ASSOCIATION OF AMERICAN LAW SCHOOLS

Bylaws of the Section on
Clinical Legal Education

Article I. Name and Purpose

Section 1. Name.
This section shall be known as the Section on Clinical Legal Education (hereinafter referred to as the Section).

Section 2. Purpose.
The purpose of this Section is to promote and facilitate the communication of ideas, interests, and activities relating to clinical legal education among its members. The Section’s work includes supporting scholarship and mentoring and building on deep-rooted pedagogical and community values that include a focus on social injustice and on the promotion of the status of clinics and externships within the broader legal academy.

Article II. Membership

Section 1. Membership.
(a) Regular membership in the Section is open to any faculty member, administrator, or non-faculty staff who direct or support a clinical or externship program at a law school that is a member of the Association of American Law Schools (hereinafter referred to as AALS).

Section 2. Privileges of Members.
(a) Regular members shall be eligible to vote, hold office in the Section and serve on the Section’s Executive Committee, and to participate in the programs, meetings, and activities of the Section.
Article III. Officers and Committees

Section 1. Officers.

The officers of this Section are the chair, the chair-elect, the secretary and the treasurer. All officers must be regular members of the Section. At the Section’s business meeting during each AALS annual meeting, the membership of the Section shall elect a regular member of the Section to serve a two-year term, the first year as chair-elect and the second year as chair. The Section may elect two members to serve as co-chair-elect and then co-chairs. The secretary shall be appointed and the treasurer shall be elected in accordance with Article V of these bylaws.

Section 2. Executive Committee.

(a) The Executive Committee of the Section (hereinafter referred to as the “Executive Committee”) shall normally consist of nine elected voting members: the Section chair(s), chair(s)-elect, treasurer, secretary, and other elected members. All members of the Executive Committee must be regular members of the Section. In the event the Section elects two members to serve as co-chair-elect, the size of the Executive Committee shall be increased accordingly. The immediate past chair(s) shall serve as ex officio, non-voting member(s) of the Executive Committee.

(b) The members of the Executive Committee shall be elected by the regular members of the Section at the Section’s business meeting during the AALS annual meeting. Members of the Executive Committee shall serve the following terms: Any chair-elect shall be elected to a two-year term, serving in the first year as chair-elect and in the second year as chair. The Secretary and Treasurer shall be elected to a three-year term and may be elected to one successive three-year term. The remaining members of the Executive Committee shall be elected to three-year terms and shall be ineligible to serve successive three-year terms. The terms of those remaining members shall be staggered to provide for the election of at least two members each year. In the event of a vacancy, the chair shall appoint a regular member of the Section to serve until the next AALS annual meeting, at which time a regular member shall be elected to serve any remaining portion of the term.

(c) The Executive Committee’s duties include: (1) discussing issues relating to Section governance and clinical legal education; (2) making recommendations when appropriate on policies affecting clinical legal education to the AALS Standing Committee on Clinical Legal Education and to the AALS Executive
Committee; (3) soliciting and receiving reports from standing and special committees of the Section and supporting the work of these committees; (4) reviewing and approving the proposed expenditure of Section income in accordance with Article VI; (5) designating a member of the Executive Committee to serve as liaison between the Section and the AALS Standing Committee on Clinical Legal Education; (6) designating a member to serve on the Section’s annual conference committee; (7) hosting an annual awards celebration; (8) considering the approval of statements of Section position or policy in accordance with Article VII; and (9) taking any other appropriate action in furtherance of the Section’s purpose. With the approval of the AALS Executive Committee, the Section’s Executive Committee may also designate members of its Executive Committee to serve as liaisons between the Section and sections of the American Bar Association and other organizations whose activities bear on clinical legal education.

(d) The Executive Committee shall meet at least annually during the AALS annual meeting and at such other times as designated by the chair of the Section.

Section 3. Standing Committees.

(a) The standing committees of the Section shall be the Nominating Committee, the Annual Meeting Program Committee, the Membership, Outreach and Training Committee, the Communications Committee, the Awards Committee, the Clinicians of Color Committee, the Externships Committee, and the Bellow Scholars Committee. The Executive Committee shall appoint the chair of each standing committee. The membership of standing committees should reflect different geographic regions and different clinical program types, and be inclusive in accordance with AALS diversity requirements.

(b) Nominating Committee. The Nominating Committee shall: (1) nominate persons who are regular members of the Section to fill open positions on the Executive Committee; and (2) perform such other tasks and make such other nominations as charged by the chair after consultation with the Executive Committee. In order to create a slate of nominees for open positions on the Executive Committee, the Nominating Committee shall solicit from Section members the names of potential nominees who are regular members of the Section; shall select nominees; and shall report the names of the nominees to the Section chair not less 60 days before the AALS annual meeting. When selecting nominees for open positions on the Executive Committee, the Nominating Committee shall consider the suitability of the potential candidates for office and shall strive to have the composition of the Executive Committee reflect different geographical regions and different clinical program types, and be inclusive in
accordance with AALS diversity requirements.

