



# SYLLABUS

American Bar Association Section of  
Legal Education and Admissions to the Bar

**Summer 2024**  
**VOLUME 55 NUMBER 4**

## **FEATURED ARTICLES**

### **From the Chair**

David A. Brennen

### **From the Managing Director**

Jennifer Rosato Perea

### **From the Section Director: Section Spotlight**

Erin Winters

## **NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**Section Announcements: New Council Members, 2024-2025 Standards and Rules, Law School Development Conference, and Important Links**

**ABA Announcements: Call for Volunteer Poll Workers and Annual Meeting Recap**



---

Published in *Syllabus*, Volume 55, Number 4, Summer 2024. © 2024 by the American Bar Association. Reproduced with permission. All rights reserved. This information or any portion thereof may not be copied or disseminated in any form or by any means or stored in an electronic database or retrieval system without the express written consent of the American Bar Association.

## From the Chair



**David A. Brennen**  
**Professor and Former Dean**  
**University of Kentucky College of Law**  
**2024-2025 Council Chair**

This is an exciting time to assume the role of Chair of the Council for the Section of Legal Education and Admissions to the Bar. First, this past Summer the Section welcomed a new Managing Director – Dean Jennifer Rosato Perea. Director Rosato Perea is the first woman and the first Latina to lead the Section. Having served as Dean at three different United States based law schools, including at one law school that was then newly accredited by the Council, Director Rosato Perea has the experience and background that will serve her well in this new role. We on the Council are thrilled to have her on board.

A second reason for excitement within the Council is the work we are doing in terms of thinking about the future of legal education and what role the Council, as an accrediting body, can and should play in that future. As an example, over the past decade, a worldwide pandemic opened our eyes to the many possibilities for legal education – especially online delivery. Thus, the Council is considering whether and how to adjust its accreditation standards in order to allow further innovation and development in the area of online delivery of legal education. Another occurrence from the past decade is the Supreme Court’s decision in the *SFFA v. Harvard/UNC* opinion on the extent to which race may be considered in college, and hence law school, admissions. As a result, the Council is exploring how its standards should be adjusted in response to that opinion. Finally, given the many complexities in modern society, it is imperative that the Council continuously do a cost benefit analysis of its accreditation role. That is, we must always weigh the benefit gained from imposing yet one more rule, or retaining existing ones, against the impact of the rule on the cost to operate a law school. As an entity that cares deeply about legal education and its role in improving justice, it is important that the Council addresses these issues thoughtfully and deliberately.

Overall, my hope as Council Chair is that we remain focused on what's important about legal education and consider ways in which we can facilitate those important aspects. Our accredited law school members are diverse in many ways. Some have religious missions. Some are state affiliated, while others are private. Some are university based, while others are stand-alone. As a result, our standards should be structured in a way that permits these diverse institutions to thrive in terms of innovative educational delivery while simultaneously protecting the interests of students and the public in terms of cost and quality. The members of the Council - who include members of the public and young people, along with judges, lawyers and academics – are committed to providing a fair, effective and efficient accreditation system for American law schools that promotes quality legal education. I invite each of you who cares about legal education to join us on the Council as we explore how best to move forward in this important mission. One way to assist is by participating in the [Notice and Comment](#) process as new standards and interpretations are proposed. If you are a legal professional or legal academic, another way to assist is to volunteer to serve on a law school site visit team. As long as we work together, we will continue to have a legal education system that is the envy of many worldwide.

Return to cover.

## Update From the Managing Director



**Jennifer Rosato Perea**  
**Managing Director of Accreditation and Legal Education**

Dear Section Members:

Throughout my career in legal education (over 30 years!) I have pursued work with purpose and passion. Those passions include improving law schools, legal education, and the legal profession. I have spent much of my career furthering these passions at individual law schools as a professor, dean of students, and a dean at three different law schools.

