

# ABA Section of Family Law Leader Responsibilities

## Chair Duties and Responsibilities

The Chair assumes office at the conclusion of the Section's Second Business Meeting at the end of the term as Chair-Elect. The Chair must be familiar with the responsibilities that are described in the Section bylaws and be prepared for many additional responsibilities as highlighted below.

NOTE: The codes used for the primary staff contacts are—

D- Director (Paula)

M- Programs and Committee Manager (Alissa)

C- Marketing and Communications Manager (Hilary)

A- Meetings and Committees Assistant (Carrie)

### OVERALL RESPONSIBILITIES

- **Chair's Articles for *Family Advocate*** [Contact – C and Deborah Eisel, Editor]:
  - Deadlines-

Fall 09:	August 14, 2009
Winter 10:	November 5, 2009
Spring 10:	February 15, 2010
Summer 10:	May 15, 2010
  - Column length is about 750 words plus a brief bio
- **Chair's Articles for *eNewsletter* (as needed)** [Contact – C]:
  - Deadlines- Middle of each month.
- **Appoint Council members as Liaisons to Section Committees** [Contact – A]:
  - Deadline- Early August
- **Create Chair's letter to be used in welcome packets for new Section members** [Contact – C]:
  - Deadline- Early August
- **Create Chair's letter to be used in cancellation packets (sent to those whose membership expires)** [Contact – C]:
  - Deadline- Mid-August
- **Attend the fall Section Officers Council (SOC) meeting** [Contact – D], which is generally held in early September in Chicago. This meeting serves to assist officers to understand their responsibilities, suggest ideas for planning their year, and provide opportunities to network with their cohorts from other ABA sections and division.

- **Finalize the Annual Action Plan that is submitted to the ABA Board of Governors Program and Planning Committee [Contact – D]**
  - Deadline- Early November
- **Special Reports/Requests to the ABA Board of Governors (when applicable) [Contact – D]:**
  - Deadlines are approximately-
    - October 1<sup>st</sup>
    - January 10<sup>th</sup>
    - May 20<sup>th</sup>
    - July 10<sup>th</sup>
- **Oversee creation of Agenda for Officers and Council Meetings [Contact – D]:**
  - Deadlines-
    - Officers’ Agenda- One to two weeks prior to meeting/call
    - Council Agenda- Approx. 4 weeks prior
- **Respond to requests for appointments to other entities [Contact – D]:**  
(As needed)
- **Respond to requests for donations from other entities [Contact – D]:**  
(As needed)
- **Respond to requests for reimbursement exceptions (with Financial Officer) [Contact – D]:** (As needed)

### **FALL & SPRING CONFERENCE RESPONSIBILITIES**

- **Site visits for each meeting venue [Contact – M]**
  - Plan site visits of hotel and local event locations (city’s CVB usually accompanies)
    - **Deadline- At least 1 year prior to meeting (\*Strongly Recommended before contract is signed\*)**
- **Host Committee:**
  - Meet with Host Committee regarding expectations (i.e. Dine-Arounds, events, etc.) [Contact – M]
  - Provide staff with names to be added to host committee list serve [Contact – C]  
*(Chairs will be needed in June [of prior year] for Redbook submission [Contact – M])*
  - Work with Host Committee and Section staff to notify the local bar (i.e. Chair of FL Section & Executive Director) in each meeting city to inform of our presence and announce our goals of conference. [Contact – C]
    - **Planning begins at least 4-6 months prior to conference**

- **Begin planning for Sponsorships/Exhibitors at Fall & Spring meetings [Contact – M]:**
  - Solicit Host Committee for ideas
  - Create list of persons/firms to approach
  - Share solicitation with Sponsorship Committee
    - **Deadline (for all of the above)- At least 4 months prior to conference**
  
- **Brochures for Fall and Spring conferences are mailed 10-12 weeks before meeting [Contact – M]:**
  - Chair’s letter
    - **Due 3 months prior to conference**
  - Finalize Sponsorships to be printed in brochure.
    - **Due 3 months prior to conference**
  
