

FINAL REPORT OF THE SCHOLARS & FELLOWS RETENTION TASK FORCE

For the Business Law Section Executive Council Meeting on June 26, 2025

The Scholars & Fellows Retention Task Force met June 25, 2025, for what we believe to be its last meeting, subject to concurrence by EC.

I. Our assignment

Let us remind you of our task: After three years (beginning in 2020) of studying challenges to the retention of Scholars and Fellows as returning section members, the task force was assigned in January 2023 by then-BLS Chair Doug Bates to create a “playbook” of best practices for retaining Scholars and Fellows. Thereupon, we developed a project timeline and projected that we would work ourselves out of job by the annual meeting or retreat in 2024, meaning within two years. Although we underestimated the time it would take busy lawyers and judges to take a deep dive into organizational science and dynamics, we have completed the task Doug gave us. We have produced a Scholars and Fellows Retention Best Practices Handbook.

II. Our process

The process we undertook to build the document was carefully constructed: the steps were sequenced, involved studies, drafting, circulation, and were open to input by stakeholders, such as the chairs of Membership, IMF, and substantive committees as well as some alums of the Scholars and Fellows program.

We thank Chair Zach Hyman, Vice Chair Peter Maskow – who served as the anchor on our relay team to bring it home, Judicial Chair Judge McEwen, past task force chair Stephen Sandiford, and the very many task force members whose fingerprints are somewhere in the document. Lest we offend someone by omission, we will not attempt to name the many who contributed in one way or another, such as by, without limitation:

- creating and critiquing initial survey tools,
- analyzing and summarizing survey results,
- researching business literature for do’s and don’ts,
- creating a style guide to make the creation of one document from many scribes easier to edit,
- researching and fact-checking current practices and forms
- drafting segments of the handbook, and
- proofing and editing the document and curating its many exhibits.

We also thank those who led and participated in the task force in the early years of its tenure for the groundwork they provided.

III. Our deliverables

The task force has approved a compilation of best practices recommendations and accompanying suggested templates for communications and assessment tools. We are prepared to turn over the handbook to section leadership, including the chair,

substantive committee chairs, and IMF and Membership chairs. The document is, as its title suggests, recommendations for best practices aimed at preventing attrition of Scholars and Fellows. These are not mandates, just recommendations. Choose to use them or not; it's a "take it or leave it" set of suggestions.

If leadership in the upcoming or any future year would like a Zoom orientation on to how to use the handbook as a tool for administering the section in a manner designed to maximize the return of Scholars and Fellows, we invite you to set up a meeting with Judge McEwen at a convenient time.

IV. Request for dissolution

Now that we have completed our task, we thank Doug for the assignment and the EC for its patience as we did our work. We ask that the task force be dissolved.