

**American Bar Association
Section of Family Law**

STRATEGIC PLAN

May 17, 2000

Prepared by:

LONG RANGE PLANNING COMMITTEE

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***Note: This document replaces the 1999 Long Range Plan**

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**American Bar Association
Section of Family Law**

STRATEGIC PLAN¹

INTRODUCTION

The ABA Section of Family Law created the Long Range Planning Committee (LRPC) in 1982-83. The purpose of this committee is to develop long-range policies, plans and goals for the Section; and to make recommendations regarding the implementation of such policies, goals and plans to the Council and Chair.

The Long Range Planning Committee met five times in 1989-1991 to study the results of the 1989 survey of Section members, and to write a planning blueprint. The Long Range Plan was adopted by the Section of Family Law Council on August 1, 1991.

The next survey of Family Law members took place in 1997. The American Bar Association released the results of the BASS Study [Benefits Assessment & Satisfaction Study] in 1999. The Long Range Planning Committee and Council studied these reports extensively.

The Section sponsored a strategic planning retreat in May 1999 to discuss implementation strategies for the next 3-5 years. Our 1991 Long Range Plan, the 1997 membership survey, and the BASS Study served as reference materials. The Strategic Plan that follows will serve as a blueprint for implementing the Section's existing Mission and Goals over the next 3-5 years.

¹ A "long range plan" addresses an organization's long term mission and goals. A "strategic plan" outlines strategies to implement the mission and goals for the next 3-5 years. This document addresses strategies to implement the mission and goals adopted by the ABA Family Law Section Council in 1991.

MISSION AND GOALS OF THE SECTION OF FAMILY LAW

The Section of Family Law Council adopted the following mission statement in 1991:

THE MISSION OF THE AMERICAN BAR ASSOCIATION SECTION OF FAMILY LAW IS TO SERVE AS THE NATIONAL LEADER IN THE FIELD OF MARITAL AND FAMILY LAW.

To accomplish its mission, the Council adopted the following six goals for the Section:

- I. **TO PROMOTE AND IMPROVE THE FAMILY.**
- II. **TO BE THE PRE-EMINENT VOICE ON MARITAL AND FAMILY ISSUES.**
- III. **TO SERVE OUR MEMBERS.**
- IV. **TO IMPROVE PUBLIC AND PROFESSIONAL UNDERSTANDING ABOUT MARITAL AND FAMILY LAW ISSUES AND PRACTITIONERS.**
- V. **TO INCREASE THE DIVERSITY AND PARTICIPATION OF OUR MEMBERSHIP.**
- VI. **TO IMPROVE PROFESSIONALISM OF ALL PARTICIPANTS IN THE ADMINISTRATION OF MARITAL AND FAMILY LAW.**

SUMMARY OF STRATEGIC PLANNING SESSION

On Friday and Saturday, May 21 and 22, 1999, the Family Law Section Strategic Planning Group engaged in strategic planning to examine its current status and determine how it should move forward in the future. The impetus for the planning session was the Section desire to determine the key essentials for focus in the next 3 to 5 years to enable full service to all of its members, including those 90% who do not come to meetings but rely on the Section as their primary source of information on all aspects of the practice of Family Law.

Through a series of questions, the Section conducted an analysis of its current situation and how it might change in the next 3 to 5 years. During the analysis, planning participants noted that the Section has played a very important role nationally in effecting positive change in the law for families. Its work on the Uniform Adoption Act, as well as the many changes in adoption law, such as tax credits for adoptions, has had a direct positive impact on the lives of many people. Further, its Partners program, now in numerous high schools throughout the United States, enables a generation to look early at the issues of marriage in more constructive ways.

Because of its national scope, the Section of Family Law can give lawyers what state and local bars cannot – a national view of and alert on how the law is changing, as well as the ability to be involved in creating that change. The interaction of members from all states allows for the sharing of information on what is happening in any one state, thus providing a heads-up for lawyers on what's likely to change in their own particular jurisdictions. The increasingly national scope of law, including federalization, makes the Section an excellent value for its members. *Family Law Quarterly*, a key benefit for members, has increased significantly in the respect courts have for its work, being cited nationally.

The Section of Family Law provides a unique level of professionalism and knowledge for its members. Section meetings offer exceptional opportunities for networking and for the development of products and publications. Section members run the gamut in experience and skill level, having not one single but multiple interests, as well as different ages and life experiences. The sharing of those experiences has made for valuable professional and personal growth for many members and is one of the important reasons for retention of those members.

In addition, the Section provides excellent publications which are cited nationally, a strong legislative voice, a powerful impact on children's issues within and outside the ABA, superior CLE programs for members and great meetings with networking opportunities for attendees. Its recently developed fax newsletter has been very successful in providing timely information to a wider variety of members. Its growing Listserv also brings together the expertise of members on many issues and practice questions and makes it available instantly to participants on-line.

However, in examining how it needs to change the Section realizes that its membership is not growing because the great wealth of its experience and products is simply not known, not publicized enough, and often is completely unavailable to the more than 90% of members who do not attend meetings. While the Section can be a major force for good in the nation, it cannot serve as the preeminent voice of the family lawyer unless it can attract members who find value in its work and products.

Solos for the most part, the majority of section members cannot afford to come to meetings. What they need most from the Section is easily delivered and accessible information and tangible products that will enable them to improve their practices and their standard of living. The Section must find new delivery methods to get CLE out to lawyers in their offices and homes.

To gain new members in order to grow and develop as the preeminent voice, the section must become a magnet for young lawyers. It must find out from its passive members and those who should be members because of their practice type but are choosing not to, what is it that would make membership in the section valuable for them. Surveys alone cannot elicit what this is, so greater personal contact, perhaps online, must be used. The Section must then implement what these members and non-members ask for.

In addition to finding out what members and non-members would value from the Section, it must market its products, programs, benefits and services to members and future members. In order to compete in today's arena for members, the Section must make itself indispensable to the family law practitioner by providing information and a level of expertise and scholarship in the field of family law such that lawyers automatically look first to the Section of Family Law for guidance on any given family law issue.

