

COMMITTEE OF BAR EXAMINERS OPEN SESSION AGENDA ITEM

AGENDA ITEM: April 2017 – O-404

DATE: April 25, 2017

TO: Subcommittee on Educational Standards

FROM: George Leal, Director, Educational Standards

SUBJECT: San Francisco International University College of Law –
Inspection Report re Application for Registration as a
Unaccredited, Correspondence Law School

BACKGROUND

Attachment A is the Inspection Report of the inspection performed at the administrative offices of the San Francisco International University College of Law (SFIUCOL). The inspection was conducted in regard to its pending application to be registered as an unaccredited law school. SFIUCOL has been formed to operate as a for-profit, correspondence law school and it hopes to start admitting and enrolling students this May. Its administrative offices are located in South San Francisco, California.

To be found eligible for registration by the Committee of Bar Examiners (Committee), a new, unaccredited law school must follow the procedures set out in the *Unaccredited Law School Rules* (Rules). As provided by Rule 4.221, to be registered:

A law school that meets the stand 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.”

At its meeting on March 17th, the Committee directed that an inspection of SFIUCOL be conducted so that a report confirming its compliance with all applicable registration standards found in the *Unaccredited Law School Rules* (Rules) and the *Guidelines for Unaccredited Law School Rules* (Guidelines) be prepared and submitted. Pursuant to Rule 4.223(C), the Committee is then expected to take action of the law school's pending application for registration.

A one-day inspection was conducted on March 22nd, during which the law school's administrative offices were inspected and a lengthy meeting with its Dean and Founder Matus Varga, its Registrar and the current faculty was held to discuss the law school's proposed operations. As confirmed during the inspection, the law school's curriculum will offer a qualitatively and quantitatively compliant program of legal education.

The law school was founded and will be administered by Dean Matus Varga, a licensed member of the New York State Bar. Dean Varga earned his first degree in law at the Comenius University School of Law, located in Bratislava, Slovakia. He then earned an LL.M. degree at the ABA-approved Florida State University College of Law, where he has also taught as an adjunct professor of law. Dean Varga now practices immigration law in Miami, Florida and will also teach a portion of the law school's first year curriculum. Dean Varga intends to be present at the SFIUCOL offices at least monthly.

In addition to the Dean, the law school will offer its students a standard and compliant J.D. curriculum taught, asynchronously, by a well-qualified faculty. The faculty will be comprised of licensed attorneys and one former law professor who is a graduate of the University of Chicago School of Law, has taught at two ABA-approved law schools and is a published author of legal treatises relating to Uniform Commercial Code.

As the founder of the law school, Dean Varga has invested in the technical infrastructure and teaching platform to be used to instruct students and has leased commercial office space that is adequate and properly equipped for use as SFIUCOL's administrative offices. The law school will offer its students access to LexisNexis in order to meet all library requirements mandated of a correspondence, unaccredited law school. Finally, the law school's website and all of its written materials (catalog, application form and enrollment agreement) are compliant with all disclosure notices now required by California law and both the Rules and Guidelines.

It appears that SFIUCOL is eligible for registration since it meets the standards for registration as set forth in the Rules and Guidelines.

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that pursuant to Rule 4.223(C) the application of the San Francisco International University College of Law for registration as an unaccredited, correspondence law school be granted, subject to an interim inspection of the law school within two years of the date that it enrolls and begins instructing its first student.

PROPOSED MOTION:

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

Move that the Report of Inspection in connection with the Application for Registration submitted by the San Francisco International University College of Law as a California unaccredited, correspondence law school be received and filed; and that, pursuant to Rule 4.223(C), the law school be registered for two years, subject to a further visitation of the law school to be scheduled within six months prior to the expiration of that time to confirm its continued compliance with the *Unaccredited Law School Rules and Guidelines for Unaccredited Law School Rules*.