



OPEN SESSION
AGENDA ITEM O-400
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 to Adjust Credit Count for Online JD Program – Pacific Coast University School of Law

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

While the Committee of Bar Examiners (Committee) has already approved Pacific Coast University School of Law's transfer from the unaccredited fixed-facility category to the unaccredited distance learning category effective fall 2023, Pacific Coast submits the request set forth in Attachment A to further modify the curriculum to allow an extra 30 minutes per class session for each class that is part of the JD curriculum.

BACKGROUND

Pacific Coast University School of Law is an unaccredited, fixed-facility law school located in Long Beach, California. According to its 2022 Annual Report, the law school enrolls 38 students in its JD program. The law school's most recent pass rates on the First-Year Law Students' Examination were 28.6 percent in June 2022, and 16.7 percent for October 2022. Its most recent cumulative five-year bar pass rate according to its 2022 disclosure pursuant to California Business and Professions Code 6061.7(a) is 37.6 percent. Note that for unaccredited law schools, this calculation includes all individuals who passed the bar exam during that five-year period regardless of when they graduated.

In August 2020, Pacific Coast completed its transition from accredited law school to unaccredited, fixed-facility law school. Since then, it has reorganized its schedule from semesters to quarters, taught classes online under a waiver from the Committee due to the pandemic and transitioned to a schedule of three fifteen-week semesters.

In June 2022, the Committee approved the law school's permanent transfer from the fixed-facility category to the distance category effective fall 2023. ([Item O-405, Committee of Bar Examiners Meeting, June 17, 2022](#)).

Now, the law school requests a single specific modification to the approved distance learning program, increasing the length of each class period to 3.5 hours, instead of the 3-hour class periods originally requested.

The law school is therefore requesting the advance permission that it needs pursuant to Unaccredited Law School Rule 4.246, which requires that registered law schools request the Committee's advance permission before making certain changes, such as offering a new law school program. (Rule 4.246(E)). Because the law school will be changing the length each of the courses in the JD program, a major change is required.

DISCUSSION

Pacific Coast University School of Law's distance learning program is ready to launch in fall 2023, but they would like to make one final change to the class length.

In all other aspects, Pacific Coast is on track to launch its distance learning JD program in fall 2023. The law school has timely met the three milestones set forth by the Committee and staff so far: 1) the curriculum and credit content; 2) sample class syllabi for the distance category program with additional syllabi expected in 2023; and 2) sample transcripts submitted to staff for evaluation. The law school has also advised that it is prepared to timely meet the remaining two milestones: 1) providing a copy of the policy that establishes procedures for verifying each student's preparation and study; and 2) providing the law school's methods and metrics it will use to monitor and adjust the effectiveness of the new courses.

Pacific Coast offers a single specific curriculum that all students follow. Right now, its fixed facility program is being taught using the same 3.5-hour class periods that the law school would like to continue to use when it switches to permanent distance learning.

Originally, when Pacific Coast submitted its proposed distance learning curriculum, the law school proposed to decrease its class periods to three hours each, and the Committee approved this change. While building out the new curriculum, the law school realized that it did not want to shorten the class periods to three hours after all, and therefore submitted this motion.

The law school's major change request set forth in Attachment A includes a course list, as well as a calendar demonstrating that the law school's program will exceed the requirement to offer at least 864 hours of study per year, as required by California Business and Professions Code 6060. It confirms that the law school is ready to proceed with the distance learning program as

the Committee approved it, but believes the program will be improved by this change in class length, based on its experience and feedback from students and faculty.

Because the law school's students and faculty already learn using the 3.5-hour class period and have expressed support for keeping this class length, it is recommended that the Committee approve the law school's request to keep this class period, instead of the 3-hour class period originally recommended.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Committee of Bar Examiners receives, files and approves Pacific Coast University School of Law's Request for Major Change to adjust the classes in its distance learning curriculum from 3 hours per class session to 3.5 hours per class session.

PROPOSED MOTION

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

MOVE, that the Committee of Bar Examiners receives, files, and approves Pacific Coast University College of Law's Request for Major Change to adjust the class sessions in its distance learning JD program from 3 hours to 3.5 hours effective immediately.

