



**L.A.W.S**

(Legal, Academic, Writing, Scholarship)

## **L.A.W.S. Committee Handbook– 2025 Edition**

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(SRO: Student-Run Organization – Central Michigan University)

***Ignorantia legis neminem excusat — 'Ignorance of the law excuses no one.'***

# Table of Contents

1. Mission Statement
  2. Contributors & Acknowledgments
    - 2.1 Founding Members
  3. Chain of Command / Organizational Structure
    - 3.1 Leadership Core
      - Editor-in-Chief
      - Operations Officer
    - 3.2 Engagement Core
      - Outreach Director
      - Student Recruiters (2)
    - 3.3 Faculty Advisor
    - 3.4 Roles, Responsibilities, and Duties
    - 3.5 Committee Eligibility & Leadership Progression
  4. Compliance & University Policies
  5. Recruitment & Membership Growth
  6. Editorial Standards & Peer Review
  7. Publishing Model & Resources
  8. Scope & Content
  9. Timeline & Milestones
  10. Long-Term Vision
    - 11. Resources & Policies
- Appendix A – L.A.W.S. Committee Meeting Framework
- Appendix B – Meeting Minutes Template
- Appendix C – Governance Principles & Fail-Safe Authority

## Appendix D – Membership Procedures & Accountability

- Swearing-In of Members / Certificate of Appointment
  - D1. Process, signatures, and member commitments
- Grounds for Dismissal
  - D2. Criteria, procedures, and appeals process



**L.A.W.S**

(Legal, Academic, Writing, Scholarship)

## 1. Mission Statement

L.A.W.S. (Legal, Academic, Writing, Scholarship) is Central Michigan University's student and faculty initiative dedicated to legal scholarship and publication. It empowers participants to flex their academic skills to analyze, write, and publish high-quality legal work, fostering professional growth, academic excellence, and a deep understanding of foundational legal principles, including the maxim *Ignorantia legis neminem excusat* — 'ignorance of the law excuses no one.'



## 2. Contributors & Acknowledgments

This publication was inspired by Ryan R. Michalski, Editor-In-Chief for the 2025 L.A.W.S. Committee, who recognized the need for a student-led legal scholarship platform at CMU and proposed the initial concept.

With the guidance and leadership of Brittany C. Wright, Founder & Owner of L.E.A.D. and Operations Officer for the 2025 L.A.W.S. Committee, the idea was transformed into a fully functioning publication.

We also acknowledge the contributions of the L.A.W.S. Committee members who support the publication each year. This collaboration maintained high standards of academic integrity and serves as a model for future student leaders and innovators in both student leadership and academia.

# FOUNDING MEMBERS



Kyla Stepp, Ph.D., J.D.



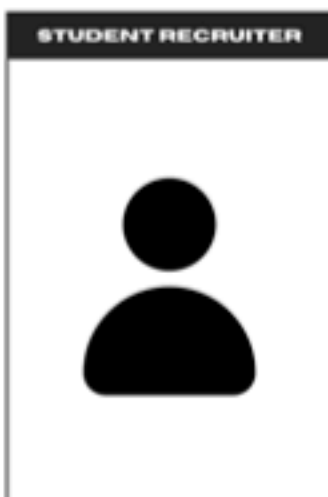
Ryan R. Michalski



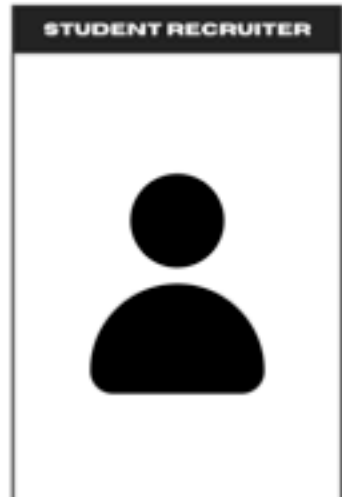
Brittany C. Wright



TBD



First M. Last



First M. Last

### 3. Chain of Command / Organizational Structure

All roles serve as critical functions within the committee, and the chain of command ensures procedural compliance and adherence to established expectations. Just as a single missing piece can compromise an entire bridge, each member's contribution is vital. Thank you for your service and dedication.

