

Application

REVIEWED
By City Clerk's Office at 5:23 pm, Feb 23, 2021

Which Boards would you like to apply for?

Public Safety Reform and Oversight Commission : Submitted

Please read the following before completing an application:

The Oaks Initiative, also known as the "Taxpayer Protection Act," was adopted by Santa Monica voters in November 2000 and amended in November 2016. Its requirements affect all City-elected and appointed officials, including Council-appointed board and commission members. Additional information is available on the City's website in City Charter Article XXII – Taxpayer Protection.

All persons are invited to apply for membership on City Boards and Commissions regardless of race, age, sex, religion, marital status, national origin, ancestry, sexual preference, or disability. Applicants shall not, however, be under 18 years of age or serve on more than one Board, Commission or Corporation. Some Boards and Commissions do require special qualifications and requirements. Appointment of members will be made by Councilmembers at an open City Council meeting. Upon appointment, designated members will be required to file a Conflict of Interest disclosure statement. Please answer all questions on this application. This application will become a public record and will be available for public inspection or duplication.

[Additional Conflict of Interest Information for applicants](#)

Profile

Ms. Michele A. Wittig
Prefix First Name Middle Initial Last Name Suffix

[Redacted]
Email Address

[Redacted]
Street Address

[Redacted]
Suite or Apt

[Redacted]
City

[Redacted]
State

[Redacted]
Postal Code

[Redacted]
Primary Phone

[Redacted]
Alternate Phone

Question applies to multiple boards
Reside in Santa Monica?

Yes No

Question applies to multiple boards
If yes, number of years residence in Santa Monica:

Question applies to Public Safety Reform and Oversight Commission

Are you applying for the seats reserved for those ages 18-22 years old?

Yes No

Question applies to Public Safety Reform and Oversight Commission

What is your occupation?

University Professor, Retired

Written Request to Serve Additional Term/s

Interests & Experience

Question applies to multiple boards

Specify current or prior service on City Boards/Commissions:

1989-1995: Member of the Commission on the Status of Women, including 2 terms as Chair. I participated in the biennial evaluation of grant applications for public funding of social service programs, particularly those serving girls and women. 1991-92: Member of the City Task Force on Homelessness. I contributed to the Action Plan that proposed changes in social services and law enforcement policy and practice that were implemented by City Council. 1997: Member of City Telecommunications Working Group that drafted the City's Telecommunications Action Plan adopted by City Council.

Question applies to multiple boards

List community activities in which you are involved:

1987-present: SM-Venice NAACP member with decades of service as education chair, social action chair and executive committee member. 1990-present: Martin Luther King Westside Coalition (former Chair), with multiple years of service as chair of the Education Awards committee, currently serving on the Community Light Award committee. 1994 (intermittently)-present: SMMUSD Intercultural Equity and Excellence District Advisory Committee member; I have presented data to the Board on racial/ethnic group-related student outcomes; conducted interviews with, and assisted with surveys of, principals and parents; co-led restorative justice sessions; and made data-based presentations to parent groups and community members. 1998-present: FAME Santa Monica Redevelopment Corporation Board member, including service as Secretary of the Board and recipient of its Outstanding Board Member Award. 2005-present: Human Relations Council-Bay Area Board member. 2018-present: Santa Monica College Equal Employment Opportunity Committee member, monitoring adherence to mandates for recruitment, hiring and retention of faculty and staff. 2015-present: Convener, the SM Coalition for Police Reform, a grassroots group which has met monthly for the past six years and meets quarterly with the City Manager and SMPD Chief to advocate for local reforms in policing policies and practices.

