



NORTH CAROLINA
ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE
of the COURTS

North Carolina Judicial Branch DRAFT---Information Technology Governance Charter

August 22, 2014



VISION

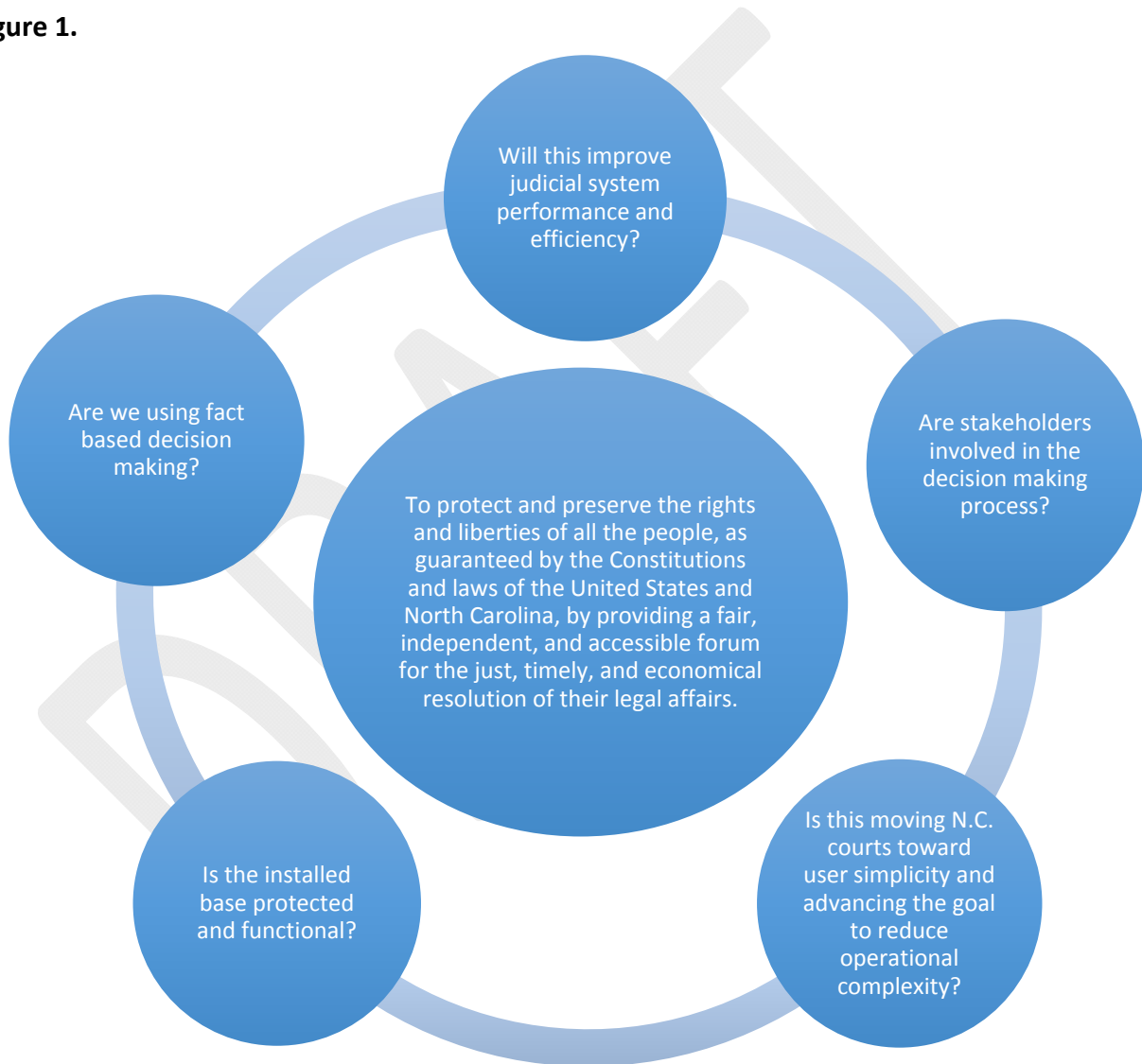
The mission of the North Carolina Judicial Branch is, “To protect and preserve the rights and liberties of all the people, as guaranteed by the Constitutions and laws of the United States and North Carolina, by providing a fair, independent, and accessible forum for the just, timely, and economical resolution of their legal affairs.” Just as court personnel play a critical role in the accomplishment of this mission, so too must the technology applications and infrastructure of the courts. The North Carolina Judicial Branch’s mission is an ever-present value that is the foundation from which this charter for information technology governance is established.