Thus following the analysis portion of the planning session, planning participants brainstormed ideas for new tangible products and possible new delivery methods for existing products to provide information and services to its 9,000 inactive members. Key strategies to be developed surround two broad areas: how the Section can most effectively communicate the value of membership and how it can keep in touch with and be able to meet the needs of all its members.

The following pages outline the Section's analysis of its current situation and how it would like to change in the future

PARTICIPANTS

Maury Kutner, Chair
Sandra Morgan Little, Chair-Elect
Linda Elrod
Sharon Corbitt
Dick Podell
Joel Kirschbaum
Ron Nelson
Bob Levy
Bill DaSilva
Mark Chinn
Carlton Stansbury
Laura Morgan
Victoria Ho
Sam Schoonmaker IV
Michael Hastings
Joel Tenenbaum

ABA Staff

Glenda Berg Sharp
Lynn Abernathy
Dolores Gedge, facilitator

ANALYSIS OF SECTION CURRENT SITUATION AND PROPOSED FUTURE

Strategic planning meeting participants analyzed the Section in 1999, and examined the Section's direction for the next three to five years. Following are the participants' responses to several key questions posed:

WHY DOES THE SECTION OF FAMILY LAW NEED TO EXIST?

- FLS should exist because it can provide for the essential needs of family lawyers, but it must focus on what is important to the potential member, how the Section could help him or her in practice, and how well it provides such help.
- FLS should exist because it provides services that smaller and more local bars cannot provide. It can reach lawyers who aren't serviced by any organized bar, but it must focus on providing services and products that lawyers cannot get elsewhere and must be operated in a more business-like manner with the member/customer as the focus of product development and delivery.
- FLS should exist to keep members reaching for a higher level of competence and performance. It should exemplify the national standard in caring about clients and their families.
- FLS should exist to continue the excellent networking, fun and camaraderie that are essential to the professional and personal growth of lawyers. One of the best benefits of FLS over the years is the opportunity for national and international networking by attending meetings.
- No, the FLS per se doesn't need to exist. But, editorial boards and other groups who oversee the Section's services should exist. Unless the ABA/FLS provides something unique and of value for the cost of membership, this group could well be a solo/small firm section or the like.
- FLS should exist because families in society need a group of people who are well intentioned and care about families to advocate for them. The Section does a better job at this than others can.
- FLS needs to look at why it needs to exist in terms of serving the membership who does not wish to come to meetings. It must do much more to get CLE out to people in offices and homes via satellite and other means. Further, it must continue to change the face of meetings in terms of camaraderie. Meetings bring together a nucleus of people who generate the end product for the other 9000 so they must focus on what is in the best interest of section.

- FLS should exist because of the vast potential it has for all lawyers. There is no exclusiveness in being a member – all skill levels, interest levels, ages and life experiences are represented. Debates among such a multi-faceted group allow for great potential for the legal profession, in terms of professionalism and appreciation for the law.
- FLS needs to exist because it can serve as the glue that binds family lawyers from all levels of experience and background. ABA/FLS is an organization that is non-exclusive, covering all aspects of the profession. As a bar with national scope and vision, it can effect the kind of changes and development in the law and practice that will benefit all lawyers.
- No the section doesn't need to exist because most practicing divorce lawyers go to state and local bars. Yes, the section has excellent CLE and looks to national trends; but most lawyers struggle from day to day to manage their cases and practices. The FLS must provide its members something beyond just mutual compatibility. The Section must reach for excellence. As a national organization, it must offer something more than a state or local bar. It must combine practical knowledge with scholarship to provide information that is not available elsewhere.
- FLS needs to exist to provide focus to family lawyers nationally. Due to the increasingly national scope of law, its federalization, there are considerably broader issues for every lawyer to deal with other than state and local issues. This makes a national organization very important. The national impact is demonstrated by a recent article in Family Law Quarterly which was cited in 16 courts. The level of professionalism and the level of knowledge available from FLS are unique, making it very important to continue meeting and networking to keep this alive.
- FLS needs to exist as an agent for positive social change. Lawyers in society serve as a vanguard for change and for protection of rights. No group has the ability to effectuate social change in the issues of family and marital law like FLS, as evidenced by the changes it has caused in adoption laws, such as the Uniform Adoption Act and tax credits for adoptions. The Section can use its national voice and ABA name to do good and to effect social change.
- FLS must exist because it is the right thing to do. As part of the ABA, it is the national voice for profession in marital and family law. Family law attorneys care more about their clients than almost any other type of lawyer because their works brings them into involvement with the whole family. FLS can and should be a national caring voice for the legal profession.
- FLS needs to exist because of the opportunities for professional, personal, and business growth it offers its members due to the sharing of ideas, skill levels, experience levels and diversity of practices that are represented in the Section and the ABA. Everyone benefits from the interactions and sharing of fresh new ideas from young lawyers as well the knowledge and experience of seasoned professionals.

**WHAT ARE THE TOP THREE THINGS THE SECTION OF FAMILY LAW
NEEDS TO DO IN THE NEXT 3 TO 5 YEARS?**

- Continue to seek out new leaders and new members to make the Section strong and dynamic, while relying on longer-term members to provide judgment, wisdom and the voice of experience in section development.
- The Section must not be afraid to change and let go of some past practices because what worked yesterday is not necessarily the right approach for today. However, it should also continue to review regularly the wisdom and practices of the past because ideas that may not have come to fruition might succeed in today's changed environment.
- Find out from passive members what is it that will add value for them, not just through surveys, but through more personal contact, and then implement what they ask for.
- Continue the section openness so FLS belongs to everyone.
- Be the preeminent voice of family law in the nation.
- Treat the FLS as a business by letting members and future members know what FLS does and can do for them. Advertise products, programs, benefits and services so everyone knows about them.
- Market FLS better and more often.
- Involve the Council more in lifeblood activities of the section; it currently has far too little involvement in the real work of the Section.
- Continue to improve CLE.
- Continue to democratize the section.
- Reach out in more personal ways, not just through surveys, to non-active members of the section to find out what they need.
- Make the Section indispensable to the family law practitioner by providing information on what he or she needs.
- Raise the profile of FLS.
- Develop tangible products.
- Provide services, professionalism and networking.

