

Seeking Accreditation, Visit 3 Institutional Report

An institution can be granted Initial Accreditation when an evaluator team and the Commission have determined that compliance with the four Standards and 39 Criteria for Review (CFR) sufficient for Initial Accreditation has been demonstrated. The institution makes the case for its level of compliance in the Seeking Accreditation Visit 3 (SAV3) Institutional Report. See the [How to Become Accredited](#) procedures manual for further details.

INSTRUCTIONS

Please provide a narrative response to each of the questions on the following pages.

- Each section must be addressed.
- As you move through the document adding information, please take care not to delete the original questions.
- Add additional pages as necessary.
- Please make sure that each section starts on a new page. In Section 4, each CFR should begin on a new page.
- Limit attachments *only* to evidence needed for each essay and/or relevant to a CFR. Evaluator teams and the Commission do not want to be overwhelmed by numerous attachments with thousands of pages of supporting material.
- Shortly before your report is due, you will be invited to a folder in Box.com to which you will upload the report and all supporting documentation.
- Please make sure that all attachments follow a consistent naming convention and are referenced the same way at appropriate places within the narrative. Please name attachments so that it is clear what they are and what section they refer to, with cross referencing in the narrative. Attachments are preferred as PDFs.

Tips for Providing Evidence:

- Put yourself in the place of a reviewer: what is the story that you need to tell? What evidence supports your story? What is extraneous and can be left out?
- Provide a representative sample of evidence on an issue, rather than ALL of the evidence.
- Consider including an executive summary or the most relevant points of supporting evidence, rather than the entire document.
- If you are referring to a specific page or set of pages in a document, include only those pages, not the entire document.
- If you are providing an excerpt of a document, include the title of the document, and a table of contents and/or a brief narrative to put the excerpt in context.
- If you provide a hyperlink to a web page, make sure the link takes the viewer directly to the relevant information on the page. Do not make your reviewer search for it.

When complete, upload your Institutional Report to the Seeking Accreditation Visit 3 Report folder in Box.com.

Naming the Report

Use the following naming convention for your application: "Institution name: Seeking Accreditation Report Visit 3".

Notifying WSCUC

Please notify your WSCUC staff liaison and Accreditation Process Manager, Marcy Ramsey (mramsey@wascsenior.org), once the report has been uploaded.

Seeking Accreditation Institutional Report

Name of Institution: CAL NORTHERN SCHOOL OF LAW

Address: 1395 Ridgewood Drive, Ste. 100, Chico, CA 95973

Date of Submission: June 24, 2019

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CFR 2.6-1	Assessment of Student Learning Policy
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Standard 1.c	Camp Fire Probate Clinic flyer
Standard 1.c	Camp Fire Chico ER news article
CFR 2.10-1	Campus Climate Survey Results
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CFR 3.6-1	CFO Biography
CFR 2.6-3	Curriculum Map-JD
CFR 2.6-3	Curriculum Map-MLS
CFR 2.11-4	Dean of Students Annual Report
CFR 2.11-1	Dean of Students Job Description
CFR 2.11-5	Director of Academic Support Annual Report
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CFR 4.1-1	Employer Satisfaction Survey Report 2019
CFR 3.4-2	Enrollment Management Plan
CFR 1.7-2	Financial Audit 2017
CFR 2.10-2	Focus Group Report
CFR 1.5-1	Governing Board Bylaws Amended April 24, 2018
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CFR 2.6-8	Guide for New Instructors
CFR 2.6-2	Institutional Research Job Description
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CFR 2.6-6	MLS Program Assessment Report Spring 2019
CFR 3.4-1	Operating Forecast 2019-2021
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CFR 2.11-6	Spring 2018 and Fall 2018 Tutoring Report
CFR 4.6-1	Strategic Plan 2017-2022
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CFR 2.7-3	Three-Year Program Review 2015-2017

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[CFR 1.5-2](#) Minutes Shareholders' Meeting April 24, 2018

CFR 1.7 List of Attached Evidences

[CFR 1.7-1](#) Minutes Board of Trustees Meeting February 7, 2018

[CFR 1.7-2](#) Financial Audit 2017

Standard One: Synthesis/Reflections List of Attached Evidences

[Standard 1.c.](#) Camp Fire Legal Clinic flyer

[Standard 1.c.](#) Camp Fire Probate Clinic flyer

[Standard 1.c.](#) Camp Fire Chico ER news article

CFR 2.6 List of Attached Evidences

[CFR 2.6-1](#) Assessment of Student Learning Policy

[CFR 2.6-2](#) Institutional Research Job Description

[CFR 2.6-3](#) JD Curriculum Map

[CFR 2.6-3](#) MLS Curriculum Map

[CFR 2.6-4](#) JD Student Learning Outcome Assessment 2015-2017

[CFR 2.6-5](#) JD Program Learning Assessment Report 2015-2018

[CFR 2.6-6](#) MLS Program Assessment Report Spring 2019

[CFR 2.6-7](#) Assessment 101 Handbook

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[CFR 2.7-1](#) Program Review Plan

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[CFR 2.10-1](#) Campus Climate Survey Report

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[CFR 2.10-3](#) Graduate Satisfaction Survey Report

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- [CFR 2.10-1](#) Campus Climate Survey Report
- [CFR 2.10-2](#) Focus Group Report

CFR 2.13 List of Attached Evidences

Not Applicable

CFR 3.4 List of Attached Evidences

- [CFR 3.4-1](#) Operating Forecast 2019-2021
- [CFR 3.4-2](#) Enrollment Management Plan

CFR 3.6 List of Attached Evidences

- [CFR 3.6-1](#) CFO Biography

CFR 3.8 List of Attached Evidences

Not Applicable

CFR 4.1 List of Attached Evidences

- [CFR 2.7-1](#) Program Review Plan
- [CFR 2.7-2](#) Annual Program Review 2018
- [CFR 2.7-3](#) Three-Year Program Review 2015-2017
- [CFR 2.10-1](#) Campus Climate Survey Report
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- [CFR 4.1-1](#) Employer Satisfaction Survey Report

CFR 4.6 List of Attached Evidences

- [CFR 4.6-1](#) Strategic Plan 2017-2022
- [CFR 4.6-2](#) Strategic Plan-Progress Report 2019

Section 1: Institutional Context

Provide an update since the Seeking Accreditation Visit 2 to the context for the review of the institution, including institutional type, size (enrollment, staff, administration and faculty), location(s), overview of degrees/levels/programs offered, and current accreditations.

A. Introduction

Cal Northern School of Law (CNSL) has offered residents of the North State an opportunity to earn a Juris Doctorate (JD) Degree through an accessible, affordable, and educationally sound program since 1983, for the past 36 years. In addition to the JD program, in 2014 the Committee of Bar Examiners of the State Bar of California (CBE) authorized CNSL's request to award a Master of Legal Studies (MLS) degree. The MLS is a Master's degree for students who wish to accomplish post-graduate studies in the law but do not want to pursue a traditional JD degree. Accredited by the CBE since 1992, CNSL now seeks regional accreditation to expand the educational opportunities available to the community served by CNSL.

