



The State Bar *of California*

OPEN SESSION AGENDA ITEM O-411 AUGUST 2021 COMMITTEE OF BAR EXAMINERS

DATE: August 20, 2021

TO: Members, Committee of Bar Examiners

FROM: Natalie Leonard, Principal Program Analyst, Office of Admissions

SUBJECT: Approval of 2020–2021 Educational Standards Goals and Accomplishments

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Below is a summary of the 2021-2022 Goals and Accomplishments for Educational Standards.

BACKGROUND

1. Maintain law school engagement by conducting meetings with the Committee on State Bar Accredited and Registered Schools (CSBARS) and the Law School Council (LSC), publishing the Law School Deans' eNewsletter, and hosting annual Law School Assembly and Registrars' Meetings.

The Law School Council met twice this year, resulting in improved communication with deans and students regarding online State Bar examinations, as well as improvements to the language in the online Applicant Portal for students. CSBARS met throughout the year to complete its feedback and recommendations related to the new rules for accredited law schools to be implemented on January 1, 2022 and their accompanying guidelines. The Law School Assembly and Registrars' Meeting will take place via Zoom on September 28 and 29, respectively. Quarterly e-newsletters were distributed throughout the year, with the next issue planned for distribution later in August 2021.

2. Recommend a proposal to revise the Accredited Law School Rules to: 1) create a modified “jointly 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) address requests from the Committee.

The Board of Trustees adopted the Committee’s proposed Rules for California Accredited Law Schools, effective January 1, 2022. ([Board of Trustees’ Directive, January 2019, Item 702, p.5](#)) The Committee is beginning the process of reviewing proposed guidelines created based on feedback from the Committee on State Bar Accredited and Registered Schools.

3. Review petitions for registration and accreditation, as well as existing registered and accredited schools’ petitions for changes.

Ongoing as received. Applications for accreditation are pending from Abraham Lincoln University School of Law and California Desert Trial Academy. Recently, California School of Law withdrew its petition voluntarily.

The Committee extended its waiver for fixed facility law schools to teach classes online, and reviewed petitions by three accredited law schools to add hybrid JD programs.

4. Regulate law schools by monitoring compliance through inspections, reporting, and other actions as directed by the Committee, addressing noncompliance as needed.

Three law schools were inspected pursuant to Notices of Noncompliance with Rule 4.160(N), the Minimum, Cumulative Five-Year Bar Exam Pass Rate.

Four periodic inspections were completed, four more are in progress, and six more are scheduled for fall 2021. Three progress reports were received documenting improved or sustained compliance.

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

Data analysis is underway. Data collection is entering Phase II of III, adding expanded gender categories as well as attrition tracking to the Annual Report metrics to be reported by the law schools in fall 2021.

6. 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. Review the existing rules and guidelines to update them as necessary.

TBD.

FISCAL/PERSONNEL IMPACT

None

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Committee of Bar Examiners approve the Report on 2020 – 2021 Educations Standards goals and accomplishments set forth above.

PROPOSED MOTION

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

MOVE, that the report on 2020–2021 Educational Standards goals and accomplishments be approved.