- Be competitive with private organizations that are trying to do what the Section does.
- Determine best delivery methods for delivering what we already have to our 9,000 inactive members.
- Preserve, protect and defend our system of jurisprudence.
- Maintain the quality of the legal profession.
- Modify CLE to meet the new technologies.
- Remain the pre-eminent voice on Family Law, especially in Congress.
- Continue excellent networking opportunities and share expertise gathered from these with passive members through technology.
- Continue national and international development as a benefit to members.
- Celebrate the great accomplishments FLS has had to date; recognize its past great work and leadership as we go forward.
- To increase membership, networking opportunities and national voice, develop better ways to exchange information with state local bars' family law sections.
- FLS should visualize what the practice of family law will be in 5 years, determine the needs of attorneys in that environment and how FLS can serve those needs.
- Focus on those people who do not come to meetings, don't want to come and never will, rather than just talking about it! One way to do this is to expand the fax news update – send it out twice a month instead of once. Make it better, longer by providing concrete information that is helpful to members, i.e., information on federal legislation; hot tips; research law on relocation, etc. Preview for them what is coming up in the next issue.
- Determine how we can most effectively communicate the value of membership in the section.
- Restructure what FLS does at meetings so that most of its revenues are not spent on meetings that most members cannot attend.

WHAT IS THE IMAGE OF THE SECTION NOW?

Closed
Not technologically sophisticated
Staid
Exclusive
Excellent CLE
Excellent publications
Good programs such as Partners
Meeting intensive
Focused on the small group of members who participate in meetings
Not a draw for young lawyers
Shrinking in membership
Strong leadership
Strong gender diversity
Low to non-existent profile
Concerned with families
Dealing with dead horse issues

HOW WOULD THE SECTION LIKE ITS IMAGE TO CHANGE IN THE NEXT 3 TO 5 YEARS?

Open to everyone
Young, vibrant, dynamic
Democratic
Well-known
Cutting edge
Technologically sophisticated
Responsive to all of its members
Excellent communications and marketing
National in scope
The preeminent voice of Family Law in the nation
Providing excellent service to all of its members
Continued excellent CLE with advanced delivery methods
Growing membership
In touch with and able to meet the needs of all its members
Well-funded
Well staffed
Revenue generating
Diversity of practice, ideas, experience levels
A section that continues to seek out new leaders and provide opportunities for leadership
FLS belongs to everyone
Having a high profile among ABA members and all lawyers

WHAT IMPACT HAVE WE HAD?

Strong effect on social change in the law for families, i.e. adoption issues
Excellent Partners program
Excellent publications which are cited nationally
Strong legislative voice
Strong impact on children's issues within and outside the ABA
Excellent CLE programs for members
Great meetings with networking opportunities for attendees
Successful fax newsletter to serve all members
Growing Listserv

WHAT IMPACT WOULD WE LIKE TO HAVE HAD 5 YEARS FROM NOW?

Able to reach and serve all members technologically
Be the leader in the nation on all Family Law issues
Providing tangible products that enable members to improve their practices and their standard of living
Be a magnet for young lawyers
Being an FLS member means being a better lawyer, a better professional
Continued agent for changes in the law to help families
Diverse
An active, engaged council that is very involved in the lifeblood of the Section
A strong voice in Congress
A leader in children's issues
Excellent and diverse delivery methods so that all members can access and benefit from Section products and programs
Strong working relationship with State Bar Family Law Sections
Excellent communications with members and the public

WHOM DO WE SERVE?

Family Lawyers and General Practitioners
Families/children
Court System
Legislatures/Congress
Public/media perspective
Members and Non-members
Section leaders
Clients
ABA

PRIORITY OF SERVICE

The Section cannot be effective if it attempts to be all things to all of its constituents. If the Section had to limit the number of constituencies it serves to five in order to provide better service, what priority order would it give those five?

1. Our members
2. Families/children
3. Clients
4. Family Lawyers
5. Court System

WHAT ARE DIFFERING NEEDS OF CONSTITUENTS?

Members	Information Help making a living Models of professionalism CLE/publications Emotional support Technology Networking opportunities Leadership in national topics Enhanced image Skills
Families	Improved quality of life Improved legislation and delivery of legal services Information Responsiveness of courts Improved quality, affordable legal services
Clients	Professional service Affordable services Informed/educated lawyers Crisis support Education
Family Lawyers	National voice International voice Delivery of CLE and publications Good books Combating a national trend toward non-lawyer divorce; help at self-preservation
Court Systems	Educating the judiciary More efficient ways of moving cases through Unified Family Courts Corollary support services – e.g. divorce education for clients; child support hearing officers; mandatory education for clients going through a divorce is now in place; increase education
Legislative/Congress	Timely input from FLS expertise

WHAT ARE OUR CURRENT PROGRAMS?

Partners
CLE
Family Advocate
Family Law Quarterly
Other Section publications
Meetings
Listserv
Fax Newsletter
Congressional relations
Intersectional cooperation
Committees
Marketing and membership
Liaisons with other groups – NGO's

WHAT PROGRAMS ARE GOING TO BE OBSOLETE?

Some Committees -- FLS should examine its whole Committee structure to determine more effective ways of carrying out the work, sharing and disseminating it and helping Chairs and members understand their roles in making a commitment to serve on committees

Examine Section meeting structure, how much section revenue should be spent in this area, how often the Section should meet, what social events it needs to conduct.

Some delivery mechanisms are obsolete for some publications, though not the publications themselves

Current methods of member recruitment

The Fax Newsletter will be as soon as better on-line methods of delivery are available

Duties of Council

Transfer of Committee Leadership and Officer transition in leadership

The way we disseminate information now

The way committees meet -- move to more conference calls and online meetings.

HOW WELL DO WE DISCONTINUE PROGRAMS?