My new role as Managing Director of the Section furthers all of those passions on a broader scale. In legal education and the legal profession, we face complex issues – old, new and evolving – that will require us to work together collaboratively and creatively. These issues include academic freedom; diversity, equity and inclusion; AI; online education; and preparation for admission to the bar and legal practice. I look forward to working with all of the law school stakeholders, affiliated organizations, the courts, and bar associations on all of these issues (and more) in the coming years.

As I begin my work at the Section, I am guided by its Mission:

“To be a creative national force in providing leadership and services to those responsible for and those who benefit from a sound program of legal education and bar admissions; and provide a fair, effective, and efficient accrediting system for American law schools that promotes quality legal education.”

Consistent with this mission, the Section serves a number of important roles as a leader in legal education, including as an:

**Accreditor**  
**Educator**  
**Collaborator**

As an **accreditor**, we are addressing some of the most important issues facing legal education and the legal profession today by imposing minimum requirements on law schools through the Standards. For example, **Standard 206** (previously titled “Diversity and Inclusion”) has gone out for [Notice and Comment](#): the revisions comply with existing law while ensuring access to legal education and the legal profession as well as enhancing a supportive learning environment for students. **Standard 405** (previously titled “Professional Environment”) also has gone out for Notice and Comment: these revisions provide for security of position for faculty members to ensure academic freedom and attract and retain a competent faculty. Revisions to Standards related to **Learning Outcomes** will come before the ABA House of Delegates in February 2025: those revisions, recently approved by the Council, will enhance programmatic learning outcomes, require regular reviews of those outcomes, and impose course-level learning outcomes related to knowledge, skills, or competencies that students need to demonstrate. The new standard on Academic Freedom and Freedom of Expression, **Standard 208**, requires law schools to have written policies addressing these issues in place by the end of academic year 2024-2025.

And this coming year, the Standards Committee is considering whether revisions to Standards may be needed to make graduates more prepared to practice, or revisions to Standards should be revised to permit a fully online law school seek ABA-approval. Affiliate organizations have and will share their views on fully online law schools during the August and November Council 2024 meetings.

As an essential part of the accreditation project, we collect data for a variety of purposes, especially to determine law schools’ adherence to the Standards and to provide consumer information. To serve these purposes, we administer the Annual Questionnaire (AQ), the Bar Admissions Questionnaire (BAQ), the Employment Questionnaire (EQ), and the Site Evaluation Questionnaire (SEQ) for schools undergoing site visits. The Council’s Data Policy Committee approves these questionnaires annually and sets the agenda for the year.

Highlights for this upcoming year include an assessment of the AQ to align it as closely as possible to the Standards and need for consumer information. This year the AQ contains a question to help ascertain the first-generation status of law students. We are also holding a roundtable in early October to discuss whether the 509s should include publication of the median LSAT and/or median UGPA. We have advisory groups (with law school representatives) for the AQ and EQ who provide valuable thought leadership. For the second year, we are having the law schools distribute a survey to all 1L students that will provide additional information about race/ethnicity, LGBTQ+ status, and disability. More generally, we are considering ways to improve our data collection and analysis as well as to reduce redundancies in the data collected on law students and graduates.

As an **educator**, our Section’s committees provide resources to our members. For example, our [Adjunct Faculty Committee](#) put out a survey this year on adjunct faculty practices, which was shared with the law schools; and the [Outcomes and Assessments Committee](#) will provide helpful information to Section members and law schools after the Learning Outcomes revisions are final (they will be implemented no earlier than the 2026-2027 academic year). Workshops are also

another way that we provide resources to law schools; New Deans, Deans, and Development workshops this year have and will provide a wealth of information to law school leaders, as well as an opportunity to share ideas and build community. The Council's AI Working Group will be considering how best to serve as a convenor and leader on AI in law schools and the legal profession, complementing other efforts such as the ABA Task Force on Law and Artificial Intelligence.

