Statement of Barry Currier, managing director of ABA Accreditation and Legal Education, on behalf of the Council of the ABA Section of Legal Education and Admissions to the Bar regarding the status of Arizona Summit Law School (updated July 27, 2018)

Given the fact that Arizona Summit Law School publicly reported that it has appealed the Council’s decision to remove the Law School from the ABA list of approved actions, we can confirm that such an appeal has been filed. The appeal is governed by Rules 4 and 35-41 of the ABA Standards and Rules of Procedure for the Approval of Law Schools. The appeal suspends the effective date of the Council’s action, and further action, including the formal removal of the Law School from the list of law schools approved by the American Bar Association, depends on the outcome of the appeal. Under the rules governing this appeal, the process of resolving it may take several months.

For background, following the May 10, 2018, appearance of representatives from the Law School before the Council and the review of both the written materials submitted on behalf of the Law School and statements made at the Council hearing, the Council voted to remove the Law School from the ABA list of approved law schools. This action was in accordance with provisions of the ABA Standards and Rules of Procedure for Approval of Law Schools. Specifically, the Council adopted the Accreditation Committee’s Findings of Fact and affirmed the Committee’s conclusions with respect to the Law School’s non-compliance with Standards 301(a), 309(b), and 501(b) and Interpretations 501-1 and 501-2. Further, the Council determined that the Law School has been out of compliance with these standards for more than two years. Accordingly, the Council concluded that approval would be withdrawn.

The ABA accreditation process provides meaningful opportunities for a law school to establish that it is operating in compliance with the accreditation standards. When the Council or the Accreditation Committee concludes that a law school is operating out of compliance with a standard, the school is given time to act and demonstrate that it is back in compliance. If a school does not demonstrate compliance, the Council and the Accreditation Committee follow an established process, which can lead to sanctions such as probation or the removal of approval.

These opportunities were afforded Arizona Summit Law School. In March 2017, the Council issued a public notice reporting its decision to place the Law School on probation and listed specific remedial action related to non-compliance with these standards.

Media inquiries should be directed to Bill Choyke in the ABA Media Relations and Strategic Communications Division at bill.choyke@americanbar.org.