

**American Bar Association  
Section of Legal Education and Admissions to the Bar  
Annual Report of the Managing Director  
August 2017**

Article III, Section 4 of the Section's Bylaws calls for an annual report of the Consultant (now, Managing Director) at the annual business meeting. This brief report is pursuant to this requirement.

**Accreditation**

At the conclusion of the Council meeting on Friday, August 11, the count of ABA-approved law schools offering the Juris Doctor (J.D.) degree stands at 204. Of those, three are provisionally approved. In the 2016-2017 year, the Council took the following actions with respect to the granting of provisional or full approval, sanctions or directed specific remedial action, or major changes in the status of approved law schools:

- University of Massachusetts – Dartmouth School of Law was granted full approval.
- University of North Texas Dallas College of Law was granted provisional approval.
- Indiana Tech Law School, which had been provisionally approved, closed and has been removed from the list of approved schools.
- Charlotte Law School was placed on probation and directed to take specific remedial action.
- Arizona Summit Law School was placed on probation and directed to take specific remedial action.
- Texas Southern University Thurgood Marshall School of Law was publicly censured and was directed to take specific remedial actions.

The Section website (<http://www.americanbar.org/legaled>) provides a complete list and additional information.

During the past year, dozens of provisional, follow-up, and regular site visits were conducted involving Section volunteers. Those visits and the rosters of the visiting team will be reported in the Section's Annual Report published in the fall. There were additional fact-finding, foreign program, and other special visits. The Accreditation Committee and the Council also considered a range of requests for variances and acquiescence in major changes. Requests for acquiescence in the establishment of non-J.D. and post-J.D. programs continue to increase.

**Standards for Approval of Law Schools**

The Council, Accreditation Committee, Standards Review Committee, and staff of the Managing Director's Office spent considerable time in 2016-2017 continuing to roll-out and integrate new Standards adopted during the comprehensive review process that concluded in August 2014. Work on updating and revising the Standards and Rules of Procedure is ongoing. Much effort has been expended to update and improve the questionnaires and various other documents used by site visit teams, the Accreditation Committee, schools, and the staff in the administration of the accreditation process. The Managing Director's Office issued several Guidance Memos intended to outline for schools and the broader legal education community how the Standards are or may be applied to law schools.

The Standards Review Committee page on the Section website continues to provide the most complete and current information on the Standards and the ongoing process of their review, updating, and improvement.

### **Standards Review Committee**

The Data Policy and Collection Committee was merged into the Standards Review Committee this past year. The change recognized the often-overlapping work of the committees operating separately and achieved some economies for the Section. Under the leadership of Pam Lysaght, the new, expanded committee functioned very well and provided great support to the Council as it worked on both Standards and data-related matters.

### **Employment Outcomes Review**

The project to review and verify law school employment outcomes, which has been in a development phase for several years, became operational in 2016-2017. The project is a major undertaking for both law schools and the staff. Although a lot of work had been done, including a full year's beta testing of the questionnaire and process involving several volunteer law schools, the process was not as smooth as it might have been for anyone. Changes are being implemented to improve the process for the next cycle.

### **Robert J. Kutak Award**

The Robert J. Kutak Award is given annually by the Section to recognize outstanding contributions to legal education in the United States. The 2017 recipient is Edward N. Tucker of Baltimore, Maryland. Ed is a long-time "public member" volunteer in the Section's accreditation work. He served six years on the Accreditation Committee and nine years as a member and officer of the Council. He also participated in Section conferences and site visits. His contributions to our work were many and much appreciated. He will be missed. The award was presented to Ed at a reception during this ABA Annual Meeting.

### **Thanks**

The Section and the Accreditation Process depend on volunteers. On behalf of my colleagues in the Managing Director's Office, we are grateful for the leadership provided this year by Council Chair Greg Murphy and the hard work of each Council member. We also appreciate the work done by the Accreditation Committee, chaired this year by Rebecca Hanner White; the Standards Review Committee, chaired by Pam Lysaght. We are also thankful to the several hundred others who volunteered their time to serve on site visit teams and Section committees.

### **Further Thanks and Farewells**

Although there will be other, more celebratory, opportunities to say thanks, it is appropriate in this formal report to say thanks and farewell to two colleagues who have contributed greatly to the work of the Section and the law school accreditation process over the years. Cathy Schrage is retiring after 43 years of service. Camille deJorna is leaving the Section to become part of the new leadership team at the Law School Admissions Council. Personally, I will miss them both. I appreciate their friendship and support. I know that I speak for everyone – staff, Council and committee members, site visitors, and the many members of the faculties and staffs of the ABA-approved law schools with whom they have worked, in wishing them the very best.

### **Further Information**

The annual report of the Section, which will be published in the fall, will detail additional Section activities and accomplishments related to the work of committees, training of volunteers, and collaboration with other legal education organizations.

Respectfully submitted,

Barry Currier, Managing Director