Poorly, if at all

WHAT PROGRAMS ARE WE GOING TO NEED TO ADD?

- New staff person
- Listening sessions with members to find out what they need
- Wide dissemination of Committee information and work
- More discussion groups and leadership meetings below the Council level to continue to seed leadership with new ideas and involvement
- Leadership training
- Institutional memory so that the Section doesn't regularly reinvent the wheel
- Internal self-promotion – telling Section membership what the Committees are doing, as well as what the Section as a whole is doing to benefit them
- New & Improved Scope
- Increased communication between Council, Committees and leadership
- Specialization/certification
- More accessible CLE
- How to Work Smarter, Not Harder
- National Competitions
- Community Service
- Meaningful Pro Bono
- Law School Outreach
- Outreach to State Family Law Sections
- More interface with other sections, other organizations
- Party Committee to continue camaraderie and openness at meetings. (Getting newcomers to Chair's Suite has a very positive effect on new members)
- Special outreach to new members
- Programs to combat lawyer ignorance and incompetence. (One third of ethics complaints are on family lawyers; special effort ought to be made by the section to combat those who do divorce law without real skill or knowledge.)
- Programs members can participate in without attending meetings
- Committee meetings via phone or on-line

WHAT DO WE DO WELL?

CLE
Publications
Meetings
Networking
Effecting changes in the law
Incorporating women into the section

WHERE DO WE NEED TO DEVELOP?

Institutional memory
Marketing
New, useful products
Promoting the products we have
Delivery of products
Raise profile
Get more minorities and younger lawyers involved.
Get more judges involved.
Learn how to keep costs down
Professionalism
Work with lawyers to help combat ignorance
Improving delivery of legal services
Develop ADR to give clients more service options

Pro se issue – should the Section take a position on this? (Over 75% of all custody cases in Connecticut are pro se.) Develop programs to educate people about the complexity so they know pro se isn't the way to go

WHAT ARE THE THREATS FACING US?

- Fighting pro se divorce is a dead horse issue. Instead the Section should concentrate on providing essential education for pro se; provide forms for divorce and help out when there are no lawyers
- Continued poor public image of lawyers
- Competition – private organizations delivering the same information as the section and the ABA; state and local bars, Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers
- Other groups providing services to younger members are making ABA/FLS membership not necessary.
- Cyberlaw
- More groups/firms pulling away from group billing programs.
- Membership in the section is primarily solo/small firm so when money is scarce, our membership is more likely to drop

WHAT OPPORTUNITIES SHOULD WE CAPITALIZE ON?

- Target younger lawyers
- Interface more with YLD rather than waiting for YLD leaders to finish their leadership in YLD before Section approaches them to join.
- Change lawyers' perceptions of FLS
- Continue to develop collaborative efforts with:
 - Steering Committee on Unmet Legal Needs of Children
 - Children and the law
 - Litigation Section
 - Judges
 - StC Substance Abuse
 - YLD
- Use SOC more often and more wisely
- Promote the multi-faceted voices of the section especially to single issue committees of the ABA with interests similar to those of FLS so that the members of these committees can join the section and take advantage of the broader debate on issues.
- Educate firms about the value to them of paying for young associates to be in ABA/FLS
- Membership in section is primarily solo/small firm so they must rely more than others on the Section to meet their information needs.
- Council should have interaction with other FLS's in state/local bars

INTERNAL FACTORS THAT IMPACT SECTION'S ABILITY TO SERVE ITS MEMBERS AND WHICH THE SECTION SHOULD ADDRESS WITH OTHER SECTIONS AT SECTION OFFICERS CONFERENCE

Lack of timely financial information from ABA

ABA creation of programs and entities w/o consulting sections already working in an area

The problem of sharing revenues, ads, etc with the ABA when it seems that the Section does all of the work

ABA political positions are the number 1 threat to membership (i.e. abortion)

ABA Dues Increase

Use of Funds – How FLS uses them, as well as ABA

As the Section increases products and programs in order to increase membership, it increases the burden on staff and leaders in terms of time and resources, and has great difficulty getting increases in staff to support the additional work.

Decentralization of technology

Lack of really good databases and the ability to get information from throughout the ABA's lots of unintegrated databases that are not on-line.

ABA structure and policies that we have to follow whether it works for us or not.

STRATEGIES FOR DEVELOPMENT

Strategic planning meeting participants next proposed strategies that may be implemented in the next 3-5 years to make the ABA Family Law Section indispensable to members. They were grouped into nine categories.

MAKING THE SECTION INDISPENSABLE TO MEMBERS

EXPAND THE FAX NEWSLETTER

Recruit two volunteers to work on the Fax Newsletter at least once a month or more. Provide a column on what's happening in Section committees on behalf of members and how that work impacts lawyers in their every day practice.

Use the Fax Newsletter as a major delivery service, providing shorter cases, committee news, keep 1 page. Use it to promote new books and to let all members know about Listserv.

Send a sample issue of the Fax Newsletter to those who do not now get it and tell them how they can subscribe

Send sample to sections and committees that FLS works closely for distribution to members to show the benefits of FLS membership.

ENHANCE MEMBERSHIP EFFORTS:

Recruit young lawyers through the Internet. Develop on-line membership brochure to show the benefits of FLS membership. Hyperlink this to the Solo/Small Firm Committee site, the Young Lawyers Division, all of the ABA Committees that work on Children's issues and other related Section sites.

Cross-match the FLS State membership list and the ABA state membership list and target non-FLS members, sending Fax Newsletter sample and a checklist of benefits, with information on accessing the Family Law website for more information.

Put FLS member advertisements in YLD's magazine, in *Student Lawyer* and other section magazines. To save on financing this, trade advertising space with these entities.

Solicit competing family law organizations to buy corporate memberships in FLS.

Recruit through AAML and others – “let us have your associates to put into leadership positions. All should be ABA members so that we can be your training ground for leadership.”

