

PROGRAMS DIRECTORSHIP
ANNUAL REPORT PREPARED FOR THE
DECEMBER 4, 2025 COUNCIL MEETING

Please describe your directorship's activities during the 2024-2025 year toward achievement of the goals outlined in the Section's Strategic Plan. Each question below corresponds to a specific Section of the Plan to which reference may be made for further guidance in providing responses.

1. Continue to hold the Business Law Institute and Annual Meeting (Article I, 2 of the Strategic Plan).

The Business Law Institute is a popular event, however numbers were somewhat down in 2025 compared to 2024 (we had 132 registrants in 2024 and 116 in 2025). The dinner event on Friday evening was poorly attended in 2025. The Directorship is exploring ways to increase attendance, including by potentially restructuring the schedule, which is currently a full day of curriculum on Friday, followed by the Annual Meeting on Saturday morning. We might consider moving the dinner to Thursday evening, with curriculum continuing to proceed for a full day on Friday. However, the BLS member meeting is held Friday after the luncheon, and so the BLS council would need to find time to meet on Friday after the luncheon since we would not have Friday evening events that would justify the council staying in Grand Rapids for a Saturday morning council meeting.

We previously scheduled the Institute at the same time as Art Prize, to draw attendees who might want to attend Art Prize over the weekend following the Institute. However, we have not been able to make that work for 2026 and the Institute will instead be held on October 9th (after Art Prize has concluded).

2. Continue to sponsor programs for continuing legal education and skills-based training within the Section (Article I, 3 of the Strategic Plan).

The Directorship is responsible for the substantive programming for the Institute. The members of the Directorship meet frequently leading up to the Institute to select topics and speakers, with ICLE representatives in attendance to support.

The Directorship is also responsible for the programming for the Business Boot Camps, similarly meeting frequently to select topics and speakers. The next Boot Camp is scheduled to occur in late November of 2026 and we are considering how to expand our reach to young lawyers and increase attendance.

3. Encourage increased member participation through the development of personal relationships with other Section members (Article IV, 1 of the Strategic Plan).

The Business Law Institute is a key networking event that has developed into strong personal relationships among Section members as well as the frequent sponsors.

The Boot Camp does not have a similar networking component, which may be explored for future Boot Camps. We believe it is important for Section members to begin networking early in their careers.

4. Increase participation by newer lawyers and lawyers from diverse backgrounds (Article IV, 3 of the Strategic Plan).

Business Boot Camp is an excellent event to encourage participation in the Section by newer lawyers and lawyers from diverse backgrounds. The Directorship will explore whether to include an educational component regarding the Section, and the various opportunities available to Section members, at the next Boot Camp, as well as a networking component.

Submitted by:

Sarah J. Williams
Directorship Chair
Bodman PLC
Swilliams@bodmanlaw.com
734.930.2485

Date Submitted: 12/3/25