

Character and Fitness Committee

Fiscal Year 2021

Jurisdiction: Support the work of the State Bar of Michigan conducted under the direction and authority of the Board of Law Examiners and Michigan Supreme Court by:

- Investigating the character and fitness of candidates for admission to the Bar pursuant to Rule 15, Section 1, of the Supreme Court Rules Concerning the State Bar of Michigan. This work product is provided to the Board of Law Examiners for its consideration. The work product is not provided to, or subject to approval by, the Board of Commissioners or Representative Assembly
- Making recommendations on changes to rules concerning admissions related to character and fitness, and SBM interaction with Michigan law schools concerning character and fitness
- Meeting on a biennial basis with the Board of Law Examiners
- Determining how the committee’s work might interact with and support the work of the Professional Ethics, Judicial Ethics, Lawyers and Judges Assistance, and Client Protection Fund committees, including through conferring and coordinating regularly with them on trends, data, insights, and metrics
- Suggesting metrics for measuring the effectiveness of the work carried out by the Character and Fitness Committee

Note: This committee may have more than 15 members. The work of this committee is conducted pursuant to the authority, and under the oversight of, the Board of Law Examiners. The committee’s and district committees’ work product is not provided to, or subject to review by, the Board of Commissioners or any other entity of the State Bar of Michigan.

Time Frame	Strategic Plan Goal/Strategy	Description of Activity
FY 2020-2021		
FY 2021-2022 Priorities	1.3, 2.1	Implementation of the Uniform Bar Examination, currently proposed to begin with the 7/22 exam, may result in an increase in applications processed when UBE transfer applications are accepted.
	1.3, 2.1	Increase committee presence at law schools during orientation and during professional responsibility classes.
Proposed Future Priorities		

Recommended Committee Changes: None.

Additional Comments: The work of the standing committee, and the district committees under its supervision, is mandated by the Supreme Court pursuant to Rule 15, Section 1, Supreme Court Rules Concerning the State Bar of Michigan. The committee is charged with investigating and making recommendations with respect to the character and fitness of every applicant for admission to the bar, by bar examination and, upon request of the BLE, the character and fitness of any other applicant for admission. The time commitment required to conduct formal hearings and monitor the applicant processing system is enormous. The committee would be unable to function without the dedication, professionalism, and hard work of its members. It is a tribute to the legal profession that among its members are so many people who give substantially of their time to ensure that persons admitted as lawyers in Michigan are worthy of public trust. The standing committee is unique in that all members are appointed yearly, with no term limits. At the conclusion of FY 2021, the committee lost 127 collective years of experience, and, with an abundance of gratitude, thanks Robert B. Ebersole, who served on the district and then standing committee from 1984–2021 and served as the committee’s chair from 2005–2021; Boyd E. Chapin, Jr., who served on the district and then standing committee from 1985–2021; David G. Chardavoyne, who served on the district and then standing committee from 1992–2021; and Linda M. Galbraith, who served on the district and then standing committee from 1996–2021.