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Thank You to Our Volunteers
Jeffrey Lewis
St. Louis, MO
2018-2019 Council Chair

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From the Chair: Thank You to Our Volunteers

Jeffrey Lewis
Dean Emeritus and Professor
Saint Louis University School of Law
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This year marks a major change in the organization of the Accreditation Project. The functions of the Accreditation Committee and the Standards Review Committee have been assumed by the Council. This reorganization will make the process of accreditation more efficient, transparent and timely.

The nature of the Council's responsibility is, in my view, most aptly stated in Standard 301(a): “A law school shall maintain a rigorous program of legal education that prepares its students, upon graduation, for admission to the bar and for effective, ethical, and responsible participation as members of the legal profession.” This is the organizing principle which the remainder of the Standards for Approval of Law Schools are designed to implement.

American legal education owes much to the selfless volunteers who give of their time and energy to fulfilling the accreditation responsibilities of the Council. They follow a long line of lawyers, judges, law deans, law professors and public members who have labored for the public good. The Council members are listed below:

2018-19 Council Members

Chair-Elect, Diane F. Bosse, Esq., Of Counsel, Hurwitz & Fine, P.C. and Chair, New York Board of Bar Examiners; Vice Chair, The Honorable Scott Bales, Chief Justice, Arizona Supreme Court; Secretary, Antonio García-Padilla, Dean Emeritus & Professor, University of Puerto Rico School of Law; Immediate Past Chair, Maureen A. O'Rourke, Dean Emerita and Professor, Boston University School of Law; David Byers, Administrative Director of the Courts, Arizona Supreme Court; Sarah Correll, Law Student Division Member, Indiana University McKinney School of Law; Roger Dennis, Dean and Professor Emeritus, Drexel University Thomas R. Kline School of Law; Robert Glidden, President Emeritus, Ohio University; Donald J. Guter, President & Dean, South Texas College of Law-Houston; James J. Hanks Jr., Esq., Partner, Venable LLP; Pamela Lysaght, Professor (Retired), University of Detroit Mercy School of Law; Leo Martinez, Professor, University of California Hastings College of Law;
the Law; Mary Campbell McQueen, President, National Center for State Courts; Gregory G. Murphy, Greg Murphy Law Firm; Charles Ray Nash, Ed.D, Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic & Student Affairs, The University of Alabama System; The Honorable Mary R. Russell, Chief Justice, Supreme Court of Missouri; Daniel R. Thies, Shareholder, Webber & Thies, P.C.; The Honorable Phyllis Thompson, Judge, D.C. Court of Appeals; Joseph K. West, Partner and Chief Diversity & Inclusion Officer, Duane Morris LLP; Rebecca Hanner White, Dean and Professor Emerita, University of Georgia School of Law, Hanner Clarke, LLC; House of Delegates Representative, Joan S. Howland, Associate Dean & Professor, University of Minnesota Law School; House of Delegates Representative, The Honorable Solomon Oliver Jr., Judge, U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Ohio; Board of Governors Liaison, Michele Wong Krause, The Wong Krause Law Firm; Young Lawyers Division Liaison, Mathew Kerbis, Associate, Condon & Cook, LLC.

The professional experience of the members of the Council and the nearly 150 members of site evaluation teams and fact finders, supported by the fine staff led by Barry Currier, will assure the continued excellence of the Accreditation Project in this new configuration.
From the Managing Director: A Legal Education Report Card

Barry A. Currier
Managing Director of Accreditation and Legal Education

If you were asked to grade legal education as an enterprise, what would be the categories or roles for which grades should be assigned? What grades would you give legal education?

The higher education e-newspaper, Inside Higher Education, recently launched a blog, Leadership in Higher Education, authored by John Kroger, former President of Reed College. Kroger’s background is in the law and his experience includes time spent as a law professor. The first post is “A Higher Education Report Card.” Americans, he observes, devote considerable time and attention to college report cards and ranking systems, and spend much less time focusing on the performance of higher education as a whole. I am not sure that I agree with that assessment, but I can certainly attest to a disproportionate amount of time being spent on rankings and their disproportionate influence in legal education.

The grading categories, as Kroger acknowledges, depend on what one believes the purposes of higher education in the U.S. are. He suggests three “core and unequivocal” roles: (1) conduct research that advances knowledge; (2) provide accessible, high quality undergraduate education to a large percentage of the population with good measured outcomes regarding learning, development, and employment outcomes; and (3) provide high quality graduate and professional degree programs that meet the specialized needs of our society. He proceeds to give U.S. higher education the grades of A-, A/F, and B, respectively.