(c) Annual Meeting Program Committee. The Annual Meeting Program Committee: (1) shall determine the nature, format, and content of the Section program for the AALS annual meeting; (2) shall arrange for speakers, participants and materials for the AALS annual meeting; and (3) shall notify Section members regarding the AALS annual meeting.

(d) Membership, Outreach and Training Committee. The Membership, Outreach and Training Committee shall: (1) design and implement programs and plans to increase and retain membership in the Section; (2) establish and maintain a mentoring program through which experienced clinicians support newer clinicians in their professional development and through which any clinician at a professional transition point might seek guidance and expertise from colleagues; (3) encourage, assist, and provide support for the development and implementation of conference and training programs for clinical educators on a national and/or regional basis; and (4) as requested by the chair, engage in other projects or activities consistent with the Section’s membership, outreach and training goals.

(e) Communications Committee. The Communications Committee shall design and implement effective methods for the Executive Committee to communicate with Section members and for Section members to communicate with one another.

(f) Clinicians of Color Committee. The Clinicians of Color Committee shall meet regularly to support its membership through programming, community gatherings, and broader initiatives as determined by its members, to advance principles of equity and inclusion both within and outside of the Academy.

(g) Externships. The Externships Committee shall support and provide information for teachers of externship courses about program implementation and design, teaching, scholarship, and other issues related to law school externship programs and courses.

(h) Awards Committee. The Awards Committee shall proceed as follows:

(1) The Committee shall solicit nominations for the William Pincus Award, the M. Shanara Gilbert “emerging clinician” award, the Steve Ellman Memorial Clinical Scholarship award, and any other award that the Section may create.
(2) The purpose of each of the awards is to honor Section members and other individuals who have made an outstanding contribution to the cause of clinical legal education. The Section’s officers – chair, chair-elect, secretary and treasurer – shall be ineligible to receive an award in the year of and the year following their service. The Committee may choose to give any or all of the awards in a given year. The awards may be announced formally at the annual AALS Clinical Conference or at the AALS Annual Meeting.

(3) The Executive Committee will provide to the Awards Committee the criteria for each award, as designated by each award’s founders and the Executive Committee.

(4) The Awards Committee recommendations shall be forwarded to the Executive Committee for consideration and approval, and then forwarded to the AALS for approval in accordance with AALS requirements. Awards made by the Section shall also comply with any other applicable AALS requirements.

(i) The Bellow Scholars Committee. This Committee shall select and encourage the work of the Bellow Scholars.

(1) The Committee shall select as Bellow Scholars clinical legal educators who propose projects which exemplify the personal and professional qualities, particularly innovation and critical analysis, exhibited by Gary Bellow. The Committee may select one or more Bellow Scholars in any given year.

(2) The Committee shall select Bellow Scholars based on proposals from interested applicants. Interested applicants shall submit proposals that involve law students and faculty in anti-poverty initiatives or access to justice projects. Projects that involve collaboration between lawyers and other professionals or empirical analysis are encouraged. Applications shall include:

(A) a detailed description of the project;
(B) the projected goals of the project;
(C) a timeline for completion of the project; and
(D) a description of how the project will be evaluated.
(3) The Bellow Scholars shall be announced formally at an AALS event. The Scholars will present their conclusions for debate, reflection and critical analysis.

Section 4. Special Committees.

With the approval of the Executive Committee, the chair may establish or terminate special committees as deemed necessary and appropriate to carry out special projects or functions on behalf of the Section. The chair, in consultation with the Executive Committee, shall determine the size, appoint the membership, and appoint the chair of each special committee. The membership of special committees should reflect different geographic regions and different clinical program types, and be inclusive in accordance with AALS diversity requirements.

Article IV. Nominations and Elections

Section 1. Nominations.

Nominations to fill open positions on the Executive Committee shall be made by the Nominating Committee in accordance with Article III, Section 3(b) of these bylaws, and may also be made from the floor of the Section’s business meeting during the AALS Annual Meeting.

Upon receipt of the list of names of the nominees from the Nominating Committee, the chair shall submit the nominees to the Executive Committee for consideration and approval. Not less than 45 days before the AALS annual meeting, the chair shall submit the names of nominees approved by the Executive Committee to the AALS national office. The Section membership shall receive notification of the identity of the nominees submitted by the Nominating Committee and approved by the Executive Committee not less than 30 days before the AALS annual meeting.

Section 2. Elections.

Open positions on the Executive Committee shall be filled by majority vote of the regular members present at the Section’s business meeting during the AALS annual meeting, with each member present having one vote for each open position on the Executive Committee. Elections at that meeting may be by voice or secret ballot, as determined by the chair. In the event that an AALS annual business meeting does not take place, or if it takes place virtually, the Executive
Committee may conduct the elections to fill open positions on the Executive Committee via mail or e-mail ballot to be voted on by the regular members of the Section, so long as the procedure is not inconsistent with any AALS Executive Committee policy promulgated to address the non-occurrence of an in-person AALS annual business meeting.

Article V. Duties of Officers

Section 1. Chair.