Use the Committee/Newsletter Editors and State Bar Chairs to reach out to non-members. Ascertain the identity of Chairs of Family Law committees or sections in state and local bars and send each a sample copy of the Fax Newsletter

Sponsor/buy membership in FLS for others

Use the Advocacy Institute to recruit new members. Profile the Advocacy Institute in Fax Newsletter and in *Family Advocate* because 70% of FLS membership are not aware of it.

Working with several other ABA sections through the Section Officers Conference, approach ABA Standing Committee on Membership on pilot project to allow individuals to temporarily join a section for a year without paying ABA dues. Those taking advantage of this trial offer could then be a target group for ABA Membership Department to recruit after one year. Should such a program be approved, the trial period would need to be very well supervised to ensure these trial members gets all the benefits and contacts they need so that they will not want to relinquish the membership when the trial period is over.

Ask the ABA Publishing Office to regularly provide a list of those buying Family Law books and publications and target those individuals for membership.

EXPAND AND REPACKAGE CLE

FLS provides excellent CLE at meetings but is not capitalizing on CLE programs.

After CLE program is run, repackage and sell materials in several different formats, i.e., via videotape, audiotape, disk, on-line, etc. Unbundle CLE program books and market individual portions to members and non-members, based on practice areas. Use push technology to market these materials based on member profiles.

If FLS wishes to continue developing 25,000 brochures for a meeting, use these to list all CLE materials available and have members check off which ones they want to order, if they do not come to the meeting.

Develop subject index to what FLS now has, examining how current materials could be unbundled to provide considerably more products to various target audiences.

Develop a library of CLE materials on disk for ready delivery upon request.

Put CLE live feed on TV

Advertise all CLE materials and how to order them in all FLS sources, including on website, Family Advocate, Fax Newsletter, meeting brochures, etc.

To expand relations and collaboration with State and Local bars, assist them to have regional meetings using CLE materials from FLS meetings that state bar leaders might not have been able to attend. Take to several state bars to set up a regional conference. Use to:

Plug FLS membership

Make contact with members in that state (look what FLS is doing for your state!)

Develop goodwill

Reputation of ABA

Enhances speakers reputation because have bigger audience

DEVELOP INFORMATION CENTER ON FAMILY LAW

Position the ABA/FLS as an information center where lawyers can get everything they need to be better lawyers, to thrive economically and to improve and enhance their practices. Develop a central library of materials on all aspects of family law practice that members can order without the requirement or expectation that they come to meetings or participate at all, except through electronic communications.

Provide materials to members and non-members on a fee basis.

DEVELOP CURRICULA ON DIVORCE EDUCATION

Divorce education is very important now in many courts, but there is a lot of very inadequate material available. Develop a proposal for a grant to develop curricula on divorce education. (Note – Vicki Ho agreed to spearhead how to do this and who to get involved.) Join with AFCC on their similar program.

ENHANCE SECTION MARKETING

Using as an example the practice of the American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers of providing its members with videos and brochures on special issues in law as benefit for joining to use in their own speeches/presentations in their communities, develop such videos and brochures for ABA/FLS, such as, e.g. ten facts on family law. (Assign this to Marketing/Membership Committee)

Use push technology (advertising directly to a member's email address, based on his or her profile) to reach members and provide information on Section products.

Sell ABA/FLS products at all meetings. Market products at AFCC. Trade with other organizations by being willing to reciprocate in showing their products at FLS meetings. Send an FLS liaison to all such meetings.

Develop a checklist for Family Advocate, perhaps ABA Journal, and the fax Newsletter on what FLS has done for lawyers this year through its legislative work, its committee work, etc.

Cross marketing – Advocate with CLE/with Quarterly/with books etc. Plan CLE meetings around books coming out – Cross-market everything; all should share information

REFINE THE WORK OF COMMITTEES

Develop a job description of the role of Committee Chairs, outlining responsibilities and expectations, and outline these in letter to those who agree to take on the role of Chair.

Develop a checklist for Chairs of each Committee on what each is expected to accomplish during year as Chair. Be as specific as possible, providing suggestions and benchmarks.

Request that each Chair have a conference call with the Section Staff Director prior to the fall and spring meetings so Committee activities can be reported at the meetings.

While some leaders have asked whether it should be mandatory that Committee chairs attend all meetings, the consensus is that it should not be because of the excellent talent of many who might not be able to serve if meeting attendance was mandatory. Request that Chairs attend at least one meeting a year and to send a designee to each meeting from each committee.

While many areas of the Section will be involved, it is a responsibility of Committee chairs to assist in development of FLS institutional memory by keeping and minutes and records of all meetings.

DEVELOP INSTITUTIONAL MEMORY

Request that all Committees keep past minute books and records so each new Committee membership can be aware of what happened and what issues the Committee has taken up in the past.

Develop minutes of each Council meeting and retain records of all actions.

Document all Family Law policies passed by the House of Delegates as a result of FLS work. (*See other Section websites for such policy libraries, e.g. Criminal Justice Section*).

Ensure that Section leadership takes into account, in making appointments, that there are some overlapping terms of membership on each Committee in addition to reliance on the minutes for past information.

DEVELOPING RESOURCES

FLS sends out 25,000 brochures for its meetings and gets about 200 responses, from those who would likely come anyway. While there are suggestions for using these brochures as marketing devices, is it better financially to eliminate them? Are they riding a “dead horse” that the Section keeps reusing because it has always done so in the past?

Examine how FLS might provide services for a fee to non-members, without having to join the ABA or FLS. Market products to non-members who don't ever want to join, such as family law associates, psychologists, social workers, AICPA members, pro se litigants, etc. Examples of such services:

- CLE online

- Sell publications/books etc

- Fax/newsletter and list serve and Advocate for a fee?

Develop a research service for a fee (*note from Dolores: should this idea be combined with the Listserv idea below of on-line mentoring or does it envision such a program via telephone, staffed by a volunteer?*) akin to what National Legal Research now does. Develop an arrangement between ABA/FLS and National Legal Research so that if anyone can call the ABA/FLS to receive answers to practice questions for a fee. Note: several participants indicated that the Section must be extremely careful about malpractice in conducting such a project. It must be sure that it is not perceived as giving advice. Proponents indicated that the Research service would provide information only but no advice. It would not tell a lawyer what to do with the information or how to use it in a case.