ATTACHMENT LIST

- A. Pacific Coast University College of Law's Request for Major Change – Change Class Session Length from 3 Hours to 3.5 Hours

**PACIFIC COAST UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF LAW**

1650 Ximeno Avenue
LONG BEACH, CALIFORNIA 90804
(562) 961- 8200
www.pculaw.org

**Application of Pacific Coast University School of Law
for Approval of Major Change in the Form of
Continuing to Offer Its Classes in the
3.5-Hour Format Upon Changing Its Category
to that of a Registered Distance-Learning Law School**

Pursuant to Rule 4.245 of the *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 continuing to offer its classes in the 3.5-hour format upon its conversion into a distance-learning law school in 2023 – notwithstanding that the distance-learning curriculum previously approved by the Committee included classes offered in the 3.0-hour format.

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. The distance-learning curriculum proposed by PCU as part of the application granted was based on interactive class meetings of 3 hours in length – as distinguished from the 3.5-hour-long classes currently offered by PCU in its present status as a fixed-facility law school.

Upon subsequent reflection and deliberation, however – including consultations among the dean, students and faculty members – PCU now wishes to continue offering its classes in the 3.5-hour format upon its transition to a distance-learning law school, instead of changing to the 3-hour format as originally proposed and approved.

In the hoped-for event that this application is granted and PCU is permitted to continue offering its courses in the form of 3.5-hour class meetings, the distance-learning curriculum will comply with the provisions of Guideline 5.3(C)(1) of the *Guidelines for Unaccredited Law School Rules* mandating a student’s “Satisfactory completion of a course of study requiring a minimum of 864 hours of preparation and study a year for four (4) years” and that “The year of preparation and study must occur in not less than forty-eight (48) or more than fifty-two (52) consecutive weeks” – as evidenced by the following:

During each of the three terms comprising PCU’s distance-learning academic year, its students will be required to register for and successfully complete 7 units of academic credit (amounting to 21 units per year) with each unit consisting of 15 hours of synchronous (*i.e.*, interactive) online class attendance. As such, students will enroll in two courses per term and, thus, six

courses per year.¹ For each course, students will complete 52.5 hours of synchronous instruction and a minimum of 91.5 hours of verified “study and preparation.” That amounts to a minimum total of 144 hours of study for each one-term course and 288 hours of study for each two-term course – which in turn adds up to 864 hours per year. (One hundred forty-four hours per course *times* 6 courses *equals* 864 hours per year.)

In compliance with the request of Educational Standards Principal Program Analyst Natalie Leonard, the following two documents are attached to this Application:

1. A “Curricula Comparison” comparing PCU’s current fixed-facility curriculum, a 3.5-unit distance-learning curriculum and a 3.0-unit distance-learning curriculum; and
2. PCU’s projected Academic Calendar for the 2023-2024 academic year.

Based on the foregoing, PCU respectfully submits that the above-described 3.5-hour format will comply with Guideline 5.3(C)(1) and requests that the Committee grant the within Application authorizing PCU to continue offering its classes in the 3.5-hour format upon its conversion into a distance-learning law school in 2023.

Respectfully submitted,

Dated: December 14, 2022

Basil G. Dezes

Basil G. Dezes, Dean
and Interim President

¹ For the purposes of simplicity and clarity, the word *course* is used at this point to refer to both single-term courses (such as Criminal Law) and each term of two-term courses (such as Contracts).

From: [PCU Dean](#)
To: [Leonard, Natalie](#)
Cc: [lawschoolregulation](#)
Subject: PCU Template Distance-Learning Course Syllabi
Date: Thursday, December 15, 2022 12:44:59 PM
Attachments: [Evidence_DistanceLearning_Syllabus_Fall2023.doc](#)
[Pleading & Practice Distance-Learning Course Syllabus 2023.docx](#)
[2023-2024 PCU Contracts Full Year Syllabus.pdf](#)
[2023-2024 PCU Contracts Full Year Assignment Addendum \(1\).pdf](#)
[2023-24 Entire Property Syllabus - draft v1.docx](#)
[Community Property 2023-24 Syllabus draft v1.docx](#)
[Torts Syllabus 2023.docx](#)
[CrimPro_DL Template Syllabus.pdf](#)

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear Ms. Leonard:

Pursuant to our agreed-upon "milestones" concerning PCU's conversion into a distance-learning law school, I am attaching template course syllabi for the following courses: Community Property, Contracts, Criminal Procedure, Evidence, Pleading & Practice, Property, and Torts.