The chair shall: (1) preside at all meetings of the Section and the Executive Committee; (2) oversee the expenditure of Section funds as provided in Article VI; (3) appoint a voting member of the Executive Committee to serve as secretary, subject to the approval of the Executive Committee; (4) present at the AALS annual meeting the report of the Section for the prior year including a detailed accounting of Section funds and of all expenditures; (5) in consultation with the Executive Committee, appoint members of the standing and special committees, including the chairs of those committees; and (6) take any other appropriate action in furtherance of the Section’s purpose. With the approval of the Executive Committee, the chair may designate Section members with special expertise to be available as resource persons to Section members.

Section 2. Chair-Elect.

The chair-elect of the Section shall assist the chair as the chair may request and shall perform the duties of the chair during the absence or disability of the chair. The chair-elect shall prepare a program proposal for the annual clinical conference and shall submit this proposal for approval to the AALS. If the office of the chair becomes vacant, the chair-elect shall succeed to the office of chair and shall serve as chair for the remainder of the two-year term for which she or he was elected.

Section 3. Vacancies in the Office of Chair.

Should both the chair and the chair-elect be unable to serve in the office of chair, a temporary chair shall be elected from the voting members of the Executive Committee and shall serve until elections are held at the next Section business meeting at the AALS annual meeting. This election shall be by majority vote of the Executive Committee. The secretary of the Executive Committee shall, as soon as practicable after learning of the vacancy, call and conduct a meeting of the Executive Committee in person, by conference call, by e-mail or by regular mail for the purpose of this election.
Section 4. Secretary.

The secretary of the Section shall be appointed by the chair, with the approval of the Executive Committee, from among the elected members of the Executive Committee. The secretary shall serve for a one-year term, and may be reappointed for successive terms. The secretary shall: (1) keep written minutes of Executive Committee meetings; (2) maintain a written record of all formal actions taken by the Executive Committee; (3) solicit and maintain written records, if any, of the activities of Executive Committee sub-committees; (4) maintain a record of the terms of the Executive Committee members; (5) maintain copies of formal communications between the Section and the AALS or other organizations whose activities bear on clinical legal education; (6) ensure the transmission of minutes and copies of formal actions and records received by the secretary to his or her successor in office; and (7) perform relevant duties as assigned from time to time by the chair or the Executive Committee.

Section 5. Treasurer.

The treasurer of the Section shall be elected from among the regular members of the Section for a three-year term and may be re-elected for one successive three-year term. The treasurer shall: (1) assist the chair in the preparation of the annual budget; (2) arrange for receipt of any funds that are to be paid directly to the Section, and for the transmission of those funds to the AALS; (3) arrange for payment of expenses on behalf of the Section in accordance with Article VI; (4) keep an account of all Section receipts and expenditures; (5) make regular periodic reports of all Section receipts and expenditures to the Executive Committee; (6) advise the chair in preparing and presenting an annual budget to the Executive Committee; (7) arrange for the solicitation and payment of dues; (8) maintain records of membership; (9) ensure the transmission of such budgets, reports and records to his or her successor in office; and (10) perform relevant duties as assigned from time to time by the chair or the Executive Committee.

Article VI. Finances

Section 1. Dues.

Each regular member of the Section shall pay annual dues in an amount to be determined by the Executive Committee. Changes in dues shall occur no more frequently than annually. Any change shall take effect at the beginning of the Section’s fiscal year following the Executive Committee vote. The Section membership shall receive notice of any change at least 30 days prior to the
increase. Publication in the Section newsletter, on the AALS’s communication platform, or by e-mail to the Section membership shall constitute adequate notice. The chair shall include an explanation for any change in the chair’s annual accounting of Section funds and expenditures.

Section 2. Annual Budget.

The chair, with the assistance of the treasurer, shall prepare an annual budget for the Section, which shall be approved by the Executive Committee prior to submission to the AALS. The annual budget shall be sufficiently detailed so that the Executive Committee, and subsequently the AALS Executive Committee, may assess and approve allocations of funds for particular activities of the Section.

Section 3. Expenditures.

Section dues and other Section income may be spent in accordance with applicable AALS and Section policies, regulations and bylaws. The chair or the treasurer shall confirm that each expenditure is permitted by AALS and Section policy and shall ensure that the Executive Committee complies with any applicable AALS policy requiring notification of the AALS in advance of an expenditure.

Article VII. Policy Statements

Section 1. Policy Statements.

With the approval of its Executive Committee, and only in compliance with AALS Executive Committee Regulations, the Section may communicate or publish statements of position or policy on matters affecting legal education.

Article VIII. Amendments

Section 1. Amendments.

These bylaws may be amended at the Section’s business meeting during the AALS annual meeting or the AALS Clinical Section annual conference by a majority of the regular members of the Section present and voting, or by mail or email ballot in the event either meeting is conducted virtually. Notice of meeting to propose an amendment of these bylaws shall include the proposed amendment, a description of its intended purpose, and shall be given no less than 30 days in advance of the meeting at which the vote will occur. Publication in the Section
newsletter, on the AALS’s communication platform, or by e-mail to the Section membership shall constitute adequate notice. The amendment takes effect when it is approved by the Executive Committee of the AALS.

Adopted: December 23, 1992
Amended: January 4, 2001; January 5, 2002; January 8, 2011, January 4, 2022