- **Plan Special Awards [Contact – M]**
  - Plan and work with staff regarding any special awards (i.e. Friend of Family) to be presented. Determine gifts, certificates and/or acknowledgements. (Also notify staff if photographer or any other special requirements are needed.)
    - **Deadline- 2 months prior to conference**
  
- **Menu Selection & Approval [Contact – M]**
  - Select menus for Chair’s suite receptions
  - Approve all other menus provided by staff
    - **Deadline- 1-2 months prior to conference**
  
- **Prepare e-mail notification of upcoming conference [Contact – C]:**
  - Chair should write a letter inviting all Family Law members to attend our upcoming Section meeting(s). Letter will be disseminated to all Family Law members via e-mail. (\*May also consider promo/invite to TeleConferences.\*)
    - **Deadline- 4-6 weeks prior to conference**
  
- **Meetings [Contact – D]:**
  - The Chair presides at the Officers’ and Council meetings and should attend the meetings of the Finance Committee, the Committee Chairs and Vice Chairs, the Long Rang Planning Committee, Scope Committee, Diversity Committee, and the Committees’ Lunches. It is also recommended that Chair visit the meetings of the Publishing Board, *Family Law Quarterly* Board, and *Family Advocate* Board.
  
- **Optional (Chair’s discretion): Post-Conference Survey [Contact – C]**
  - If the Chair chooses to provide a follow-up survey, that survey and a Chair’s “thank you” should be sent by e-mail to all meeting attendees.
    - **Deadline- 1-2 weeks following conference**

- **Optional** (Chair's discretion): **Post-Conference Thank You Letters** [Contact – A]  
In the past, the Chair has sent personal thank you letters to those most intimately involved with each meeting (i.e. hotel, host committee, speakers, etc.) Staff will provide Section letterhead for mailing purposes.
  - **Deadline- Suggested 1-2 weeks following conference**

**OTHER MEETING RESPONSIBILITIES:**

**ANNUAL MEETING**

- **Annual meeting brochure is included in the Spring issue of *Family Advocate*** [Contact – M]:
  - Chair's letter and Sponsorships to be printed in brochure
    - **Deadline- early March**
- **Awards for Annual Luncheon** [Contact – M]:
  - Select Chair's awardee and work with staff on other awards/certificates to be presented at Annual Luncheon
    - **Deadline- early May**
- **Chair's speech at Annual Luncheon** [Contact – C]:
  - Work with staff regarding Chair's remarks for luncheon presentation.
    - **Deadline- early July**

**INSTITUTE**

- **Travel to opening weekend of Trial Advocacy Institute in Denver, CO, if needed** [Contact – M]
- **Additional responsibilities to be determined**

[Please note that the dates for deadlines may be subject to change]

## **CHAIR-ELECT DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

The Chair-Elect assumes office at the conclusion of the Section's Second Business Meeting at the end of the term as Vice-Chair. The Chair-Elect must be familiar with the responsibilities that are described in the Section bylaws and be prepared for many additional responsibilities as described below. The Chair-Elect should also be familiar with the Chair's responsibilities in order to be prepared to assume that office.

NOTE: The codes used for the primary staff contacts are—

D- Director (Paula)

M- Programs and Committee Manager (Alissa)

C- Marketing and Communications Manager (Hilary)

A- Meetings and Committees Assistant (Carrie)

**ABA Infrastructure.** Understand the ABA Infrastructure so you will know when things are due and how to advance the Section's interests through ABA entities.

### **Section Appointments** [Contact – M].

- Meet with the Vice-Chair and Secretary during the Annual, Fall, and Spring Conferences to discuss appointments to Section committees and appointments of Section liaisons to other entities.
- Submit your CLE Co-Chair appointments to staff by December 1. Determine your CLE Co-Chairs in a manner that ensures continuity with the Chair preceding you and the Chair following you. It is suggested that CLE Co-Chairs consist of one man and one woman and that they serve multiple years with only one new CLE Co-Chair being introduced in any given year. Cooperate with CLE Co-Chairs in scheduling dates for the CLE Committee planning meetings, which usually occur in September (for the following Spring) and February (for the following Fall).
- Submit your other committee chair appointments to staff by March 15. Since the incoming committee chairs need to submit budget requests for the following fiscal year by April, their appointments need to be sent and their acceptances received in time to generate their budget requests before the April deadline.
- Submit your liaison and committee member appointments to staff no later than June 1.

