



**OPEN SESSION
AGENDA ITEM O-401
JANUARY 2023
COMMITTEE OF BAR EXAMINERS**

DATE: January 27, 2023

TO: Members, Committee of Bar Examiners

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

SUBJECT: Action on Major Change of Administrative Headquarters – Pacific Coast University School of Law

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Pacific Coast University School of Law (Pacific Coast) has filed a major change request set forth in Attachment A requesting permission from the Committee of Bar Examiners (Committee) to move to a smaller administrative headquarters in its current building. The reason for the move is the law school's approved transition from the fixed-facility category to the distance learning category effective fall 2023, which reduces the law school's reduced need for physical space. The law school requests to move to 1650 Ximeno Avenue, Suite 240, Long Beach, CA 90804.

BACKGROUND

Under Unaccredited Law School Rule 4.246 "[a] registered law school contemplating a major change must notify the Committee and obtain its prior approval before making the change. The notice must explain in detail any effect the change might have on the law school's compliance." Major changes include the law school's current request to change the location of the law school's administrative office."

Pacific Coast University School of Law is a registered, unaccredited, law school. It is currently a fixed-facility law school teaching classes online under a pandemic-related waiver from the

Committee. The Committee has also approved the law school's permanent change to the distance learning category effective fall 2023.

DISCUSSION

Because Pacific Coast is not teaching classes in a physical classroom and will transition permanently to teaching all classes online when it enters the registered, unaccredited distance learning category in fall 2023, the law school requests to move to a smaller space in its current office building. This will reduce both cost and space by about 75 percent, with a lease available for seven years and an option to renew. Rather than four classrooms, the law school will maintain one classroom for study, meeting or trial practice as needed. The law school will no longer have a physical library because it will provide library resources electronically.

The Committee approved Pacific Coast's distance learning program in June 2022. The approved JD program no longer requires students to take any portion of their classes in a physical classroom, so the law school does not need the space it previously used to teach all classes online. Pacific Coast already teaches all of its classes online under a waiver from the Committee related to the pandemic using Zoom, and it plans to continue to do so.

The law school plans to provide an electronic library going forward, so it will not maintain library space. Students will be able to meet with law school personnel by appointment in the new space. The law school is open to holding specific office hours if requested but does not expect to need to do so based on the small number of requests currently being received. All classes and services are now available online.

The law school expects that the students will not be affected by the move in any way since teaching and services are in the cloud, and no students are currently required to come to campus.

The law school has submitted a proposed floor plan and lease contract and is prepared to undertake a video visit with staff.

Because the new space appears to fulfill the law school's planned needs, based on their trial period teaching online classes, while reducing overhead costs, staff recommends approval.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Committee of Bar Examiners receives and files Pacific Coast University School of Law's Request for Major Change seeking approval to move from its current location to 1650 Ximeno Ave, Suite 240, Long, Beach, CA 90804 as set forth in Attachment A and approve the request effective immediately. The Committee should require Pacific Coast to notify staff when the move is complete and undergo a video visit of the new location, or if the move is cancelled for any reason prior to March 1, 2023.

PROPOSED MOTION

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

MOVED that the Committee of Bar Examiners receive and file Pacific Coast University School of Law's Request for Major Change seeking approval to move its administrative headquarters to 1650 Ximeno Avenue, Suite 240, Long Beach, CA 90804 as set forth in Attachment A, and approve this request effective immediately.

FURTHER MOVE, that the law school update staff as to the conclusion of the move, and undergo a video visit of the new location upon completion of the move, or notify staff promptly if the move does not complete prior to March 1, 2023.

ATTACHMENT LIST

- A.** Pacific Coast University School of Law Major Change Request – Move Administrative Headquarters to 1650 Ximeno Avenue, Suite 240, Long Beach, CA 90804

**PACIFIC COAST UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF LAW**

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LONG BEACH, CALIFORNIA 90804
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**Application of Pacific Coast University School of Law
for Approval of Major Change in the Form of
Changing the Location of
the Law School's Administrative Office**

Pursuant to Rules 4.245 and 4.246(B) of the *Unaccredited Law School Rules* – and as a natural and integral component of its plan to resolve itself into a registered distance-learning law school in compliance with Guideline 5.3(C) of the *Guidelines for Unaccredited Law School Rules* -- Pacific Coast University School of Law (hereinafter referred to as “PCU”) hereby applies to the California State Bar Committee of Bar Examiners (hereinafter referred to as the “Committee”) for approval of a Major Change in the form of changing the location of the law school’s administrative office.

