**TYL Editorial Board Training**  
June 16–17, 2017

**TYL In Focus**  
Monthly Theme Planning Process

**Overview**  
Monthly themes (aka “TYL In Focus,” which are explorations of substantive law topics and practice areas) are a pillar of TYL online. The website blends repurposed print content with original, thematic, topical web content. This document provides a process for planning and finalizing original, thematic web content.  

*TYL In Focus* provides practice-area-specific content to new attorneys, packaged in downloads to your computer or e-reader. Each *In Focus* consists of 6 to 8 articles available exclusively online to ABA members. Though practice area specific, *In Focus* is still designed to appeal to and inform the broader base of attorneys new to practice and the ABA. To do this, editors develop content in two categories:

- New attorneys practicing in the practice area: *What are the emerging trends in the field? Are there new cases that may have impact on practice?*
- New attorneys outside the practice area: *How does this practice area intersect with other practice areas? Are there essential definitions or misconceptions that would be helpful to clarify?*

**Planning**  
Editors should plan to discuss the *In Focus* publication beginning three months in advance. If editors on the specific *In Focus* team have an interest or experience in the practice area, dive right in! Editors should also connect with the corollary ABA group, if possible. For example, to plan the Administrative Law *In Focus*, we met with the blog editors for the Administrative Law Division’s blog *Notice and Comment*. These practice area leaders offer helpful suggestions and can connect you with potential authors. Don’t forget to check out your fellow YLD Leadership Team members. YLD fellows are often looking for other ways to contribute too.

**Materials Needed**  
To create a monthly theme, various materials (see list below) may be useful for posting to the website, sending announcement through social media, and sending an email newsletter and ebook. Various people are responsible for generating drafts of these items.

- a. 5–10 original articles (for three different experience levels: beginner, intermediate, expert) *(lead editor/editorial board)*  
  b. 1–2 repurposed articles (from various ABA publications) (for three different experience levels: beginner, intermediate, expert) *(ABA staff/lead editor)*  
  c. List of Sections/Divisions/Forums/Committees in ABA that cover various topic areas with links to home pages, member benefit pages, and join pages and information about the cost to join *(ABA staff)*
d. List of upcoming meetings and CLEs (entities or ABA) related to topic area (ABA staff)
e. ABA books on topic area with excerpts/chapters for publication (ABA staff)
f. List of external resources on topic (lead editor, editorial board, ABA staff)
g. Social media outreach on subject (lead editor/editorial board)

**Working with Planning Contacts**

To prepare a monthly *In Focus*, a first step is to identify a contact on another editorial board or ABA group to help plan. The staff editors will gather the names of potential contacts and send them to the lead editor (see details on article planning contacts below). Contacts could come from a variety of places:

a. Another ABA periodical editorial board  
b. A leader from an ABA entity that addresses the topic at hand  
c. A leader or member of the YLD Committee on the topic at hand  
d. An author of an ABA book on the topic  
e. A knowledgeable source from other, trusted colleague  
f. A reputable blogger

The lead editor should then send a message (below), call the contacts, and set up a brief planning call. Once the contact has agreed to a call, a list of questions should be emailed in advance of the call so that the contact can consider them ahead of time. The call should focus on coming up with article topics for three experience levels (beginner, intermediate, expert) and potential authors. The lead editor should also ask the contact if he or she is willing to contribute an article or blog post.

Example questions:

a. What [criminal law/administrative law/litigation] issues or questions are most important for lawyers brand new to this practice area? How might these subtopics be treated as articles? (how-to, list of tips, essays, point-counterpoint, Q&A/interviews, etc.) What about for lawyers with an intermediate or advanced level of experience?  
b. How do you get started practicing in this practice area/type of practice?  
c. Is there any career advice that you would give to new lawyers who are interested in this practice area/type of practice?  
d. What aspect of [criminal law/administrative law/litigation] should all lawyers know about; what issues/questions related to this type of law  
e. What resources (ABA and in general) would you point young practitioners to? Books, meetings, CLE, LinkedIn groups, blogs, etc.  
f. Are there authors or bloggers we should approach about writing or contributing something to this month’s exploration of [topic of *In-Focus*] for young lawyers?  
g. Would you be willing to contribute an article or blog post on this important topic?
Steps to Take After the Planning Call

1. The lead editor should carefully document the call to capture all article and author ideas. These ideas should be incorporated into and issue planner and circulated to the group who was on the call.
2. As soon as possible after the call, associate editors should each contact prospective authors, solicit their participation, and follow up with them to ensure compliance with deadlines and answer questions.

Sample Timeline:

1. **Early February**: In Focus editors email to set up conference call; reach out ABA groups
2. **Mid-February**: Conference call with editors and ABA group leaders; solicit articles
3. **Mid-March**: Article submissions due; review articles
4. **Early April**: Submit finalized articles to EIC and ABA Publications Managing Editor
5. **May**: In Focus published

How to Work with Potential Authors

**Author Invitations.** Because invitations are sometimes declined, associate editors should reach out to potential authors within a couple business days of the planning call. Associate editors should outline the article proposal in an email or letter that details what the article is about, the deadline, and the revision and publication process. You can use the sample solicitation letter for this purpose. Please also re-familiarize yourself with the author guidelines prior to reaching out to a potential author.

**Style Guide.** As with TYL magazine, In Focus and other web articles do not include footnotes. However, it may be easier to reference helpful sites or other resources, so linking to ABA webpages or external websites or blogs is encouraged. Web articles should be approximately 750 words; however, if an author requires or requests additional space, be sure that delivered article and additional length is important and warrants the added length and is consistent with the TYL voice, which is witty and irreverent, but still informative.

**Revision Process.** Authors may require guidance in composing their article or defining their topic. It is the job of the associate editor to work with the author and lead editors to refine ideas and manuscripts so that they are worthy of publication. Any questions about such standards for publication should be referred to the lead editor. In working with authors, associate editors should help shape the text so that the article conforms to TYL’s standards, including article length, style, and readability. Web articles do not have to be long. Editors should note repeatedly that the TYL board reserves the right to revise, rewrite, and/or reject any manuscript that does not adhere to the publication’s standards.
Copyright Forms. Once the author has completed his or her manuscript, and it has been deemed worthy of publication, the associate editor should inform the author that the article has been finalized and ensure that the author receives a copyright form. It is the responsibility of the web associate editor to obtain a signed copyright form well in advance of the publication date. Please note that that ABA cannot publish an article for which it does not have a signed author agreement. Delay in collecting copyright forms can cause significant delays in the publication of the In Focus contents on the web. If you need a copyright form, please contact ABA Managing Editor Lindsay Cummings (lindsay.cummings@americanbar.org).

After Publication. Associate editors of TYL should send authors notification once their work is published, alerting the author to the web address for the article and the In Focus digital download page (note that these files are member protected, however) and suggesting that the author notify his/her colleagues via email and social media (twitter mentions would be great, too; reference @ABAYLD). Continuity of correspondence throughout the article development process, and even after publication, is critical in maintaining good relationship with authors and building a good reputation for TYL.

If you have additional questions or comments about TYL In Focus, please contact the TYL editor-in-chief.