Since the Seeking Accreditation Visit 2 (SAV2) September 12-14, 2017 we have established our educational effectiveness according to WSCUC standards. Our initiatives to assess and enhance student learning have solidified our commitment to improve our programs and services.

CNSL is clearly achieving its educational objectives. We have revised our Program Learning Outcomes for both the JD and MLS programs, bar pass rates remain strong, tuition is still one of the most affordable of comparable California Accredited Law Schools, our graduates are working in the legal profession, and our students and alumni express considerable satisfaction with their law school experience. All constituencies are actively engaged in developing, implementing, and refining our approach to evidence-based practices to gauge our student achievement and program effectiveness.

B. Institutional Type

Cal Northern Educational Development Corp. (CNEDC) dba Cal Northern School of Law (CNSL) was established in 1983 as a private, for-profit corporation. While CNSL is organized as a private, for-profit corporation, since 1983 dividends have only been distributed to the shareholders twice, in 2005 and 2006. The Board of Directors have made a commitment to ensuring priority is given to sustaining and enhancing CNSL's educational mission and academic infrastructure and to enhancing effective student learning and student success.

C. Size

Currently, there are 41 students enrolled in the JD program, 31 of those are enrolled in the dual JD/MLS degree option and 3 students enrolled in the MLS as a stand-alone program. Staff includes two full-time employees (the CEO/President and the Assistant to the Dean); four part-time administrators (the Dean of Students, the Director of Academic Support, the Director of Institutional Research, and Chief Financial Officer); three part-time office/library staff members; and 19 adjunct faculty members.

D. Location

The School of Law campus occupies approximately 20,000 square feet of the facilities located at 1395 Ridgewood Drive in Chico, California. CNEDC owns the building, which was built in 1998 specifically for use as the law school. The building includes additional space not used by the law school that is leased to long-term tenants, the Internal Revenue Service and a professional office.

E. Degree/Levels/Programs Offered

CNSL offers two degrees, the Juris Doctor (JD) and Master of Legal Studies (MLS).

F. Current Accreditation

CNSL has been accredited by the State Bar of California Committee of Bar Examiners (CBE) since March 13, 1992. CBE accreditation authorizes CNSL to operate and award degrees under California Business and Professions Code, Sec. 6060.7(b). CNSL is subject to inspection every fifth year following the grant of accreditation or more frequently if the CBE believes inspection is necessary. CNSL's last accreditation visit was September 25-28, 2018. The visitation team found CNSL to be in full compliance and continued its accreditation through the Fall of 2023 site visit. (See CBE 2018 Inspection Report attached as [Section 1.F.](#))

Section 2: Statement on Report Preparation

Describe the process of preparing the Institutional Report, naming the personnel who were involved. Widespread and comprehensive involvement of various constituencies is required, including faculty, administrative staff, students, and others as appropriate. The governing board should review the report before it is submitted to WSCUC.

After the SAV2, CNSL's staff, administrators and faculty began planning for the SAV3 Report and site visit, with the oversight from the Governing Board, CNSL's Board of Trustees (Board of Trustees). WSCUC's SAV2 Report, exit interview comments and Commission Action Letter were discussed with constituent groups (boards, faculty and students). Led by the CEO/President, Sandra Brooks, CNSL completed a self-review process and prioritized goals to be addressed over the next eighteen months.

The faculty contributed through the Faculty Senate, participating in program review discussions, conducting assessments, evaluating curriculum and recommending and authorizing changes. The faculty have been informed of the SAV3 progress and has had the opportunity to comment on the draft report. Thus, this report reflects the expanded participation of faculty in governance and their involvement in the SAV3 effort.

Students were brought into the process through meetings with student leaders and satisfaction surveys; and input was sought from external sources including alumni, employers, and leaders from other law schools who consulted on topics such as marketing and enrollment, faculty development, curriculum and institutional research.

Progress reports related to the SAV3 were provided regularly to the Board of Trustees and Faculty Senate. A draft report was submitted to the Board of Trustees, faculty and student leaders for review in June 2019 and the report was accepted by the Board of Trustees at a Special Meeting on June 11, 2019.

Section 3: Response to Issues Identified in Seeking Accreditation Visit 1 Commission Action Letter

Please provide evidence of how the institution has responded to each recommendation found in the last Commission Action Letter. Refer to a preceding or subsequent section if a response appears in a different part of the report albeit provide a brief summary of that response here.

It is the case that the majority of the report will respond to the SAV2 recommendations. As such, do not be detailed with evidence in this section. At the same time, do not simply “refer” the reader to the relevant preceding or subsequent section that covers each recommendation. A summary will help the team and Commission appreciate that you took the recommendations seriously and that you take the process seriously; responding to prior issues is a signature component of a WSCUC report. If there were issues raised that do not relate to a CFR, this is the section to cover those in more detail.

The key is to resist redundancy.

The visiting team identified several key areas for improvement, as stated in the SAV1 Commission Action Letter and the Team Report, in addition to recommendations woven throughout its report. CNSL was encouraged to: 1) refine its governance structures; 2) further develop faculty engagement with comprehensive assessment and program review; 3) improve the IR function 4) consider sufficiency of staffing levels. Below, CNSL summarizes how these recommendations have been addressed:

1. Governance

While changes to the Bylaws appropriately separated the roles and duties of the Board of Directors and the Board of Trustees “additional work is necessary to address the WSCUC Independent Governing Board Policy.” To be more in line with WSCUC’s Independent Governing Board Policy, the Governing Bylaws Article III, Section 1. Powers. b. has been amended to ensure removal of law school employees other than the President, is not reserved to the Board of Directors. See further discussion in response to CFR 1.5.

2. Faculty Engagement with Assessment

Two of the SAV1 visiting team’s key recommendations focused on effective use of data. The team recommended faculty build on its “progress to develop a more systematic approach to assessment and program review.”

As detailed in response to CFR 2.6, having completed and further developed several quality assurance processes that have generated data, insights and improvements, the faculty have developed a further understanding and appreciation of assessment and program review. Among the initiatives described in Section 4 are those that show or support enhancements to academic programs or services, including projects to assess student learning and program review.

As suggested, CNSL has gathered and analyzed data to further track academic performance; we have also disaggregated data by gender and race/ethnicity as appropriate, to determine whether student demographic distinctions reflect different educational needs.

Data and insights have been widely disseminated, discussed and used for decision-making by faculty, staff and trustees. Student achievement data is published on CNSL’s website [here](#). CNSL’s efforts show

that it effectively educates its students and engages in continuous, evidence-based efforts to improve its programs and services.

3. Improve the Institutional Research Function

The visiting team felt more expertise was needed to appropriately process data for meaningful analysis. Since the SAV2, CNSL has developed the duties and functions of the Office of Institutional Research. The Director of Institutional Research has joined the Association of Institutional Research (AIR) and the California Association of Institutional Research (CAIR) and has met with several other law school institutional researchers to further develop the expertise needed to build the capacity for data collection, analysis and dissemination that will foster a culture of evidence-based decision making.

