Statement from Barry Currier, Managing Director for the ABA law school accreditation process, regarding Council revision of Standard 316 of the ABA Standards and Rules of Procedure for the Approval of Law Schools:

“At its public meeting on Friday, May 17, the Council approved by voice vote changes to the law school accreditation process standard on bar passage outcomes (Standard 316). The standard becomes effective immediately. The Council, through the Managing Director’s Office, will provide guidance soon to law schools on the implementation of the revised standard.

“These revisions provide more straightforward and clear expectations for law schools, and establish measures and process that are more appropriate for today’s environment. Most students go to law school to become lawyers. Becoming a lawyer requires passing the bar exam. How well a school’s graduates perform on the bar exam is a very important accreditation tool to assess the school’s program of legal education.

“The Council has long understood that this is a complex matter and appreciates the attention this proposal received in the past by the ABA House of Delegates and other stakeholders in the legal education community. After a thorough review of their concerns and several years of study (as covered in this Standard 316 memorandum and this Standard 316 Q&A), we are confident the changes to Standard 316 are a significant improvement over the current standard and should not have the adverse impacts predicted by those who expressed concerns about the revisions. The Council will closely monitor bar outcomes under the new standard. If further change is needed or would be desirable, the Council can make those changes.

“The U.S. Department of Education recognizes the Council of the ABA Section of Legal Education and Admissions to the Bar as the national accreditor of law schools Under the rules and procedures of the Council and the ABA, the Council has the final say on accreditation matters and any changes to the standards after a maximum of two reviews by the ABA House of Delegates.”

Media seeking additional information should email Bill Choyke at bill.choyke@americanbar.org or call 202-662-1864.