**“Cleaned” General Comments**

* **Access to Justice**
  + Access to justice and justice equality are the key lenses through which every other court issue should be viewed.
  + The Courts have a responsibility to continue adapting to both societal changes and technology. The idea of Courts is meaningless without meaningful access for all persons.
  + Access to justice goes hand in hand with IT and making court services accessible to every court participant allows for the public trust in court to grow. Allowing for funding and development of stronger IT systems, security, and access to courts will instill trust and confidence in the judicial system. (2)
  + It is my feeling that the access to justice conversation nationwide fails in one very important aspect. These programs often aim to help citizens navigate an incredibly complex system rather than attempting to simplify the system itself. As someone who supervises staff dedicated to access to justice topics, there is an obvious conflict when courts/laws maintain challenging procedural standards, and then attempt to have staff/volunteers help people with disabilities, literacy or financial concerns navigate that system.
  + A human-centered court system built to put the public's needs for access (regardless of ability, capacity, income, language, culture or other determinants), procedural simplicity and self-representation should drive all financial, technological and operational decisions.
* **Court Administration**
  + Data is the key to future and the courts have a ton of it. We must learn how to understand, use, share and keep secure our data, especially as it relates to serving new customers and the changing demographics of our court clientele.
* **DEI**
  + RSJ is being debated and taught throughout society - and is at times divisive. Avoid this topic to avoid becoming entangled in the debate.
  + Racial inequities in court are pervasive. While NACM does not lack gender diversity it does lack racial diversity in its upper ranks which reflects the lack of diversity in Court leadership (with of course a few exceptions that people sometimes point to, simply to debunk the striking lack of racial diversity). The voices that speak out strongly on these issues are often marginalized. Unfortunately, since there is more racial diversity in NACM than in some other justice system professional organizations, some long-time members believe that there has been a great deal of progress. The bar has simply been set low by making this comparison. The lack of diversity in NACM leads to a passive approach to equity efforts. A few programs or a token set of steps is and has been insufficient. Traditionally, leadership may simply have been willing to accept racial inequities in the court system. Without the inclusion of strong and unapologetic voices of People of Color there will only be token steps and surface change. We need to do better.
  + The courts must not contribute to disparity and should lead the way to equal justice!
* **Funding**
  + In order for the courts to move forward either with technology or enhanced services, funding needs to be addressed
* **HR**
  + The courts need to stay on top of HR and the expectations of employees. Hybrid work and shorter workweeks will make us less competitive with non-government employers. (2)
* **IBR – IT Budgets**
  + In order for courts to be relevant the use of current technology must keep pace. Often budgeting for IT needs is not well supported or misunderstood and the need for educating the purse holders is great.
* **IT Generally**
  + Courts are an in-person operation due to the technical and serious nature of our work. Remote options should be considered only after a court has become paperless. Forcing remote operations in a paper driven court is creating dysfunction with maintaining the integrity of court data.
  + Courts need to begin looking seriously at their own peformance using 21st century tools and that requires that courts seriously consider adding a data scientist (or at least someone with those skills) to their complement. Courts are essentially massive data warehouses, but capturing and analyzing that data requires actual expertise- not just some data standards on a dashboard absent the necessary regression and longitudinal analysis required to identify actual causality (or lack thereof).
* **Judicial Independence**
  + Perception of the courts and building belief in non-political position is critical to the sovereignty of the justice system including the integrity of its officers, staff and infrastructure.
  + As I am the financial manager for our courts, I believe the county/public should keep in mind that courts are not meant to be revenue makers and we need public funding to continue to evolve and provide quality services.
* **NACM**
  + I think staking out a position for NACM gets very shaky when we start wading into areas that are primarily public policy or political issues, and not court management. We often talk about judicial independence and respecting our role and identity as a separate branch of gov't, but ironically we seldom talk about respecting the policy and political role of the legislative branch. Like monetary bail -- it's very popular as a social justice issue I know, but in my mind it's really a public policy issue, and less about court management.
  + Should be a standing committee focused on municipal courts, justice courts, and other courts of limited jurisdiction
  + I feel that NACM should represent the profession of Court Management. It should not become bogged down in movements of the day, but focus on bringing future court managers into the workplace.
  + Resist attempts to politicize the Bench, at all levels.
  + I do not think it is prudent for the court to get involved with or get on board with social or political agendas.
  + NACM can certainly voice its support for many issues related to the larger justice system and combatting institutional biases (they ARE relevant to perceptions of procedural justice) but should concentrate its greatest focus on issues that are most within its own wheelhouse. The imposition of fines and fees and pretrial services are more often related to policies of executive and legislative officials than to court management.
* **Problem Solving Courts**
  + It is time for the problem solving court conversation to exit the phase of social experimentation and "scienciness" and become a fully funded element of court operations rather than thousands of programs nationwide engaging in a constant funding arms race for grants.
* **Security**
  + Security in the courthouse, courtroom, and courthouse steps has become increasingly more important with the current political climate. We do not do enough to secure our buildings for staff, judges, community members, or litigants. Courthouses should have a security presence to support the safety of the buildings. Parking areas should be well lighted, gated and safe. We have to demonstrate our ability to protect jurors coming into our courthouses.
* **SLRs**
  + It is great to put information out, but it needs to be standardized and simplified and in a way that individuals can understand and not be overwhelmed.
* **Social Media**
  + Concerns with social media as it currently stands for information dissemination. Social media while convenient suffers from wide-spread disinformation abuse and needs to re-invent itself to become a reliable resource.