Market Listserv to non-members as an on-line mentoring service in family law for a fee. “Get answers to your questions in minutes.” (*NOTE: Will not be technically feasible until late 1999 with ABA's launch of e-commerce. Will require utilization of new Internet discussion software rather than existing listserv forum.*)

Develop a Grant Development Program to obtain grants to produce FLS materials in various areas, such as ADR in schools; updating Partners; ways to package materials.

Continue to explore holding joint meeting with other sections with like interests, even though several initial attempts have failed. Such meetings could enable each of the sections to share materials to provide to members on-line and in other ways. Options for

pursuit are: Law Practice Management Section for assistance on all technological material and practice how-to. The General Practice, Solo and Small Firm Practice Section, etc.

Seek out the services of a Pro Bono Ad agency which met with the Steering Committee on Unmet Legal Needs of Children and outlined its program of providing pro bono public advertising for particular programs. This group might be willing to work on Partners materials or in developing Public Service Announcements on Children's issues.

Hire Law Student Interns.

Continue to work to get fully funded new staff person in upcoming fiscal year.

Develop a membership directory that is self-funded through advertisements.

Encourage all Section officers to get sponsorships for meetings, cocktail parties etc, when FLS meets in a particular officer's state.

Have funded committees meet via conference call or online more

Scrutinize equipment costs at hotels – negotiate better rates

HOW TO IMPLEMENT AND MONITOR THE PLAN

It has been indicated that responsibility for presenting the plan to Council will be assigned to the FLS Officers and Long Range Planning Committee [LRPC]. Presentations will be made at the Atlanta Annual Meeting on August 6, 1999, the San Diego Fall CLE Conference on October 14-15, 1999, the New Orleans Spring CLE Conference on April 7-8, 2000, and final approval will be sought at the New York Annual Meeting on July 8, 2000. The FLS Council will oversee implementation of the plan. Involvement of the LRPC in the process of implementation and evaluation, however, is essential to ensuring that such implementation occurs.

The LRPC should meet or consult regularly to review progress toward plan implementation. During the process of monitoring implementation, its role becomes much more one of a Program Evaluation Committee. There is no one best way to link strategy to actual activity. Any approach must be based on:

Nature of the work to be done
Culture and flow of current work and how much can be foregone
Where the capabilities and talents to execute the work are located.

However, here are suggested steps:

1. With the Chair and Chair-elect, present the plan to the FLS Council for overall approval in concept of the strategic directions.
2. With the Chair and Chair-elect and any other appropriate leaders, as well as the Staff Director, recommend preliminary assignments of responsibility for implementation of each strategy.
3. Request within a particular time frame that all assignees, i.e., Council, Committees, individuals and staff develop specific action plans with due dates to support the strategy assigned them. This will force all involved to examine what is currently being done that can or cannot be set aside to implement this plan and also force prioritization of work flow within the section.
4. Upon receipt of action plans, meet with the Chair, Chair-elect and Staff Director to determine what is doable in terms of staff and volunteer resources, to prioritize staff work flow in terms of implementation of the action plans and to assign appropriate budget to activities, as needed. Submit report for Council approval. Examine whether the plan requires strategic changes in the governance and/or operational components of the Section to make implementation feasible. Is the plan linked to all other section activities, budgeting, planning, workflow etc.

5. Based on due dates developed on each action plan, request progress reports from assignees and report on such progress to the Chair, Chair-elect and Council.
6. In addition to monitoring progress on the defined strategies, the LRPC should regularly review with Council the following portions of the plan to ensure that strategies are developed for any changes the section needs to make to accomplish what it proposes for its future:

What are the top three things the family law section needs to do in the next 3 to 5 years?

How would the section like its image to change in the next 3 to 5 years?

What impact would we like to have had 5 years from now?

What programs are we going to need to add?

Where do we need to develop?

What opportunities should we capitalize on?

7. Based on the above steps, determine whether mid-course adjustments are needed.
8. Recommend adjustments the plan as needed, as suggested by the experience of committees, staff, or experience in implementation.

STRATEGIC PLANNING ASSIGNMENTS CHART

* Note: This chart is a dynamic, ever-changing document. See date in upper-right corner.

PROJECT - ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION	RESPONSIBILITY <i>Name of section and individual(s) within the section who will take the lead</i>	NOTES -- ACTION STEPS <i>Funding sources?</i> <i>Other resources needed?</i>	DUE DATE <i>Date for first progress report.</i> <i>Date of second report, etc.</i> <i>Estimated completion date.</i>
Goal 2 – To be the pre-eminent voice on marital and family issues.				
Enhance Section marketing	Develop videos and brochures for ABA/FLS, such as, e.g. ten facts on family law	Marketing & Membership	\$2,500 for each consumer brochure; \$20-30k for video	10/01 UPDATE – Officers approved a proposal for a complete Section “re-brand” including new membership and marketing materials 4/02 – New membership recruitment/retention brochure completed
Public Education	<p>ABA House of Delegates approved resolution that every lawyer should consider it their responsibility to help educate the public about the law and the role of lawyers.</p> <p>ABA President-Elect A.P. Carlton’s “Advocacy for the Profession Initiative”</p>	<p>Staff, CLE, Membership & Marketing</p> <p>Staff, Membership & Marketing</p>	<p>Create an on-line Family Law speaker database – delegate to CLE. The database should contain Section members who can speak on the profession and specific topics to churches, schools, law schools, state bars, AARP, YMCA, etc. The Membership & Marketing Committee needs to target the appropriate organizations to contact.</p> <p>See above</p>	Spring 2003

