

Gender Equity (GE) Committee

Conference Call

October 18, 2019

**AGENDA and Notes**

**Call Participants:**

**Marsha Travis (AJA/Tennessee)**

**Kevin Dickson (Securus Foundation)**

**Erika Frierson (AJA/California)**

**Tiffany Mass (AJA/Iowa)**

**Joli Rish-Shumpert (AJA/South Carolina)**

**Maureen Buell (National Institute of Corrections)**

**Panda Adkins (National Institute of Corrections)**

**John Johnson (Florida)**

**Sandy Cathcart (National Institute of Corrections)**

**Sonya Gillespie-Carter (Colorado)**

**Kim Barnett (Correctional Education)**

**Dawn Freeman (Securus Foundation)**

**Shawn Laughlin (AJA/Colorado)**

**Donna Deutsch (The Moss Group)**

**Margarette Devilas (AJA/Florida)**

**Susan McCampbell (Center for Innovative Public Policy)**

**Conference Update** Collaboration with 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President and Conference Chair Mandy Lambert yielded a Gender Equity Track for conference with three workshop slots reserved for the committee. Andie Moss and Cornita Riley have taken the lead developing a workshop dedicated to Leadership Issues focusing on highlighting trailblazers in the field which will discuss obstacles and challenges as well as successes and motivation. Another workshop will highlight the Denver model of creation of an agency committee, and this workshop will also reference an administrators "tool kit" that will be available on the AJA website for agencies to utilize in creating their own change. Sonya Gillespie-Carter described the agenda and topics they plan to discuss. The third workshop is a collaboration with the Vera Institute. The author of the Overlooked report will begin the discussion related to finding challenges in providing appropriate care and services for female offenders in rural and/or small jails. Vera will be joined by 2 practitioners to discuss effective strategies to overcome obstacles. A fourth workshop was suggested and agreed upon in which agencies that have addressed gender equity could discuss success. Orange County Corrections will team with Los Angeles County for this workshop. Karen Dalton from LASD and Capt. Chiquita Camacho from OCDOC plan to

research legislative mandates as well as their successes in implementing a gender responsive (GR) system. The Programs Track also selected a submission from Erika Frierson's agency to discuss their programming successes with female offenders. Erika briefly described the programs and effectiveness.

**Resolutions Update** The chair of the resolutions committee was not available at the AJA board meeting to present a resolution due to commitments with the Alabama Jail Association, however, GE committee member Joli Rish-Shumpert has agreed to spearhead this activity. Joli advises that 2 resolutions be created. Having a separate resolution for staff and one related to inmate care will give each area the focus it deserves and not conflate the mission by trying to make it all fit into one document. Marsha commented that a charge for the resolutions committee next year will be to review all existing AJA resolutions for GE/GR, to include issues related to the transgender population.

**AJA Website development** The President's Initiative page is up and running! All members were asked to send any content to Joel for inclusion. The idea is that articles will be refreshed as new articles come in, and resources from a variety of backgrounds will be included. We expect to draw information from resources outside of corrections. A slider for the website homepage is being developed for the home page. Susan McCampbell shared that the NJLCA website has a resource listing that could help Joel create a resource tab for the GE webpage. She sent the link to Marsha, who forwarded it to Joel. Maureen Buell suggested a link to the AWEC website. Joel also is responsible for the American Jails magazine and reports the January/February issue has at least 5 articles, presidential commentary, and editorial surrounding GE/GR. Kim Barnette suggested that any research-based articles may be cross-published in her organization's education journal.

**Vendor/Exhibitor committee** Previous updates included the progress and discussion related to exhibitors hiring models to staff booths. The models have no knowledge of the subject matter, and are there only as "eye candy" which is demeaning and a devaluation of the role of female attendees. Language in the exhibitor agreement was updated with the assistance of committee member Julie Abbate. Also, headquarters staff report that they will have a direct conversation with the exhibitor, as their practice has continued at other professional conferences. Shawn Laughlin mentioned that the Colorado Jail Association developed an exhibitor dress code to address similar issues.

