



# The State Bar of California

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**OPEN SESSION**  
**AGENDA ITEM O-406**  
**JUNE 2020**  
**COMMITTEE OF BAR EXAMINERS**

**DATE:** June 19, 2020

**TO:** Members, Committee of Bar Examiners

**FROM:** Natalie Leonard, Principal Program Analyst

**SUBJECT:** Approval of 2019-2020 Educational Standards Goals

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Below are the goals proposed for Educational Standards for 2019-2020 and their current status.

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1. Implement the rules and guidelines approved by the Committee of Bar Examiners and the Board of Trustees to create a path to accreditation for qualifying law schools offering online J.D. programs.

**Complete.**

2. Implement avenues of engagement with law schools by forming and coordinating the work of the Committee on State Bar Accredited and Registered Schools (CSBARS) and the Law School Council (LSC) and a new e-newsletter. Continue to host the Law School Assembly and Registrars' Meeting.

**Complete. Meetings commenced on April 22, 2019 for Law School Council and April 23, 2019 for CSBARS. Newsletters have been issued quarterly, with the most recent issue sent in June focusing on response to COVID and future bar exam studies. While tentative dates were set for the Law School Assembly and Registrars' Meeting as live gatherings, conditions are being monitored to determine the best timing and format for these gatherings.**

3. Review rules to: 1) create a modified “deemed accredited” status for law schools that earn accreditation from a regional accreditor and also meet specified State Bar responsibilities and disclosures; 2) ensure rules embody best practices in accreditation; 3) review major change guidelines as requested by the Committee.

**CSBARS reviewed the history of Accreditation in June and met in October to discuss Guiding Principles and Values. The Committee received an update in December and CSBARS has been editing a proposed rules package since then. While previously scheduled for presentation to the Committee in June, it is now scheduled for presentation in August due to a shift in priorities related to COVID-19.**

4. Review applications for registration or accreditation of law schools, as well as petitions for major changes or waivers from existing registered and accredited schools.

**Applications will be presented to the Committee as they are received. The Committee has reviewed and approved three applications for major change from accredited law schools: John F Kennedy University College of Law; Santa Barbara and Ventura Colleges of Law; and Trinity Law School. The Committee also reviewed initial applications from four schools that are now scheduled for inspection: Abraham Lincoln School of Law, Concord Law School, St Francis Law School, and Northwestern California University School of Law. These inspection reports will be brought to a future meeting. In addition, both California School of Law and California Desert Trial Academy have begun the application process for presentation at a future meeting.**

**The Committee has also reviewed a number of major change requests related to campus sales, waivers, and campus moves.**

5. Participate in the periodic inspection of prospective and current registered and accredited law schools. Consider reports of interim and periodic inspections of accredited and registered law schools and inspections performed in response to the issuance of Notices of Noncompliance; generally monitor the compliant operation of both California-accredited and registered law schools and the overall educational requirements for applicants seeking to qualify to take and pass the California Bar Examination.

**Ongoing. The Committee has reviewed periodic inspection reports from Taft Law School and Oak Brook College of Law. Pending are inspection reports from Peoples College of Law and San Francisco Law School. Upcoming this year, as health circumstances allow, the following additional schools will undergo periodic inspections: American Heritage University School of Law, Humphreys University, Drivon School of Law, San Francisco International University, Thomas Jefferson School of Law and University of La Verne College of Law.**

6. Support the State Bar’s 2019 strategic initiatives related to law school diversity, retention and performance on the Bar examination.

**Ongoing.** The State Bar recently finalized the new data collection categories, issued memorandum on data handling practices, and sent a survey to schools to determine how best to roll out this new data collection step in 2020. The new format will be presented to schools in Summer 2020.

7. Continue to pursue mandatory accreditation for unaccredited law schools in accordance with the Rules and Guidelines approved by the Committee of Bar Examiners and the Board of Trustees.

**TBD.**

## **FISCAL/PERSONNEL IMPACT**

None

## **AMENDMENTS TO RULES OF THE STATE BAR**

None

## **AMENDMENTS TO BOARD OF TRUSTEES POLICY MANUAL**

None

## **STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS & OBJECTIVES**

None

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that the Committee of Bar Examiners approve the 2019 – 2020 Educational Standards goals set forth above.

## **PROPOSED MOTION**

Should the Committee of Bar Examiners agree with the staff recommendations, the following motion should be made:

**MOVE,** that the 2019 – 2020 Educational Standards goals be approved.