### **Nominating Committee** [Contact – D].

- Announce the Nominating Committee members for the following fiscal year at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Business Meeting of the Annual Meeting occurring at the end of your year as Chair-Elect.
- Serve as Chair of the Nominating Committee during your year as Chair-Elect.
- Contact the committee members in August to plan dates to convene to fill any vacancies created by the prior Annual Meeting election (if applicable) and for selecting a new slate of Council and Officers soon after the November 1<sup>st</sup> nominations deadline.

- Complete the selection of candidates to fill vacancies created by the prior Annual election (if applicable) by mid-September so that there is enough time for the Council to vote and for the newly elected person to take office at the fall meeting.
- Complete the selection of a slate of candidates by approximately March 1<sup>st</sup> so that the slate can be published in the Spring issue of *Family Advocate*.

**Annual Action Plan** [Contact – D]. Work with Section staff to finalize the Section’s Annual Action Plan that is submitted to the ABA Board of Governors Program and Planning Committee  
Deadline- Early November

**Council Meetings** [Contact – D]. Attend all Council meetings convened during Spring, Fall, and Annual Meeting. Participate in Council conference calls, as scheduled at the Chair’s discretion, and vote via e-mail when such votes are needed between Council meetings. In the event of the absence of the Chair, the Chair-Elect runs the Council meeting.

**Finance Committee** [Contact – D]. The Chair-Elect serves on the Finance Committee and attends all meetings. Endeavor to master the ABA and Section financial reporting issues so that the Chair-Elect can work with the Financial Officer on both special financial projects, such as updating financial policies and procedures, as well as preparing the budget for his or her year as Chair.

**Budget Preparation** [Contact – D]. The Section budget for the following fiscal year is due in June under the bylaws. Meet with the Director and Finance Officer by early June to finalize the draft budget that will be submitted to Council at the Annual Meeting. [As stated in Appointments section above- it is important to make committee chair appointments well in advance of April so that those entities can submit budget requests for the following fiscal year.]

Deadline – Early June

**Meeting Attendance** [Contact – D]. Attendance is required at Spring, Fall and Annual Meetings. The Chair-Elect is Co-Chair of the Diversity Committee and is expected to attend the meetings of that committee as well as the meetings of the Officers, Finance Committee, Council, Long Range Planning Committee, Scope Committee, Sponsorship, Committee Chairs and Vice Chairs (at Fall and Spring Conferences) and Section Business Meetings (at Annual Meeting), and the First-Timers’ and Chair’s Court breakfasts.

**Officer Calls** [Contact – D]. Treat periodic Officer calls as events as important as Court appearances. Be sure to read all materials circulated by the Section Director and other Officers in preparation for the meeting and be sure to have reviewed Minutes. Be responsive to Director’s requests to add agenda items for Officer calls.

**Sponsorship** [Contact – M]. Work with Section Chair and the Sponsorship & Fundraising Committee to develop sponsorship opportunities and implement plans for confirming sponsorships so that all sponsors will receive full benefit of brochure advertising for meetings. Sponsors’ commitment forms must be completed and submitted to staff at least 2-3 months prior to conferences in order to include their information in the conference brochures.

**Staff Relations** [Contact – D]. Become familiar with the duties of each staff member and their expectations for what you will need to do as Chair-Elect and later as Chair.

**Chair's Gift** Work with members of Council to select and contribute to the gift to be presented to the outgoing Chair at the Annual Meeting Awards Luncheon.

Deadline- June

**Officers/Council Meeting Planning** [Contact – D]. Select the dates of the Officers' and Council meetings for your year as Chair and announce the dates by the conclusion of your year as Chair-Elect.

Deadline – August

**Family Advocate Chair's Article** [Contact – C]. Work with staff and *Family Advocate* managing editor to write the Chair's article for the fall issue of your year as Chair.

