ADMINISTRATIVE GOVERNANCE OF THE MINNESOTA JUDICIAL BRANCH
THE JUDICIAL BRANCH

- 315 Judges
- 2,500 Employees
- 106 Locations
- $ 318 Million Annual Budget – fully state funded
- 1.5 Million Cases
ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

Supreme Court (7 Justices)

Court of Appeals (19 Judges)

District Court (289 Judges)
JUDICIAL DISTRICTS

- Administrative
- Election
ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE

Chief Justice

Judicial Council

State Court Administrator’s Office (SCAO)

Chief Justice

Supreme Court

Chief Judge

Court of Appeals

Chief Judge

District Court

Rules Committees

Regulation of Practice of Law

Judicial District Administrator

County Court Administrator
WHY?

• State Funding of all Trial Court Operations going into effect

• Current Government Structure was fragmented and confusing

• Chief Justice Vision
  ➢ Willingness to delegate authority
HOW?

- January 2004 – Transformation Workgroup established – 20 members
- December 2004 – Chief Justice promulgated order
- January 2005 – Membership established – transition/planning period
- July 2005 – Judicial Council operational
COUNCIL MEMBERS

25 members representing all levels of courts:

✓ 19 judges - voting members

✓ 6 administrators - non-voting members
MEMBERSHIP

- Chief Justice
- Chief Judge Court of Appeals
- Chief Judges of Ten Judicial Districts
- Minnesota District Judges Association President
- State Court Administrator
- One Associate Justice by Chief Justice
- Five at-large Judges (3 trial court) by Chief Justice
- One at-large Appointment by Chief Justice
- Three District Administrators by peers
- One Court Administrator by peers
GOVERNANCE PHILOSOPHY

• “Deliberating in many voices and governing in one.”

• High-level policy perspective, delegating management and implementation responsibility

• Pro-active, ends-focused approach
• Primary consideration of the needs of the judiciary as a whole, balanced with recognition of particular needs of individual district and courts.

• Provide clear and consistent direction
PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITIES

• Statewide administrative policy-making
• Strategic planning
• Legislative agenda
• Budget and resource allocation
PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITIES (CONT’D)

• Court performance and accountability
• Outreach and stakeholder communications
• Annual evaluation of State Court Administrator
  ❖ Sole Judicial Council employee
  ❖ Serves “at pleasure of” Council
JUDICIAL COUNCIL FUNCTIONING

• Meets every month

• Agendas, minutes and policies are on the Judicial Branch intranet site

• Meeting summaries emailed statewide

• Meetings open to the public

• Staffing provided by SCAO
JUDICIAL COUNCIL COMMITTEES

• Three Standing Committees:
  - Court Operations Policy and Strategy
  - Human Resource/Education and Organization Development
  - District Implementation

• Operate at the will of the Council
KEY CHALLENGES

• Statewide perspective, but very diverse districts and counties

• Clear delegation of implementation authority included in all policies

• Communication and outreach
ACHIEVEMENTS

• More equitable levels of judicial services
• Budget accountability has been clarified and co-location of policy-making and funding responsibility
• Administrative Unity
• Cost efficiency and effectiveness improved
CLOSING REMARKS

Perspectives:

• District Administrator
• State Court Administrator
• Chief Judge
CONTACT FOR INFORMATION

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