

INTRODUCTION

At the State Bar of Michigan, we know how important voluntary membership in a section is to members of a mandatory bar, and we take those memberships seriously. We also know that our relevance as a mandatory bar is increased when we work to help sections succeed. It is to that end that the State Bar of Michigan will go the extra mile to ensure that the lines of communication between the Bar, you and your section members are a top priority.

Congratulations on your new position as Chair of your section. To a very large extent, the accomplishments of the State Bar depend on the accomplishments of the sections. Your members volunteer to help fulfill the goals set for the State Bar by the Michigan Supreme Court. These goals include:

- To aid in promoting improvements in the administration of justice and advancement in jurisprudence.
- To improve relations between the legal profession and the public.
- To promote the interests of the legal profession in the state.

Structural Overview and Governance of the State Bar of Michigan:

The State Bar of Michigan (SBM) is created by statute (Chapter 9, Revised Judicature Act of 1961) and by the Michigan Supreme Court Rules concerning the State Bar. The Representative Assembly (RA), created by Rule 6, is the final policy-making body of the SBM. The Board of Commissioners (BOC), created by Rule 5, is in charge of the governance of the State Bar of Michigan and makes policy decisions in between meetings of the Assembly. The BOC also has the responsibility of adopting the annual budget for the operation of the SBM. The officers of the SBM are elected annually by the BOC from among its membership. The Executive Director, appointed by the BOC, carries out the policies and implements the programs of the SBM as determined by the RA and the BOC. The Executive Director also directs the work of the SBM staff to meet the goals of the RA and BOC.

Sections

Sections of the SBM are established by action of the BOC upon written petition of not fewer than 50 active members of the Bar demonstrating compliance with bylaw Article VII requirements. Section membership is by voluntary enrollment by active members of the SBM, except for the Young Lawyers Section, membership in which is automatic up to the age of 36 or 5 years in active practice, whichever comes later, and the Judicial Conference, which includes all judges in the state.

Sections are governed by officers and councils selected by their members as provided by section bylaws. The level of section dues, including affiliate and law student memberships, is set by the section and approved by the BOC. The Young Lawyers Section and Judicial Conference operate within budgets appointed by the BOC out of the general SBM funds.

Your work this year will help improve the practice of law through seminars, policy advocacy, newsletters, forums and other methods your section uses to increase the legal skills of your members. You will lead appropriate networking for business development and social pleasure, and will build strategic partnerships with other associations and groups to improve the practice of law and otherwise achieve the goals that all members of the State Bar of Michigan share. We want you to know that we are committed to forging the strongest possible partnership with you to achieve our common objectives, and that the State Bar staff is here to help you succeed. We look forward to working with you throughout the year.