If you had to create a report card for legal education, what roles do you think are “core and unequivocal”? Try to limit it to three or four, as Kroger did for higher education as a whole. What grade would you assign for how we are doing in each area?

Here’s a first take:

Legal education must provide accessible, high quality legal education confirmed by measurable outcomes related to learning, skill development, and employment outcomes that serves well the students, the profession, and the public. Grade: A/F

Taking cues from Kroger’s comments about undergraduate education, at its best, U.S. law schools offer an education of unsurpassed quality, and it is better than it has ever been. True,
the education can be expensive, but for many the expense is justified by the careers that the education makes possible. At its worst, legal education carries a hefty price tag that leaves graduates with high debt and limited opportunities.

Notably, in his discussion of graduate and professional education, Kroger, a former law teacher, says:

“Graduate education in America seems adequate. Yes, we have issues. Legal education has not changed much in the last one hundred years, and one might question whether that lack of evolution makes sense or not....”

That is simply wrong and a trope that needs to be put to the side. Much has changed in legal education in the last one hundred years, and even in the last 50 or 25 years. The pace of change can be slow, however, and right now is not accelerating fast enough to respond to the challenges and opportunities in both the higher education and the legal profession spaces.

The quality of programs, outcomes, and opportunities for graduates are a mixed bag across legal education as a whole, thus the A/F grade.

Legal education must conduct research that advances knowledge and protects/promotes the rule of law in the U.S. and the world. Grade: A

The research that has been and continues to be done in U.S. law schools is at or among the best in the world by almost any measure. It makes major contributions to the evolution of both public and private law, leads the growing conversation about the increased use of technology in law and the practice of law, and is increasingly interdisciplinary and global in approach. Legal education has been and continues to be blessed by the participation of some of America’s most talented and wise individuals.

Legal education must be a leader in assuring that the bar, and law-trained people in general, reflect the diversity of the society and the communities in which they work and serve. Grade: B-

It is often and correctly observed that the law is the least diverse of the professions. Further, it is often and correctly noted that for our legal system to function effectively, those who work in it, and those who have power in it, must reflect the diversity of our communities and nation.

While many law schools and individuals in those schools have done much to stand up for, nurture, and encourage the diversity that we must achieve in our institutions and in the profession, the problem remains acute.

What do you think are the core missions for American law schools? How do you think legal education is doing?
Section Spotlight

Erin Ruehrwein
Section Director

2018 Annual Meeting
The ABA’s 2018 Annual Meeting was held in August in Chicago. Section Annual Meeting events included a council meeting, business meeting, student debt program, and the Kutak Award Reception.

In collaboration with the ABA Law Student Division, the Section presented a complimentary program entitled “Road to Zero: A Strategic Approach to Student Loan Repayment.” More than 30 students attended the program that focused on student loan options, debt repayment strategies, debt resources, and refinancing. A podcast featuring the program panelists was also recorded and is available here.

The Section also presented the Honorable Solomon Oliver, Jr. with the 2018 Robert J. Kutak Award at a reception in his honor.

2019 Associate Deans Conference – Save the Date!
The Section will host its conference for Associate Deans in June of 2019. The specific dates and location will be announced soon. The Co-Chairs of the planning committee are Sondra Tennessee, Associate Dean for Student Affairs at University of Houston Law Center and Larry Cunningham, Associate Dean for Assessment and Institutional Effectiveness at St. John’s University School of Law.

New ABA Website
The ABA launched its new website on October 9. Designed to provide a better user experience, the website features a more effective search function and is mobile friendly. If you have any comments, suggestions, or questions, please feel free to reach out to Erin at Erin.Ruehrwein@americanbar.org.

2018-2019 ABA Standards and Rules of Procedure for Approval of Law Schools
The new edition of the Standards is now available. Download the full pdf or purchase a hard copy in the ABA Webstore.
**Section News and Announcements**

**Council Member Gregory G. Murphy Receives 2018 William J. Jameson Award**

Mr. Murphy is the 2018 recipient of the William J. Jameson Award, the highest honor given by the State Bar of Montana. He was honored with the award on September 20, at the State Bar of Montana’s Annual Meeting.

The award, named after U.S. Federal Judge William James Jameson, has been given annually since 1989 to a Montana attorney who, among other criteria, "shows ethical and personal conduct, commitment and activities that exemplify the essence of professionalism". Murphy is the 30th recipient of the award.

