

Graduate Program Committee

Judicial Conference of Indiana

Zoom Committee Meeting Minutes, August 17, 2026

The Graduate Program Committee met on Monday, August 17, 2026, from 12:00-1:00 p.m. via Zoom for the purpose of welcoming new committee members and providing an overview of the current Graduate Program, setting expectations, and answering questions.

Members and Staff Attending

Committee members checked below attended the Zoom meeting.

- ☒ Senior Judge Margret Robb, Chair
- ☒ Senior Judge Darrin Dolehanty
- ☐ Judge AmyMarie Travis, Jackson Superior Court
- ☒ Judge Melanie Kendrick, Marion Superior Court
- ☒ Judge Matthew Sarber, Marshall Superior Court 3

Staff Present: Vicki Davis, IOCS, participated in the virtual meeting.

Welcome & Call to Order

Judge Robb called the meeting to order at 12:00 p.m.

Meeting Agenda Items

The Zoom meeting was held to welcome new committee members and provide an orientation overview of the current Graduate Program operation and application process, to set expectations, and answer questions.

Welcome to new members

Judges Robb and Dolehanty welcomed new members Judge Matthew Sarber, Marshall Superior Court and Judge Melanie Kendrick, Marion Superior Court. They attended the Graduate Program in 2024/25.

Graduate Program Update

Judge Robb provided an update on the academic program.

- The program includes three academic subjects and a mini-course (communication styles/consensus building the first year and war crime trials the second year).

- Judge Robb takes the lead role in securing the academic faculty for the 2-year program.
 - For 2027, Fred Cate will return as an anchor Indiana University faculty member. He will focus on privacy and security. Judge Robb asked him to reduce the amount of AI content and include one class that focuses on the right of privacy and is there a right of privacy anymore or who really should have a reasonable expectation of privacy considering facial recognition, Ring cameras, flock cameras and Alexa in our homes.
 - Thomas Healey, Seton Hall, will present a course on the First Amendment; 2027 will be his third time participating in the program.
 - The third academic topic will be on policing in the courts, but the speaker has not been identified.
 - Noah Weisbord, McGill University, CA, will conduct a mini-course on war crimes and war crime trials on Monday and Tuesday.
- The academic speakers receive a speaker fee and travel expenses.

Judge Dolehanty reviewed the division of responsibilities as between himself and the trial judge members of the committee.

- Trial judge members are asked to attend a day and a half (with one overnight) of the program instead of the full week to minimize time commitment and impact on their court calendars.
- Since additional support will be needed during the engagement activities on Thursday evening, one member may be asked to allocate two and a half days to attend the Program.
- Trial judge committee members are responsible for working with Judge Dolehanty to secure four lunch speakers.
- Assigned as a point of contact for a designated speaker to serve as a liaison giving the speaker some sense of what to expect, answer questions and give speaker some insight into the program and Indiana's judiciary.
- Be actively engaged in the program when present.
- During the program, committee members should sit with the students which gives the appearance of being an ad-hoc class member.
- Others responsible include:
 - Keeping the group together
 - Building collegiality
 - Networking with the class
 - Introducing lunch speakers

- Facilitating group dinners (Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday evening)
- Keeping class focused
- Encouraging students to participate with professors and vice versa
- Staff/participate in the Networking Suite, Terrace Suite
- Facilitate or arrange for a student to lead morning walk/run.

Jenny, Vicki and Ashley handle the logistical requirements in implementing the program the week of the event.

Judge Kendrick asked whether committee members could attend more of the program covering their own hotel overnight expense for the additional nights. Judge Robb advised she would follow up and provide an answer at a future committee meeting. Currently, IOCS can cover one authorized hotel overnight for the trial judge committee members.

Judge Sarber noted he is available to support the program implementation in any way he can or is needed.

Grand Colonnade breakfast was preserved because it encourages networking.

Several dinner events were eliminated including the Sunday dinner, a meet and greet reception was substituted. The cash bar for the Thursday evening dinner was also eliminated.

Chief Justice Rush normally attends a portion of the program each year, schedule permitting.

Graduate Program Application Process

Judge Robb and Judge Dolehanty reviewed the Graduate Program Application Process. A graduate program class will be held in 2028/29. The application process will start September/October 2027.

The request to apply will be included in a Wednesday Weekly message late September 2027. The application window is generally 30 days.

The Committee will receive a copy of all applications along with a map of the state showing the distribution of applicants across the state. The map will show the names of applicants, court, county, if a judge or magistrate, if prior alternate, if prior applicant.

In selecting students, the Committee is looking for cross sections of the judiciary, a good mixture of judges and magistrates, one Marion County small claims judges, general jurisdiction/limited jurisdiction, and where applicants are in the judicial career life cycle.