Personal qualities identified in the criteria include leadership, creativity, and innovation as well as the ability to work effectively in a group setting and an ability to balance competing needs. Provide examples of how you have demonstrated those qualities:

During my years of service as a SM City Commissioner, Task Force member and Working Group member, I collaborated with diverse segments of the Santa Monica community to achieve common goals. These positions taught me to be prepared, listen with respect and an open mind; collaborate, balance competing needs and complete the work to a high standard. As a psychology professor at CSUN for over four decades, I taught courses in research methods and multivariate statistics and authored or co-authored over fifty peer-reviewed research publications. I have used my subject matter expertise to design and conduct scores of innovative, community-based action research projects. Many of these projects were conducted at no cost to the community partners because they were funded by grants which I secured from the National Institutes of Health, Anti-Defamation League or California State Legislature, among others. As principal investigator on these grants, I was also responsible for budgeting, hiring research personnel and writing final reports. One multi-year project involved coding and analyzing crime data for the LA County Human Relations Commission's annual Hate Crimes report. For a study entitled Driving While Undocumented, we conducted interviews of police officers, insurance company executives and undocumented immigrant workers to identify issues of importance to each group, prior to changes in state law. I also have a track record of success leading service projects that forge consensus among diverse groups to directly address community or organizational needs. For example, I participated in the committee of faculty, students and university administrators that launched the CSUN Children's Center. As part of this effort, I designed and conducted a student referendum documenting support for allocating a portion of student fees to support it. The Center provides partially subsidized day care to children of qualifying CSUN students. In the early 2000's, I helped launch the SM Human Relations Council's Dialogue Committee which convenes community discussions of current issues and problems. As co-founder and co-chair of the HRC's annual Kids with Cameras summer program from 2007-2015, I worked closely with the SMPD Chief and other HRC Board members to identify community needs, design and implement creative programming, recruit volunteer photographer-mentors and arrange the joint participation of youth enrolled in the Family YMCA, PAL and the Boys and Girls Club. As a dispute resolution mediator certified by the State of California, I have successfully mediated neighbor-to-neighbor, business-to-customer, faculty-student and student-student disputes. Five decades of community involvement have taught me how to harness the potential of collective action at the grassroots of civic participation. My skills include: gathering, weighing and using quantitative and qualitative information; taking multiple perspectives into account; and promoting group consensus.

Please share any knowledge of or experience with law enforcement, public safety policies and issues, or social services policies and issues.

KNOWLEDGE and EXPERIENCE of SOCIAL SERVICE ISSUES Concurrent with my service on the SM City Task Force on Homelessness in 1991-92, I co-led a successful effort to launch SHWASHLOCK, a pilot program for job-seeking adults living without homes in Santa Monica. This initiative was designed, funded and operated by a diverse group of Santa Monica residents (including those without homes) whom I helped organize on the City's Public Electronic Network. The program was subsequently adopted, expanded and funded by the SM City Council and continues as a program of The People Concern, providing showers, access to laundry facilities and lockers for selected homeless clients. KNOWLEDGE and EXPERIENCE of LAW ENFORCEMENT / PUBLIC SAFETY ISSUES My formal training in cognitive psychology (PhD, U. of Illinois) has been foundational to my subject matter expertise on a range of topics relevant to law enforcement. Among the topics on which I developed and taught university courses (at CSUN, Claremont Graduate University or the Drucker School of Management) are: procedural justice, overcoming prejudice, stereotyping, bias, and discrimination; principles and practice of intercultural communication; racial-ethnic identity development and acculturation, intergroup relations and conflict mediation, equity in employment and organizational justice. I have worked with NAACP leaders to draft several national and regional NAACP resolutions on law enforcement and public safety issues. My completion of the SM Community Emergency Response Team training (2013), the SM City Manager's People's Academy (2014), and SMPD's Community Police Academy (2015), acquainted me with emergency response strategies; municipal government policies and practice; and law enforcement procedures. In 2015, I convened the SM Coalition for Police Reform. At the local level, the Coalition encourages enrollment in the SMPD Community Police Academy; advocates for reforms in use-of-force and de-escalation policies and practice; promotes greater transparency and accountability; and supports individuals in filing complaints. Our Coalition members have also appeared before the SM Social Services Commission in support of establishing a public safety mediation program that implements restorative justice between community members and SMPD officers. At the state level, our Coalition members send emails, make phone calls and visit lawmakers in Sacramento in support of law enforcement legislation. I have testified at over two dozen meetings of the California Racial and Identity Profiling Act (RIPA) Advisory Board. Several of my recommendations on police training and community voice have been included in the RIPA Board's annual reports on best practices in law enforcement. In 2016, I co-authored (with RAND graduate student G. Weinberger) "Policing in Santa Monica: Transparency, Accountability and Oversight," a 16-page analysis that includes recommendations for local law enforcement reform. During the past five years, I've increased my knowledge of law enforcement issues by participating in courses and attending lectures and conferences on criminal justice. As a member of the NYU Immigration and Criminal Justice Working Group during the Spring 2017 semester, I collaborated in planning and implementing academic events hosted by the University; participated in NYU Law School seminars, conferences and continuing education workshops on criminal justice and law enforcement reform; accompanied immigrants to their ICE check-ins; and participated in professional workshops on policing equity at the John Jay College of Criminal Justice. In the Summer of 2017, I assisted local Committee for Racial Justice leaders, the SM City Manager and SMPD Chief who crafted a successful community response to repeated visits from white nationalists at Virginia Ave Park. In the Fall of 2020, I gave invited written testimony to the SM Public Safety Reform Advisory Committee, participated in its Oversight Commission subcommittee and Use-of-Force Policy subcommittee and made an invited presentation on policing reform to the CA state-wide League of Women Voters Committee on Criminal Justice Reform.