As always, thank you for your continued courtesy, cooperation and assistance in these matters.

Best regards,
George

Basil G. Dezes,
Dean and Professor of Law
Interim Board of Trustees Chairman and President
Pacific Coast University School of Law
1650 Ximeno Avenue
Long Beach, California 90804
(310) 622-5727

PCU Academic Calendar | 2023-2024

JULY '23						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

04 Independence Day – **No Class**

05 First Day of fall term:
Classes begin

JANUARY '23						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

1 New Year's Day – **No Class**

15 Martin Luther King Jr. Day – **No Class**

AUGUST '23						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

FEBRUARY '24						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29		

05 Final Exam – **Monday Course**

07 Final Exam – **Wednesday Course**

19 President's Day – **No Class**

12 First Day of spring term:
Classes begin

SEPTEMBER '23						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

04 Labor Day – **No Class**

MARCH '24						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

OCTOBER '23						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

09 Columbus Day/
Indigenous Peoples' Day – **No Class**

11 Final Exam – **Wednesday Course**

13 Final Exam – **Monday Course**

16 First Day of winter term:
Classes begin

APRIL '24						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

NOVEMBER '23						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

22-24 Thanksgiving Break – **No Class**

MAY '24						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

27 Memorial Day - **No Class**

22 Final Exam – **Monday Course**

29 Final Exam – **Wednesday Course**

DECEMBER '23						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

25-29 Winter Break - **No Class**

JUNE '24						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30						

	Monday Class	Wednesday Class
1	July 7, 2023 (Friday)	July 5, 2023
2	July 11, 2023	July 12, 2023
3	July 17, 2023	July 19, 2023
4	July 24, 2023	July 26, 2023
5	July 31, 2023	August 2, 2023
6	August 7, 2023	August 4, 2023 (Friday)
7	August 14, 2023	August 9, 2023
8	August 21, 2023	August 16, 2023
9	August 28, 2023	August 23, 2023
10	September 1, 2023 (Friday)	August 30, 2023
11	September 11, 2023	September 6, 2023
12	September 18, 2023	September 13, 2023
13	September 25, 2023	September 20, 2023
14	October 2, 2023	September 27, 2023
15	October 6, 2023 (Friday)	October 4, 2023
Final	October 13, 2023 (Friday)	October 11, 2023

Winter Class meetings

	Monday Class	Wednesday Class
1	October 16, 2023	October 18, 2023
2	October 23, 2023	October 25, 2023
3	October 30, 2023	November 1, 2023
4	November 6, 2023	November 3, 2023 (Friday)
5	November 13, 2023	November 8, 2023
6	November 20, 2023	November 15, 2023
7	November 27, 2023	December 29, 2023
8	December 1, 2023 (Friday)	December 6, 2023
9	December 9, 2023	December 13, 2023
10	December 11, 2023	December 20, 2023
11	December 18, 2023	January 3, 2024
12	January 5, 2024 (Friday)	January 10, 2024
13	January 8, 2024	January 17, 2024
14	January 22, 2024	January 24, 2024
15	January 29, 2024	January 31, 2024
Final	February 5, 2024	February 7, 2024

Spring Class meetings

	Monday Class	Wednesday Class
1	February 12, 2024	February 14, 2024
2	February 26, 2024	February 21, 2024
3	March 1, 2024 (Friday)	February 28, 2024
4	March 4, 2024	March 6, 2024
5	March 11, 2024	March 13, 2024
6	March 18, 2024	March 20, 2024
7	March 25, 2024	March 27, 2024
8	April 1, 2024	April 3, 2024
9	April 5, 2024 (Friday)	April 10, 2024
10	April 8, 2024	April 17, 2024
11	April 15, 2024	April 24, 2024
12	April 22, 2024	May 1, 2024
13	April 29, 2024	May 3, 2024 (Friday)
14	May 6, 2024	May 8, 2024
15	May 13, 2024	May 15, 2024
Final	May 22, 2024 (Wednesday)	May 29, 2024