



## Best Practices for Committee Structure

This “Best Practices for Committee Structure” recognizes the need for a more uniform approach in establishing and maintaining committees, subcommittees and other subgroupings with MCB with regard to purpose, effectiveness, reporting, accountability, membership goals (including size, attendance expectations, term limits, appointments and vacancies, diversity goals, and Chair/Vice-Chair structure), involvement of MCB Board members on committees, committee subgroupings, special project development, and collaborative participants’ involvement on committees. Such best practices will help better evaluate the relevancy and productivity of all committees, clarify member transition from year-to-year, enhance leadership succession planning, improve communications between Committees and Board, measure and recognize achievements, encourage feedback and confirm volunteer expectations. The MCB President will approve individual committee members and vacancies occurring during his/her year, as stated in the MCB Bylaws, approved May 20, 2010. The President has discretion to depart from these guidelines.

### Purpose, Effectiveness and Accountability

- At the beginning of the fiscal year, committees should review their purpose for clarity and relevancy to the MCB Mission Statement and develop goals that adhere to the MCB Annual Goals and Strategic Plan. Bar Staff will review the goals for consistency and make recommendations to the Executive Committee, Strategic Planning Committee and Executive Director. Committees should be cognizant of the time frame of their goals to ensure they are measurable and progress is attainable within a year’s time. The President-Elect of the MCB serves as committees’ liaison to the Executive Committee and should be used as a resource.
- At the conclusion of the fiscal year, each committee is expected to prepare a report assessing its accomplishments and lessons learned in view of the committee’s annual goals and objectives. The report will be submitted to the Executive Director, who will present the report to the Executive Committee. This report is intended to improve communications, efficiency, effectiveness, consistency and accountability to the Board, as defined by the MCB Strategic Plan. Feedback to the committees will be provided as needed.

### Committee Membership

- Size: Typically, committees will have a membership size greater than or equal to 8 members, and less than or equal to 24 members.
- Attendance Expectations: When a member has failed to attend in person three consecutive meetings or one-half of the meetings held during any twelve-month period, his or her membership shall be subject to termination and he or she shall be so notified and be given an opportunity to explain. Before membership is terminated, the Executive Committee must be notified.

- Term Limits: Members serve three-year staggered terms defined by classes, and no member may be eligible to serve consecutive three-year terms, unless approved by the President.
- Appointments and Vacancies: A new class of committee members and existing vacancies will be appointed by the incoming President. Members from the previous classes will be reviewed by the incoming President and appointment will be determined. Committee chairs and staff liaisons will work together to recommend potential members to the incoming President and notify the Executive Director, with special attention being given to firm size, public and private sectors; diversity (including race, ethnicity, gender, personal experience and viewpoint); and different practice areas (where appropriate). If a vacancy arises during the year, the current President will appoint a new member to carry out the remainder of the term.
- Non-MCB Member Committee Representation: Non-MCB attorney members may not serve as Chair, Vice-Chair and may not vote on committee matters that do pertain to 26<sup>th</sup> Judicial District business.

### **Chair/Vice-Chair Positions**

- Term Limits: Committee leadership shall consist of a Chair and a Vice-Chair, each serving a one-year term with the expectation that the Vice-Chair is to become Chair if approved by the MCB President. For a Chair's or Vice-Chair's term to extend beyond one year, approval from the President must occur. Such factors that the President may consider include length of time active with the committee, length of time active with leadership, upcoming committee projects, and the general best interest of the committee.
- Appointments and Vacancies: If the Chair position becomes vacant, the Vice-Chair will be presented to the MCB President for approval to become Chair. A vacancy in the Vice-Chair position will need to be filled through a recommendation to the MCB President from the incoming Chair and staff liaison. If a current committee member is appointed Chair or Vice-Chair, he/she will be removed from his/her class, creating a vacancy to be appointed per recommendations set forth in Committee Membership above.

### **Board Involvement on Committees**

- The President, President-Elect, Vice-President and Executive Director shall be ex officio members of all the committees based on MCB Bylaws.
- To encourage participation and leadership, one or more Board member may be assigned to serve on each committee. This could be a current committee member who also serves on the Board. This may take the place of or be in addition to Board liaisons. In some instances, the Board representative may serve as Committee Chair.

### **Committee Subgroups and Special Project Development**

- Committees may find specific initiatives are best carried out by subgroups within that particular committee. The length of that initiative will determine how much Board involvement is necessary. Committee approval will be needed before subgroups take action on behalf of the committee.

- Requests for formation of any Subcommittee, Council, task force, ad hoc or other group shall be directed to the Executive Director before creation. The Executive Director will seek approval by the President as necessary and appropriate. These subgroups will be led by a committee member and participants may be committee or non-committee members.
- Committees are encouraged to seek Bar leadership input on any long-term or specialized project development -- particularly those that may create questions as to the relevancy of the project to MCB goals. If financial support of MCB is needed or anticipated, Board approval for the project must be obtained.

### **Collaborative Participants on Committees, Non-Member**

- Some committees may have non-voting participants who play a specific role individually, or who represent a certain interest group or organization.
  - Examples of Collaborative Participants: The CLE Committee appoints program planners to implement ideas and the Communications Committee utilizes writers to author articles proposed by the committee. These individuals are not considered committee members but Collaborative Participants.
  - Examples of Collaborative Organizations: The Volunteer Lawyer Program works with Legal Aid of North Carolina and Legal Services of Southern Piedmont as well as firms. Currently, these organizations are referred to as partners of VLP and representatives have voted on some VLP business. An additional example includes representatives from the Judiciary who regularly attend MCB Board of Directors meetings as non-voting member in order to report on the trends and needs within their scope. Individuals representing these organizations will be called Collaborative Organization Representatives.
- Term Limits and Voting Status: Collaborative Participants and Collaborative Organization Representatives are not voting members of the committee and should not serve more than the three-year term limit described in Committee Membership but may serve less.

### **Implementation**

MCB Committees are grouped generally based on one of the following categories pertaining to the underlying basis for the committee: NC State Bar/State Statute; Indigent Defense Services; MCB Bylaws; MCB Board; and through MCB custom or practice. The chart below summarizes these groupings. Prior to adding or changing any committees or subcommittees, MCB will need to review existing committees with the goal of minimizing duplication of form or function. New committees or subcommittees should follow existing approved guidelines, policies and procedures. Such guidelines should be reviewed.

MCB Committees by Governance Category				
Committees defined or partially defined by NCSB/State Bar Statute	Indigent Defense Services	Committee defined or partially defined MCB Bylaws	Committee defined or partially defined in (Board-approved) writing	Committee defined by practice
APL	Indigent Representation	<i>BLI</i>	CLE	Bar History <sup>1</sup>
Fee Dispute		Executive	Diversity	Communications <sup>3</sup>
Grievance		Finance	LRS	Courthouse Liaison
Judicial Nominating		Nominating	PLLC	<i>Future MCB/MBF Center</i> <sup>1</sup>
			Strategic Planning	<i>Law &amp; Society</i>
				Law Day
				Luncheon Series <sup>2</sup>
				Medical/Legal <sup>2</sup>
				Memorials <sup>2</sup>
				Social Sports
				Sponsorship (TBD)
				VLP <sup>3</sup>
<i>Those Committees in italics serve as joint MCB/MBF committees and the Committee make up of these will incorporate input from MBF</i>				
<sup>1</sup> This Committee's role is time sensitive				
<sup>2</sup> Operates primarily through the work of a chair/co-chairs				
<sup>3</sup> Operates with both Committee Members and non-Committee Members working on behalf of the Committee				