**NIC Strategic Planning** National Institute of Corrections approached the committee regarding support of the GE initiative. Marsha explained that one of the most important, but difficult, parts in her role as chair has been creating a mission and vision for the committee as outlined in the charges from the President. Conference calls are not the most conducive format, and the meeting in Louisville was too short to be effective in that manner. The request to NIC has been for assistance in the development of a strategic plan to develop a roadmap. Current accomplishments have centered on tangible achievable objectives—specific items that we can point to as some quick change. However, the focus of the initiative is a paradigm change, a CULTURE change, which takes planning, collaboration, and continual

focus. Panda Adkins discussed NIC's role in hosting a 2-day strategic planning session with a trained facilitator and the ongoing committed support from NIC administration and staff. The planning session is expected to occur in January 2020.

**NIC collaboration: Large Jail Network** AJA has been invited to collaborate with NIC at the next meeting of the Large Jail Network. The upcoming year is the 30<sup>th</sup> year of LNJ, and a focus on GE is scheduled to launch the meeting. The plan is to focus on GE and staffing issues in the first half of the day; the second half will highlight gender-responsive strategies to incarceration. NIC is also asking the LNJ reps to bring their highest-ranking female subordinate to the meeting to cultivate female leadership and succession planning. The next meeting is scheduled for March 23-25, 2020 in Boston.

**Position statements** One tangible goal is to have a section on the website dedicated to position statements related to best practices in GE and GR issues. Julie Abbate with Just Detention International wrote a statement for the American Bar Association about availability of feminine hygiene products to women in prison. The topic was covered in depth and extremely well written. Julie has agreed to pare the 12-page document down to 2-3 pages and focus on jails. We need more submission topics from committee members and assistance in determining and documentation of the best practices.

**AJFO Conference** The Association for Justice-Involved Females and Organizations is conducting its conference December 8-11 in Atlanta. Committee members are encouraged to participate with this organization. Of the members present on the call, it is noted that Davidson County is sending 3 attendees, LA County is sending 2 participants, and San Diego is scheduled to present a workshop. The President of AJA is attending as well. AJA is available to collaborate in any role requested. Maureen added that this is the only conference that focuses solely on working with women in the criminal justice system. It has grown over the years to include practitioners and researchers.

**Radio Interviews with President** President Diggins was recently interviewed on Sirius XM Radio, Channel 126. The first interview was on the Topeka Sam show, and Dawn Freeman also participated. A link to the interview is located on the website and everyone is encouraged to listen. Marsha asked Dawn to give a brief summary of the interview. Dawn related how professional and polished President Diggins was in championing the issues in leadership as well as for those who are incarcerated, and that the interview went extremely well. She said the second interview was on the Karen Hunter Show and had a broader focus due to the larger audience. Dawn reported that there had been positive feedback on both interviews.

**AWEC Legacy Award** The Association of Women Executives in Corrections recently honored President Diggins with the Legacy Award. Maureen explained that the Legacy Award is given to the individual who has championed female leadership in corrections. This year was a unanimous vote. Committee members are encouraged to join AWEC to increase networking in our initiative.

**Collaborations-Existing and Future** As noted in the topics previously discussed, collaborations and networking are vital as we push forward in changing the culture in corrections. The more voices carrying the same message will strengthen the efforts of change. AJA has already worked the AWEC, AJFO, NIC, and NJLCA. Contact will be made soon with the ACA committee and NSA to explore more options of projects that can be branded across multiple organizations. Any other suggestions of organizations to add to our collaborations are welcome. Please send suggestions to Marsha.

**Future of the GE Initiative** As discussed previously, changing culture is not a quick and easily accomplished goal. There is still much work to be done. Rather than launch a new initiative in 2020, AJA will maintain the focus on GE to continue the momentum and collaborations that we've begun. There is still much work to be done, even with the strides we've discussed. Recently the Board of Directors voted to make the Gender Equity Committee a standing committee in the bylaws of the organization. This means all presidents going forward will establish a committee to focus on gender issues. In the coming year, Erika has agreed to chair the committee as Marsha's responsibilities change. Erika discussed her commitment to continuation of our goals, and she shared how introduction of gender responsive strategies at her facility has enhanced the quality of services and care for the inmate population

**Around the "Room"** As the meeting closed, all participants were offered the opportunity to share or present issues to discuss. No one brought forth new business items and the meeting adjourned.