Question applies to Public Safety Reform and Oversight Commission

Why you are interested in serving on the Public Safety Reform and Oversight Commission?

Santa Monica has been my home since 1970. Public safety is among the most basic services that our local government provides. Without it, little else can be accomplished. Municipal government fulfills that responsibility when it acts in accord with the values articulated in our nation's founding documents, uses all the relevant evidence that's available, harnesses its financial and cultural resources for the common good, and brings diverse community voices to bear on the decision-making. Nearly 35 years ago, the SM City Council authorized an independent review of SMPD that resulted in improvements in the recruitment, hiring and promotion of SMPD officers. In 2016, SMPD embraced the six pillars of law enforcement reform articulated in the 2015 Report of the President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing. In the aftermath of the events of May 31, 2020, the City has responded to a call from diverse segments of the community to lead a transformation of local public safety itself. The primary mechanism for institutionalizing community participation in that process is the Public Safety Reform and Oversight Commission. I wholeheartedly support its mission and believe that I have relevant experience and skills that can contribute to its success. The Commission will give community representatives a role in recommending law enforcement reforms and providing oversight of policing policies and practices. The charges to the Commission also recognize the value of community-police dialogue, social workers and mental health professionals, as well as the roles of mediation and restorative justice principles, in achieving public safety standards of performance that serve all segments of the community well. The opportunity to contribute to this inclusive process of reform and oversight is compelling. If appointed to the Commission, I will work collaboratively to identify, recommend and implement best practices for promoting more equitable and successful public safety.

Question applies to multiple boards

Participation on the board requires a significant commitment over the length of the term including attendance at approximately two scheduled meetings per month, and possibly other tasks and meetings outside of board meetings. Will you be able to commit the necessary time to perform your duties if appointed to the board?

Yes No

Question applies to multiple boards

How did you learn about the vacancy in this board or commission? (select all that apply) *

Word of Mouth- Council or Board/Commission member, City Staff, neighborhood groups, etc.

Business Information (Public)

Occupation:

University Professor, Retired

Business name:

Business Address

Business Phone



Ms. Michele A. Wittig

Notes

ALL INFORMATION, EXCEPT PERSONAL DATA ENTERED IN THE PROFILE SECTION, IS PUBLIC AND AVAILABLE FOR VIEWING AT THE CITY CLERK'S OFFICE AND ON THE CITY'S WEB PAGE.

DISABILITY RELATED ASSISTANCE AND ALTERNATE FORMATS OF THIS DOCUMENT ARE AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST BY CALLING (310) 458-8211.

After an application has been submitted, a confirmation page will be displayed. If an email address has been provided, an email confirmation will be sent. IF A CONFIRMATION IS NOT DISPLAYED, PLEASE RESUBMIT OR CONTACT THE CITY CLERK'S OFFICE AT (310) 458-8211.