BYLAWS OF THE SECTION ON RURAL ACCESS TO JUSTICE

Article I. Name and Purpose

Section 1. Name. This Section will be known as the Section on Rural Access to Justice.

Section 2. Purpose. The purpose of this Section is to advance the role of legal education in improving access to justice in rural communities. The Section will provide a forum for faculty, administrators, and other participants in legal education to study and address barriers to legal education and legal services in rural areas; support the preparation of students for rural practice; encourage scholarship, teaching, clinical education, pipeline initiatives, and other programs related to rural access to justice; share information and effective practices; and foster collaboration among law schools and with courts, bar associations, legal services organizations, legislators, nonprofit organizations, and other stakeholders.

Article II. Membership

Section 1. Regular Members. Membership is open to all faculty and professional staff of a law school that is a member of the Association of American Law Schools (AALS). "Regular members" include retired faculty and professional staff of member schools who previously served in a full-time capacity.

Section 2. Associate Members. Associate membership is open to others who are concerned with the teaching, administration, and improvement of legal education. Associate members may participate in the programs, meetings, and activities of the Section, but may not vote or hold office in the Section. The number of Associate Members may not exceed 25 percent of the regular membership.

Section 3. Privileges of Members. Regular members may vote in person or through any other voting method authorized by these bylaws, may hold office, and may participate in all activities of the Section.

Article III. Officers and Executive Committee

Section 1. Named Officers. The named officers of the Section are the Chair and Chair-Elect.

(a) Chair. The Chair shall preside at meetings of the Section and the Executive Committee; guide the work of the Section; serve as the Section's principal liaison with AALS; appoint committees as authorized by these bylaws; oversee Section programs, communications, and required reports; and perform such other duties as are customary for the office or assigned by the Executive Committee.

(b) Chair-Elect. The Chair-Elect shall assist the Chair, coordinate planning for future Section programs and activities, perform the duties of the Chair when the Chair is unable to act, and succeed to the office of Chair at the conclusion of the next AALS annual meeting.

(c) Eligibility. Officers shall be current or retired full-time faculty or professional staff of law schools that are members of AALS.

(d) Election. The Chair-Elect shall be elected by the regular members of the Section in accordance with Article IV.

(e) Term. Each officer shall serve for a term of one year, commencing at the conclusion of the AALS annual meeting, and until a successor has been elected and qualified.

Section 2. Executive Committee.

(a) Membership. The Executive Committee shall consist of the officers of the Section, the immediate past Chair, and an odd number of additional members, not fewer than one and not more than seven, elected by the regular members of the Section.

(b) Duties. The Executive Committee shall advise the Chair and Chair-Elect, oversee the affairs of the Section between meetings of the membership, and discharge such other functions as it may undertake by majority vote, consistent with AALS Bylaws and Executive Committee Regulations.

(c) Meetings. The Executive Committee shall meet in connection with each AALS annual meeting and otherwise upon the call of the Chair. Meetings may be conducted in person or by electronic means. A majority of the members of the Executive Committee constitutes a quorum, and action requires the affirmative vote of a majority of those participating, unless these bylaws provide otherwise.

(d) Eligibility. Members of the Executive Committee shall be current or retired full-time faculty or professional staff of law schools that are members of AALS.

(e) Election and Term. The additional members of the Executive Committee shall be elected in accordance with Article IV and shall serve for a term of one year, commencing at the conclusion of the AALS annual meeting, and until their successors have been elected and qualified.

(f) Action Without a Meeting. The Executive Committee may act between meetings by electronic vote. Such action requires the affirmative vote of a majority of the entire Executive Committee.

Section 3. Special Committees. Special committees may be created by majority vote of the Executive Committee. The Chair shall appoint the members of each special committee with the advice and consent of the Executive Committee. Special committees shall have the duties assigned to them by the Executive Committee.

Article IV. Nominations and Elections

Section 1. Nominations. At or promptly following the annual meeting, the Chair shall appoint a Nominating Committee for the subsequent year. The Nominating Committee shall consist of at least three regular members of the Section and shall include at least one past Chair, when available. The Nominating Committee shall receive and consider suggestions of persons to serve as officers and members of the Executive Committee and shall report a slate of nominees to the Section before the next AALS annual meeting. All nominees must be regular members in good standing of the Section and eligible to serve under Article III.

Section 2. Elections. The Chair-Elect and the additional members of the Executive Committee shall be elected at the annual meeting or by mail or electronic ballot before the annual meeting. The slate of nominees shall be circulated to the regular members of the Section at least one month before the election. If the election occurs at the annual meeting, additional nominations may be made from the floor with the consent of the nominee. A plurality of votes cast is sufficient for election.

Article V. Filling of Vacancies

Section 1. Chair. If the office of Chair becomes vacant, the Chair-Elect shall become Chair for the remainder of the unexpired term and shall also serve the succeeding term for which the Chair-Elect was elected.

Section 2. Chair-Elect. If the office of Chair-Elect becomes vacant, the Chair, with the advice and consent of the Executive Committee, shall appoint an eligible regular member to serve as Chair-Elect until the next election. A person appointed under this Section does not automatically succeed to the office of Chair unless elected as Chair-Elect by the regular members.

Section 3. Executive Committee. If the position of an additional member of the Executive Committee becomes vacant, the Chair, with the advice and consent of the remaining members of the Executive Committee, shall appoint an eligible regular member to serve until the next election.

Article VI. Income and Authorized Expenditures

Section 1. Section Funds. Section dues and other Section income may be received and spent only in accordance with AALS Bylaws and Executive Committee Regulations.

Article VII. Policy Statements and Inclusion

Section 1. Policy Statements. Sections are components of AALS. Any statement of policy adopted by the Section, or any similar public position taken in the name of the Section, may be made public only in accordance with AALS Bylaws and Executive Committee Regulations.

Section 2. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. Every effort should be made to ensure diversity among Section leaders, program presenters, and award recipients. Diversity is defined broadly to include ideological diversity; diversity in schools represented and in faculty and administrative responsibilities; and diversity based on race, color, religion, national origin, sex, gender (including identity and expression), sexual orientation, age, or disability.

Section 3. Professional Development and New Participation. The Section strives to welcome new members and provide professional development opportunities to junior scholars and administrators. In addition to the diversity considerations described above, the Section should seek to include first-time AALS presenters in its annual-meeting programming.

Article VIII. Amendments

Section 1. Adoption. These bylaws may be amended by a majority of the regular members present and voting at an annual meeting of the Section, provided that the proposed amendment has been circulated to the regular members at least one month before the meeting. The regular members may instead approve an amendment by mail or electronic ballot if the proposed amendment has been circulated at least one month before voting closes.

Section 2. Effective Date. An amendment takes effect when approved by AALS under applicable procedures.