



OPEN SESSION

AGENDA ITEM O-400

JUNE 2022

COMMITTEE OF BAR EXAMINERS

DATE: June 17, 2022

TO: Members, Committee of Bar Examiners

FROM: Natalie Leonard, Principal Program Analyst

SUBJECT: Action on Major Change – Change of Name and Acquiescence to non-JD Programs - Degrees in Public Administration – University of La Verne College of Law

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

University of La Verne College of Law (La Verne COL) has submitted this application to the Committee of Bar Examiners (Committee) seeking the Committee's acquiescence to the law school's planned acquisition, absorption, and administering of the public administration academic programming currently offered and delivered at the University of La Verne College of Business and Public Administration. (Attachment A). Upon completion of the change, the law school will change its name to the University of La Verne College of Law and Public Service. The law school would like to make this change effective in August 2022.

Staff recommends that the Committee approve the name change and acquiesce to the proposal, because the law school appears to demonstrate its ability to carry out the program without detracting from its JD program. Staff notes that it also provides the opportunity to enhance the program.

BACKGROUND

University of La Verne College of Law is located in Ontario, California. The law school voluntarily returned to accreditation by the Committee of Bar Examiners after a prior period as a law school approved by the American Bar Association (ABA). The law school is in the process of teaching out its students in its ABA-approved program, and it enrolled its first California accredited class in fall 2020.

Its parent institution, the University of La Verne, is institutionally accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) as is the University's public administration program that would be absorbed into the law school. The University's Master of Public Administration degree is also accredited by the Network of Schools of Public Policy, Affairs and Administration (NASPAA). The University has also submitted this request to WASC for approval.

The law school was last inspected in 2021 and found to be compliant. According to its 2020 Annual Report, the law school enrolls 266 students in its JD program. Its Minimum, Cumulative, Five-Year Bar Exam Pass Rate (MPR) trend for the most recent three years is: 2019 MPR 69 percent, 2020 MPR 66 percent; and 2021 MPR 75.1 percent.

To offer a professional degree in addition to a JD degree, an accredited law school must apply for Committee acquiescence of a professional law degree program and provide the Committee any other information it requests to assist it in evaluating whether the proposed non-JD professional program will detract from the professional law degree program pursuant to rule 4.160(D)(8).

In order to be approved, the request must demonstrate to the satisfaction of the Committee that its proposal complies with the curriculum and other substantive program requirements adopted by the Committee, and that receiving acquiescence to grant a professional law degree in addition to the Juris Doctor will not detract from the law school's ability to maintain its Juris Doctor Degree program in compliance with the Rules for Accredited Law Schools. The school must also agree to disclosures that clearly communicate the nature and limitations of the program.

The Committee's acquiescence in a law school's professional law degree programs other than for the Juris Doctor degree is not, and law schools must not represent it to be, approval of the quality of any such program.

DISCUSSION

La Verne COL is an accredited law school offering a fixed-facility JD program, with approval to offer some classes and certain study periods online through distance learning.

The law school is part of a larger university that includes a College of Business and Public Administration. Under this proposal, the full public administration program will be transferred to and operated out of the law school. The program will bring its full staff and funding, ultimately reporting to the law school dean. The additional degrees offered will be: Doctor of Public Administration (DPA); Master of Public Administration (MPA); and Bachelor of Science in Public Administration (BSPA). The law school plans to maintain both WASC and NASPAA accreditation for these programs.

These programs have had a previous association with the law school. When the law school operated under ABA approval, it offered a joint JD/MPA program. This was popular with the many law students at the school who plan to pursue careers in government and public service. By merging the law schools and offering relevant courses cross-listed in both the public administration program and the JD program, the law school will again be able to offer this joint

degree, with 8-9 credits of overlap, without compromising a JD student's bar examination preparation. The joint program will continue to contain bar exam courses, while providing JD students with the chance to take a wider range of relevant electives.

The current dean of the law school holds not only a JD but also a PhD, which will be helpful as he leads the merged institution. The merger does not appear to detract or distract from the mission of the JD program, but rather to enhance it. First, the full funding and staff of the program will transfer to the law school, and the program has already demonstrated that it is successful and fully built-out as a program. Next, it will address student demand for the return of a joint JP/MPA program and the revenue opportunity that comes with this option.

In addition, the law school has the physical space and technology to operate the program. Currently, the public administration program meets on Saturday in the law school classrooms. Under this proposal, the programs will be able to share classes throughout the week, adding more scheduling opportunities for both the JD students and the public administration students.

The law school had in place a successful grading plan when the joint JD/MPA program was offered in the past and it can call upon that program again. The other programs are not expected to interact with the JD program.

