

Professional Ethics – Standing Committee

Jurisdiction

Offer analysis and guidance concerning the Michigan Rules of Professional Conduct, and, to the extent that they relate to attorney conduct in Michigan, provisions of the ABA Model Rules of Professional Conduct, the ABA Model Code of Judicial Conduct, and other applicable professional conduct standards, as well as emerging issues of professional conduct affecting lawyers:

- Drafting informal opinions on professional ethics published on the State Bar of Michigan website
- Drafting proposed formal opinions for consideration by the Board of Commissioners
- Making recommendations concerning amendments to the Michigan Rules of Professional Conduct, and other standards of professional conduct that relate to lawyer conduct, on the committee's own initiative or upon request by the Board of Commissioners or Representative Assembly
- Proposing and advising on revisions to court rules or legislation affecting professional ethics
- Determining how the committee's work might interact with and support work of the Judicial Ethics, Lawyers and Judges Assistance, Character and Fitness, and Client Protection Fund committees, including through a meeting of the chairs at least annually to discuss trends, data, insights, and **metrics**
- Conferring with the Attorney Grievance Commission and the Attorney Discipline Board to discuss trends, data, insights
- Reviewing and evaluating **metrics** measuring the effectiveness of efforts to reduce behavior subject to professional discipline and promote professionalism and civility

Committee Chair: Stephanie LaRose

Staff Liaisons: Danon Goodrum-Garland, Nkrumah Johnson-Wynn, Alecia Ruswinckel, and Karen Spohn

Meetings: In-person: 4; Electronic or phone: 1

Committee Activities

1. Drafting and publishing ethics opinions, articles, FAQs, and other ethical resources
Goal 3: Strategy 2: Educating members on ethical rules and regulations
2. Recommending amendments to the Michigan Rules of Professional Conduct
Goal 3: Strategy 1: Working with our partners to effectively regulate the legal profession in Michigan
3. Participating in or supporting special committees, special projects, and task forces, e.g., Regulatory Objectives workgroup, Professionalism Summit, Ad Hoc Workgroup on Professionalism, Regulatory Task Force

Goal 3: Strategy 1: Working with our partners to effectively regulate the legal profession in Michigan

4. Supporting State Bar ethics seminars by serving as expert presenters
Goal 3: Strategy 2: Educating members on ethical rules and regulations

5. Representing the interests of the Committee and the State Bar of Michigan by presenting during BOC meetings and the Michigan Supreme Court administrative hearings
Goal 3: Strategy 1: Working with our partners to effectively regulate the legal profession in Michigan

Future Committee Activities

The Committee just completed a major FAQs project on various social media platforms that are now more commonly being used by lawyers for communication about their law practice and/or with prospective and current clients. The Committee continues to review the use of technology by lawyers in their law practices and the ethical duties associated with such use and proposed amendments to the MRPC to advance the issue of tech competence. The Committee is now focused on a project involving cybersecurity. The Committee also plans to engage in a wholesale review of the MRPC in conjunction with the ABA Model Rules of Professional Conduct to determine if it should make recommendations for amendments.

Special Committee Characteristics

Pursuant to operating rules adopted by the Board of Commissioners, informal ethics opinions of this committee are made public on the committee's own initiative, without approval of the Board of Commissioners. This committee may have more than 15 members.