Bill Drafting Systems: A Collaborative Effort
Wednesday, August 9, 2017
10:30-11:45 a.m.

Speaker Biographies

**Joe Diana**
Joe Diana is the applications section manager at the Texas Legislative Council. He began his career at the council in 1999 developing legislative applications and soon moved to a lead architect position for the council's bill drafting application. Over the next several years, Mr. Diana led projects including the rewrite of a workload management application, the database migration of a correspondence management system, and the implementation of enhancements to a bill analysis drafting system. Along the way, he investigated and championed the use of new technologies and methodologies. As the applications section manager, he is responsible for overseeing eight development teams focused on creating custom software for legislative and administrative offices. Mr. Diana received his Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering at The University of Texas at Austin in 1995.

**Brett Ferguson**
Brett Ferguson is an attorney with the Texas Legislative Council. His practice areas include open government, legislative law and procedure, redistricting, tax, and agriculture. He is the attorney liaison to the council's information systems division. In this role, he collaborates with software developers to create custom applications for the Texas Legislature.

**Elaine Filer**
Elaine Filer is an Information Systems Manager at the California Office of Legislative Counsel. Her team, the Legal Services Section, is part of the Legislative Data Center. Ms. Filer has over 25 years of experience providing IT services in support of the California Legislature and the associated Legislative Counsel Bureau. Her career in California began at the Assembly Help Desk and transitioned to the Assembly Software Development Unit. As a developer, she worked on many legislative applications, including the agency’s first bill drafting system. She became manager for the Legal Services team in 2014 and is currently Project Manager of the rewrite of the Legal Services application. Prior to working at the Legislative Data Center, Ms. Filer received her Bachelor of Science in Management Information Systems from the University of Colorado, Colorado Springs.
Kyle W. Forster
Kyle Forster has been the information technology manager for North Dakota Legislative Council (NDLC) since March 2011. Forster and his IT staff support the Legislative Assembly Senate and House of Representatives members, legislative council staff, and legislative assembly session staff. Before his employment with NDLC, he worked for the North Dakota Information Technology Department as the state's enterprise software architect and was involved in many of the recent IT projects for the legislative branch.

Susan Murray
Susan Murray is a senior systems analyst in the Office of Legislative Information Services and also is the Project Manager for the Session Systems Replacement project. She has been with the Legislative Services Division for one year, and previously worked for the Office of Public Instruction for the State of Montana in the same role. Ms. Murray acted as business analyst and project manager for the Bill Draft Request Workflow, working with the research analysts and other stakeholders throughout testing and implementation to verify the product’s completion. Murray has her bachelor’s degree from the University of San Diego in English and Spanish, and her master’s degree in Information and Library Science from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Kendra Nielsen
Kendra Nielsen is a principal deputy legislative counsel at the California Office of Legislative Counsel. She is a supervisor of a branch of the office that handles laws relating to business, civil law, healing arts, professions and vocations, employment, retirement, state and local government, taxation, and unemployment insurance. As a drafting deputy, she was the attorney primarily responsible for the drafting of major pension reform legislation. She has served on the office’s Legal Services User Group since 2014. Prior to joining the office, Nielsen was a law clerk for the Honorable Curtis V. Gomez, Chief Judge for the District Court of the U.S. Virgin Islands. Nielsen received her J.D. from the University of California, Berkeley, Boalt Hall, where she served as supervising editor of the California Law Review. She worked as a technical support representative at a web hosting company while earning her undergraduate degree from the University of California, San Diego.

Rachel Weiss
Rachel Weiss is a research analyst with the Montana Legislative Services Division. She is responsible for staffing standing and interim committees, drafting legislation and amendments, and assisting legislators with rule and policy questions and research. Her issue areas include elections and campaign finance, pensions, general state administration, criminal justice and other law and justice-related topics, and redistricting. Weiss and another research analyst provide a bill drafter’s perspective to the division’s IT staff as they work to replace and update Montana’s bill tracking, drafting, and processing systems. Ms. Weiss graduated from Seattle University with a degree in International Studies/Politics.