Information technology governance provides a method to align an information technology strategy with the vision, mission, goals, and values of the N.C. Judicial Branch. The information technology governance process will help to: 1) ensure technology supports the business needs of the courts; 2) provide formal, mature, process-oriented technology services; and, 3) institute policies, procedures, and structures that provide necessary controls around information technology acquisition and use. This charter defines who makes information technology decisions and how they are made using a consistent and transparent process. It describes the roles and responsibilities of key individuals and groups and reinforces the need to align resources based on priorities established by stakeholders and decision makers. Finally, the charter outlines guidelines by which decision-making parties interact and operate.

KEY PRINCIPLES

The State Judicial Council Technology Committee has determined that the decision making process for major information technology initiatives will evaluate alignment with five key principles (listed in Figure 1 below). This evaluation process is not isolated to the review of one group. Instead, input from business stakeholder groups as well as technical staff is required to conduct a thorough assessment of information technology opportunities and investments.

Figure 1.



- *Are stakeholders involved in the decision making process?*
The perspective of Judicial Branch users will be represented at various levels in the formal decision making structure.
- *Will this improve judicial system performance and efficiency?*
Every effort should be made to select information technology projects that provide the most benefit for the judicial system as a whole at any given time. The implementation and rollout of information technology projects will be completed expeditiously and uniformly across all jurisdictions.
- *Are we using fact based decision making?*
Technology investment decisions must be justified using objective measures of business value and impact. Staff analysis should provide information such as return on investment and cost-benefits to assist in the prioritization process and ensure solutions will be cost effective and meet business objectives. Committees will utilize a formal delegation criteria matrix and scoring criteria guide.
- *Is the installed base protected and functional?* Lifecycle replacement, hardware redundancy, timely upgrades, license renewals, and other maintenance and support processes are important to ensure information systems are stable, reliable, performant, secure, and available every day.
- *Is this moving North Carolina courts toward user simplicity and advancing the goal to reduce operational complexity?* Technology should make jobs easier. The number of technologies used should be minimized to reduce the amount of resources required to maintain varied platforms and equipment. Applications should be developed in a way that maximizes design simplicity while considering the business needs of users from diverse jurisdictions. As new technology is delivered, older technologies should be retired.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY GOVERNANCE: STRUCTURE, ROLES, and RESPONSIBILITIES

The North Carolina Judicial Branch will utilize a multi-tiered information technology governance model. The information technology governance process consists of a number of key roles embodied in existing judicial branch organizational structures and several newly created roles specifically designed for information technology governance. Following is an outline of the key roles and responsibilities embedded in the governance process.

A. Initiator Groups: Existing Commissions, Conferences, Associations, and NCAOC Divisions

In line with the guiding principle of ensuring stakeholder and user input into the governance process, key initiator groups are constituent-based organizations already in operation. These are organizations that meet regularly and provide ongoing education, communication, and support focused on improving the administrative operations of the court system. In addition, NCAOC programs and divisions that are responsible for the effective administrative operation of the Judicial Branch are also key initiators of business process improvement and information technology requests. These key initiator groups include:

- North Carolina Conference of Clerks of Superior Court
- North Carolina Conference of Superior Court Judges
- North Carolina Association of District Court Judges
- North Carolina Conference of District Attorneys
- North Carolina Magistrates' Association
- North Carolina Office of Indigent Defense Services
- North Carolina Sentencing and Policy Advisory Committee
- North Carolina Dispute Resolution Commission
- Chief Justice's Commission on Professionalism
- North Carolina Supreme Court
- North Carolina Court of Appeals
- NCAOC Internal Programs and Divisions

Responsibilities: Initiator groups shall serve as the origination point for business process improvement ideas that may lead to information technology projects and requests. It is the responsibility of the initiator group to represent the interests of their constituencies and to evaluate ideas for effectiveness, business impact, and achievability. One of the overall goals of initiator groups is to assess ideas that potentially have wide business process impact or applicability and eliminate those with too narrow a focus or that do not have a significant opportunity for process improvement. Specific responsibilities of initiator groups include, but are not limited to:

- a. Assemble and review business process improvement and technology requests from members.
- b. Evaluate each request according to the five governance principles laid out early in this document.
- c. Decide on whether to move forward with each request considered. A favorable determination is considered the group's endorsement of the request.