**“Cleaned” responses on other issues/trends NACM should be advocating for**

* **Court Administration**
  + I would love to see more content on internal processes. Even courts that appear to be on the cusp of innovation in operations are running internally the same way they were 30-40 years ago, with antiquated technology, processes, and cultures.
  + Standardized state-wide forms in plain language and (hopefully) translated.
  + Mentorship/Succession Planning Mentorship/Succession Planning
  + Too often, judges are the primary impediments to improving court performance. Too few take an interest in or make an effort to learn, much less apply, best management practices. If judges insist on maintaining control over court operations outside the courtroom, then NACM should advocate for all judges to get significantly more training in court management, treating their administrative responsibilities as seriously as their adjudicative ones. It will require a long-term effort to change both court and related legal cultures.
  + Related to other issues, NACM and the National Center for State Courts should have a way to receive examples of misinformation and disinformation from courts around the nation and to use that information to spot trends and develop education and counter-messages in plain English to redirect the discussion to reality.
  + NACM should advocate for a neighborhood courts that allows for services to customers in areas that might not have all the resources to physically appear in court, don't have internet access as well as, simple fillable forms (with required fields) that allow customers to quick file documents online.
* **Education**
  + The public needs more knowledge of what we do and do not do.
  + Ongoing need to educate court staff and staff of other departments supporting courts on the why behind the many things we do.
  + Topics to stimulate the interest of the younger generations of seeking the judicial system as a career. Not only in the legal fields but in the administrative and clerical fields.
  + Promote good citizenship and civics, e.g., Jury service
  + Vexatious Litigants (sovereign citizens): NACM or another national entity should work to produce a handbook and legal guidance for dealing with sovereign citizens/groups, not so much from a security standpoint as to assure that court/clerical staff knows how to deal with an encounter.
* **Guardianships**
  + Guardianship reporting & compliance - the stewardship responsibility of the courts (2)
* **HR**
  + Standard job roles and processes
  + The relationship between employee workload and employee well-being.
  + Mental Health, Well-Being, Self-Care (2)
  + Starting salaries must be raised across the board to compete with the private sector (4).
  + NACM should advocate for merit appointment for court managers, not elected Clerks of Circuit Court as they are in WI. Professionalization of the courts.
  + Required education or training for promotions/leadership positions
  + Equity, Inclusion and Diversity should be a top priority with a focus on building a workforce that reflects the community it serves.
  + We need court staff, management, and judges to reflect our communities. The "pipeline" has been talked about for decades but our numbers haven't improved enough.
  + Advocating for realtime court reporters as a requirement in the courts and encouraging incentives for those who provide this service to the court.
* **IBR**
  + Judicial branch administration should be able to receive these grants or funds directly without having to compete with other county/state departments.
  + NACM should be advocating for plight of local courts and the pressure they are under to produce revenue
  + Legislation that affects the courts and their operations.
  + Intergovernmental relations and what works.
  + More spending to increase the number of caseworkers and accommodations to provide them with effective/supportive work and client care environments.
* **IT**
  + Courts should be working with community partners to provide remote access for those in need.
  + Providing access using app base programs, easy digital fillable forms to be uploaded when efiling that easily integrate into case management systems.
  + I would like NACM to also talk about home-grown solutions that are cheap and do not require more software than the Microsoft suite. Some of us don't have IT folks and contracts with vendors.
  + Remote hearings
  + Use of the available technology, tools and platforms to automate some practices so that the new generations that prefer less interaction with people and who rely mainly on technology and virtual interaction are not completely disenchanted with the legal process
  + Virtual jury trials
  + Inter-agency data exchanges for things like criminal history reporting, vital statistics, victim notification, bulk data subscriptions, etc.
  + The need to ADHERE to data standards and how non-unified judicial systems can successfully contribute with good practices.
* **Restorative justice**
* **Mental Health**
  + Top priority - budgeting for increased prevention programs at the judiciary level with appropriate funding allocations given to court related programs to adequately deploy for drug and mental health related interventions.
  + Juvenile Justice as dumping ground for youth with mental health diagnosis. Ongoing issues with finding placement for youth and mental health facilities' inability to control and handle youth with serious mental health issues and physical aggression.
* **School Engagement**
  + Strengthen education of the law in schools with proactive judiciary engagement in the post elementary school system providing student visitation to their courthouses and related agencies to listen and learn firsthand about the process and the role of the judicial system as the critical third branch of government to witness its essential role in the principle of checks and balances of government and to our civil liberties. (2)
  + Promoting and expanding Civic and Law Related Education in K-12 schools
* **SLRs**
  + Help customers in the court system comply with court fine obligations

