At its meeting on Monday, August 11 in Boston, the ABA House of Delegates concurred in all of the proposed new Standards and Rules of Procedure for Approval of Law Schools with the exception of Interpretation 305-2. The Interpretation, which prohibits law schools from granting credit for field placement programs for which the student receives compensation, was referred back to the Council after the House heard strong testimony for and against the provision. Because the revised Standards proposed to continue the existing rule on this matter, the existing rule remains in place, pending further review by the Council.

In accordance with the Rules of Procedure, a decision by the Council to adopt, review, amend or repeal the Standards, Interpretations or Rules is subject to a maximum of two referrals back to the Council by the House. If the House refers a Council decision back to the Council twice, then the decision of the Council following the second referral will be final and will not be subject to further review by the House.

The revised Standards and Rules are legally effective as of the end of the ABA Annual Meeting on August 12. However, cognizant that law schools will need time to do the work that some of the changed Standards will require, the Council and the Section have established a transition and implementation plan. The revised Rules do not require a delay for implementation and are effective immediately.

The 2014-2015 edition of the ABA Standards and Rules of Procedure for Approval of Law Schools will contain both the 2013-2014 Standards and the 2014-2015 revised Standards. Law school site visits in 2014-2015 will substantially and primarily rely on the 2013-2014 Standards, although schools may implement and comply with any new Standard as is beneficial. The 2014-2014 edition will be available in early September, both in hard copy and on the Section’s website.

Council Chair, Chief Judge Solomon Oliver, Jr., of the United States District Court for the Northern District of Ohio, expressed his appreciation for “the careful thought and hard work of my colleagues on the Council; our Standards Review Committee, chaired by Professor Jeff Lewis; Managing Director Barry Currier and staff; and for the helpful comments of so many during the comprehensive review of the Standards over the last six years. I am very pleased that the ABA House of Delegates has concurred in them. The revised Standards will bring significant improvements to legal education, including more skills training, focus on learning outcomes, and increased reporting of consumer information for greater transparency.”

Visit the Section’s Standards Review Committee page for more information on the new Standards and Rules.