

COMMITTEE OF BAR EXAMINERS OPEN SESSION AGENDA ITEM

AGENDA ITEM NUMBER: June 2016 – O-405

DATE: June 13, 2016

TO: Subcommittee on Educational Standards

FROM: George Leal, Director for Educational Standards

SUBJECT: Abraham Lincoln University School of Law - Periodic Inspection Report

BACKGROUND

Attachment A is the Report of the periodic inspection of the Abraham Lincoln University School of Law (ALUSOL), which I conducted on October 14, 2015. Attachment B is correspondence dated June 13, 2016 received from Dean Hyung J. Park, accepting the Report's findings and each of its recommended mandatory actions and confirming ALUSOL's efforts to address each.

ALUSOL is a registered, unaccredited for-profit distance learning law school. It was initially inspected on behalf of the Committee in 2008 and, after correcting a few technical issues of noncompliance, was found to be compliantly operating. It was founded in 1996 and was initially approved by the former Bureau for Private Postsecondary and Vocational Education until its regulatory oversight was transferred to the Committee of Bar Examiners in 2008. In 2011, ALUSOL received accreditation from the Distance Education Training Council, now the Distance Education Accrediting Commission, a national accreditor of distance learning institutions.

ALUSOL's online J.D. degree curriculum requires the successful completion of four years of part-time study consisting of 140 quarter units. It has a stable enrollment, which consisted of 168 students in 2015. Its administrative offices are located in a modern commercial office building in the mid-Wilshire district of Los Angeles where the law school operates classrooms so local students may attend its classes as they being streamed synchronously and videotaped for all of its online students.

ALUSOL was found to be operating compliantly. As described in the Report, the inspection found that its curriculum, academic standards and almost all operational policies and procedures are sound and compliant. In Dean Park, the law school has very experienced dean, a very good staff of administrators and an experienced faculty.

Only a few minor issues of noncompliance under the *Guidelines for Unaccredited Law School Rules* (Guidelines) were identified. To address each, the Report recommends that ALUSOL be required to take action as to each of the following recommendations:

1. To comply with Guideline 2.8, the law school must develop, adopt and publish notice of a written policy regarding the imposition of student discipline consistent with the mandatory procedural requirements;
2. To comply with Guidelines 4.8 and 4.9, the law school must develop, adopt and publish notice of a written policy and associated procedures to conduct the regular and compliant evaluation of all active members of the faculty; and
3. To comply with Guideline 5.34, the law school must adopt an express policy that permits the compliant re-admission of students previously academically disqualified from any law school including ALUSOL.

DISCUSSION

As Dean Park's letter confirms, ALUSOL has accepted the Report's findings and each mandatory recommendation. As such, the law school has agreed to formulate, adopt and revise the following policies and procedures that were found to be noncompliant: Its student discipline policy (Guideline 2.8); its faculty evaluation process (Guideline 4.8 and 4.9); and it will amend its policy to properly document its decision to admit or re-admit academically-disqualified students (Guideline 5.34).

Among the other operational issues discussed in the Report, Dean Park has confirmed that ALUSOL will regularly review and revise its website so that all content offered is accurate and updated (Guideline 2.3); it will develop better procedures to authenticate and verify its students' identity and the work product and examination answers they submit (Guideline 2.9(D)); and, finally, it will audit the files of transfer students to confirm that they contain the information and official transcripts that supported their admission.

RECOMMENDATION:

With Interim Dean Park's acceptance of the Report's findings, including each mandatory recommendation regarding ALUSOL's noncompliance, and his confirmation that the appropriate action has or will be taken to correct each such issue, it is recommended that the Inspection Report be received and filed; that the response of Dean Park be received and filed; that each recommended, mandatory action made in the Report regarding ALUSOL's noncompliance be adopted by the Committee; and, following confirmation within the following sixty days that each mandatory recommended action has been adopted; that the law school's next periodic inspection take place in the fall of 2020, unless an earlier inspection is found necessary by the Committee.

PROPOSED MOTION:

If the Subcommittee agrees with this recommendation, the following motion is suggested:

Move that the Periodic Inspection Report of the Abraham Lincoln University School of Law (ALUSOL) of the inspection conducted on October 14, 2015 by George Leal, Director for Educational Standards, be received and filed; that the response of June 13, 2016 submitted on behalf of the law school by Dean Hyung J. Park be received and filed; that each of the Report's recommended, mandatory recommendations regarding ALUSOL's noncompliance be adopted; that subject to receipt from ALUSOL within the next sixty days confirming that each recommended, mandatory action has been addressed, the law school's next periodic inspection take place in the fall of 2020, unless an earlier inspection is found necessary by the Committee.