## CHAIN OF COMMAND



#### 3.1 Leadership Core

The Leadership Core provides internal management, ensuring strategic direction and operational stability.

- **Editor-in-Chief (EIC):** Provides vision and leadership, serving as the primary overseer of publications and committee decisions.

- **Operations Officer (OO):** Manages logistics, resources, and internal workflows to ensure smooth functioning of the committee.

### 3.2 Engagement Core

The Engagement Core ensures student-facing communication, visibility, and recruitment to strengthen participation.

- **Outreach Director:** Leads student engagement, promotion, and feedback to strengthen committee visibility and connections.
- **Student Recruiters (2):** Recruit new members, support outreach efforts, and build the leadership pipeline for future committee growth.

### 3.3 Faculty Advisor

The Faculty Advisor provides mentorship and professional guidance. This role is supportive only and carries no operational authority.

### 3.4 Roles, Responsibilities, and Duties

Each role within the committee carries specific responsibilities and duties to ensure accountability, balance, and effective function.

- **Editor-in-Chief (EIC)**  
 Responsibilities: Vision, leadership, final decision-making (fail-safe).  
 Duties: Chair meetings, approve submissions/events, oversee workflows, represent the committee.  
 Notes: Final decision authority is a fail-safe only, subject to checks and balances with the Operations Officer.
- **Operations Officer (OO)**  
 Responsibilities: Logistics, resources, schedules, finances, internal oversight.  
 Duties: Organize agendas/notes, track progress, secure supplies, step in for EIC if needed.  
 Notes: Acts as tethered counterpart to EIC; dual approval required for critical decisions.
- **Outreach Director**  
 Responsibilities: Student engagement, promotion, communication.  
 Duties: Manage outreach platforms, organize events, collect feedback, collaborate with recruiters.  
 Notes: Serves as the bridge between committee and campus community.
- **Student Recruiters (2)**  
 Responsibilities: Recruitment, student participation, leadership pipeline.  
 Duties: Host drives/sessions, create recruitment materials, track metrics, support Outreach

Director.

Notes: Entry-level leadership role and first step toward higher committee positions.

- **Faculty Advisor**

Responsibilities: Mentorship, guidance, professional advice.

Duties: Attend when invited, support student leaders, advise on university policies.

Notes: Provides oversight and mentorship without operational authority.

### **3.5 Committee Eligibility & Leadership Progression**

- **Recruiter** → required first step for all leadership positions.
- Leadership roles (Outreach, Operations, Editor) require at least one year of recruiter service.
- Exceptions are rare, only granted with comparable prior experience.
- This ensures pipeline continuity, leadership training, and fair progression.

### **4. Compliance & University Policies**

Ensure all activities, publications, and events operate within CMU rules, maintaining professionalism, integrity, and accountability.

Follow CMU's Student-Run Organization policies.

Uphold academic integrity standards.

Respect copyright and intellectual property.

Obtain approvals for events, recruitment, and space use.

Report questions to Faculty Advisor or Operations Officer.

### **5. Recruitment & Membership Growth**

Recruiters serve as the first point of entry into leadership.

Outreach through student org fairs, pre-law clubs, classroom visits, and digital campaigns.

Clear pathways to leadership ensure continuity.

Diversity in recruitment strengthens scholarship and perspectives.

### **6. Editorial Standards & Peer Review**

All work must be original, cited, and meet CMU academic integrity standards.

Peer review conducted by committee members prior to Faculty Advisor consultation.

Submissions evaluated on clarity, accuracy, contribution to legal scholarship.

Revisions required before final publication.