- d. For endorsed requests, provide a high-level justification including a statement about the potential business impact of the request.
- e. Submit endorsed requests to NCAOC TSD who will provide a high level resource requirement and level of effort estimate.

B. Judicial Advisory Groups

After endorsed requests are given a resource estimate by NCAOC, they are assigned to one of three Judicial Advisory Groups (JAG). The three Judicial Advisory Groups are: criminal, non-criminal, and administrative. These JAGs review the endorsed requests that come before them and carry out the following responsibilities.

1. Responsibilities: The Judicial Advisory Groups shall review the initial business problem statement submitted by an initiator group and examine the cursory assessment by NCAOC Technology Services. The JAG will determine the status of all ideas that come before the group; identifying projects that are approved for consideration and those which are not approved. Of the approved projects, the JAG will prioritize and rank up to five requests before forwarding all reviewed ideas to the NCAOC Cross-Functional Analysis Committee. Specific responsibilities of the JAGs include, but are not limited to:
 - a. Review the NCAOC Business Problem Statement and cursory analysis submitted for each business issue.
 - b. Each JAG member should score the issue presented in a problem statement using the JAG Scoring Criteria Guide.
 - c. If a JAG member represents the conference, association, or other initiator group, then he or she should have knowledge about the issue and be prepared to provide other members with background information concerning the issue.
 - d. JAG members should use the scored criteria to facilitate a discussion about the issues presented.
 - e. JAG members should create a list of approved items, and may also create a list of items not yet approved for further consideration.
 - f. On the approved list, members will prioritize, and rank in order, up to five business needs using all information and input at the group's disposal. The JAG should maintain a list of needs at all times, as commitments are established to move forward with a project, or the JAG determines one should be removed, the vacant slot should be filled with a new priority.
 - g. Provide a report that includes the original problem statement, NCAOC TSD analysis, scoring documents, a list of approved and non-approved items, up to five selected priorities, notes that reflect member discussions and reasoning for decisions, and other supporting documentation to NCAOC Cross-Functional Analysis Committee.
 - h. Communicate with original endorsing group to notify that a project did not receive support to move forward.

2. Members: The term of appointment for members of the Criminal and Non-Criminal Judicial Advisory Group shall be two years, with an option for reappointment. The maximum term will be 8 years. The appointing authority shall select one person to represent their group, and the appointing authority has discretion to determine the qualifications needed when selecting a member. The term of Administrative JAG members will correspond to the filled position of NCAOC staff at the time. The JAGs will have a NCAOC technology services staff member in a non-voting, advisory capacity to provide technical expertise.

The appointment authority for JAG membership is as follows:

Criminal Judicial Advisory Group appointing authority:

North Carolina Conference of Clerks of Superior Court
North Carolina Conference of Superior Court Judges
North Carolina Association of District Court Judges
North Carolina Conference of District Attorneys
North Carolina Magistrates' Association
North Carolina Office of Indigent Defense Services
North Carolina Sentencing and Policy Advisory Committee

Non-Criminal Judicial Advisory Group appointing authority:

North Carolina Conference of Clerks of Superior Court
North Carolina Conference of Superior Court Judges
North Carolina Association of District Court Judges
North Carolina Magistrates' Association
North Carolina Office of Indigent Defense Services
North Carolina Dispute Resolution
NCAOC Deputy Director of Program Services
North Carolina Judicial Support Staff

Administrative Judicial Advisory Group appointing authority:

NCAOC Director
Assistant Director
Senior Deputy Director
Deputy Director of Program Services
Chief Information Officer
Financial Services Officer
Communications Officer
Human Resources Officer
Purchasing Officer
Legal Counsel

Planning and Organizational Development Officer
Court Services Officer
Budget Officer

3. Chairperson: The Chairperson of each JAG shall be selected by the members of the group. The Chairperson shall schedule all meetings of the committee, maintain records of committee meetings, discussions, and decisions, and ensure that the committee implements needed actions. The Chairperson shall ensure that all necessary information is forwarded to the NCAOC Cross-Functional Analysis Committee.
4. Vice-Chairperson: The Vice-Chairperson of each JAG shall be selected by the members of the group. He or she shall preside over committee meetings in the Chairperson's absence.