		Marketing		
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Enhance Section public relations efforts	Develop TV and/or radio public service announcements Audio or Video news releases	Officers & ABA staff	Audio news release in conjunction with ART Forum -- \$6,000 Audio news release with adoption focus -- \$6,000 Video news release for consumers on domestic and international adoption focus -- \$20-30k	Not applicable due to lack of funding FY2002-03 4/02 UPDATE – These programs are not applicable due to a lack of money in the Section’s budget. All Media/PR efforts are being handled through ABA Media Relations
Media training	Presentation by communications expert on implementing Strategic Communications Plan and ABA/FLS Message Platform	Officers & ABA staff	Participation by Officers, Council and committee leaders -- \$3,500-\$4,000 for consultant expenses	10/00, sponsor occasionally at Leadership Development meeting 11/02 – Media training planned for all committee chairs, Officers, Council and other Section leadership
Enhance Section’s profile within ABA	Increase visibility and expertise via <i>ABA Journal</i> Participate in annual ABA Day on the Hill Initiate Family Law grassroots effort.	Officers, committee chairs & ABA staff Officers, Congressional Relations Committee Congressional Relations Committee, Government Affairs staff, Section members	Will cosponsor Children’s Breakfast on 5/9/01 w/Center & Steering Cte on Unmet Legal Needs of Children. Planning mtg to identify critical issues by 1/01. Develop email and/or blast fax infrastructure.	monthly annually each Spring 3/01, ongoing for infrastructure. Actual grassroots efforts implemented as needed.

	<p>Recommend members for appointment to ABA standing/special ctes.</p> <p>Recommend leadership for appointment to SOC committees</p> <p>Recommend liaison appointments throughout the ABA with relevant entities</p> <p>Increase joint Section activities and programming</p>	<p>Officers, Director</p> <p>Officers</p> <p>Officers, Director</p> <p>Officers, CLE, Staff</p>	<p>Implementation varies annually. FLS Director gathers CVs and completes & files recommendation forms to Office of President.</p> <p>Recommendation to SOC Chair.</p>	<p>Annually</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Annually</p> <p>Ongoing</p>
Develop Institutional Memory	<p>Develop Committee and Council minutes and records.</p> <p>Document all Family Law policies passed by HOD</p>	<p>Bylaws/Policy, Scope Committee</p> <p>Staff</p>	<p>Publish summary of Council minutes in Non-Disc. Agenda or make available on Section’s website. Disseminate Committee minutes in customized committee orientation handbook.</p> <p>Utilize ABA Policy & Procedures handbook (aka “Green Book”).</p>	<p>Ongoing w/each meeting</p> <p>Ongoing annually</p> <p>Annually</p>
Issues Response	<p>“Rapid Response Team” proactively plans for Supreme Court rulings and other high family law profile issues.</p>	<p>Officers, Staff, Media Response Team</p>	<p>Local and national media interviews and placements [spokespersons, develop message/talking points; ABA policy; Opinion Editorial; Letters to the Editor; Media kits]</p>	<p>7/00 - Media Response Team</p> <p>10/01 UPDATE – Team appointed but needs to be re-activated</p> <p>4/02 UPDATE – Rapid Response Team not a practical idea. Replace with Section’s committee chairs and the on-line speaker database.</p>

Goal 3 – To serve our members.				
Expand Fax Newsletter	<p>Recruit add'l volunteers</p> <p>Provide a column on FLS committee work.</p> <p>Use the Fax Newsletter as promotion vehicle for section products.</p> <p>Send sample issue to members do not now get it so they can subscribe</p> <p>Send sample to various potential members.</p> <p>Publish on Members Only website. Provide hyperlink to all cases.</p> <p>4/02 - Disseminate either via Fax or via e-mail depending upon the member's preference</p>	<p>Officers</p> <p>Scope Committee, Staff</p> <p>Editors, Staff</p> <p>Membership & Marketing</p> <p>Membership & Marketing</p> <p>Online publication- Staff</p> <p>Staff</p>	<p>Chair-Elect during committee appointment process.</p> <p>On p. 2 each month.</p>	<p>As needed</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>10/00-online</p> <p>First e-mail issue sent April 2002</p>

Expand and Repackage CLE	<p>Unbundle, repackage and sell CLE materials in several different formats.</p> <p>Use meeting brochures as sales forms.</p> <p>Develop a library of CLE materials and publications ready delivery upon request.</p>	<p>CLE, Staff, Product Development</p> <p>CLE, Staff</p> <p>CLE, Membership & Marketing, Staff</p>	Product Development Committee to implement.	<p>Annually</p> <p>10/01 UPDATE – catalog of complete CLE materials and publications developed</p>
Develop Institutional Memory	<p>Review appointment process to ensure continuity</p> <p>Update Council handbook and committee leadership manual</p>	<p>Officers, Scope Committee, Staff</p> <p>Bylaws Revision Working Group, Scope</p>	Section Bylaws revision began 4/02. Part of the process will redefine Council, committees, etc.	<p>Annually</p> <p>Est. Spring 2003 – at the completion of the Bylaws revision</p>
Refine The Work Of Committees	Develop a job description of the role of Committee Chairs; provide written outline of responsibilities to each – details in plan.	Scope Committee, Staff	Survey 99-00 Cte Chairs	Annual review
Refine The Work of Liaisons	<p>Develop a job description and handbook.</p> <p>Create detailed definitions of liaisons, expectations, job responsibilities</p>	<p>Officers, Scope Committee, Staff</p> <p>Scope Committee</p>	<p>Job descriptions and details of the various types of liaisons need to be created. More active contact with the liaisons. Scope Committee needs to examine how to make liaisons more effective.</p>	<p>status report on 4/01, project completed by 7/02</p> <p>Implement in 2002-2003 Association Year</p>

Develop Resources	<p>Membership and leadership should be disseminating meeting/program information</p> <p>Examine how FLS might provide services for a fee to non-members, including research service; Listserv mentoring, etc.</p>	<p>Membership & Marketing</p> <p>Council, Membership & Marketing, Staff</p>	<p>How do we use our leadership and members to reach new audiences with information about Section meetings, etc.?</p>	<p>Fall 2002 – ideas and suggestions due</p>
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This completes the updates from the April 19, 2002 meeting of the Long Range Planning Committee in Providence, RI.