Finally, La Verne COL agrees to provide clear, complete, informative, and transparent communication to prospective and current students in the non-JD program, operating the degree programs in compliance with any terms, conditions and restrictions set by the Committee within its jurisdiction. This includes specifically informing students that these other programs do not contribute toward qualifying a student to take any bar examination, and that only cross-listed courses may count toward the JD program. The law school is also aware that this non-JD program does not contain the courses needed for those who have earned a foreign first degree in law to establish eligibility to take the California bar exam.

Staff recommends approval of the law school's proposed name change because it will clearly communicate its offerings to the public once this acquisition is complete.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Committee receive and file the University of La Verne College of Law's application and approve the law school's name change to University of La Verne College of Law and Government Policy, and acquiesce to the acquisition, absorption, and administration of the University of La Verne's public administration program which will offer the Bachelor of Science in Public Administration, the Master of Public Administration, the Doctor of Public Administration, and the joint JD/MPA). Further, it is recommended that the law school provide a summary of its progress as to the acquisition in its 2022 Annual Periodic Compliance Report.

PROPOSED MOTION

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

MOVE, that the Committee of Bar Examiners receive and file the University of La Verne College of Law's application, approve the name change of University of La Verne College of Law to University of La Verne College of Law and Government Policy and acquiesce to the immediate acquisition, absorption, and administration of the University of La Verne's public administration program currently housed in the University of La Verne's School of Business and Public Administration, which will offer the Bachelor of Science in Public Administration, the Master of Public Administration, the Doctor of Public Administration, and the joint JD/MPA.

FURTHER MOVE, that the law school provide a summary of its progress as to the acquisition in its 2022 Annual Report.

ATTACHMENT LIST

- A.** University of La Verne College of Law Application for Acquiescence to a non-JD Program

Ms. Natalie Leonard
Principal Program Analyst,
Educational Standards--Office of Admissions
The State Bar of California
180 Howard Street, San Francisco, CA 94105

April 15, 2022

Sent Via Regular Mail and Email:

Re: Request for Major Change

Dear Ms. Natalie Leonard:

Pursuant to Rule 4.165 of Title 4. Admissions and Educational Standards, Division 2. Accredited Law School Rules, the University of Law College of Law requests the Committee's approval to acquire, absorb, and administer the public administration academic programming currently offered and delivered at the University of La Verne College of Business and Public Administration. This change will have no impact on or require any alterations or adjustments to the College of Law's current program of legal education. Additionally, the College of Law's operational acquisition and absorption of the University of La Verne's public administration programs creates additional value to our current law students who desire a dual/joint degree in law and public administration (JD/MPA) in that it will authorize the Dean of the College of Law to have managerial and administrative control over the quality of academic programming and faculty retained to deliver public administration course/subject matter content.

Vision, Mission, and Foundational Rationale:

The College of Law is located in downtown Ontario, California, adjacent to the City of Ontario's Government Center. The College of Law has a long-standing partnership with our local and regional community and governmental stakeholders. Additionally, for several years (including when it operated as an ABA accredited program), the College of Law has offered, and continues to offer, dual degree opportunities in law and public administration (i.e., JD/MPA) to its law students, in partnership with the University of La Verne's College of Business and Public Management. For years we have graduated students who seek legal careers with government and/or non-profit entities. Our community stakeholders and partners look to and regard the University of La Verne College of Law to be a center for legal advocacy, education, and programming. The acquisition and absorption of the University of La Verne's public administration program is a natural fit for the College of Law and will result in several

positive externalities and synergies for law students, public administration students, faculty, and our surrounding communities.

With this acquisition and absorption of the University's public administration academic programs, the College of Law will change its name to the *University of La Verne College of Law and Public Service*.

With this acquisition and absorption of the University's public administration academic programs, the University of La Verne College of Law and Public Service will be a robust center for the study of law, governance and public service, graduating legal and public administrator professionals, practitioners, and thought leaders in law, governance, and public service sectors.

Academic Programming:

The JD program as currently articulated in the College of Law's Manual of Academic Policies and Procedures (the "MAPP") will remain the same, except as to the College of Law's current dual degree programming which can be found in Appendix B of the MAPP. Appendix B details the law school's academic policies regarding the pursuit and award of its dual JD/MPA degree.

In 2020, the College of Law voluntarily resigned its ABA accreditation and reaffirmed its California Bar accreditation. As a result, the College of Law was required to eliminate its autonomy to grant elective credit for courses taken in the University's public administration program because the College of Law had no control over or the ability to hold such programming accountable to the rigorous educational standards and expectation of the Office of Admissions of the California State Bar.