**“Cleaned” responses to what NACM should be doing about items we strongly agree or agree upon**

* **Access to Justice**
  + I think the most important thing that NACM should be saying is that access can be increased to many through the effective and available use of technology. NACM should advocate to remove barriers to those who struggle with such access and legislators who wish to limit it due to their contentions wtih unions and other political forces.
* **Best Practices**
  + Creating standards in these areas and the need to share effective practices (3).
* **Civics Education**
  + IBR - Education on what Judicial Independence means and why it is important. Reminders of the "Three Branches" model of government. Too many courts suffer misguided governance from the other branches. (5)
  + Communicate the dedication and professionalism of the court community. We are not just doing a job, but truly striving to improve the administration of justice and inspire trust in the courts as an institution. (2)
  + Regarding IBR, there is so much education needed, both educating the other branches and the public on why we do what we do, how it is paid for, etc.
* **Communication**
  + NACM should be promoting increase in accessibility and consumable information for both SRLs, Attorneys and anyone who is involved in the courts. As things begin to shift and technology becomes a more integral part of the judicial system, it is more important than ever to focus on communication and creating a standard for how we provide assistance to the public, and not only because of the changes with technology but also because of the generational shift.
* **Education**
  + Provide education (4) Keep producing timely training and material that can be scaled and used, regardless of jurisdiction type.
  + NACM should be investigating these areas in depth and educating the membership
  + Discuss trends (2), highlight research, provide resources, share what other courts are doing, discuss ways to implement change, best practices (5), education/training
  + NACM can provide timely information and resources on these topics, educational programs, actionable resolutions and collaboration with other court improvement organizations.
  + I would like to see more information given to the public and I would like to learn more about how I can help the public with these topics (4).
  + Use data to educate on these issues (3).
* **DEI**
  + Racial/Social Justice as a priority and helping courts navigate the intersection of public trust and confidence in this area. Community engagement/outreach/education. Educating judges on the topic overall and assisting systems in identifying areas of improvement.
  + RSJ - discussing the need for culturally intelligent administrators and staff; how to meaningfully generate conversations about these issues; helping leadership understand the difference between advocacy (which they can't do) and support (which they can) for causes that may be meaningful to judicial officers, staff, and the community (for example, racial equity, the demilitarization of police).
  + The system has been, intentionally and unintentionally, rigged against people of color for far too long. We need to begin dismantling the processes and systems that contribute to racial injustice!
* **IT**
  + Cybersecurity is a huge issue and one that is evolving so rapidly it is important that JTC/other push out info to keep us informed.
* **NACM**
  + NACM statements should be that no one would be unclear on where this organization stand with issues like race and social injustice as well as helping with courts being able to provide the best legal options for all parties no matter of their economic status
  + Think there needs to some resolutions for some. Think NACM should be willing to go alone with some instead of just me too.
  + NACM should establish a stronger voice om the above topics. They should not continue to piggyback on others statements of other associations. Be First Be Strong
* **Plain Language**
  + NACM should continue to bring educational resources to members in plain language. I have a particular interest in data quality as I see progress for so many other topics stem from this. Creating a bank of social media files might be a nice idea, for generous reposting of standard information across judicial districts.