## **7. Publishing Model & Resources**

Hybrid model: digital-first with option for print compilations.

Annual volume with rolling online submissions.

Resources: CMU library, writing center, advisory faculty.

Open-access approach ensures accessibility.

## **8. Scope & Content**

Focused on legal scholarship, but inclusive of interdisciplinary work.

Acceptable content: research papers, case briefs, commentaries, policy analyses.

Must maintain professional tone and adhere to citation standards (Bluebook or APA).

## **9. Timeline & Milestones**

Recruitment: Fall semester.

Training & onboarding: Early fall.

Submissions: Rolling, with deadlines each semester.

Peer review: Completed within 4 weeks of submission.

Publication: End of spring semester for annual volume.

## **10. Long-Term Vision**

Establish CMU as a leader in student-run legal scholarship.

Build traditions for annual publication and conference presentations.

Expand partnerships with law schools, journals, and alumni.

Provide future leaders with a framework that is replicable and sustainable.

## **11. Resources & Policies**

All committee members are expected to stay informed of and comply with CMU's official policies and student organization guidelines. For the most current information, please refer to:

 [Central Michigan University Policies & Procedures](#)

## **Appendix A: L.A.W.S. Meeting Framework – Agenda**

**Purpose:** To ensure consistent, professional, and accountable meetings that uphold academic integrity and the committee’s mission.

### **Instructions:**

- The Editor-in-Chief or Operations Officer prepares the agenda prior to the meeting.
- Recorder (or Communication Coordinator) documents all minutes, decisions, and action items.
- Minutes should be distributed to all committee members within 48 hours.
- Use concise, factual language; Latin or formal terminology may be used for standard procedural phrases (e.g., *Ignorantia legis neminem excusat*).
- Clearly assign tasks with responsible parties and deadlines.

## **Appendix B: Minutes Template**

### **Purpose:**

To ensure consistent, professional, and accountable meetings that uphold the committee’s mission and standards of academic integrity.

### **Instructions:**

- The Editor-in-Chief (Chair) or Operations Officer prepares the agenda at least 48 hours before the meeting.
  - Minutes are recorded during the meeting by the designated Recorder (or Communication Coordinator if assigned).
  - Minutes must be shared with all members within 48 hours after the meeting.
-

## Meeting Agenda Template

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Location/Platform: \_\_\_\_\_

1. **Call to Order** – Confirm required members are present.

**Quorum Requirement:** A meeting may only proceed if a **quorum** is present. For the **L.A.W.S. Committee**, a quorum is defined as a **simple majority of voting members (50% + 1)**, including at least one member of the **Leadership Core (Editor-in-Chief or Operations Officer)**.

2. **Review of Previous Minutes / Action Items** – Check progress on assignments.
  3. **Member Updates** – Each officer/subcommittee provides a brief update.
  4. **New Business / Discussion Items** – Present proposals, issues, and upcoming deadlines.
  5. **Assignment of Next Steps** – Clarify responsibilities and deadlines.
  6. **Closing / Adjournment** – Confirm next meeting date and time.
- 

## Meeting Minutes Template

### L.A.W.S. Committee – Meeting Minutes

- **Date/Time:** \_\_\_\_\_
- **Location/Platform:** \_\_\_\_\_
- **Chair (EIC/OO):** \_\_\_\_\_
- **Recorder:** \_\_\_\_\_
- **Attendance:** \_\_\_\_\_ (50+1)

1. **Call to Order** – Meeting commenced at: \_\_\_\_\_

2. **Review of Previous Minutes / Action Items** – Approved / Amended

3. **Member Updates** – Key points summarized:

- Editor-in-Chief: \_\_\_\_\_
- Operations Officer: \_\_\_\_\_
- Outreach Director: \_\_\_\_\_
- Student Recruiters: \_\_\_\_\_
- Faculty Advisor: \_\_\_\_\_

4. **New Business / Discussion Items** – Summary of proposals, issues, and decisions:

- Item 1: \_\_\_\_\_
- Item 2: \_\_\_\_\_
- Item 3: \_\_\_\_\_
- Item 4: \_\_\_\_\_
- Item 5: \_\_\_\_\_
- Item 6: \_\_\_\_\_

5. **Assignment of Next Steps** –

- Task: \_\_\_\_\_ | Responsible: \_\_\_\_\_ | Due: \_\_\_\_\_
- Task: \_\_\_\_\_ | Responsible: \_\_\_\_\_ | Due: \_\_\_\_\_
- Task: \_\_\_\_\_ | Responsible: \_\_\_\_\_ | Due: \_\_\_\_\_
- Task: \_\_\_\_\_ | Responsible: \_\_\_\_\_ | Due: \_\_\_\_\_
- Task: \_\_\_\_\_ | Responsible: \_\_\_\_\_ | Due: \_\_\_\_\_
- Task: \_\_\_\_\_ | Responsible: \_\_\_\_\_ | Due: \_\_\_\_\_

6. Closing / Adjournment – Meeting adjourned at: \_\_\_\_:\_\_\_\_

Next Meeting: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ Time \_\_\_\_:\_\_\_\_ Location \_\_\_\_\_

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## Appendix C – Governance Principles & Fail-Safe Authority

### Purpose:

To ensure the L.A.W.S. Committee operates collaboratively, efficiently, and fairly, while protecting against power imbalances and maintaining accountabilities for all members, including the Editor-in-Chief (EIC).

### 1. Collaborative Decision-Making:

- All committee decisions are made collectively whenever possible.
- Majority votes determine the outcome for routine matters, policies, and publications.

### 2. EIC Fail-Safe Authority:

- The EIC’s “final decision” role is **strictly a fail-safe** used only when the committee is deadlocked and cannot reach consensus.
- This authority does **not override standard committee votes** on membership, budgets, or policy changes.
- Fail-safe decisions must be **documented with rationale** and communicated to the committee.

### 3. Dual-Approval Requirements:

- For critical actions (e.g., officer appointments, committee removals, or major procedural changes), both the EIC **and** Operations Officer must approve.
- This ensures checks and balances and prevents unilateral control.

### 4. Accountability Measures:

- The EIC is responsible for active participation and cannot delegate all duties without oversight.
- Committee members may review performance and raise concerns to the group; sustained neglect or misconduct may trigger the **committee vote for removal** as outlined in the handbook.

## 5. Protection Against Power Imbalance:

- This framework prevents any single member from dominating operations.
- It reinforces transparency, shared responsibility, and sustainability for future leaders.
- All roles, including the EIC, are subject to the governance rules of the committee.

### Notes:

- This appendix complements the numbered roles in the handbook and clarifies why fail-safe mechanisms exist.
  - It ensures the publication can continue effectively even in cases of deadlock or temporary absence of key officers.
- 

## Appendix D: Membership Procedures & Accountability

### Purpose:

To maintain integrity, professionalism, and fairness within the committee.

## Grounds for Dismissal

### A member may be removed for:

- Failure to meet assigned responsibilities on multiple occasions.
- Repeated unexcused absences from meetings/events.
- Breach of academic integrity (e.g., plagiarism, misrepresentation).
- Conduct unbecoming of the committee (disruptive, discriminatory, or unethical behavior).
- Violation of Central Michigan University's Student Organization policies.

## Dismissal Process

1. Concern raised and documented by a committee officer.
2. Private discussion with the member to allow for correction.
3. If unresolved, formal vote by the Leadership Core (EIC + Operations Officer + Outreach Director) with Faculty Advisor present.
  - **Majority vote required for dismissal. 50+1**

## **Appeals Process**

- A dismissed member may submit a written appeal to the Faculty Advisor within 7 days.
- The Faculty Advisor, in consultation with the Leadership Core, reviews the case.
- The decision of the Faculty Advisor is final.