As a **collaborator**, the Section works with affiliated organizations, law schools, judges, and bar associations to improve the quality of legal education and transparency – each of us has a special role to play in ensuring that lawyers are effective, ethical, and responsible. This year I am reaching out to many of these constituencies as part of my “listen and learn” tour, including affiliated organizations, bar associations, and other stakeholders. And we are continuing to participate in the proceedings of the Committee on Legal Education and Admission Reform (CLEAR) as it examines the critical issues of access to justice, bar admissions, and preparation for practice.

Overall, I hope to continue to make the work of the Section and Council more efficient, more transparent, and more of a resource to law schools and other constituencies as a leader in legal education. The challenges in legal education require us all to do our part consistent with our mission and values, and to work together in a spirit of collaboration and good faith. Please reach out with any questions or concerns, or just to introduce yourself! I look forward to doing the Section's work with purpose, passion, and joy.

Return to cover.

## From the Section Director: Section Spotlight



**Erin Winters**  
**Section Director**

As the summer season comes to a close, I'd like to highlight the various programs and events the Section hosted over the last several months. Included in this list of well-attended and valuable events are workshops for new deans and deans, training for the Annual Questionnaire, a webinar on student debt, and the Site Visit Workshop.

The New Deans' Workshop was held July 16-18 at Seattle University School of Law. With over 30 new deans in attendance, there was ample opportunity for networking and learning. Workshop sessions covered important topics including diversity, equity, and inclusion; managing complex situations; budgeting and fundraising; and deaning during a time of polarization, among others.

The Deans' Workshop, which followed the New Deans' Workshop, was held July 18-19 in Seattle and had over 100 deans in attendance. It began with a joint lunch for all new deans and deans that included a presentation on alternative pathways to attorney licensure. Session topics included leadership skills, speech and protest, the ABA standards process, online and hybrid education, AI, continuing challenges posed by *SFFA v. Harvard/UNC*, and many other relevant topics. The deans also had the opportunity to hear from the leaders of AALS, AccessLex, LSAC, and NALP, as well as new Managing Director Jennifer Rosato Perea.

A huge thank you goes out to the planning committee members for their hard work on these workshops, and Seattle University School of Law and Dean Anthony Varona for so generously opening up the law school to the deans.

The Section held its Annual Questionnaire Training virtually on July 12<sup>th</sup> with over 250 attendees and its Site Visit Workshop, held in Chicago, took place August 23-24. Materials from the Site Visit Workshop can be found [here](#).

The Section hosted its annual [student debt](#) program during the ABA's Annual Meeting on August 1<sup>st</sup> in Chicago. 2023-24 law student Council member Jehan Senai Worthy moderated the program and panelists included representatives from the ABA Young Lawyers Division (YLD), AccessLex, and University of Chicago Law School as they discussed the YLD Debt Survey and Report, financing law school and loans, repayment, the payment pause, PSLF, loan consolidation, and refinancing, among other helpful topics.

The Section's Annual Business Meeting was held on Friday, August 2<sup>nd</sup> during which the Section elected the [slate of nominees](#) for the 2024-2025 Council.

To view a complete list of upcoming programs and meetings, visit the Section's [Events Page](#).

Return to cover.



## Section Announcements: New Council Members, 2024-2025 Standards and Rules, Law School Development Conference, and Important Links

### Welcome to the 2024-2025 Section Council

During the Section's Annual Business Meeting in Chicago on August 2<sup>nd</sup>, the Section elected the [slate of nominees](#) for the 2024-2025 Council, listed below. To view the complete 2024-2025 Council, [click here](#).

