Invitation to Apply for the Position of
Managing Director, Legal Education and Accreditation

Council of the ABA Section of Legal Education and Admissions to the Bar
Chicago, IL

Search Summary

The Council of the ABA Section of Legal Education and Admissions to the Bar (the Council) is seeking a highly respected leader from the legal academy, the practicing bar, or the judiciary to assume the role of Managing Director of Legal Education and Accreditation.

The Council and the American Bar Association seek a diverse field of candidates, who embrace the Council’s responsibility to ensure the quality of legal education in the United States and the Section’s mission to provide leadership on issues related to legal education and bar admission. The Managing Director is responsible for the day-to-day management of the Section office and is assisted by a staff of 20 professionals. Based in Chicago and reporting to the Council and the ABA Deputy Executive Director, the Managing Director is also responsible for promoting useful and cooperative relations with constituent organizations in support of the Council’s accreditation and leadership functions. The next Managing Director will assume her/his duties in the summer of 2020 upon the retirement of Barry Currier, who has served in this role since 2013.

With the staff and a set of experienced volunteers, the Managing Director supports and collaborates with the Council to assure that the Standards for Approval of Law Schools are uniformly and fairly enforced and are responsive to the ever-changing environment of legal education and the practice of law.

The next Managing Director will present a strong record of pertinent experience and enjoy the respect of the legal academy, the judiciary and the legal profession. The next Managing Director will demonstrate excellent communications and collaborative skills and will be familiar with legal education, the legal profession, higher education, accreditation, bar examination and bar admissions.

An eleven-member committee, chaired by Jeffrey E. Lewis, Dean Emeritus and Professor of Law at Saint Louis University School of Law, is conducting the search for the next Managing Director. The executive search firm of Isaacson, Miller has been engaged to manage the search process. Nominations, applications and inquiries about the Managing Director position should be directed to Isaacson, Miller as indicated at the end of this document.
The ABA Section of Legal Education and Admissions to the Bar

Members of the Section of Legal Education and Admissions to the Bar are part of a 14,000 member group that strives to improve legal education and lawyer licensing by fostering cooperation among legal educators, practitioners and judges through workshops, conferences and publications.

The Section's Council is the national accrediting body for American legal education. Under Title 34, Chapter VI, §602 of the Code of Federal Regulations, the Council is recognized by the United States Department of Education (DOE) as the accrediting agency for programs that lead to the J.D. degree. In this function, the Council and the Section are separate and independent from the ABA, as required by DOE regulations.

The Council of the Section promulgates the Standards and Rules of Procedure for Approval of Law Schools with which law schools must comply in order to be ABA-approved. The Standards establish requirements for providing a sound program of legal education. The law school approval process established by the Council is designed to provide a careful and comprehensive evaluation of a law school and its compliance with the Standards.

The Council is comprised of 21 voting members, no more than 10 of whom may be legal academics. Other members of the Council include judges, practicing attorneys, one law student, and at least three public members. By tradition, the Chair rotates among a judge, an academic, and a practicing lawyer.

The Standards for Approval of Law Schools, the associated Rules of Procedure, additional information about the accreditation process, and other information about legal education may be found here www.americanbar.org/legaled.

The mission of the Section of Legal Education and Admissions to the Bar, the ABA’s first section, is:

- To be a creative national force in providing leadership and services to those responsible for and those who benefit from a sound program of legal education and bar admissions,
- To provide a fair, effective, and efficient accrediting system for American law schools that promotes quality legal education, and
- To continue to serve, through its Council, as the nationally recognized accrediting body for American law schools.

The American Bar Association

Founded in 1878, the American Bar Association is committed to advancing the rule of law across the United States and beyond by providing practical resources for legal professionals, law school accreditation, model ethics codes and more. Its mission is to serve equally its members, the profession and the public by defending liberty and delivering justice as the national representative of the legal profession.

The ABA carries out this mission in 4 key ways: Serve its members by providing benefits, programs and services which promote members' professional growth and quality of life; Advocate for the Profession by promoting the best quality legal education, promote competence, ethical conduct and professionalism, and promote pro bono and public service by the legal profession; Eliminate Bias & Enhance Diversity by promoting full and equal participation in the association, and the justice system by all persons and eliminating bias in the legal profession, and the justice system; and Advance the Rule of Law by increasing public understanding of and respect for the rule of law, the legal process, and the role of the
legal profession at home and throughout the world. The ABA works for just laws, a fair legal process, meaningful access to justice for all persons, and the independence of the legal profession and the judiciary.

