American Bar Association
SOC Fall Leadership Meeting
Membership Officers Breakout - Friday, September 15, 2017

Chair Mary Craig Calkins called the meeting to order and began with group introductions.

She indicated that she hoped for an open discussion of topics, including the One ABA program, so that collected comments could be submitted to the Standing Committee on Membership.

Discussion topics for the hour were announced as: marketing; content; business development; joint meetings/partnering and; relationships.

Discussion of the One ABA program began with the following points being made:

- There is special concern for the impact to be made upon smaller sections.
- There is concern over the perspective and scope of the survey that brought the program about.
- Comment was made that millennials are not “joiners” but will still need interaction with similar communities and the ABA needs to find ways to satisfy that need.
- Concern was expressed regarding revenue sharing with sections.
- The importance of explaining the rollout to members and communicating a “new” ABA to potential members was described.
- The idea that Sections/Divisions and Forums need to do a better job of marketing to Young Lawyers was noted.

Paula Cleave (ABA Membership) reported on various statistics which brought out the following points:

- 66% of dues paying members are members of a section. 50% of the total ABA membership are.
- As of 8/31/17 the ABA had 412,505 members.
- Lawyer memberships decline in part because of fewer bar admissions.
- Peak membership percentage came in 1977 when 50% of bar admittees were ABA members. Today, the percentage is 22%.
- 59% of law school graduates have jobs requiring a JD.
- Over the past ten years, there has been a 19.5% decline in dues revenue.
- A 2008 survey showed that lawyers belong to an average of 2.8 bar associations (ABA, state, local). Currently, the number is 1.7 and 1.5 for young lawyers.
An open discussion followed with the following points being addressed:

- There is concern that One ABA will dilute the ABA’s ability to brand sections, for example, the International and Antitrust Sections.
- A suggestion was made that sections create recruiting tools explaining work of the section so that prospective members would know what to expect before they lock in for a year.
- There is anxiety over budget concerns because the One ABA program and a request was made for anticipated monies that section can expect.
- It was noted that some sections are losing greater numbers of members than others.

Chair Calkins adjourned the session.