

COMMITTEE OF BAR EXAMINERS OPEN SESSION AGENDA ITEM

AGENDA ITEM: June 2013 – O-101

DATE: June 19, 2013

TO: Committee of Bar Examiners

FROM: Gayle Murphy, Senior Director, Admissions

SUBJECT: Task Force on Admissions Reform Report and Recommendations

BACKGROUND

Over the course of the last several months, the Task Force on Admissions Reform has met several times. During its June 11, 2013 meeting, it took final action on its report and recommendations. The report and recommendations are scheduled for consideration by the Board of Trustees during its meeting on July 18 and 19, 2013. It is expected that the Board will authorize circulation of the report and recommendations for public comment prior to taking any final action with regard to the recommendations.

DISCUSSION

The final version of the report and recommendations is not yet published, but as soon as it is, it will be forwarded to the Committee of Bar Examiners (Committee). Contained in the report are several requirements for admission that may impact the operations and the budget of the Office of Admissions, which will, most likely, be addressed during the course of determining an implementation plan, which could be among the next steps taken by the Board of Trustees.

Of historical note, in a press release dated August 16, 1988, the following was reported: “The State Bar of California’s Board of Governors when it meets this month will consider a proposal that would require all persons admitted to practice law in California to complete a certified “Lawyering Skills Course.”...Approved in concept by the board in June, the proposed “Lawyering Skills Course” would be designed as a course or training program of which at least three semester units (45 hours) would be devoted to teaching trial and court-related lawyering skills. According to the Committee of Bar Examiners proposal, persons admitted to practice in California after January 1, 1992 would have to complete the course, and applicants to the Attorneys’ Examination would have to provide proof of equivalent experience. In making its proposal, the CBE exhorts law schools “in the strongest possible manner to immediately begin to develop course structures in all aspects of lawyering skills.” According to the plan, courses could be offered by law schools, post-graduate training programs or internship programs

approved by the CBE Educational Standards Department and supervised by qualified attorneys.” For various reasons, the proposal ultimately was not adopted. It does indicate, however, that the Committee has a history of supporting the concept of requiring more lawyering skills of those just entering the practice of law in California.

RECOMMENDATION

No action is necessary.