Deadline – Early August

**Fall CLE Conference Brochure** [Contact – M]. Work with staff to finalize copy of the fall conference brochure for your year as Chair.

Deadline – Early July

**Other** [Contact – D]. Keep in mind that other responsibilities may arise that are not listed here. Keep track of them and submit them to the Director to use in updating this list.

## **VICE-CHAIR RESPONSIBILITIES**

The Vice-Chair assumes office at the conclusion of the Section's Second Business Meeting at the ABA Annual Meeting in August. The Vice-Chair must be familiar with the responsibilities that are described in the Section bylaws and be prepared for additional responsibilities as described below.

NOTE: The codes used for the primary staff contacts are—

D- Director (Paula)

M- Programs and Committee Manager (Alissa)

C- Marketing and Communications Manager (Hilary)

A- Meetings and Committees Assistant (Carrie)

**ABA Infrastructure.** Understand the ABA Infrastructure so you will know when things are due and how to advance the Section's interests through ABA entities.

**Section Appointments** [Contact – M]. Meet with the Chair-Elect and Secretary during the Annual, Fall, and Spring Conferences to discuss appointments to Section committees and appointments of Section liaisons to other entities.

**Section Officers Conference (SOC)** [Contact -- D] Plan to attend the SOC Fall Meeting, usually held in Chicago in September. This meeting serves to assist officers to understand their responsibilities, suggest ideas for planning their year, and provide opportunities to network with their cohorts from other ABA sections and division.

**Council Meetings** [Contact – D]. Attend all Council meetings convened during Spring, Fall, and Annual Meeting. Participate in Council conference calls, as scheduled at the Chair's discretion, and vote via e-mail when such votes are needed between Council meetings.

**Finance Committee** [Contact – D]. The Vice Chair serves on the Finance Committee and attends all meetings. Note that the budget approved by Council in August for the following fiscal year is final; any changes over \$500 must be approved by Council vote.

**Budget Preparation** [Contact – D]. Budget requests for the following fiscal year are due in April and the draft budget is due in June under the bylaws. Ask staff to confirm the amount budgeted for the Vice Chair's account during your year as well as for the Chair-Elect's account for your year as Chair-Elect.

Budget Request Deadline – April

**Meeting Attendance** [Contact – D]. Attendance is required at Spring, Fall and Annual Meetings. The Section Vice Chair is Co-Chair of the Diversity Committee and is expected to attend the meetings of that committee as well as the meetings of the Officers, Finance Committee, Council, Long Range Planning Committee, Scope Committee, Sponsorship, Committee Chairs and Vice Chairs (at Fall and Spring Conferences) and Section Business Meetings (at Annual Meeting), and the First-Timers' and Chair's Court breakfasts.

**Officer Calls** [Contact – D]. Treat periodic Officer calls as events as important as Court appearances. Be sure to read all materials circulated by the Section Director and other Officers



in preparation for the meeting and be sure to have reviewed Minutes. Be responsive to Director's requests to add agenda items for Officer calls.

**Sponsorship** [Contact – M]. Work with Section Chair and the Sponsorship & Fundraising Committee to develop sponsorship opportunities and implement plans for confirming sponsorships so that all sponsors will receive full benefit of brochure advertising for meetings. Sponsors' commitment forms must be completed and submitted to staff at least 2-3 months prior to conferences in order to include their information in the conference brochures.

### **CLE Conference Planning** [Contact – M]

Keep in mind that, while the person who will be the Section Chair during a proposed conference is given as much choice as possible, the staff must follow ABA procedures and ensure that the meetings are planned in a manner that results in a positive budget balance. Only ABA staff may arrange contacts and contracts with hotels, vendors, or event providers.