C. NCAOC Cross-Functional Analysis Committee

1. Responsibilities: This committee is intended to review the top five priorities identified by the Judicial Advisory Group, explore the identified business need, and determine how other NCAOC divisions may be impacted or how they might assist in addressing the issue. This committee will not change the prioritization established by JAGs, instead the Cross-Functional Analysis committee will evaluate solutions, analyze the impact, and forward the information to the appropriate authority as determined by the "IT Governance Delegation Matrix." Specific responsibilities of the NCAOC Cross-Functional Analysis Committee include, but are not limited to:
 - a. Assessing impact of JAG recommendations on the functions and responsibilities of NCAOC Divisions, including but not limited to Court Services, Communications, Legal & Legislative Services, Financial Services, Human Resources, Purchasing & General Services, Budget, Technology Services, and Organizational Development & Planning. The potential costs, returns on investment, and other analyses are presented to the policy committee.
 - b. Determining which requests might be referred to another agency or external provider
 - c. Preparing Requests for Information and/or Requests for Proposals.
 - d. Consulting with JAG members for additional information
 - e. Creating special research teams to investigate and report upon specific topics.
 - f. Communicating with stakeholders.
 - g. Identifying the availability and potential sources of funding.
 - h. Reviewing applicable state and federal legislation.
 - i. Implementing policy directives.
 - j. Forwarding request, analysis, and all supporting documentation to the appropriate authority designated by the "IT Governance Delegation Matrix."
 - k. Developing plans, policies, and budgets for the review of the State Judicial Council Technology Committee.
2. Members: The membership shall reflect the NCAOC Executive Staff at the time.

3. Chairperson: The Chairperson of the committee will be the NCAOC Director or a designee. The Chairperson shall schedule all meetings of the committee, maintain records of committee meetings, discussions, and decisions, and ensure that the committee implements needed actions. The Chairperson shall ensure a formal business case with all necessary documentation is forwarded to the State Judicial Council Technology Committee.
4. Vice-Chairperson: The Vice-Chairperson of the committee will be the NCAOC Senior Deputy Director or a designee, and he or she shall preside over committee meetings in the Chairperson's absence.

D. The State Judicial Council Technology Committee (SJCTC)

1. Responsibilities: The State Judicial Council Technology Committee advises the Chief Justice of the North Carolina Supreme Court on the strategic direction and financial oversight for information technology of the North Carolina Judicial Branch. Responsibilities of the committee include, but are not limited to:
 - a. Leading the process for updating the strategic plan, goals and objectives for information technology
 - b. Establishing the core principles to be considered when making information technology decisions
 - c. Reviewing the IT governance charter and delegation matrix annually and recommend changes
 - d. Creating guidelines and decision making criteria for the Judicial Advisory Groups; review documents annually to address any needed changes
 - e. Providing oversight for the information technology budget and projects
 - f. Pursuing legislative initiatives to support the IT strategic plan
 - g. Evaluating recommendations from each Judicial Advisory Group and prioritizing requests
 - h. Preparing reports with recommendations for the consideration of the Chief Justice who will consult with the State Judicial Council as she or he deems appropriate.
2. Members: This standing committee shall include a superior court judge, a district court judge, a clerk of superior court, a district attorney, a public defender, a magistrate, and a person not employed by the Judicial Branch. These positions shall be filled by those serving in that capacity on the Judicial Council unless otherwise determined by the Chief Justice.
3. Chairperson: The Chairperson of the State Judicial Council Technology Committee shall be appointed by the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court. The Chairperson shall schedule all meetings of the committee, maintain records of committee meetings, discussions, and decisions, and ensure that the committee implements needed actions. The Chairperson shall ensure all necessary information is forwarded to the State Judicial Council.

4. Vice-Chairperson: The Chief Justice shall appoint a Vice-Chairperson of the State Judicial Council Technology Committee, who shall preside over committee meetings in the Chairperson's absence.

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OVERVIEW OF THE INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY GOVERNANCE PROCESS

Figure 2 shows the flow of requests as they pass through the governance process. The State Judicial Council Technology Committee (SJCTC), the Judicial Advisory Groups (JAGs), and the NCAOC Cross-Functional Analysis Committee will be newly created standing committees but the flow of information begins with users. Individuals and existing conferences or associations (initiating groups), are the greatest resource to identify unmet needs and process improvement ideas. Stakeholders and users will be encouraged to describe business issues and inefficiencies they are experiencing, rather than thinking in terms of specific technology solutions. With this philosophy, business needs can be evaluated both individually and along with others, to determine effective solutions and appropriate technology.