4. Sufficiency of Staffing Levels

The final key recommendation encouraged CNSL to seek additional capacity and professional expertise needed to grow and progress through the WSCUC process. The Board of Trustees' has included in CNSL's Revised Strategic Plan, an initiative that "will ensure future institutional capacity will be adequate to achieve our mission, vision and goals." This will include approval of additional staffing which has been incorporated into the three-year operating forecast.

5. Conclusion

CNSL has fully embraced and addressed the visiting team's recommendations and we believe that we are now in compliance with WSCUC's relevant Standards and Criteria for Review sufficient for Initial Accreditation.

Section 4: Evidence of Compliance with 2013 Standards and Criteria for Review

The heart of the report focuses on the institution demonstrating its level of compliance with the Criteria for Review found to be insufficient for Candidacy or Initial Accreditation during the SAV1 through narrative, summary statements, and evidence as found through appropriate attachments and/or appendices. In attempting to demonstrate compliance sufficient for Initial Accreditation, institutions must exhibit self-reflection showing areas of strength or improvement rather than producing a public relations report.

The WSCUC Standards and CFRs

The WSCUC Standards are designed to guide institutions in self-review, to provide a framework for institutional presentations to the Commission and evaluator teams, and to serve as the basis for judgments by evaluator teams and the Commission. Each standard is set forth in broad holistic terms that are applicable to all institutions. Under each of the four Standards are two or more major categories within which the standard is more specifically defined. Under each category are Criteria for Review (CFRs), intended to identify and define key elements of the standard. Guidelines identify suggested forms or methods for demonstrating performance related to certain Criteria for Review. By design, the Commission has not developed a Guideline for each Criterion for Review.

Strategies for Completing This Section

The institution can use this section of the report as an initial basis for conducting a thorough self-study of the institution's compliance with the relevant Standards and CFRs by the planning committee, administration, faculty, staff, students, and Board. As the self-study is conducted, key areas may be identified where more evidence is needed or more development is required. Once the institution has completed this self-study process, priorities that are identified using this section should be integrated with the institution's context, goals, and planning in the development of its report. Summary questions are provided as a means of assisting institutions in determining areas of greatest concern or areas of good practice to be addressed. After this work is completed, this section should represent the collective work of the institution's self-study process.

Instructions for Completing This Section

- For each CFR on the following pages, please provide a narrative response to demonstrate the institution's level of compliance and a list of the evidences that support the narrative.
- Insert additional pages as needed.
- Please start each CFR on a new page.
- Evidences should be uploaded as attachments in the Section 4 folder in the Upload Attachments folder in Box.com.

Standard 1. Defining Institutional Purposes and Ensuring Educational Objectives.

The institution defines its purposes and establishes educational objectives aligned with those purposes. The institution has a clear and explicit sense of its essential values and character, its distinctive elements, its place in both the higher education community and society, and its contribution to the public good. It functions with integrity, transparency, and autonomy.

Integrity and Transparency

CFR 1.5: *Autonomy from external entities.*

Institutional Response

CNSL is expected in the SA3 review to give specific attention to the following issues:

Amend bylaws to ensure that removal of CNLS staff and administration, other than the President, is not solely the purview of the Board of Directors.

The visiting team was concerned that the Governing Bylaws gave the Board of Directors' the power to "nominate and remove with cause members of the Board of Trustees and remove with cause employees of the school of law" (emphasis added). To be more in line with WSCUC's Independent Governing Board Policy, the visiting team recommended the powers of the respective boards be reviewed and amended accordingly. The Governing Bylaws Article III, Section 1. Powers. b. was amended by the Shareholders on April 24, 2018 to ensure removal of law school employees, other than the President, is not reserved to the Board of Directors.

List of Attached Evidence:

[CFR 1.5-1](#) Governing Board Bylaws Amended April 24, 2018

[CFR 1.5-2](#) Minutes Shareholders' Meeting April 24, 2018

CFR 1.7: *Adoption and implementation of appropriate policies and procedures, sound business practices.*

Institutional Response

CNSL is expected in the SAV3 review to give specific attention to the following issues:

The Board of Trustees should appoint the auditor and review that appointment annually.

CNSL has a long-standing history of ethical business practices. CNSL is audited annually by a qualified, independent audit firm, Barry Glasser & Company, a professional accounting firm, which has performed audits and provided corresponding management reports.

In that the audit firm was selected during the prior governance structure the visiting team recommended the Audit Committee of the Board of Trustees formally select and approve the auditor annually as recommended by the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges (AGB).

On February 7, 2108 the Board of Trustees approved the site team’s recommendation that the Audit Committee select and approve the audit firm annually. The Audit Committee approved the use of Barry Glasser & Company ([CFR 1.7-1](#)). The audit reported on the law school and the corporation separately. No material weaknesses, significant deficiencies, reportable instances of noncompliance or other matters were identified in the 2017 Audit consistent with the past two fiscal years. ([CFR 1.7-2](#)).

List of Attached Evidence:

[CFR 1.7-1](#) Minutes Board of Trustees Meeting February 7, 2018

[CFR 1.7-2](#) Financial Audit 2017

Standard One: Synthesis/Reflections

1. After completing this analysis, what are the 2 or 3 most important issues that should be emphasized in the review under this Standard?

- a. **Longevity and Continuity**-For the past 36 years, CNSL has provided an affordable quality legal education to residents of the North State who may not have otherwise had the opportunity to attend law school. Dedication to its mission and vision is ingrained in the culture of the law school and is reflected in not only the published philosophy and policies, but also in all aspects of the educational and administrative operation of the institution. CNSL's achievement of its educational objectives and its institutional integrity and transparency were recognized in the CBE's reaccreditation determination.
- b. **Educational Value**-Both CNSL's programs, the JD and MLS offer a remarkable educational value. Its reasonable tuition is one of the lowest for California Accredited Law Schools throughout the State making the JD program one of the most affordable routes to eligibility to sit for the California Bar Examination. The reasonable tuition also offers CNSL an opportunity to serve a more economically diverse student body, many of whom would not otherwise have the opportunities provided by our JD or MLS programs.
- c. **Contribution to the North State Community**-CNSL is not only essential to its students but also to the surrounding communities. Its campus provides a location for local bar association events, mediations and fee arbitrations and its students work throughout the community in law firms, district attorney's offices and businesses. Its Self-Help Legal Clinic assists members of the public who do not have access to an attorney with their family law, small claims and landlord/tenant cases and its graduates enrich the judiciary, local bar, governmental entities and business with their leadership and service.

During the recent Camp Fire crisis, CNSL partnered with the Butte County Bar Association to provide a free legal clinic to answer the myriad of legal questions facing those impacted by the Camp Fire, including but not limited to probate, real property, and insurance related questions. Volunteer attorneys and support staff were available at the Disaster Relief Center from the middle of December to the end of January and assisted over 120 members of the community. In addition, a separate workshop was held specifically for those members who had family or loved ones die in the fire. While every volunteer left the clinic emotionally drained, it was wonderful to know that we were able to contribute to our community in this difficult time and provide a valuable service. Copies of the Camp Fire Legal Clinic flyers and Chico ER news article are attached as [Standard 1.c Camp Fire Clinic Flyer](#); [Probate Clinic Flyer](#); [Chico ER news article](#).