#### Site selection process:

1. Section Chair\* proposes locations and 3 sets of dates for the fall or spring conference. NOTE: Allow a minimum of one month between the end of the Spring Conference and the beginning of the Trial Advocacy Institute
2. Section Chair\* confirms with staff whether to hold a compacted or regular CLE schedule for the conference and discusses the suggested price range for the hotel's guest rooms
3. ABA staff members check the dates against religious holidays
4. Section staff submits the preferred dates and sites (and meeting/guest room requirements) to ABA Meetings and Travel to determine hotel availability and costs
5. Section staff discusses ABA Meetings and Travel's response with the Section Chair\*; if none of the suggested options works, then the process begins again at #1.
6. ABA Meetings and Travel arranges with three hotels for (weekday) site visits by the Section Chair\* and the Section Programs and Committees Manager.
7. Section staff contacts the local convention and visitors' bureau to arrange for event venues to be visited during the site visit
8. Section Chair\* and Section staff agree upon the preferred site and Section staff works with ABA Meetings and Travel to contract the hotel, tours, events, etc.

In working with staff to select meeting sites being mindful of the following factors:

- Concentration of members in the area
- Length of commute to and from airports which affects member costs
- Geographic balance between east and west coasts
- Local sponsorship opportunities
- Attractiveness and affordability of the location to the people most likely to attend the meeting
- Meetings of other groups which we can anticipate will conflict. For example, Spring meetings could conflict with the American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers (AAML) Annual Meeting, the American College of Family Trial Lawyers' meeting and the Florida AAML Chapter meeting
- Often, the Chair selects one city and one resort location for the year
- Plan site visits of hotel and local event locations with staff at least one year prior to the meeting. (The city's CVB usually accompanies)

- The maximum amount available for reimbursement for site visits in a fiscal year is in the budget passed by Council. Ask Section staff to assist you in determining the amounts budgeted for Chair, Chair-Elect, and Vice Chair.

\*during the proposed conference

**Staff Relations** [Contact – D]. Become familiar with the duties of each staff member and their expectations for what you will need to do as Chair-Elect and later as Chair.

**Other** [Contact – D]. Keep in mind that other responsibilities may arise that are not listed here. Keep track of them and submit them to the Director to use in updating this list. Please note that the dates for deadlines may be subject to change.

## **SECRETARY RESPONSIBILITIES**

The Secretary assumes office at the conclusion of the Section's Second Business Meeting at the ABA Annual Meeting in August. The Secretary must be familiar with the responsibilities that are described in the Section bylaws (see especially Section 4.5) and be prepared for additional responsibilities.

NOTE: The codes used for the primary staff contacts are—

D- Director (Paula)

M- Programs and Committee Manager (Alissa)

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A- Meetings and Committees Assistant (Carrie)

### **Meeting Minutes** [Contact -- D]

- The Secretary takes the minutes for all meetings of the Section (Business meetings), Council, and Officers.
- If the Secretary is unable to attend any of the meetings, he/she will notify the Chair and make arrangements for another Officer to take the minutes.
- The Secretary disseminates to the Council a Summary of Action and/or draft minutes of each meeting of the Officers within 21 days of the conclusion of such meeting
- The Secretary disseminates to the Council a Summary of Action and/or draft minutes of each meeting of the Council within 30 days of the conclusion of such meeting

### **Appointments** [Contact -- M]

- Plan to meet with the Chair-Elect and Vice Chair at Spring, Fall, and Annual conferences to discuss appointments to Section committees and the appointment of Section liaisons to other entities.
- In preparations for your year as Vice Chair, submit an appointee to the Long Range Planning Committee

Appointment Deadline- June 1

**Meeting Attendance** [Contact – D]. Attendance is required at Spring, Fall and Annual Meetings. The Secretary is expected to attend the meetings of the Officers, Finance Committee, Council, Long Range Planning Committee, Scope Committee, Sponsorship Committee, Diversity Committee, Committee Chairs and Vice Chairs (at Fall and Spring Conferences) and Section Business Meetings (at Annual Meeting), and the Chair's Court breakfasts.

**Officer Calls** [Contact – D]. Treat periodic Officer calls as events as important as Court appearances. Be sure to read all materials circulated by the Section Director and other Officers in preparation for the meeting and be sure to have reviewed Minutes. Be responsive to Director's requests to add agenda items for Officer calls.