The ABA Leadership team includes Officers, the Board of Governors, the House of Delegates, and Senior Officials. The 43-member Board of Governors has the authority to act and speak for the ABA, consistent with previous action of the House of Delegates, when the House is not in session. The Board usually meets four times a year, oversees the general operation of the ABA and develops specific plans of action. The control and administration of the ABA is vested in the House of Delegates, the policy-making body of the association. The House meets twice each year, at ABA Annual and Midyear Meetings.

The beginning of the American Bar Association is linked with American legal education. When the ABA was organized in Saratoga, New York, in August 1878, one of the first standing committees it named was the Committee on Legal Education and Admissions to the Bar. About the time of the ABA’s founding, written bar examinations were just coming into use. Although required by most states, the bar examination previously had been largely oral and informal. Thus, the two subjects of legal education and admissions to the bar were coupled from the ABA’s founding and remain so today. It was at its 1893 Annual Meeting that the ABA created its first section, the Section of Legal Education and Admissions to the Bar.

The Role of the Managing Director

Reporting to the Deputy Executive Director as an ABA employee and to the Council on accreditation matters, the Managing Director is responsible for the administration of the ABA Law School Accreditation Project, the ABA Section of Legal Education and Admissions to the Bar, the ABA Standing Committee on Paralegals, and the ABA Standing Committee on Specialization.

The Office of the Managing Director of Legal Education and Accreditation administers the accreditation project. Administrative functions include, but are not limited to, overseeing the training and appointment of law school site evaluation teams, the collection of law school data in accordance with the Standards for Approval of Law Schools, and the dissemination of site team reports and other relevant accreditation materials to the Council. The Managing Director’s Office may also provide guidance on compliance with the Standards, although that guidance is not binding on decisions made by the Council.

To successfully lead the section of legal education and accreditation, the next Managing Director will address a set of key opportunities and challenges:

- Internally lead the department responsible for the ABA’s law school accreditation process, which includes standard-setting and review, law school accreditation and reaccreditation (now every 10 years), data collection, and publications;
- Manage negotiations and litigation involving the Council and the ABA on accreditation issues;
- Externally work with and represent and speak for the Council with law schools, deans, national legal education organizations (AccessLex, AALS, LSAC, NALP), other legal education organizations (e.g., CLEA, SALT, SEALS, ALWD), professional organizations (e.g., ABA, CCJ, NCBE, state bars and bar admissions offices) higher education entities and organizations (U.S. Department of Education, accreditors and accrediting organizations);
- Provide guidance and direction on budget, membership and marketing, and strategic planning for the Standing Committees on Paralegals and Specialization;
- Participate as a senior leader within the ABA, including weekly meetings, and otherwise as directed; and
- Perform other related duties as required.
As a normal course of business, this job will require intermittent travel up to 40% of the time.

**Desired Qualifications and Experience**

The successful candidate should bring many of the following professional qualifications, skills, experience, and qualities to the role.

- J.D. degree and current or prior admission to practice law in at least one state;
- Substantial, leadership and management experience in one or more of the following: legal education, higher education, legal practice, judicial service, accreditation, other regulatory work (particularly work related to the legal profession);
- Vision and creativity to help guide the Council’s operations and the accreditation process during transformative changes in legal education and practice;
- Substantial knowledge of accreditation processes in general, and in particular, of the accreditation of JD-programs for American law schools;
- A commitment and track-record of promoting diversity within legal education and the legal profession;
- Respect among peers in the legal academy, judiciary and legal profession;
- Exceptional communications and relational skills;
- Willingness and capacity to be the face and voice for high quality legal education;
- Ability to listen and entertain various points of view and collaborate with multiple constituencies and stakeholders;
- Entrepreneurial attitude and ability to confront and solve difficult issues;
- Ability to mentor staff;
- Excellent strategic and negotiating skills;
- Ability to set priorities and be pro-active.

**Application Procedure**

Interested applicants are required to send a cover letter and resume to the following web address: [https://www.imsearch.com/search-detail/S7-228](https://www.imsearch.com/search-detail/S7-228). Nomination and inquiries must also be submitted to the same web address with correspondences addressed to the search firm representatives noted below. Application reviews will begin immediately and continue until the completion of the search process.

Tim McFeeley, Partner  
Sherlene Parsons, Senior Associate  
Isaacson, Miller  
1300 19th Street, N.W., Suite 700  
Washington, DC 20036  
202-682-1504

*The American Bar Association is an Equal Opportunity, Affirmative Action Employer of all protected classes including veterans and individuals with disabilities.*