2. Looking overall at the quality and effectiveness of the institution's data gathering processes and its systems to support the review process, what are institutional strengths?

CNSL has firmly established processes for establishing and evaluating its purposes, strategic direction, goals and student learning outcomes, and for gathering, analyzing, disseminating and using data needed for institutional review and decision-making. The School is supported in these efforts by its dedicated and committed faculty, Director of Institutional Research and Board of Trustees. The recent expansion of the CNSL administrative team, the Director of Academic Support,

and the implementation of Populi, further strengthen CNSL's resources and continued development of a strong evidence-based culture.

3. Looking again at the overall quality and effectiveness of the institution's data gathering processes and systems, what are areas to be addressed or improved in the foreseeable future?

First, we are expanding our systematic collection efforts to gather additional data. At all levels we must continue to develop evidenced-based approaches to our work, whether as faculty, staff, or trustees. Our collective mindset about decision-making must be to routinely ask whether we have the data we need; ensure that such data are developed; reach for and effectively use the data and then document the data-driven basis for our decisions. Finally, we must continue to adjust our staffing, planning, and budgeting to take into account the fact that effective deployment of an evidence-based approach requires more administrative resources and a longer time-horizon for accomplishment of tasks.

Standard 2. Achieving Educational Objectives Through Core Functions

The institution achieves its purposes and attains its educational objectives at the institutional and program level through the core functions of teaching and learning, scholarship and creative activity, and support for student learning and success. The institution demonstrates that these core functions are performed effectively by evaluating valid and reliable evidence of learning and by supporting the success of every student.

Teaching and Learning

CFR 2.6: *Graduates achieve stated levels of attainment; SLOs embedded in faculty standards for assessing student work.*

Institutional Response

CNSL is expected in the SAV3 review to give specific attention to the following issues:

Periodic program reviews should include student learning assessment results, retention and graduation rates, bar pass rates, and other relevant data to inform decision-making.

Since the SAV2, CNSL's assessment of student learning has moved into a mature program of assessment. CNSL has an Assessment of Student Learning Policy which identifies the goals of assessment, program learning objectives and student learning outcomes ([CFR 2.6-1](#)). CNSL has a Director of Institutional Research/Assessment Coordinator who is dedicated to conducting institutional research and to processing assessment data for publication ([CFR 2.6-2](#)). CNSL has an assessment infrastructure and has defined and vetted learning outcomes on a programmatic and course level for all of its programs. The attached curriculum maps plot the outcomes, how they interact with each course and the decided methodology to assess these outcomes through the program ([CFR 2.6-3 JD](#); [CFR 2.6-3 MLS](#)).

The Faculty have crafted and implemented a number of assessments in their courses to assist them in their understanding of student learning and to guide instruction. From 2015-2017, seventeen formal assessments have been completed in the JD program, with assessment reports written and shared with faculty. The 2015-2017 JD Student Learning Outcome Assessment is attached as [CFR 2.6-4](#) and are published on the website under Student Achievement [here](#).

In addition to the IL JD Assessment of Contracts, Torts and Criminal Law where the Assessment Committee found that the majority of IL students are Beginning and Developing their abilities to understand substantive law, think critically, and communicate effectively through exam writing, the Assessment Committee was able to provide a side-by side analysis of the IL JD program for three academic years. The Committee was also able to provide a baseline for further analysis of the 2L, 3L and 4L success rates. The 2015-2018 JD Program Learning Assessment Report shows the progress CNSL is making toward achieving its desired Program Learning Outcomes ([CFR 2.6-5](#)).

CNSL has also created three Program Learning Outcomes for the MLS program. In Spring 2019, the Assessment Coordinator assessed students in the MLS Program on one of the three outcomes (PLO 1-

Demonstrate the understanding fundamental legal principles in the American legal system.) Students were assessed on their understanding of legal principles in the IL subjects of Contracts, Criminal Law and Torts by the administration of multiple-choice (MBE) questions. The data show a wide range of correct answers from a low of 13% to a high of 60%. The Assessment Coordinator and the Assessment Committee will continue to assess the MLS Program learning Outcomes. This first assessment is the baseline to which all future assessments will be compared. Results will be shared with the faculty during regularly scheduled faculty meetings. Additionally, results will be posted on the website for the students and the public ([CFR 2.6-6](#)).

Faculty discuss assessments and outcomes with the Assessment Coordinator in order to determine how the assessments can be used to close the loop in improving course preparation and delivery. For example, the Assessment Coordinator met with Contracts Professor Dirk Potter to discuss the results of his assessment of student learning the Statute of Frauds. The concern was the range of student answers from 0 (no student having the correct answer) and 100% (every student having the correct answer). Averaging the result of the whole assessment would have shown that students' knowledge level averaged only 55%. Professor Potter revisited the assessment and reviewed each question carefully. He determined that Question 2 (which none of the students answered correctly) was poorly written, so he is redrafting that question to make it clearer.

CNSL continues to work with faculty to ensure the methods of assessing students are those which consider the numerous and diverse ways in which students learn. On June 3, 2019, faculty and staff attended a three-hour Assessment Workshop presented by Andrea Bing, Director of Accreditation and Assessment at UC Hastings College of Law. The workshop goals were to become:

- more aware of the importance of methods of assessment in relation to student learning outcomes and program improvement
- more knowledgeable about direct and indirect assessment methods
- more competent at developing methods for assessing student learning outcomes
- more knowledgeable about using and adapting assessment methods that are currently in practice
- more adept at reviewing methods for assessing effectiveness and efficiency

By the end of the workshop everyone in attendance left with a greater understanding of program learning outcomes, student learning outcomes, performance criteria and closing the loop.

In order to fully engage new faculty members in outcome-based education, assessment activities, and the goals of continuous improvement cycles, CNSL has developed faculty training and orientation materials which will be reviewed with each new faculty member ([CFR 2.6-7](#) and [CFR 2.6-8](#)).

List of Attached Evidence:

CFR 2.6-1	Assessment of Student Learning Policy
CFR 2.6-2	Institutional Research Job Description
CFR 2.6-3	JD Curriculum Map
CFR 2.6-3	MLS Curriculum Map
CFR 2.6-4	JD Student Learning Outcome Assessment 2015-2017
CFR 2.6-5	JD Program Learning Assessment Report 2015-2018
CFR 2.6-6	MLS Program Assessment Report Spring 2019
CFR 2.6-7	Assessment 101 Handbook
CFR 2.6-8	Guide for New Instructors

CFR 2.7: Program review.

Institutional Response

CNSL is expected in the SAV3 review to give specific attention to the following issues:

Periodic program reviews should include student learning assessment results, retention and graduation rates, bar pass rates, and other relevant data to inform decision-making.

Under CNSL's Program Review Plan ([CFR 2.7-1](#)) CNSL completes an Annual Program Review as part of a five-year cycle of review designed to support evidence-based decision making for the continuous improvement of the law school and its programs and to ensure its programs are aligned with its mission, meaning and purpose. Faculty and staff are charged with the responsibility of identify program goals, objectives and student learning outcomes; developing assessment modalities; gathering data; analyzing data and in conjunction with the law school leadership, make improvements to the law school's programs and services.

