told Me”  
with first year law students as presenters

***Speakers: the following potential speakers were discussed –***

Ann Brandt (LSAC)  
Jerry Organ (ABA)  
A Texas Supreme Court Justice  
A State Legislator  
Jamie Dillon - University of Houston Law School

**V. PLANC:**

The National Conference is scheduled for June 13-16, 2012 in Washington D.C. Jeff is on the program committee but noted that he hasn’t heard anything as of yet. Jerry said that Heather Struck will be taking over the Chair position. Also, the LSAC is developing an online LSAT prep course for under \$100.00. It should be available in August or September. Frank noted that ACCESS is almost out of business because of the new laws.

Gary said that we will need to elect officers for next 2 years at the SWAPLA business meeting, but there are no bylaws changes needed. Jeff said that he is willing to cycle back into a leadership position.

There being no further business, meeting was adjourned.

Sandy Self, J.D.  
SWAPLA Secretary