



GENERAL COMMITTEE MANDATES

2025-2026

Access to Justice and Legal Services

To encourage and facilitate the provision of pro bono legal services by individual College Fellows to persons who are unable to afford counsel to represent themselves effectively in litigation.

Adjunct Fellowship

(Appointed in accordance with the Bylaws, Article 3, Section 3.4(b)). To consider and make recommendations with respect to nominations of lawyers whose trial experience and trial activities are not known to the State or Province Committee of the particular state or province where the lawyer resides or maintains his or her office.

Admission to Fellowship

To study and make recommendations with reference to the standards of the College for admission to Fellowship, to investigate and determine whether those standards are properly administered in each of the several states or provinces; to develop and suggest procedures to be followed by the State and Province Committees in proposing nominations.

Amicus Briefs

To consider requests for the College submit amicus curiae briefs and provide recommendations to the Executive Committee and Board of Regents as to whether the College should act.

Arbitration

To promote and encourage excellence in trial advocacy and high standards of ethics and professionalism among advocates in arbitration proceedings; identify best practices in arbitration and educate Fellows, clients and others about those best practices; and identify and propose for nomination to Fellowship the growing number of outstanding trial lawyers who try arbitration cases as a significant part of their practices.

Beverley McLachlin Access to Justice Award

The Award, named for The Honourable Beverley McLachlin, former Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Canada, is to be awarded to a judge or a member of the bar in the United States or Canada, whether or not a Fellow of the College, who has played an exceptional role in creating and promoting access to justice. The Award will recognize innovative measures or extraordinary personal commitment and professional dedication which have enhanced access to justice in the United States or Canada.

Boot Camp Trial Training Programs

To create and execute one-day trial training programs for young lawyers, public service lawyers, public defenders, prosecutors, and other trial lawyers.

Canada - United States

To promote and strengthen the bonds of respect, collegiality, and unity between Fellows from the United States and Canada.

Communications

To serve as an editorial board for the College with respect to White Papers, special reports and other publications, on a wide variety of topics, with the exception of the *Journal*. The Communications Committee ensures that the publications it reviews are of the highest quality and consistent with the high standards of the College. The Committee contributes content to the *eBulletin* and makes editorial decisions.

Complex Litigation

To study and monitor procedures in complex and multi-district litigation and make proposals in connection therewith; to prepare and disseminate written materials relating thereto.

Distinguished Pro Bono Fellows

The Access to Justice Distinguished Pro Bono Fellows Committee significantly advances in many ways a fundamental core mission of the College; namely, to ensure meaningful access to justice for all citizens throughout the United States and Canada. The Committee also identifies and recommends to the Board of Regents for approval as Distinguished Pro Bono Fellows those Fellows in the College, who are providing at least 250 hours of pro bono access to justice related service on an annual basis through their partnerships with nonprofit organizations, courts, and other public service entities.

Emil Gumpert Award

To receive and investigate recommendations for the Award and recommend worthy candidates to the Board of Regents. The Award recognizes programs, whether public or private, whose principal purpose is to maintain and improve the administration of justice.

Federal Civil Procedure

To monitor the operation of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure and other federal civil procedural developments generally, to determine the adequacy of the operation of the rules and procedures in federal civil cases, to evaluate proposed changes, and to make recommendations with regard to these matters.

Federal Criminal Procedure

To monitor the operation of the Federal Rules of Criminal Procedure and other federal criminal procedural developments generally, to determine the adequacy of the operation of the rules and procedures in federal criminal cases, to evaluate proposed changes, and to make recommendations with regard to these matters.

Federal Rules of Evidence

To monitor the operation of the Federal Rules of Evidence, to determine their adequate operation and to study and make recommendations with regard to desirable changes.

Gale Cup

To monitor the operation of the Gale Cup Moot competition; to ensure that the competition continues to bear the stamp of excellence meriting the College's association with it; to ensure that, where fiscal support is provided by the College, appropriate budgetary mechanisms are in place so that the College can be confident that its money and resources are being well spent; and to ensure that the Fellows of the College are engaged in these activities to an extent that is appropriate and useful and that the College has appropriate involvement and recognition in the competition as a significant sponsor, including recruiting Fellows to serve as judges and assessors, presentation of awards and having an officer speak at the closing banquets.

Griffin Bell Award for Courageous Advocacy

To receive and investigate recommendations for the Award and recommend worthy candidates to the Board of Regents. The Award is the highest honor conferred by the College upon an individual trial lawyer and recognizes lawyers who have persevered in pursuit of an important cause despite substantial personal danger, fear, unpopularity, opposition, or other difficulties.

Heritage

To maintain a permanent archival facility to include *inter alia*, a library of living history through videotaped interviews of senior Fellows; appropriately coordinated written records in the possession of Fellows of the College, particularly Past Presidents and members of the Board of Regents relating to College activities over the years, together with such other heritage initiatives as will ensure that there exists, in the future, a meaningful archival history of the College and its Fellows.

Honorary Fellowship

To make recommendations to the Board of Regents with respect to the election of Honorary Fellows.

International

The Committee identifies, assists in the planning of and promotes participation by Fellows in trial skills training for lawyers and other legal education initiatives consistent with the mandate of the College in appropriate countries outside of the United States and Canada.

Investment

To review and monitor the work of the College's investment manager, as outlined in the College's investment policy.

Judiciary

To establish and maintain cooperative relationships with the appropriate agencies, organizations, and the courts; analyze and seek to ameliorate barriers to the attraction and retention of highly qualified judges; distribute appropriate College publications; and participate in other programs and projects to educate, train, and assist the judiciaries in the discharge of their duties.

