

COMMITTEE OF BAR EXAMINERS OPEN SESSION AGENDA ITEM

AGENDA ITEM NUMBER: March 2016 – O-403

DATE: March 3, 2016

TO: Subcommittee on Educational Standards

FROM: George Leal, Director, Educational Standards

SUBJECT: Lady Justice Law School – Application for Registration

BACKGROUND

Attached for your consideration is an application (Attachment A) submitted by the Lady Justice Law School (“LJLS”) to become a registered, unaccredited fixed-facility law school. LJLS is owned and will be operated by a recently-formed limited liability corporation that hopes to open as a for-profit law school in Bakersfield. LJLS also hopes to begin recruiting and enrolling students within six to seven weeks after it is registered by the Committee of Bar Examiners (“Committee”).

To be eligible for registration by the Committee, a new law school must comply with the following procedures set out in the *Unaccredited Law School Rules*. As provided by Rule 4.221:

A law school that meets the standards [for registration] set forth in Rule 4.240, may apply for registration by:

- (A) completing and submitting the Application for Registration using the form prescribed by the Committee with the fee set forth in the Schedule of Charges and Deadlines; and
- (B) Agreeing to allow the Committee to make any inspection it deems necessary and promptly pay all expenses of the inspection.”

DISCUSSION

LJLS submitted the appropriate application and has paid the required fee. As described in its written materials, LJLS has been organized to offer a program of legal education designed to admit and enroll qualified students living and working in the Bakersfield metropolitan area. With a total population in excess of 500,000, Bakersfield is the largest California city without a fixed-facility law school of any kind.

The founders of the law school are John Porter, Warren Record and Molly Brown. While none of them have graduated from law school, they appear to have sufficient prior experience in the management of a business to operate LJLS successfully. Moreover, if registered, the law school will be administered by a part-time dean who is a licensed California attorney.

Mr. Porter is a former police officer and private prison warden with a significant amount of managerial experience. In addition to working in the management of his former police department and at the contract prison operated by the City of Coalinga, California, Mr. Porter also owned and operated a private detective agency. Mr. Porter was also the former, part owner of a now-closed unaccredited law school that operated in Bakersfield, John Williams University School of Law. Mr. Porter sold his interest in the law school to his former business partner, Mr. Williams, in 2004. The law school was voluntarily closed in 2009 after it received a Notice of Noncompliance issued by the Committee.

Mr. Record is represented to be both a successful business owner who specializes in automobile restoration and repairs and as a landlord who owns 20 rental properties, each of which is unencumbered by any debt. Ms. Brown is the administrator and bookkeeper for a local Bakersfield church. As also has been represented, assuming LJLS is found worthy of registration and permitted to open, both Mr. Porter and Ms. Brown will devote all of their time and professional expertise to its management.

As described in its application, LJLS will offer a traditional law school curriculum designed to offer its graduates a Juris Doctor degree so that they will be qualified to take the California Bar Examination ("CBX"). As discussed in its educational mission statement, LJLS intends to offer a low-cost degree program for working adult who will be more frequently tested and given graded written assignments to be better prepared to pass the First-Year Law Students' Examination and then the CBX.

To achieve that goal, all part-time LJLS faculty members, including its Dean, will be licensed California attorneys who have earned their law degrees at accredited law schools, with two members of the proposed faculty being graduates of ABA-approved law schools and the other graduate of a Committee-accredited law school, University of West Los Angeles College of Law. As described in its application, the law school's curriculum, its admissions standards and all of its proposed academic standards and operational policies and procedures appear to be compliant with each of the relevant requirements of the *Guidelines for Unaccredited Law School Rules*.

RECOMMENDATION:

After review of all of the supporting materials submitted by LJLS, it appears that the law school may be eligible for registration since it appears that it will meet each of the registration standards mandated by Rules 4.240(A) through 4.240(M). Therefore, as provided by Rule 4.221(B), it is recommended that an inspection of LJLS be conducted

so that a report may be prepared for further consideration of the laws school's request for registration by the Committee.

PROPOSED MOTION:

Should the Committee accept this recommendation, the following motion is suggested:

Move that the Application for Registration of the Lady Justice Law School as a California unaccredited, fixed-facility law school be received and filed; that, as provided by Rule 4.221(B) of the *Unaccredited Law School Rules*, an inspection of the law school be scheduled to take place within the next sixty days; and that a report of that inspection be prepared and submitted for consideration by the Committee at a future meeting.