Annually, faculty and staff gather and analyze data from student learning assessments, and other program metrics, including student demographics (e.g., race/ethnicity, undergraduate GPA, LSAT), enrollment and graduation trends, student satisfaction measures, course evaluation data, alumni and employer satisfaction measures, and graduates' bar exam success rate. The data, analysis and resulting action plans are reported in the Annual Program Review Report.

CNSL's 2018/2019 Annual Program Review Report was completed June 2019 ([CFR 2.7-2](#)).

In addition, as evidence that CNSL has built its quality assurance methodologies and practices sufficient for initial accreditation, CNSL has completed a comprehensive Three-Year Program Review which includes data on students' achievement of program learning outcomes, admissions data, enrollment data, retention and graduation rates, placement data, student demographics, bar exam results, alumni, student satisfaction survey results, employer survey results, in addition to data on faculty, fiscal resources, staff, technology and information resources, space and facilities, and the future. ([CFR 2-7-3](#)).

List of Attached Evidence:

- [CFR 2.7-1](#) Program Review Plan
- [CFR 2.7-2](#) Annual Program Review 2018
- [CFR 2.7-3](#) Three-Year Program Review 2015-2017

Student Learning and Success

CFR 2.10: *Students' timely progress.*

Institutional Response

CNSL is expected in the SAV3 review to give specific attention to the following issues:

Regularly collect and analyze aggregated and disaggregated data related to student satisfaction and student achievement to inform decision-making.

CNSL's retention and graduation data show that CNSL is meeting the needs of its particular student population. The first-year retention rates, or the percentage of students in a starting cohort who begin in the fall term and return in the subsequent fall term, provide insight into why some students continue to be successful at CNSL. Over the past 3 years, CNSL has had an average first-year retention rate of 57% (Table 1). Retention data is also disaggregated by gender and race/ethnicity (Tables 2 and 3).

Table 1. CNSL One-Year Fall to Fall Retention Rates for Fall New Starts

Student Starting Cohort	Not Retained	Retained	Overall Cohort Total	Retention Rate
Fall 2015	7	11	18	61%
Fall 2016	7	4	11	36%
Fall 2017	7	13	20	65%
Overall Total	21	28	49	57%

Table 2. One-Year Fall to Fall Retention Rates by Gender

Gender	Fall 2013 (N=17)	Fall 2014 (N=11)	Fall 2015 (N=18)	Fall 2016 (N=11)	Fall 2017 (N=20)	3-Year Average	5-Year Average
Male	60% (6)	50% (2)	27% (3)	50% (2)	69% (9)	49%	51%
Female	40% (4)	50% (2)	73% (8)	50% (2)	31% (4)	51%	49%
Overall Retention Rate	59% (10)	36% (4)	61% (11)	36% (4)	65% (13)	54%	51%

N = The number of students enrolled in the starting cohort. For example, of the 17 students enrolled in Fall 2013, 59% were retained at the end of the 1st year and of those retained, 60% were male and 40% were female

Table 3. One-Year Fall to Fall Retention Rates by Race/Ethnicity

Race/Ethnicity	Fall 2013	Fall 2014	Fall 2015	Fall 2016	Fall 2017	3-Year Average	5-Year Average
Hispanic	33%	0%	50%	0%	100%	50%	37%
African American	100%	N/A	N/A	N/A	100%	100%	100%
White	62%	50%	60%	44%	67%	57%	57%
Other*	N/A	N/A	100%	N/A	50%	75%	75%

*"Other" includes students identifying as Asian, American Indian or Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander.

CNSL's retention rates are trending upward and are respectable for a school with a mission of increasing educational opportunity. With the implementation of CNSL's Student Services-Tutoring Program we believe we will continue to see an upward trend in retention rates.

Retention and Attrition Analysis for the Fall 2017 entering cohort shows retention is 65% (up 29% from the Fall 2016 cohort). Causes of attrition include voluntary withdrawal/leave of absence (25%) and academic exclusion (10%).

One cause of attrition at the end of the first year is CNSL's rigorous program. Academic standards are high both in terms of grading and work load because we want to prepare students for the rigors of the bar exam and the practice of law. Although some students are academically excluded a larger number of students leave voluntarily citing finances, family pressures and lack of time commitment necessary to be successful in their studies as reasons for their withdrawal.

Once students are retained, the next qualifier to success is graduating from the program. For the most recent starting cohorts with graduating classes, approximately half of the cohorts successfully graduate from the JD Program within 4 years (Table 4).

Table 4. CNSL 4-year Graduation Rates – Fall 2012- Fall 2015 Cohorts

Student Starting Cohort	Cohort	Within 4 Years	
		(N)	(%)
Fall 2012	22	9	41%
Fall 2013	17	10	59%
Fall 2014	11	4	36%
Fall 2015	18	10	56%
Overall Total	68	33	49%

Student Satisfaction data shows students' express satisfaction with the instruction provided by CNSL. The average satisfaction rate for the past three years is 90%.

Q1: "Were you satisfied with your instructor's overall performance?"

Academic Year	Response Rate	% Extremely/Quite/Somewhat Satisfied	% Somewhat/Quite/Extremely Dissatisfied	% Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied
2014-2015	55%	89%	11%	0
2015-2016	54%	89%	11%	0
2016-2017	43%	92%	6%	2%

In addition to assessing student satisfaction through Student Course Evaluations, in August 2018 and February 2019 CNSL circulated its first Campus Climate Survey and received 22 responses (42%) out of 52 students surveyed. Results showed 100% student satisfaction with their overall law school education (Q1 and Q2 below) and high scores ranging from 82% to 95% for instructor performance (Q7 below). Students are especially pleased with administration's response to their questions and concerns and the diversity of viewpoints encountered ([CFR 2.10-1](#)).

Q1: "How satisfied have you been with your law school education so far?"

Academic Year	% Very/Generally Satisfied	% Generally/Very Dissatisfied	% Ambivalent
2018-2019	100%	0	0

Q2: "How satisfied have you been with the following aspects of your CNSL experience during the academic year?"

	% Very/Generally Satisfied	% Generally/Very Dissatisfied
Overall Quality of Education	100%	0
Academic Advising	95%	5%
Administration's responsiveness to student concerns	100%	0
Sense of Community	86%	14%
Ethic/Race Diversity of the Campus	95%	5%
Diversity of Points of View Encountered on Campus	100%	0

Students also feel their experience at CNSL has contributed to the program learning outcomes highlighted in Q7 and Q16 below ranging from 68% to a high of 95%.

Q7: “How would you rate your professors overall in terms of:”

	% Outstanding/ Strong	% Adequate	% Poor
Professionalism/Conduct in Class	95%	5	0
Motivating Students	91%	9	0
Concerned with Student Learning Progress	86%	9	5
Responsiveness to Student Questions	91%	9	0
Control of Class	91%	9	0
Encouraging Meaningful Class Discussion	91%	9	0
Availability to Students Outside of Class	82%	18	0
Encouraging Critical Thinking	95%	5	0
Encouraging Independent Thought	86%	14	0
Overall Effectiveness	91%	9	0

Q16: “To what extent has your experience at CNSL contributed to your knowledge, skills and personal development in the following areas?”