Goal 6 – To increase the diversity and participation of our membership				
Leadership Development	<p>Develop Council job descriptions</p> <p>Sponsor leadership development meeting for those considering seeking nomination to Officer or Council position.</p> <p>Require each Council member to submit 1 page written report for each agenda book</p> <p>Develop committee chair job descriptions</p> <p>Develop orientation manual for committee chairs and Council</p> <p>Sponsor training sessions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Live - Video - web based <p>Identify leaders/”wannabes”</p> <p>Sponsor committee chair roundtable at each meeting</p>	<p>Past FLS Chairs</p> <p>Officers</p> <p>Officers & Council</p> <p>Scope, ABA staff</p> <p>Scope, ABA staff</p> <p>Officers, Scope, ABA staff</p> <p>Officers, Scope, Membership & Marketing; Nominating Cte</p> <p>Officers, Scope,</p>	<p>Survey 99-00 cte chairs & vice chairs for input</p> <p>Formal leadership training meeting.</p> <p>Sponsor committee information booth at Wed. nite party at Fall/Spring Meetings</p>	<p>Begin draft by 4/01</p> <p>4/01, then annually</p> <p>8/00; then 3x per year</p> <p>10/01 – currently not being down. Re-implement?</p> <p>10/01 – completed in fall 2000</p> <p>10/01 – completed in fall 2000</p> <p>10/00, revised scopes by 4/01</p> <p>10/00, then annually</p> <p>10/00, then 2x year</p> <p>4/00 implementation; 3x year</p> <p>5-6/02, annually</p>

	<p>Invite committee chairs to report at each Council meeting</p> <p>Implement leadership orientation training each Spring as stand-alone meeting.</p>	<p>Chair</p> <p>Officers, Scope, ABA staff</p>	<p>Include components on membership recruitment, member outreach, committee products, Internet, diversity, etc. Reimbursement – up to \$300 per attendee.</p>	
Minority Outreach	<p>Implement FLS diversity policy.</p> <p>Sponsor Annual Meeting network event for FLS leaders, minorities and young lawyer members</p> <p>Contribute \$5,000 to ABA law school minority scholarship fund</p> <p>Contribute scholarship to CLEO [Council on Legal Education Opportunities]. Bring recipient to Fall or Spring Meeting.</p> <p>Network w/CLE on getting law students to Fall & Spring Meetings</p> <p>Establish fund for minority scholarships via law firm donations</p> <p>Present annual diversity award to a FLS committee</p>	<p>Officers & Council; Nominating Cte; CLE; Advocacy Institute; all Pub/Editorial Boards</p> <p>Chair-Elect; CLE</p> <p>Council</p> <p>Council</p> <p>Scope or Diversity Cte</p> <p>Chair-Elect, Council, Diversity Cte</p>	<p>Policy drafted by Chair-Elect and Section Director. Policy adopted by Council.</p> <p>Requires ABA Operations Cte approval to establish award.</p> <p>Chair-elect appoint Diversity task force by 2/01.</p>	<p>4/00 review by Council</p> <p>8/01</p> <p>4/00</p>

	Create FLS Diversity Plan, including implementing an Ambassadors Program offering scholarships & travel reimbursement for up to 5 lawyers of color per year to attend FLS meetings with the understanding that they become active on a committee.		Council approves Diversity Cte on 4/01. Plan developed for implementation by 8/02. Some form of the Ambassadors Program is implemented in 8/01, for full implementation in 8/02.	4/01 report to Council; 8/02 full implementation
Enhance Membership Efforts:	<p>Internet recruitment of young lawyers</p> <p>Develop online member recruitment piece for website</p> <p>Cross-match the FLS and ABA State membership lists and target non-FLS members. (See further details in plan)</p>	<p>Membership & Marketing</p> <p>Membership & Marketing, Staff</p> <p>Council & ABA staff</p>		<p>10/00</p> <p>10/00</p>
Outreach to membership	Identify projects to involve ABA/FLS members generally without attending meetings (i.e., online committee newsletter; hot tip to post on website; member recruitment). One size doesn't fit all – offer options (volunteer 1 hour/month; 30 mins/month; 15 mins/month).	Cte Chairs; Membership & Marketing; Regional Council Members; ABA staff	<p>Reasons members get involved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Personal & professional development - Contribution to the greater good - The need to belong to a community 	10/01 UPDATE – completed redesign of membership/marketing pieces
Outreach to young lawyers/new family law practitioners	Develop website for family law practitioners	CLE; Advocate Editorial Board; ABA staff	Redesign of FLS web site to capture identity of new ABA web site. Make it attractive and user-intuitive.	10/00; updated monthly thereafter (i.e., post new Hot Tip, Ethics Update)

	<p>Develop online newsletter specifically for young lawyer and new practitioner</p> <p>Sponsor free Annual Meeting networking event for leadership, young lawyer and minority members.</p> <p>Appoint Fellow's Committee, who will implement a Fellow's Program, offering up to 5 YLD members full scholarships and reimbursement to 2 years of FLS meetings with expectation that they will become active in a committee.</p>	<p>TBA</p> <p>TBA</p> <p>Chair-Elect will appoint cte to design & implement</p>	<p>Council approve new editorial entity. FLS Chair appoint members.</p> <p>Council appoint committee and appropriate funding.</p>	<p>Task force appointed by 2/01 for approval by Council as cte in 4/01. Implement some form of program by 8/01, with full development and implementation by 8/02.</p>
<p>Outreach to law students</p>	<p>Sponsor "Family Law Careers Lectures" at law schools in key cities</p> <p>News release for law school papers, LSD Representatives</p> <p>Law firm internships for law students between 1st & 2nd year</p> <p>Advertise meetings & activities in <i>Student Lawyer</i> and on LSD website.</p> <p><i>Also see Outreach to minorities for law student initiatives</i></p>	<p>LSD Liaison; Council; Programs Cte</p> <p>LSD Liaison, Council & FLS members</p> <p>TBA</p>		<p>4/01, planned for 4/02</p> <p>3/01</p>