With the acquisition and absorption of the University's public administration academic programming, both the law and public administration programs will answer to and be under the administrative authority of the Dean of the College of Law. Accordingly, all faculty in both the law and public administration programs will be subject to the oversight, supervision, and administrative authority of the College of Law dean. Additionally, it is acknowledged that the Dean and/or any future Dean must satisfy the qualifications as prescribed by the accreditation rules of the California Committee of Bar Examiners. Given the above, Appendix B of the College's MAPP will be revised to provide dual degree students the ability to earn 6-9 units of credit in the public administration program that they may transfer and count towards the 88 units required for their JD degrees.

This initiative will also provide our CalBar students the same and similar opportunities offered by ABA schools throughout the state of California (and the country).

Other than the above-described changes to the College of Law's Dual Degree Program, the acquisition and absorption of the university's public administration program will have no other impact on the College of Law's JD programming.

Organizational Structure:

Organizationally, the College of Law will reorganize its administrative infrastructure to adopt a two Associate Dean model resulting in an Associate Dean of Law and Associate Dean of Public Administration, each having administrative oversight of their academic programming ensuring each are in compliance with their respective academic policies and procedures, as well as with their respective accreditation standards. I have attached a copy of the proposed organizational structure. Both Associate Deans will report to the Dean of the College of Law.

Capacity:

The College of Law has the capacity and physical infrastructure to serve and deliver both the JD and the Public Administration programs with respect to classrooms, seating capacities, faculty offices, administrative services, staffing, parking, student services, OIT, and library resources. Additionally, the entire public administration program, faculty, staff, with its corresponding university budget and funding is being acquired and absorbed. Accordingly, the College of Law's budget and funding for its JD programming will not be impacted, and in fact, will be additionally fortified and supplemented with the budget and funding currently supporting the public administration programming.

Currently, the Doctor of Public Administration program is delivered only on Saturdays, and currently is utilizing the College of Law facilities.

Doctor of Public Administration, Master in Public Administration, Bachelor of Science in Public Administration:

Specifically, the College of Law will be acquiring, absorbing and assuming the administration and delivery of the University's Doctor of Public Administration, Master of Public Administration, and its Bachelor of Science in Public Administration.

- The Doctor of Public Administration (DPA) program is designed for professionals with five or more years of work experience who wish to become the next generation of outstanding civic leaders and professionals. Graduates of the program are ready to assume vital roles as insightful and thoughtful contributors to a broad spectrum of public sector organizations, as well as nonprofits, municipal government, and a variety of quasi-governmental agencies.

The program is face-to-face and consists of 54 units and can be completed in four to eight years. Students take three classes per term for three years, with classes taking place on Saturdays to accommodate full-time work schedules. The third year is focused on each student's individual research and following years are for the development of a dissertation. After 3 years of course work students move to continuous enrollment/dissertation units. The DPA is WASC accredited.

- The Master of Public Administration (MPA) program at the University of La Verne prepares students for careers in public and nonprofit administration in local, state, and national government, and strengthens the competences of those currently serving in these fields. The MPA program offers an innovative and practical curriculum that stresses intellectual and theoretical foundations for professionals preparing to take on socially responsible roles in public leadership and service. The MPA program is 38 units and is available via face-to-face and hybrid modality.

The MPA is accredited by the Network of Schools of Public Policy, Affairs, and Administration (NASPAA).

The MPA offers degree specializations to address the individual career needs of our students:

- Urban Management and Affairs
- Nonprofit;
- Public Health; and

- JD/MPA Dual Degree Program.

Students can select a concentration or propose electives that best addresses their career path.

- The Bachelor of Science (B.S.) in Public Administration program at the University of La Verne focuses on the theory, applications, and practice of public sector management. Students gain experience and skills through class participation, special projects, and research reports.

To provide maximum convenience and flexibility, the program is offered online and is available at several locations throughout California, including Bakersfield, Irvine, Ontario, and Rio Hondo Community College, and Vandenberg Space Force Base.

The Bachelor's in Public Administration degree program requires a minimum of 40 total semester hours. Students must complete 28 semester hours of core requirements and 12 semester hours of electives. Courses include Management of Change and Conflict, Administrative Processes, and Policy Making Process.

The BS in Public Administration is accredited by WASC.

Accreditation:

All academic programming to be offered by the new College of Law and Public Service is and will continue to be accredited: JD (CalBar/WASC); DPA (WASC); MPA (NASPAA/WASC); and BSPA (WASC).

Name Change

With this change, the College of Law's name will change to the University of La Verne College of Law and Public Service.

Expedited Request:

We understand that we are required under the rules to provide you at least 180 days before making the change. We ask that you consider this request on an expedited basis so we can launch this initiative in fall of 2022, preferable in August.

Thank you for your consideration. I stand by should you have any questions, concerns or need further explanation.

Sincerely,

Kevin S. Marshall
JD, MPA, PHD
The Frank Lizarraga Endowed Dean and Professor of Law.