AMERICAN COLLEGE OF TRIAL LAWYERS

## Guide to

# Onboarding Inductees

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## Introduction

It is the responsibility of the College to make Inductees and their spouses/significant others ("spouses") feel comfortable and otherwise enjoy their experience with the College, beginning even before the College meeting where their induction will take place. A great experience will increase the likelihood that the new Fellow will attend future meetings and become an active Fellow.

## Consider an Inductee Liaison

To adequately prepare for onboarding, each State/Province ("S/P") Chair should have a plan in place to onboard the Inductee. Since the S/P Chair has so many other responsibilities, the plan could include a person other than the S/P Chair to act as the "Inductee Liaison." The Inductee Liaison appointed by the Chair would manage the process similar to that set forth below. The Inductee Liaison should be a person who will attend both the Annual and Spring Meetings.

After receiving notice from the National Office that the Statement of Qualifications has been approved by the Regent and that a letter has been sent by the National Office to the candidate informing them that they have been approved for fellowship, it is recommended that the following occur.

1. The S/P Chair should notify the Inductee Liaison of the names of the candidates who are eligible for induction.
2. The Inductee Liaison should review the list of candidates and make a decision as to which current Fellow (the "Onboarding Fellow") should be assigned to onboard each candidate, taking into account geography, practice area, personal relationship, demographics, activity level of the potential Onboarding Fellow, that person's willingness to serve, and the likelihood that the Onboarding Fellow will be able to attend the induction with the candidate. (It is not essential that the person doing the onboarding actually attend the meeting, although doing so is an added benefit to the Inductee.) If the S/P has only one Inductee for an upcoming meeting, this should be undertaken by the Inductee Liaison.
3. The identity of the Onboarding Fellow for each Inductee should be shared with the S/P Chair. The S/P Chair should then call, email, or write a letter to each Inductee welcoming them to fellowship and encouraging them to be inducted at the next College meeting or, if that is not possible, at the earliest opportunity. Note: College rules require the Inductee to be formally inducted in one of the three meetings following the notice of eligibility for

induction. The S/P Chair should notify the Inductee that they will be contacted by the Onboarding Fellow to help welcome them to the College.

4. The S/P Chair should confirm to the Inductee Liaison that the contact noted in 3, above, has occurred. The Onboarding Fellow for each Inductee is urged to then promptly reach out to the Inductee by telephone so that they can (a) congratulate the Inductee on their upcoming admission to fellowship; and (b) set up a time to have a Welcome Meeting (ideally in person) to meet with the Inductee to discuss the upcoming induction and the College generally.

5. At the Welcome Meeting (whether done in person, by Zoom, or over the phone, the Onboarding Fellow should discuss the following topics:

    (a) welcome the Inductee;

    (b) introduce local leadership;

    (c) explain the need for a formal induction ceremony and the desirability of being inducted at the first available meeting;

    (d) explain that the Inductee's spouse is encouraged to attend, and that the meeting includes free time on Friday and Saturday afternoons for the Fellow and spouse to explore the host city, either on their own or through a College-sponsored program;

    (e) explain that the Inductee will especially enjoy the educational sessions and the Inductee Luncheon (explaining what happens at that luncheon);

    (f) explain the mission, purpose, and leadership structure of the College;

    (g) discuss the benefits of and encourage future attendance at national, regional, and state or province meetings;

    (h) The Inductee should be advised that if their work as a trial lawyer is impacted by a job/role change (selection for the Bench, job change from trial practice to an administrative role, new employment in a general counsel's office, etc.), they should notify the Onboarding Fellow as soon as possible so that they can be inducted before their work as a trial lawyer is completed.

6. The Onboarding Fellow (or, if they are unable to attend the meeting where the induction will take place, a substitute Fellow) should reach out to the Inductee a week or so before the meeting and make arrangements to connect at the meeting venue, preferably shortly before or at the Thursday night Welcome Reception. At the reception and otherwise, the Onboarding Fellow should introduce the Inductee and their spouse/significant other to

others, both from the home S/P and from other places, demonstrating the friendliness of our Fellows and opportunities that exist in the College to build relationships with people from our two nations. It is important that the spouses of both the Onboarding Fellow and the Inductee be involved in this process if possible. College meetings are expensive and take time away from work, family or both. Spousal "buy-in" to the College experience enhances the likelihood that the couple will participate in future meetings and the Fellow will be engaged in the work of the College. Like so many organizations, one largely receives from the College what one puts into it, and thus it is important that the Inductee and their spouse understand how easy it is to build relationships despite the fact that the first walk into the Welcome Reception (attended by between 750 and 1200 people) can be quite intimidating.

## Other Pre-Induction Involvement

Many S/P Committees have social or other events between the time the Inductee is notified of their admission to the College and the actual Induction. The Inductee (and, if appropriate for the event, their spouse) should be invited to attend such events. At the event, either the S/P Chair or the Onboarding Fellow should make a special effort to introduce the Inductee (and their spouse) to as many other participants as possible.

## Post-Induction Involvement

The S/P Chair, Regent and President-Elect should give careful consideration to the appointment of new Fellows to the S/P Committee; and the Treasurer should do the same for General Committees. All of our Committees are enhanced by new Fellows who bring fresh eyes to address the issues of each Committee's mandate. When an Inductee is going to be asked to join a Committee, the S/P Chair and either the Regent for the Region (if it is for the S/P Committee) or the Regent liaison for the General Committee should confer to try to confirm there is a "fit" and then strategize to ensure that the Inductee agrees to join.

The Inductee Liaison and/or Onboarding Fellow should consider periodic reach-outs to the new Inductee in the 12-18 months after Induction. If the person feels welcome and included for a period after Induction, they are more likely to engage.

The bottom line is this: we must make a deliberate effort to include Inductees and their spouses into the "College life" as early as possible. The future of the College depends on their participation in the College's work and social activities