

## Summary of Actions of the Section's Council at its Meeting February 9-10, 2018

The Council of the ABA Section of Legal Education and Admissions to the Bar met in San Antonio, Texas, in open session on Friday, February 9 to consider recommendations, reports and other issues. The Council's open session agenda, including reports and memorandums, can be found [here](#).

At its meeting, the Council took these actions:

- Finalized a proposed new rule for distance education that would increase the amount of distance learning that a law school could allow as part of its J.D. program. Under this proposal, [Standard 306](#) would allow one-third of a school's required credits for graduation to be earned in distance learning courses. Schools may currently allow a student to earn 15 of those credits through distance learning courses. The ABA Standards require at least 83 credit hours for graduation although most schools require more (many schools require 90 credits). The proposal provides that a school may allow up to one-third of whatever units it requires, rather than a limit that is an absolute number of credits.

The proposed revisions raise the number of credits allowed for distance learning courses to at least 28 credit hours and in many cases 30 credit hours. In addition, the proposed Standard removes the prohibition on distance learning courses in the first-year program, providing that a school's required 1L program could include up to 10 credits of distance learning.

The proposal continues the current rule that provides that a course does not become a "distance learning course" counting against the one-third cap so long as no more than one-third of the work in the course is done at a distance.

The proposal will be put out for "Notice and Comment" and incorporated into a public hearing with other [proposed changes](#) to standards on April 12 in Washington, D.C.

- Approved, with minor modifications, keeping the current form of how schools are required to report employment outcomes for their graduates, including the manner that school-funded positions must be reported.
- Proposed changes to Rule of Procedure [53](#), one of several rules that govern the confidentiality of the accreditation process. The changes will give the Managing Director's Office more flexibility in posting official "Public Notices" of adverse and other actions against a school. These changes will be put out for notice and comment and, if the Council approves them, required the concurrence of the ABA House of Delegates to become effective.
- Received an update from Barry Currier, managing director, regarding developing changes in the structure of the Council's operations. Under the outlined scenario, the Council's Standards Review and Accreditation committees would be phased out later this year, with their work absorbed by the Council. Significant outcomes of these changes would be the streamlining of the accreditation process and cost savings realized by reducing the number of committee/council meetings needed to do the Council's work. If adopted, the periodic re-accreditation process, including site visits, would take place every 10 years rather than seven years now. These changes required amendments to the standards, rules of procedure and bylaws. Changes in bylaws would have to be approved by the ABA Board of Governors. Changes in the standards and rules of procedure must be concurred in by the ABA House of Delegates.

In closed session, the Council considered individual school matters. The outcomes of those matters that are not subject to the confidentiality provisions of Rules of Procedure 49-55 will be publicly reported after decisions are communicated by letter to the affected schools.

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