Legal Ethics and Professionalism

To advance, improve, and promote ethical standards, attorney-client relationships, and professionalism in the trial bar in all its aspects in both the United States and Canada.

Lewis F. Powell, Jr. Lectures

To arrange the presentation of lectures by distinguished speakers at regular meetings of the Fellows of the College in honor of Lewis F. Powell, Jr., the twentieth President of the College and the ninety-ninth Justice to sit on the Supreme Court of the United States.

Mental Health Awareness

To educate our colleagues about mental health challenges confronting our profession and to de-stigmatize those issues and concerns; to improve understanding among our colleagues about what mental health challenges and related issues of substance abuse and impairment look like, how they impact individuals and the legal system at large, and how best to respond; through publication and circulation of available resources, enable our colleagues to recognize when help might be needed and to provide meaningful support, making it easier for affected individuals to find the help they need.

Mentoring

To facilitate and promote mentoring by ACTL Fellows of young lawyers, with the goals of creating career opportunities and of imparting the core principles of the College, namely: 1) improving access to justice; 2) improving the standards of trial practice; and 3) maintaining the highest levels of professionalism and integrity. The Committee is tasked with implementing the recommendations of the College's Mentoring Task Force, which include advocating for the importance of trials in our justice system; encouraging judges, public sector attorneys, clients, and in-house counsel to provide opportunities for younger lawyers to have speaking roles in courtroom proceedings; inspiring young lawyers to take on pro bono matters; and overseeing the development and distribution of written material that will serve these ends.

National Moot Court Competition

To represent the College as the co-sponsor of the National Moot Court Competition with the Young Lawyers Committee of the New York City Bar Association. Recruits Fellows to serve as judges at the regional and national levels of the competition. To present awards sponsored by the College at the regional competitions.

National Trial Competition

To assist the Texas Young Lawyers Association in the organization and administration of the National Trial Competition, including the recruitment of accredited law schools to

participate; the recruitment of Fellows to participate as judges at the various regional competitions; participation as jurors at the national and regional finals of the Competition; and to promote the credibility of the Competition as a premier event and to promote the Competition as a quality educational experience for law students interested in trial advocacy. To select the winner at the final rounds of the competition.

Outreach

To develop, through appropriate communication initiatives, the external profile of the College so that it may serve more effectively and improve and elevate the standards of trial practice, the administration of justice, and the ethics of the trial profession.

Podcast

To produce *Trial Tested: A Podcast by the American College of Trial Lawyers*, which presents enlightening discussions about life and law through interviews with prominent Fellows and significant figures in the world of trial law. The podcast seeks to elevate and inspire trial attorneys and law students through sharing the College's dedication to maintaining and improving the standards of trial practice, professionalism, ethics and the administration of justice.

Public Defenders

To represent the interests of the College in ways favorable to the protection of the rights of criminal defendants and the pursuit of equal justice for indigent defendants, and to advance the interests of lawyers and other defense professionals assigned to represent them.

Rule of Law

To increase public awareness that the rule of law, applied by an independent judiciary, is the cornerstone of our democracy; to promptly alert the Executive Committee to actions or efforts that undermine the rule of law or its enforcement by fair and impartial courts at the state, province and federal level; to propose immediate responses to such actions or efforts for Executive Committee consideration; and to engage all Fellows and educate the public in protecting and defending the rule of law and the independent judiciary upon which it depends.

Samuel E. Gates Litigation Award

To receive and investigate recommendations for the Award and recommend worthy candidates to the Board of Regents. The Award honors a lawyer or judge, whether or not a Fellow of the College, who has made a significant, exceptional and lasting contribution to the improvement of the litigation process.

Sandra Day O'Connor Jurist Award

To receive and investigate recommendations for the Award and recommend worthy candidates to the Board of Regents. The Award, named for Sandra Day O'Connor, is to be given from time to time to a judge in the United States or Canada, whether or not a Fellow of the College, who has demonstrated exemplary judicial independence in the

performance of his or her duties, sometimes in especially difficult or even dangerous circumstances.

Sopinka Cup

To monitor the operation of the Sopinka Cup trial competition; to ensure that the competition continues to bear the stamp of excellence meriting the College's association with it; to ensure that, where fiscal support is provided by the College, appropriate budgetary mechanisms are in place so that the College can be confident that its money and resources are being well spent; and to ensure that the Fellows of the College are engaged in these activities to an extent that is appropriate and useful and that the College has appropriate involvement and recognition in the competition as a significant sponsor, including recruiting Fellows to serve as judges and assessors, presentation of awards and having an officer speak at the closing banquets.

Special Problems in the Administration of Justice (Canada)

To recommend improvements in the administration of justice in Canada and to suggest ways to maintain proper liaison with others to that end.

Special Problems in the Administration of Justice (U.S.)

To recommend improvements in the administration of justice in the United States and to suggest ways to maintain proper liaison with others to that end.

Teaching of Trial and Appellate Advocacy

To promote and encourage the teaching of trial and appellate advocacy and the participation of the College and its Fellows in the teaching process.

Thurgood Marshall Equality and Justice Award

The Thurgood Marshall Equality and Justice Award, named for the revered lawyer, civil rights advocate and first Black Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States, is to be given from time to time to an individual who has been a champion of justice and equality in all forms, including but not limited to race, ethnicity, gender or sexual orientation or other form. The candidate must possess vision, courage, and fortitude, and must have stood steadfast in the passionate and effective pursuit of equal justice under the law.