The Committee will meet by Zoom to identify the names of 30 students plus three to four alternates. The Committee's recommendations are shared with Chief Justice Rush for her input and review.

Committee members generally encourage judicial officers in their region to apply.

Students selected must commit to attending both years.

Questions

Judge Kendrick asked how the Committee selected and identified lunch speakers. Lunch speakers are Indiana based speakers. We can reimburse mileage and offer a hotel overnight if needed, but a speaker fee is not offered to lunch speakers. Education credit is available for the lunch speakers; the content ranges between legal subject matter and non-legal subject matter. Judge Robb and Dolehanty reviewed the list of prior lunch speakers which included for example, Bryan Babb, Karen Freeman-Wilson, Crista Carlino, Craig Pinkus.

Judge Robb and Dolehanty noted two possible lunch speakers for 2027 are a speaker from the Levi Coffin State Historic Site and Richard Shevitz, who was a lead attorney, on the Class Action Holocaust litigation. Judge Dolehanty suggested that lunch speaker working ideas be discussed this fall with selection, date availability, and confirmation being made in January-February 2027. Judge Kendrick mentioned Gary Brackett, Indianapolis Colts, as a possible speaker or Mark Nicholson, former felon, successful criminal defense attorney in Indianapolis. Lunch speakers give a 20-minute presentation with another 10-minutes for Q&A.

Wrap-Up, Closing & Next Meeting

The meeting adjourned at approximately 1 p.m. The Committee will meet for breakfast on Thursday, September 3 at 8:00 a.m. during the Annual Meeting.

Respectfully submitted,
Vicki Davis, Education Division Director
Indiana Office of Court Services

Graduate Program Committee

Judicial Conference of Indiana

Committee Meeting Minutes, September 3, 2026

The Graduate Program Committee met on Thursday, September 3, 2026, from 8:00-9:00 a.m. at the September Annual Meeting of the Judicial Conference of Indiana.

Members and Staff Attending

The Committee members marked below attended the breakfast meeting.

- ☒ Senior Judge Margret Robb, Chair
- ☒ Senior Judge Darrin Dolehanty
- ☒ Judge AmyMarie Travis, Jackson Superior Court
- ☐ Judge Melanie Kendrick, Marion Superior Court
- ☒ Judge Matthew Sarber, Marshall Superior Court 3

Staff Present: Vicki Davis, IOCS, attended. Jenny Kidwell could not attend due to Annual Meeting conference duties.

Call to Order

Judge Robb called the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m.

Meeting Agenda Items

The Committee discuss program content and program format for the 2027 Graduate Program.

2027 Program Academic Faculty

Judge Robb gave a recap on faculty previously secured for 2027: Professor Fred Cate, IU Maurer School of Law, Professor Thomas Healy, Seton Hall Law School, and Professor Noah Weisbord, McGill University Faculty of Law, CA.

Judge Robb announced Professor Seth Stoughton, Joseph F. Rice School of Law, University of South Carolina agreed to conduct a course on policing in the courts.

All academic faculty for 2027 are lined up. Committee member/faculty point of contact must still be determined.

Vicki Davis will work on speaker agreements.

2027 Lunch Speakers

The Committee decided to pursue a representative from Levi & Catharine Coffin Historical State Site as a lunch speaker. Joanna Hahn was the last speaker from the Coffin House.

Additionally, the Committee identified Richard Shevitz as a lunch speaker.

No assignments were made as to which committee member (Judges Dolehanty, Travis, Sarber, Kendrick) will reach out to the Coffin House and Attorney Shevitz regarding interest and date availability for June 14-15-16-17.

The Committee must still identify the other two lunch speakers. From the August meeting, Judge Kendrick recommended Gary Brackett and Mark Nicholson.

2027 Program Structure

The Committee decided there would not be a hosted dinner on Tuesday evening. Vicki Davis was asked to make sure snacks are available on Monday and Tuesday due to the late afternoon course, Professor Weisbord's War Crimes.

All exams will be completed electronically. Students will be asked to bring a tablet or their laptop to produce MSWord, iWork Pages, or email text exam. Electrical service will be available at the classroom tables. Blue books will be available for those not comfortable in digital wordsmithing.

Judge Dolehanty asked that Judges Travis, Sarber, and Kendrick check their calendars and let him know which days they would be available to attend the Program so assignments can be made.

Judge Robb reaffirmed she will talk with the Chief Justice about the ability of committee members to attend more than one and half days.

Wrap-Up, Closing & Next Meeting

The meeting adjourned at 9:00 a.m. A date for the next meeting was not set.

Respectfully submitted,
Vicki Davis, Education Division Director
Indiana Office of Court Services