

STANDING COMMITTEE ON PROFESSIONALISM

David E. Roop, Jr., chair

The Virginia State Bar's mandatory professionalism course has become the cornerstone for professionalism training of all newly admitted Virginia lawyers. Since 1988, approximately sixteen thousand new admittees to the Virginia bar—more than half of the lawyers in active practice—have taken the course.

The Standing Committee on Professionalism has three areas of responsibility:

- Selection of faculty members for nomination to the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Virginia.
- Oversight of the curriculum for the course.
- In cooperation with VSB staff, the administration of the course.

Faculty for the professionalism course comprises seventy-five judges and lawyers, each serving a three-year term. The faculty is chosen to achieve diversity of geography, practice area and legal experience—with an emphasis on excellence and professionalism. Approximately twenty-five faculty members are chosen for nomination each year. After the faculty members are nominated by the standing committee, they are invited by the Chief Justice, upon his approval, to serve a three-year term.

New faculty members are invited to a faculty training seminar given in early October in Richmond. New and current faculty members are oriented to the theory of the curriculum, the mechanics of the course and its aspirational goals.

The course is offered seven times during each academic year: twice in Northern Virginia, twice in Richmond and once each in Roanoke, Portsmouth and Charlottesville. The number of students varies from approximately one hundred to more than three hundred at each meeting of the course. The course is held from 8:30 A.M. until 5 P.M.

In addition to the regularly scheduled meetings of the course, two sessions were held during the 2004–2005 bar year, and one will be held during the 2004–2005 bar year year to accommodate the large number of admittees joining the bar pursuant to the new Corporate Counsel Rule. These courses will handle the one-time increase in the annual number of admittees. The committee anticipates that in future years the seven-course schedule will be adequate to serve all new members.

A welcome in the morning from the VSB president begins the day, followed by a presentation of the new *Professionalism in Virginia* video. This video—which incorporates footage of former Virginia Chief Justice Harry L. Carrico and the late U.S. Supreme Court Justice Lewis F. Powell Jr.—also includes comments and thoughts on professionalism from contemporary justices, judges and lawyers from around the commonwealth.

The curriculum of the course is reviewed annually to assure the currency of the ethical rules articulated. The standing committee is in the process of revising the real-life situations that are discussed in both the general workshop sessions and the specialty workshop sessions before and after lunch.

Judge Jeri K. Somers is chair of the committee and moderator of the course for 2005–2006. Judge Jacqueline Ward Talevi is vice-chair, and Judge J. Martin Bass continues as vice-chair in charge of the law school program.