	% Very much/ Quite a bit	% Some	% Very Little or None
In-depth knowledge of a field or discipline	91	9	0
Career or work-related knowledge and skills	91	9	0
Writing clearly and effectively	82	18	0
Communicating well orally	82	18	0
Thinking critically and analytically	86	14	0
Planning and executing complex projects	64	32	4
Using quantitative reasoning and methods	73	23	4
Leadership skills	55	27	18
Relating well to people of different backgrounds and social identities	68	14	18
Developing and clarifying a personal code of values or ethics	68	23	9
Being able to respectfully discuss controversial issues with others who hold different values	91	9	0
Working effectively as a member of a team	59	27	14

While the majority of the Campus Climate Survey responses were overwhelmingly positive, as a follow up CNSL held a focus group on May 14, 2019 led by an independent mediator in an effort to identify any gaps in student satisfaction. The focus group was attended by four students who all had positive comments about their CNSL experience ([CFR 2.10-2](#)).

Like the Course Evaluations and Climate Survey results, Graduate Survey results show overwhelmingly satisfaction with the law school experience CNSL offers ([CFR 2.10-3](#)) Not one student expressed dissatisfaction with the CNSL experience.

Q1: Overall, are you satisfied with your experience at CNSL?

Academic Year	% Extremely/ Moderately/ Satisfied	% Slightly Satisfied	% Slightly/ Moderately Dissatisfied	% Neither
2010-2015	97%	3%	0	0
2016-2017	100%	0	0	0

List of Attached Evidence:

- [CFR 2.10-1](#) Campus Climate Survey Report
- [CFR 2.10-2](#) Focus Group Report
- [CFR 2.10-3](#) Graduate Satisfaction Survey

CFR 2.11: *Co-curricular programs aligned with academic goals and regularly assessed.*

Institutional Response

CNSL is expected in the SAV3 review to give specific attention to the following issues:

Regularly assess the effectiveness of efforts by the Dean of Students and the Dean of Student Services to support students' academic, personal, and professional development, and use those results for improvement.

After the SAV 2 visit CNSL's Student Services Department was reassessed and new job descriptions for the Dean of Students and Director of Academic Support (formerly Director of Student Services) were drafted by the Dean of Students and the Director of Academic Support ([CFR 2.11-1](#) and [CFR 2.11-2](#)). A revised Organizational Chart is attached as [CFR 2.11-3](#).

Primary responsibilities of the Dean of Students include:

- Counseling students on academic planning, including its relationship to bar exams, career plans and employability, and helping students to establish and maintain relationships with the faculty.
- student complaints and academic integrity matters and conduct investigations as Address required.
- Assess student disabilities and the need for law school academic accommodations.
- Advise students regarding the American Disabilities Act, Veterans Affairs, Title IX, FERPA, CalWORKS, etc.
- Assist with the interpretation of CNSL policy and regulations.
- Assist students, staff, faculty, family members, and community members with student questions, issues and concerns.
- Provide first year students with a comprehensive orientation to law school education.
- Respond to student emergency situations as they may occur.
- Counsel students on non-academic matters.
- Delegate to the Director of Academic Support (DAS) the determination and provision of academic support for students.
- Serve as adviser to the Student Bar Association (SBA).
- Meet regularly with the DAS and Institutional Researcher to assess the effectiveness of student services to support the students' academic, personal and professional development.
- Report to the Dean.

Primary responsibilities of the Director of Academic Support include:

- Report to the Dean of Students.
- Develop and implement strategies to retain and assist students to reach successful completion of their degree program.
- Provide specialized student support services to students in need of additional academic support (tutoring).
- Ensure that the tutoring program meets the needs of students and is in compliance with accreditation standards.
- Assists students in identifying their individual learning styles and provides resource suggestions for enhanced learning opportunities.
- Supports student development, retention, and self-advocacy.

- Make recommendations to the Dean of Students (DOS) on improving the students’ academic experience, including but not limited to the students’ experience with individual course material.
- Meet regularly with the DOS and Institutional Researcher to assess the effectiveness of student services to support the students’ academic, personal and professional development.

As reported in the Dean of Students Annual Report, Dean Jacobs met with many first-year students and advised them on successfully pursuing their legal education. His goals for this year were to ensure his availability to CNSL’s students and to get to know the first-year class to better support their academic, personal and professional development. In all instances, the first-year students understood the role of Dean of Students and expressed an understanding of the CNSL policies and procedures affecting them ([CFR 2.11-4](#)).

Led by the Director of Academic Support, CNSL’s Tutoring Program seeks to best serve students’ academic needs by carefully developing individualized curriculum designed to meet students’ expectations for successful completion of law school. As reported by Ms. Stover, tutoring was provided to a total of 12 students during the 2018-2019 school year, ten first year students and two second year students. At the time of her Annual Report, assessment of tutored students’ Spring 2019 final exam responses were not yet available ([CFR 2.11-5](#)). However, the assessment of the Spring and Fall 2018 tutoring reflected that tutored students collectively improved their scores and successfully completed their first year of study ([CFR 2.11-6](#)).

Tutoring program results are distributed and discussed with faculty and the Board of Trustees. In addition, the Dean of Students, the Director of Academic Support and the Institutional Research meet regularly to assess the effectiveness of student services to support the students’ academic, personal and professional development.

In addition to assessing the value of the support provided by the Dean of Students and the Director of Academic Support the visiting team suggested CNSL assess student satisfaction and campus climate. CNSL circulated its first Campus Climate Survey in August 2018 and February 2019 and received 22 responses (42%) out of 52 students surveyed. When asked if students sought advice from their academic advisor, or tutoring or academic assistance, did it help you, students overwhelmingly reported it did ([CFR 2.10-1](#)).

Campus Climate Survey Q13: “If you sought advice from your academic advisor(s) did it help you?”

Climate Survey Q13	%but it was not very helpful	%and it helped me some	%and it helped me quite a bit
2018	15%	23%	62%

Campus Climate Survey Q15: “If you sought tutoring or academic assistance, did it help you?”

Climate Survey Q15	%but it was not very helpful	%and it helped some	%and it helped quite a bit
2018	0	33%	67%

While the majority of the Climate Survey responses were overwhelmingly positive, as a follow up CNSL held a focus group on May 14, 2019 led by an independent mediator in an effort to identify any gaps in student satisfaction. The focus group was attended by four students who all had positive comments about their CNSL experience ([CFR 2.10-2](#)).

List of Attached Evidence:

CFR 2.11-1	Dean of Students Job Description
CFR 2.11-2	Director of Academic Support Job Description
CFR 2.11-3	Organizational Chart
CFR 2.11-4	Dean of Students Annual Report
CFR 2.11-5	Director of Academic Support Annual Report
CFR 2.11-6	Spring and Fall 2018 Tutoring Reports
CFR 2.10-1	Campus Climate Survey Report
CFR 2.10-2	Focus Group Report

CFR 2.13: *Student support services.*

Institutional Response

CNSL is expected in the SAV3 review to give specific attention to the following issues:

Regularly collect and analyze aggregated and disaggregated data related to student satisfaction and student achievement to inform decision-making.