#### **Chair (automatic under Section Bylaws)**

##### **David A. Brennen**

Professor and Former Dean  
University of Kentucky College of Law

#### **Chair-Elect**

##### **Election to a One-Year Term**

##### **Daniel Thies**

Shareholder  
Webber & Thies PC

#### **Vice Chair**

##### **Election to a One-Year Term**

##### **Melissa Hart**

Justice  
Colorado Supreme Court

#### **Member-at-Large**

##### **Election to a Three-Year Term**

##### **Leah Chan Grinvald**

Dean and Professor  
UNLV William S. Boyd School of Law

#### **Re-election to a Three-Year Term**

##### **Alicia Alvarez**

Professor  
University of Illinois Chicago School of Law

##### **Steven C. Bahls**

President Emeritus  
Augustana College

##### **Carla D. Pratt**

Ada Lois Sipuel Fisher Chair in Civil Rights,  
Race and Justice in Law  
University of Oklahoma College of Law

##### **Barbara A. Sestak**

Professor of Architecture  
Portland State University  
(Public Member)

##### **Adrien K. Wing**

Associate Dean for International and  
Comparative Law Programs and Professor  
University of Iowa College of Law

#### **Law Student Division Member**

##### **Election to a One-Year Term**

##### **Christiana Burnett**

University of Chicago Law School  
JD Expected May 2025

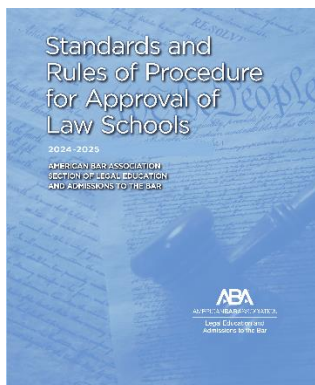
#### **Section Representative to the ABA House of Delegates**

##### **Election to a Three-Year Term**

##### **Joseph K. West**

Partner and Chief Diversity, Equity &  
Inclusion Officer  
Duane Morris LLP

## **2024-2025 Standards and Rules of Procedure for Approval of Law Schools**



The 2024-2025 edition of the ABA Standards and Rules of Procedure for Approval of Law Schools is now available in pdf format on the [Section's website](#).

Hard copies of the publication are also available for purchase in the [ABA Webstore](#).

### **Register Today – Law School Development Conference**

The Section is excited to host the 2024 Law School Development Conference, October 24-25 at Northwestern Pritzker School of Law in Chicago.

Designed for new and seasoned law school deans and development/fundraising staff, this conference brings together professionals from across the country to network, share ideas, and discuss relevant and timely issues. Attendees will have the opportunity to attend sessions on topics including building a successful fundraising team/model, what makes law school fundraising unique, the importance of metrics, social media campaigns, DEI funds and scholarships, AI, collaboration, and more. There will also be a session for new deans and development staff, and we will soon announce the Keynote speaker.

[Learn More and Register Today](#)

### **Links of Interest**

[Summary of August 2024 Council Meeting Actions](#)

[Matters for Notice and Comment Related to the Arbitration Policy Required by USDE and Revisions to Definitions, Standards, and Rules to Align with USDE Changes](#)

[Matters for Notice and Comment Related to Standard 206](#)

[Matters for Notice and Comment Related to Definition \(9\) and Standard 405](#)

Return to cover.

## **ABA Announcements: Call for Volunteer Poll Workers and Annual Meeting Recap**

### **ABA Call for Volunteer Poll Workers**

The ABA encourages its members, lawyers, and students to assist as poll workers for the upcoming election as part of its [Poll Worker, Esq.](#) initiative. To learn more about the initiative, how to volunteer, and how to receive CLE credit, [click here](#).

### **Annual Meeting Recap**

The 2024 ABA Annual Meeting was held last month in Chicago. To review the House of Delegates' actions on policy resolutions, [click here](#).

Return to cover.

---

Published in *Syllabus*, Volume 55, Number 4, Summer 2024. © 2024 by the American Bar Association. Reproduced with permission. All rights reserved. This information or any portion thereof may not be copied or disseminated in any form or by any means or stored in an electronic database or retrieval system without the express written consent of the American Bar Association.