

Florida Bar Standing Committee on Professionalism 2019-2020 Annual Report

Through its working groups, the Florida Bar Standing Committee on Professionalism (“SCOP”) helps The Florida Bar and the Florida Bar’s Henry Latimer Center for Professionalism (the “Center”) implement lawyer professionalism events and activities. This year’s emphasis has been on record keeping initiatives for the Local Professionalism Panels, supporting lawyer health and wellness, addressing gender bias, promoting mentoring, and recognizing outstanding professionalism through SCOP’s professionalism awards.

Local Professionalism Panels: When the Supreme Court Commission on Professionalism and Civility dissolved in 2019, SCOP was entrusted with the duty to keep track of the activities and facilitate the work of the Circuit Local Professionalism Panels (LPPs). The Panels were created by the Florida Supreme Court as a means to address unprofessional lawyer behavior that does not rise to an ethical breach, and after the Commission disbanded, SCOP was formally charged with taking over the Commission’s programs. In late 2019, the Education and Resource Working Group and the Center gathered contact information for the LPPs in each of the twenty judicial districts. The Center has now sent a survey to the chairs of the LPPs to gather information that can help the Center and SCOP better understand the processes and activities of the panels, and the SCOP will be looking to that data as a way to assess what the LPPs need in their work. The Center is also collecting court opinions that refer to the LPPs and will be posting those on the Center’s website as a resource. As an additional step, SCOP is exploring hosting a summit with LPP Committee Chairs at the Annual Convention in June.

The Professionalism Handbook: Every other year, the Center publishes a handbook for law students that includes select Florida ethics and professionalism materials and is designed to help students learn critical ethics and professionalism information. This year, the SCOP Chair authored a new component of the Handbook, *Introduction to Professionalism in Florida, An Overview*, which is meant to help students understand the various sources of the professionalism expectations in Florida.

Awards Working Group: Led by Elizabeth Hunter, Chair, and the Honorable Jim McCune, Co-Chair, this group solicited nominees for and will recommend this year’s professionalism award recipients, including the recipients of the William M. Hoeveler Judicial Award, the Law Faculty/Administrator Award, and the Group Professionalism Award. Part of the work of the Group this year was to develop new marketing for the awards and to reformulate the criteria for the Group Professionalism Award. Award winners will be announced at the 2020 Annual Convention.

Education and Resource Working Group: This group’s charge includes locating potential professionalism articles and videos to enhance the Center’s Library Guide, which is located on the website. Led by Chair Howard Marsee, members contributed articles on professionalism for publication in *The Professional*. The group also led the effort to collect updated information on the LPPs.

Gender Bias Working Group: The Gender Bias working group is led by Chair Magdalena Ozarowski and Matthew Feeley, Co-Chair. The group's charge for the year is to assist with development of materials and programming related to gender-bias. The group is currently planning a CLE on gender bias and professional dress.

Health and Wellness Working Group: This group is led by Sarah Zabel, Chair, and Joshua Wright, Co-Chair. This group is charged with developing health and wellness related materials and programming, and this year it assisted with the Health and Wellness CLE that was sponsored by the Center at Ava Maria Law School in September 2019.

Mentoring Initiatives Working Group: This group is led the Honorable Suzanne Van Wyk, Chair, and James Stephan, Co-Chair. This year, the working group is planning a CLE presentation on mentoring which highlights the challenges of mentoring the millennial lawyer and success of structured and unstructured programs. In addition, members are surveying local bar associations and sections to update the Center website information on mentoring programs around the state. Finally, the group is considering a number of ideas for future programming to raise awareness of/interest in mentoring such as creating a mentoring program award and finding ways to connect newly admitted attorneys to members of their local bars and sections.

It has been an honor to lead SCOP this year. My thanks to Vice Chair Ita Neymotin, Board of Governors Liaison Steven Davis, Center Director Rebecca Bandy, Center staff, and all the Committee members.

Respectfully submitted,

Kirsten K. Davis, Chair