As detailed in the response to CFR 2.10 and CFR 2.11, CNSL's retention and graduation data and student satisfaction surveys show CNSL is meeting the needs of its particular student population.

List of Attached Evidence:

Not Applicable

Standard Two: Synthesis/Reflections

1. After completing this analysis, what are the 2 or 3 most important issues that should be emphasized in the Review under this Standard?

- a. Meaningful Rigorous Course of Study**-With its focus on legal fundamentals, CNSL provides its students with the essentials of a sound legal education. It offers a coherent, rigorous, meaningful course of study whether for the JD or MLS taught by attorneys and judges who bring their professional expertise to bear.
- b. Bar Passage Success**-CNSL's five-year cumulative bar pass rate of 73% clearly demonstrates it is effectively educating its students for the California Bar Exam. Our students are individuals who have chosen not to disrupt their personal lives and careers to attend law school full time or to take on the large debt that would entail. Some would have difficulty gaining admission to larger full time American Bar Association (ABA) programs, yet they have been successful at CNSL.
- c. Evidence-based Decision Making**-We are building a culture of evidence-based decision-making through reflection and action on learning outcomes. Faculty, staff, Board of Trustee and students are engaged in our assessment processes. Our efforts are beginning to show results with indicators of positive trends in retention, student achievement and bar pass rates.

2. Looking overall at the quality and effectiveness of the institution's data gathering processes and systems to support the review process, what are institutional strengths?

CNSL is fortunate to have a group of committed faculty, staff and Board of Trustee members working towards understanding and supporting its efforts toward an evidence-based culture; and a 36-year commitment to continuous improvement that is now channeled through several systematic review processes. Changes implemented with the tutoring program and the scholarship and loan programs have improved CNSL's enrollment, graduation and retention rates.

3. Looking again at the overall quality and effectiveness of the institution's data gathering processes and systems to support the review process, what are areas to be addressed or improved in the foreseeable future?

We must continue our efforts to integrate reflection and action on data into the everyday function of the law school. Learning outcomes must be aligned with the faculty's teaching and we must further develop evidence-based approaches to evaluating the law school's purposes, strategic plan, goals and student learning outcomes.

Standard Three: Developing and Applying Resources and Organizational Structures to Ensure Quality and Sustainability

The institution sustains its operations and supports the achievement of its educational objectives through investments in human, physical, fiscal, technological, and information resources and through an appropriate and effective set of organizational and decision-making structures. These key resources and organizational structures promote the achievement of institutional purposes and educational objectives and create a high-quality environment for learning.

Fiscal, Physical and Information Resources

CFR 3.4: *Financial stability; integrated budgeting; enrollment management.*

Institutional Response

CNSL is expected in the SAV3 review to give specific attention to the following issues:

Develop and implement strategic enrollment management plans that are integrated with other institutional planning and resource allocation to ensure the institution's long-term viability.

Since being founded 36 years ago, CNSL has remained continuously financially stable and has always received unqualified independent financial audits. The law school takes a conservative approach to its financial planning to ensure its continued financial stability and has adequate present and anticipated financial resources to support its mission and purposes, to ensure all students have a reasonable opportunity to complete the program and obtain a degree. Long range planning typically commences in early October and is completed at the end of January after the Chief Financial Officer (CFO) has completed the budget with the Dean's approval. An annual budgeting/planning process is approved by the Board of Directors and the Board of Trustees in January.

To review enrollment trends for the CALS from 2014-2017 is to see a 14% decline in JD headcount (from 2,009 in 2014 to 1,721 in 2017). CNSL's enrollment saw a similar decrease in enrollment over this same period (from 45 student in 2014 to 38 students in 2017, a 16% decline). However, since Fall 2017, Fall 2018 enrollment numbers show a 23% increase to 47 students. This increase is attributed to, among other variables, focused attention on enrollment activities and the successful creation of CNSL's Scholarship and Loan Programs.

The following table offers a bottom line look at revenues, expenses and operating surpluses during the 2015-2017 academic years. Even with the fluctuation in enrollment, CNSL saw an operating surplus all three years.

Fiscal Year	2015	2016	2017
Gross Revenues	\$374,055	\$411,523	\$383,034
Operating Expenses	\$352,850	\$370,711	\$362,190
Operating Surplus (Deficit)	\$21,205	\$40,812	\$21,648

CNSL continues to have successful audits. In anticipation of WSCUC accreditation, each year the independent financial audit reports CNSL’s “composite score” which will be used by the Department of Education to evaluate continued eligibility in the Title IV program once CNSL is accredited. CNSL’s composite scores for the past three audits are 2.0, 2.7, and 2.6 on a maximum 3.0 scale, further evidence of CNSL’s sound financial standing.

Looking to the future, CNSL is currently engaged in a strategic planning project to guide its agenda for the next three years. As part of this exercise, the school produced a long-range plan through FY2021 ([CFR 3.4-1](#)). Among the plan’s assumptions are that new enrollment for the JD program will match what was accomplished in FY2018 for FY2019 and a 10% increase over the next two years. Meanwhile, enrollment for the MLS program also is modeled with modest expectations with most of the growth coming from the dual-degree initiatives underway. Tuition increases are currently modeled at 10% every four years so tuition remains the same all four years of a student’s study. The next tuition increase will occur in Fall 2019. With tuition at \$578.00 per unit, which includes access to Bar Bri (a leading California Bar Review provider) a \$4,000 value, CNSL’s tuition remains one of the most affordable of the CALS. Combined with its high five-year cumulative bar exam pass rate of 73%, 2nd highest of all CALS as published on the State Bar’s website [here](#), CNSL’s educational program is an excellent value.

The following table offers a snapshot of the plan’s projected gross revenues and operating expenses:

Fiscal Year	2019	2020	2021
Fall New Enrollment	23	24	26
Fall Total Enrollment	49	56	62
Projected Operating Revenue	\$570,013	\$637, 217	\$724,830
Projected Operating Expense	\$466,362	\$513,461	\$527,706
Projected Operating Surplus	\$89,651	\$99,756	\$177,124
Operating Surplus Margin	16%	16%	24%

Finally, the long-range plan to increase financial stability includes increasing fundraising efforts. CNSL's first Annual Fund letter sent to friends and alumni in 2016 yielded approximately \$3,500 annually for scholarships. The Board of Trustees has made a commitment to fundraising and will support all CNSL's efforts.

To further its efforts towards continued financial stability, CNSL has engaged in deliberate discussions about enrollment management and has developed an Enrollment Management Plan (**CFR 3.4-2**). The Enrollment Management Plan is philosophically grounded in the goals and objectives of CNSL's Strategic Plan. With steadily eroding markets for ABA and state accredited law schools, as evidenced by the most recent closure notice from ABA law school Western State College of Law.