At its meeting held June 17, 2022, the Committee granted PCU’s application for approval of a Major Change in the form of changing its category from that of a registered unaccredited fixed-facility law school to that of a registered unaccredited distance-learning law school. PCU thereafter embarked upon the process of locating alternative premises for its administrative office for the purpose to retrench the size of its physical office in view of the substantially reduced need for space resulting from the Committee’s approval of PCU’s prospective conversion into a distance-learning law school. Those search efforts included discussions with PCU’s current landlord exploring the possibility of entering into a new lease agreement whereby the premises presently occupied by PCU might be scaled down to more closely align with the law school’s current reduced needs for space – or, in the alternative, PCU would lease other space within the same building in which it is now situated.

Negotiations with PCU’s present landlord, Regency Centers, L.P. (hereinafter referred to as “Regency”), ultimately proved fruitful – such that a lease agreement was entered into by and between PCU and Regency whereby PCU will relocate to a space situated in the same building (one floor down) in which the law school is presently located. More specifically, on the afternoon of November 2, 2022, PCU’s dean received notice from Regency that the lease agreement, dated October 31, 2022, had been fully executed – thereby definitively confirming that PCU would in fact be relocating its offices subject, of course, to the Committee’s approval of the intended relocation.

The following morning, November 3, 2022, the dean advised Educational Standards Principal Program Analyst Natalie Leonard during a videoconference that he had been advised the previous afternoon that the lease agreement had been signed by Regency and thus formalized. It was then agreed during that videoconference that PCU’s within application for approval of the

prospective change of location would be submitted to the Committee not later than December 15, 2022. (A true and correct copy of the fully executed lease agreement, together with a separate “floor plan,” is attached to this Application.)

Following is a summary description of PCU’s prospective new premises and the lease thereon, including comparisons and contrasts with the law school’s current facilities and lease agreement:

1. PCU’s current administrative office comprises the third floor of 1650 Ximeno Avenue in Long Beach, California. Its prospective new premises are situated one floor below, on the second floor of the same building;
2. The lease term for the new premises is seven years, with an option to renew on PCU’s part for an additional five-year term;
3. The monthly lease payment for the premises currently occupied by the law school was REDACTED. As is set forth more fully at the bottom of page 1 of the attached lease agreement, the monthly rent for the new space will be REDACTED for the first year of the lease term, with minimal annual increases scheduled over the course of the initial seven-year lease term;
4. PCU’s premises, comprising the entire third floor of the building, is approximately 8,500 square feet. The new space on the second floor, one floor below the current premises, encompasses 2,052 square feet;
5. In that PCU will continue conducting virtually all of its classes online – that is, synchronously and interactively via the Zoom videoconferencing platform (as has been the case since the onset of the Covid-19 Pandemic) – there is no need or use for all of the four classrooms that PCU’s current premises include. As such, the new premises will include only one classroom, for periodic use on an as-needed basis for, by way of example, the practicum Trial Techniques course, and/or as a study or meeting area for students;
6. The new space will include four inner offices – three of which are designated for use by the administrative staff and one that will be reserved for faculty-student conferences and as a study room on an as-needed and as-requested basis;
7. Both the current and new premises include a waiting-room area, a reception space and a kitchenette;
8. As a registered unaccredited distance-learning law school, PCU will not be required to maintain hardbound library resources. (Guideline 6.2.) Accordingly, the new premises will not include a discrete physical law library. That said, PCU will, of course, continue, as it does now, to provide all required resources to students and faculty in electronic form – and keep available in its administrative office a current, standard text or treatise for each course or subject in the curriculum for which such a text or treatise is available. Moreover, the school intends to retain select portions of its library resources for its students’ use; and

9. PCU will continue to provide its students a high level of administrative and academic services and support. By the use of email, telephone, text messaging and Zoom conferences, students have – and at all times since the advent of the Covid-19 Pandemic have had -- ready, essentially immediate, access to PCU's dean and administrators. (By way of example, the dean's cellphone number is provided to all students.). As such, students are not required to wait until they are physically present on campus in order to engage in an in-person meeting to discuss an issue. Instead, PCU students are able, as they have been throughout the Pandemic, to schedule and attend meetings with the law school's dean and/or registrar at any time during regular business hours. So, it is currently contemplated that the campus will remain open to students on an appointment basis. It is further contemplated, though, that the law school will set regular hours for student physical visitation in the event it is later determined that a need for such a regular schedule is necessary to fully serve the students' needs. Given the experience of the past two-plus years, however, no exigent need in this respect is anticipated.

Based on the foregoing, PCU respectfully submits that the contemplated new premises for its administrative office – providing, as they do, more-than-ample workspace; file-storage space; and conference and meeting facilities, including a classroom -- will prove eminently suited to its students' and faculty's needs.

Respectfully submitted,

Dated: December 14, 2022

Basil G. Dezes

Basil G. Dezes, Dean
and Interim President