



## Judicial Council of California · Administrative Office of the Courts

455 Golden Gate Avenue · San Francisco, California 94102-3688

[www.courts.ca.gov](http://www.courts.ca.gov)

---

# REPORT TO THE JUDICIAL COUNCIL

For business meeting on: July 29, 2014

---

Title	Agenda Item Type
Judicial Branch Education: Demonstration of New Judicial Branch Education Website CJER Online	Information Only
Submitted by	Date of Report
Hon. Robert L. Dondero, Chair, CJER Governing Committee Dr. Diane Cowdrey, Director, CJER	July 1, 2014
	Contact
	Bob Lowney, Senior Manager, CJER, 415-865-7833 <a href="mailto:bob.lowney@jud.ca.gov">bob.lowney@jud.ca.gov</a>

---

### **Executive Summary**

The Judicial Education section of the Serranus website and the COMET website for court staff have been combined and redesigned into a single judicial branch education and resource website, CJER Online. CJER Online contains enhanced functionality to make searching, accessing content, and program registration easier for judicial branch members.

### **Previous Council Action**

The Judicial Council approved the CJER Governing Committee's 2014–2016 Education Plan at its April 24, 2014 meeting. This education plan contains, among other items, all of the distance and online education products CJER develops and delivers to the judicial branch. CJER Online is the primary method by which these distance education products are accessed by the courts.

### **Methodology and Process**

While developing the 2010–2012 Education Plan, several members of the CJER Governing Committee's curriculum committees expressed concerns about the Judicial Education section of Serranus, the judicial branch's password-protected extranet. They felt that the education section was difficult to navigate and poorly organized. In response, the CJER Governing Committee took on the task to redesign the Judicial Education section of Serranus and directed CJER staff to initiate this effort.

In 2010, CJER appointed a Serranus Education User Workgroup, which was tasked to provide user feedback and recommendations to CJER and Information Technology Services Office (ITSO) staff who, in turn, would begin a redesign of this portion of Serranus. As a result of the workgroup's recommendations, the various judicial education resources such as bench handbooks, videos, and online courses were organized by subject area into Judicial Toolkits. These toolkits have enabled users to more easily find online materials and resources in their subject matter areas.

Another consequence of the efforts of this workgroup was the decision to create a separate website devoted solely to judicial branch education (to be known as CJER Online). Staff from CJER and ITSO began designing this new website, utilizing the format and structure of the judicial branch's recently redesigned public website.

In 2013, CJER appointed a new workgroup, the CJER Online Workgroup, which comprised judges, court leadership, and court staff. The purpose of this workgroup was to provide CJER with feedback and recommendations on the design and functionality of the CJER Online website that staff were building. These recommendations resulted in several revisions and user improvements to the new judicial branch education website.

### **Concerns of Stakeholders**

As noted above, developing this new website came about primarily in response to concerns from judges and other stakeholders who accessed the Judicial Education section of Serranus and found that experience to be unduly burdensome. It is hoped that CJER Online effectively addresses these concerns.

### **Policy and Cost Implications**

There were no significant costs other than staff time to develop CJER Online and to collaborate with the CJER Online Workgroup. Costs to CJER of maintaining this new website will be comparable to the costs of maintaining the (now former) Judicial Education section of Serranus.

### **Next Steps**

CJER has developed a communication and implementation plan to ensure that CJER Online is effectively introduced to the entire judicial branch and users are smoothly transitioned from the Judicial Education section of Serranus to CJER Online. A significant component of this outreach consists of holding presentations such as today's demonstration to the Judicial Council. CJER has requested similar time before the Trial Court Presiding Judges Advisory Committee, the Court Executives Advisory Committee, as well as other advisory committees and stakeholder groups such as the statewide training coordinator network. The announcement of CJER Online will be e-mailed to all the appellate and trial court leadership. In addition, WebEx demonstrations for all court staff and judicial officers will take place throughout July and August.