**Section Officers Conference (SOC)** [Contact - D] Attend the SOC Fall Meeting, usually held in Chicago in September. This meeting serves to assist officers to understand their

responsibilities, suggest ideas for planning their year, and provide opportunities to network with their cohorts from other ABA sections and division.

**Finance Committee** [Contact – D]. The Secretary serves on the Finance Committee and attends all meetings. Note that the budget approved by Council in August for the following fiscal year is final; any changes over \$500 must be approved by Council vote.

**Long Range Planning Committee** [Contact -- D] The Secretary serves as an ex-officio, voting member of the Long Range Planning Committee and should plan to attend the committee meetings held in conjunction with the spring and fall conferences.

**Sponsorship Committee** [Contact – M] The Secretary, as the newest line officer, is designated the Vice Chair of the Sponsorship and Fundraising Committee and should attend all of the committee meetings. Work with Section Chair and the Sponsorship & Fundraising Committee members to develop sponsorship opportunities and implement plans for confirming sponsorships so that all sponsors will receive full benefit of brochure advertising for meetings. All sponsorship forms/levels must be confirmed by staff before being shared with potential sponsors. Sponsors' commitment forms must be completed and submitted to staff at least 2-3 months prior to conferences in order to include their information in the conference brochures.

**Preparing to Become Vice Chair, Chair-Elect, and Chair** [Contact – D]  
The Secretary must submit his/her nomination for election to become Vice Chair. The Vice Chair must submit his/her nomination for election to become Chair-Elect. The person elected as Chair-Elect automatically becomes Chair at the conclusion of his/her year as Chair-Elect. Read the documents listing the responsibilities of Vice Chair, Chair-Elect, and Chair in order to be prepared to ascend to those offices.

Deadline – Nov. 1

**Budget Preparation** [Contact – D]. Ask staff to confirm the amount budgeted for the Vice Chair's account during your (future) year in that office. Submit request or any change to the Finance Officer. Note that the budget approved by Council in August for the following fiscal year is final; any changes over \$500 must be approved by Council vote.

Budget Request Deadline – April

**Council Meetings** [Contact – D]. Attend all Council meetings convened during Spring, Fall, and Annual Meeting. Participate in Council conference calls, as scheduled at the Chair's discretion, and vote via e-mail when such votes are needed between Council meetings.

**Staff Relations** [Contact – D]. Become familiar with the duties of each staff member and their expectations for what you will need to do as Secretary and later as Vice Chair, Chair-Elect, and Chair.

**Other** [Contact – D]. Keep in mind that other responsibilities may arise that are not listed here. Keep track of them and submit them to the Director to use in updating this list.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES OF MEMBERS OF COUNCIL**

1. Section and Council Meetings
  - Council Members are expected to attend the Spring and Fall Section Conferences and the Annual ABA Meetings.
  - They are expected to attend all Council meetings held in conjunction with such conferences/meetings.
  - They are expected to have read the Agenda Books and supporting material prior to the Council meeting and be prepared to discuss the issues at the meeting.
2. The in-coming Chair, with the assistance of the Officers, shall assign each Council Member to be liaison to at least one non-administrative committee. As liaison, the Council Member shall:
  - Contact the Chairs of those committees prior to the fall, spring, and annual Council meetings and offer to assist those committees as may be necessary.
  - Attend those committees' meetings.
  - Make recommendations to the Officers regarding committee leadership for future years.
  - Assist the Scope & Correlation Committee as needed to make certain committee reports are completed.
3. Each Council Member shall serve as an ambassador for the Section, seeking to retain current members and promote the Section to attract new members.
4. The Section shall have an orientation meeting for new Council Members every year, preferably at the Annual Meeting.
5. Council members shall familiarize themselves with the contents of the Section Administrative Guide (distributed by staff and available on the Website) that contains key Section information, such as Bylaws, Financial Policy, Fiscal Year Budget, and Council and Committee leadership rosters.
6. Council members should submit reimbursement forms for their attendance at fall and spring meetings in full compliance with the Section's reimbursement policy.
7. Our staff members are the backbone of our Section and should be treated with civility. It is important that Council Members not make unreasonable demands on staff.