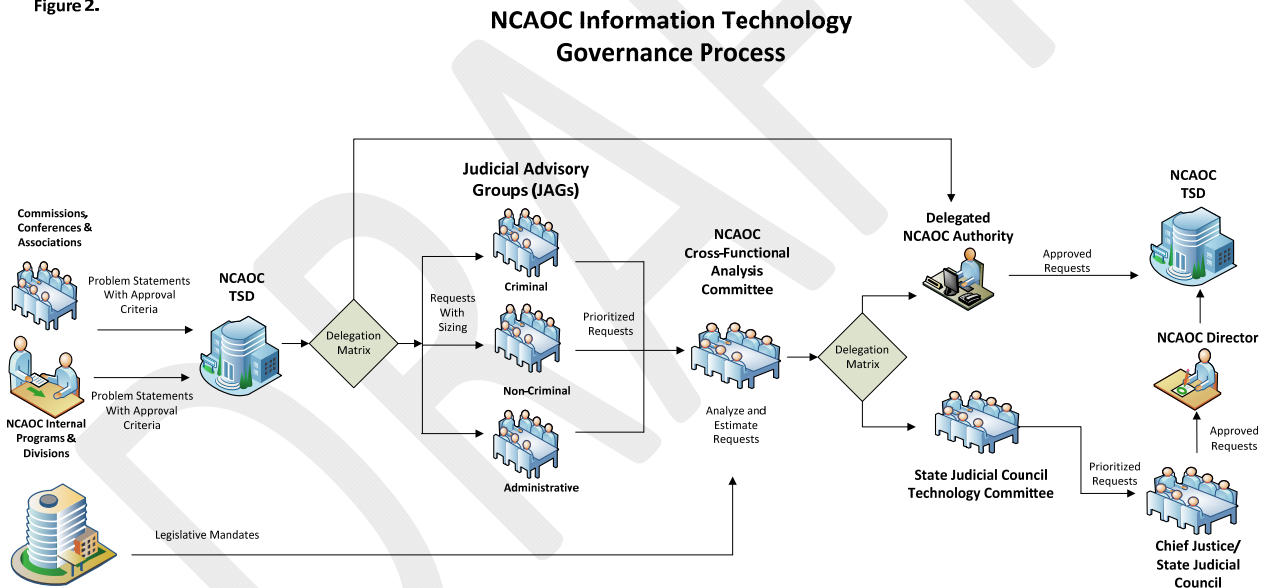
When an individual recognizes an opportunity for process improvement, that person would approach his or her representative conference, association, or commission. After reviewing the “NCAOC IT Governance - Filtering Criteria Checklist” to ensure consistency with the key principles outlined above, as well the IT Strategic Plan, and other values, the person would complete the “NCAOC Business Problem Statement.” This statement allows the submitter to describe the problem as well as the benefits and any known risks. Conferences or Associations can implement similar processes as a group, as can internal divisions and programs of the NCAOC. Technology Services Division staff will assess the identified problem and determine if an initial assessment by other NCAOC staff is required. Following the review, a cursory analysis will be conducted to show estimated staff resources and costs for addressing the issue. Technology Services Division staff will review the “NCAOC IT Governance – Delegation Matrix” to determine if the issue and analysis are within a certain type and cost that can be forwarded directly to a TSD Administrator, the NCAOC Chief Information Officer, or the NCAOC Senior Deputy Director for immediate approval or rejection. Alternatively, the issue can be sent to the corresponding Judicial Advisory Group (JAG). JAGs are divided into three categories: Criminal, Non-Criminal, and Administrative.