Mr. Murphy, who is currently serving a two-year term on the Section’s Council, was first elected to the Council in 2010, served as vice chair from 2014 to 2015, chair-elect from 2015 to 2016 and chair from 2016 to 2017. His service to the Section also includes a term as chair of the Accreditation Committee.

To read more about the award and Mr. Murphy’s tireless work in bar admissions and accreditation, [click here.](#)

**Section Staff Member Becky Stretch Retires After 29 Years of Service to the ABA**

Charlotte “Becky” Stretch, Accreditation Consultant to the Section, retired to her home state of Hawaii in August after 29 years of service to the ABA, 11 of which were spent in the Section as Accreditation Counsel and Assistant Consultant.

During her time with the Section, Becky contributed greatly to the Accreditation Project. She provided invaluable support and guidance on the Standards, questionnaires, site review process, and policy recommendations from the Section to the ABA Board of Governors and House of Delegates, among many other important roles.

Prior to her work with the Section, Becky served as both Special Counsel and Associate Director for the ABA’s Center for Professional Responsibility. She provided legal expertise and policy guidance to ABA governance and ABA entities in developing, interpreting, and implementing policies on lawyer and judicial regulation and consulted with state supreme courts, bar associations and state regulatory agencies regarding the interpretation and implementation of the ABA’s Model Rules of Professional Conduct, the Model Rules for Lawyer Disciplinary Enforcement, the Model Rules for Judicial Disciplinary Enforcement, and the Model Code of Judicial Conduct.
Barry Currier, Managing Director of the Section, remarked, “Becky was a hard-working, creative, and persistent colleague and collaborator. She deserves a good deal of credit for the work that the Section accomplished in recent years to update, streamline, and improve the Standards, Rules of Procedure, and the accreditation process.”

The Section wishes Becky a fond Aloha! She will surely be missed!
2018 ABA Annual Meeting Recap

The 2018 ABA Annual Meeting was held in Chicago in August. The Section held business meetings and gathered at social events including the Chairperson’s Dinner and Kutak Award Reception. The Section also presented a complimentary program on student debt.

The Chairperson’s Dinner was held at the Gleacher Center. Outgoing Council members (left to right) Samuel Chang, Cynthia Nance, The Honorable Jequita Napoli, Maureen O’Rourke (2017-18 Chair), James Klein, and Gregory Murphy (Immediate Past Chair) were recognized for their service to the Section. Outgoing Council member Raymond Pierce was also recognized for his service, but unable to attend the event.

Managing Director Barry Currier presented Chair Maureen O’Rourke with a membership to the New York Yankee’s Hall of Fame as a small token of appreciation for her contributions as 2017-18 Chair.
The Honorable Solomon Oliver, Jr. received the 2018 Kutak Award at a reception held in his honor (left to right: Joan Howland, The Honorable Solomon Oliver, Jr., Maureen O’Rourke).

Past Kutak Award recipients joined the celebration (left to right: James White, The Honorable Solomon Oliver, Jr., Peter Winograd).
The Section presented a complimentary program in collaboration with the Law Student Division on law student debt. Panelists included (left to right) Moderator David Scriven-Young, Zach Weber, Lyssa Thaden and Bruce Brotine. A podcast featuring the program panelists is available on the website.
Third Party Comments Invited for Law Schools Undergoing Accreditation Site Visits in Spring 2019

The law schools listed below are scheduled for site evaluation visits in Spring 2019. Any additional visits scheduled after the date of this memo will be posted on the Section’s website.

Consistent with Internal Operating Practice 4(a), written comments related to current compliance with the Standards for the Approval of Law Schools may be submitted to the ABA Section of Legal Education and Admissions to the Bar. Comments on law schools with Spring 2019 visits should be sent by January 15, 2019. Please click on this link to submit third party comments.

Law schools undergoing accreditation site visits in Spring 2019 are:

Belmont University (Comprehensive Full Approval Year 3 Visit)
Brooklyn Law School (Regular Comprehensive)
Florida A & M University (Regular Comprehensive)
Florida Coastal School of Law (Regular Comprehensive)
La Verne, University of (Comprehensive Full Approval Year 3 Visit)
Mississippi, University of (Regular Comprehensive)
North Texas-Dallas, University of (Provisional Year 2 Visit)
Quinnipiac University (Regular Comprehensive)
Saint Louis University (Regular Comprehensive)
St. Thomas University (FL) (Regular Comprehensive)
Temple University (Regular Comprehensive)
Western State College of Law (Regular Comprehensive)

Note: Your comments must be signed. Only comments directly related to the ABA Standards and Rules of Procedure for Approval of Law Schools will be considered.