JAGs will meet to review the problem statement and possible solutions prepared by the NCAOC Technology Services Division. Each JAG member will review and score a proposal based on the “Judicial Advisory Group Scoring Criteria Guide.” The scoring guide is a comparison tool to launch discussion in the group about the various ideas before the group. Following discussion, the JAG will determine whether an idea should be added to a list of approved ideas or a list of ideas that will not be considered at this time. The list of approved ideas should be compared to decide how each business problem relates to other pending requests. Each JAG will select its top 5 priorities in order, and then, the JAG will forward all analysis and documentation to the NCAOC Cross-Functional Analysis Committee. The NCAOC Cross-Functional Analysis Committee members will explore the identified business need and determine how other NCAOC divisions may be impacted or assist in addressing the issue. For example, a change in technology implemented for 100 counties, might result in the need for a new training module to be developed and delivered across the state. Depending on the type of project (e.g., enhancement, new application, or replacement) and the cost analysis performed by the NCAOC Cross-Functional Analysis committee, the request may be forwarded directly to the NCAOC Chief Information Officer (CIO) or the State Judicial Council Technology Committee, in accord with the “NCAOC IT Governance -

Delegation Matrix.” If the CIO is the recipient, then he or she may authorize the project to move forward and schedule implementation as resources allow. Projects going to the State Judicial Council Technology Committee will be reviewed, scored by each member using the “State Judicial Council Technology Committee Scoring Guide,” and discussed by the group to determine the final prioritization of projects. They will prepare a report with recommendations for the consideration of the Chief Justice who will consult with the State Judicial Council as she or he deems appropriate. Once projects have been approved, the NCAOC Director, the CIO, and other impacted NCAOC administrators will be informed and can schedule the project as resources allow. Once a project starts, resources should remain committed to the project until it is finished, and then resources can be shifted to other projects.

Technology projects mandated by the North Carolina General Assembly will also proceed through this diagrammed process for review and analysis but they are automatically approved, and projects will be prioritized based on deadlines established in the mandate and by the NCAOC Director.

Figure 2.



RULES OF OPERATION

A. Resignation & Removal of Members; Vacancies

1. Resignation and Removal: Any member of any committee may resign at any time upon written notice to the Chairperson of his or her committee. The Chairperson will notify the appointing authority and request a new appointment. Members of all committees serve at the pleasure of the Chief Justice, and members are subject to removal upon written notice from the Chief Justice.
2. Vacancies: Whenever there is a vacancy on a committee due to expiration of a term, the appropriate appointing authority may reappoint the member or appoint a successor. Whenever there is a vacancy due to death, resignation or removal from office, the appropriate appointing authority may appoint a successor to serve the balance of the term.

B. Conflict of Interest

All committee members shall disclose any interest or affiliation they may have with any entity or individual with which the North Carolina Administrative Office of the Courts has entered, or may enter, into contracts, agreements or any other business transaction, and shall refrain from voting on, or influencing the consideration of, such matters.

C. Meetings

1. Frequency: It is anticipated that the State Judicial Council Technology Committee, Judicial Advisory Groups, and the NCAOC Cross-Functional Analysis Committee will meet quarterly, with the expectation that additional meetings may be required to adequately fulfill the obligations and duties of each committee. When appropriate, the Chairperson shall allow members to attend meetings via electronic means including audio, video, and web-based conferencing.
2. Scheduling: At the first committee meeting of each calendar year, the Chairperson of each committee shall establish a schedule for the regular meetings of that committee. The Chairperson may call ad hoc meetings by general agreement of members.

D. Project Planning and Reports

1. Project Planning: The Chairperson of each committee shall analyze the tasks and responsibilities before the committee, and shall establish appropriate deadlines and ensure the committee acts to meet them. The committees are expected to communicate and coordinate regarding their project planning activities and deadlines.
2. Reports: The Chairperson of each committee shall ensure that summaries of discussions and activities are documented. Specifically, the reports of Judicial Advisory Groups and the

Technology Committee should not only include priorities, but also explanations of how priorities were determined. These reports shall generally occur after each committee meeting or at such other times as the Chairperson deems appropriate. These reports shall be furnished to the Chairpersons of the other committees and to other recipients as may be appropriate.

E. Decision Making

A majority of members must participate in proceedings, either in-person or remotely, to make a binding decision. If a member is unable to attend, he or she may send a representative to observe and gather information, but the representative cannot make decisions for the member or the appointing authority. Decisions will be made by consensus, which means that there is general agreement among members. Consensus does not mean that all members agree with the decision, but that all members can live with the decision. If a clear consensus cannot be achieved, the Chairperson may call for a vote. A simple majority of those voting in favor of an item shall pass the item. The Chairperson shall only vote in the event of a tie vote among voting members.

F. Duration

The State Judicial Council Technology Committee, the Judicial Advisory Groups, and the NCAOC Cross-Functional Analysis Committee are standing committees that shall be in existence until the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court discontinues them.