<http://www.abajournal.com/news/article/proposed-teach-out-plan-submitted-by-western-state-college-of-law> enrollment in law schools is changing. We recognize we are faced with a more challenging competitive environment. In response, we must develop stronger outreach and partnerships with area employers, colleges and universities and community leaders to promote our JD and MLS degrees as successful pathways to advance our students career goals. We are confident these and other efforts will lead to an increase in overall enrollments over the ensuing five years.

The Enrollment Management Plan consists of four components – Marketing, Enrollment, Diversity and Retention. Each of these components is grounded in the fact that CNSL offers tremendous educational value in terms of quality and cost. CNSL's historical philosophy is to offer an academic program of excellence that is student and practice centered, accessible, affordable, and linked to the demographics and civic needs of its campus communities. The Enrollment Management Plan is implemented, assessed and adjusted on a regular basis through research and reporting processes that provide continuous assessment of inquiries, applications, enrollments and retention.

List of Attached Evidence:

- [CFR 3.4-1](#)** Operating Forecast 2019-2021
- [CFR 3.4-2](#)** Enrollment Management Plan

Organizational Structures and Decision-making Processes

CFR 3.6: *Leadership operates with integrity, high performance, responsibility, and accountability.*

Institutional Response

CNSL is expected in the SAV3 review to give specific attention to the following issues:

The Board of Trustees should empower the President to charge the Chief Financial Officer (CFO) and Director of Student Services with the appropriate responsibility to allow them to provide effective leadership and management in their functional areas.

After the SAV2 it became clear that CNSL's Chief Financial Officer (CFO) was not engaged with CNSL or its operations in a meaningful way. As such, at its November 8, 2017 meeting the Board of Trustees authorized the appointment of a new CFO and formed a search committee to seek interested candidates from the local community. After talking with several candidates, the search committee chose Dana Campbell. Ms. Campbell is an attorney and a Certified Public Accountant (CPA) with 18 years of experience working as a CFO, including working with multiple federal financial funding sources. She is also a Cal Northern graduate. As a CPA and CFO, Ms. Campbell brings a wealth of experience in long-term financial planning and insight into her role as CFO. Since joining CNSL's key administrative staff, Dana Campbell has fully immersed herself in CNSL's budget management, long-term strategic financial planning, regularly advises the Dean and reports to the Board of Trustees at Board of Trustee meetings. ([CFR 3.6-1](#)).

List of Attached Evidence:

[CFR 3.6-1](#) CFO Biography

CFR 3.8: *Full-time chief executive officer (CEO); chief financial officer (CFO); sufficient qualified administrators.*

Institutional Response

CNSL is expected in the SAV3 review to give specific attention to the following issues:

The Board of Trustees should empower the President to charge the Chief Financial Officer (CFO) and Director of Student Services with the appropriate responsibility to allow them to provide effective leadership and management in their functional areas.

As detailed in response to CFR 3.6, with Dana Campbell as CFO, CNSL has a CFO who is now fully engaged with the law school's financial oversight and planning which will be instrumental when it comes time to access Title IV funding from the Department of Education.

With the restructuring of CNSL's Student Services Department, the Director of Academic Support (formerly the Director of Student Services) has provided additional resources for both administrative and academic oversight, as well as further development of our functions related to student services as discussed in the response to CFR 2.11.

List of Attached Evidence:

Not Applicable

Standard Three: Synthesis/Reflections

- 1. After completing this analysis, what are the 2 or 3 most important issues that should be emphasized in the Review under this Standard?**

CNSL's well-designed and implemented organizational structures have enabled it to effectively educate students and create a high quality environment for learning for the past 36 years. Budgeting resources are sufficient to meet the needs of the institution and its students; and are aligned with the law school's educational purposes and objectives. With the implementation of its review processes and culture of evidence-based decision-making CNSL is in a position to meet the needs of its students for an affordable quality legal education for years to come.

CNSL's dedicated and experienced faculty and staff are committed to its students' graduation and success on the California Bar Examination. Students' success is also supported by appropriate technology and information resources and services consistent with the law school's educational objectives.

- 2. Looking overall at the quality and effectiveness of the institution's data gathering processes and systems to support the review process, what are institutional strengths?**

The commitment of CNSL's faculty along with the changes made in the law school's organizational structures, review processes and institutional governance have solidified its academic quality and educational effectiveness.

- 3. Looking again at the overall quality and effectiveness of the institution's data gathering processes and systems to support the review process, what are areas to be addressed or improved in the foreseeable future?**

Additional support from faculty, staff and the Board of Trustees are needed to improve the law school's data gathering processes and the analysis needed to make evidence-based decisions. Through our review processes, we must find ways to creatively and cost-effectively improve our legal education programs to more effectively meet the needs of all of our students, within the constraints imposed by the California Bar Examination. To fully engage new faculty members in outcome-based education, assessment activities, and the goals of continuous improvement cycles, we will need to continue to design effective orientation materials. Finally, an effective approach must be found for efficient and consistent tracking of assessment activities and data on an ongoing basis, even as our approach to these matters is undergoing a constant process of review and improvement.

Standard Four: Creating an Organization Committed to Quality Assurance, Institutional Learning, and Improvement

The institution engages in sustained, evidence-based, and participatory self-reflection about how effectively it is accomplishing its purposes and achieving its educational objectives. The institution considers the changing environment of higher education in envisioning its future. These activities inform both institutional planning and systematic evaluations of educational effectiveness. The results of institutional inquiry, research, and data collection are used to establish priorities, to plan, and to improve quality and effectiveness.

Quality Assurance Processes

CFR 4.1: *Quality-assurance processes.*

Institutional Response

CNSL is expected in the SAV3 review to give specific attention to the following issues:

Develop and implement systematic quality assurance processes that integrate the results of existing and emerging academic fiscal, and co-curricular inquiries.

Since the SAV2, under CNSL's Program Review Plan ([CFR 2.7-1](#)) CNSL has completed its 2018/2019 Annual Program Review as part of its five-year cycle of review designed to support evidence-based decision making for the continuous improvement of the law school and its programs ([CFR 2.7-2](#)). Faculty and staff are charged with the responsibility of identify program goals, objectives and student learning outcomes; developing assessment modalities; gathering data; analyzing data and in conjunction with the law school leadership, make improvements to the law school's programs and services.

Annually, faculty and staff gather and analyze data from student learning assessments, and other program metrics, including student demographics (e.g., race/ethnicity, undergraduate GPA, LSAT), enrollment and graduation trends, student satisfaction measures, course evaluation data, alumni and employer satisfaction measures, and graduates' bar exam success rate. The data, analysis and resulting action plans are reported in the Annual Program Review.

The 2018/2019 Annual Program Review included the results of CNSL's first Campus Climate Survey ([CFR 2.10-1](#)) and Employer Satisfaction Survey ([CFR 4.1-1](#)). While the majority of the Climate Survey responses were overwhelmingly positive, CNSL held a follow up focus group in an effort to identify any gaps in student satisfaction. The focus group was attended by four students who all had positive comments about their CNSL experience ([CFR 2.10-2](#)).

CNSL's Employer Satisfaction Survey was sent to employers identified by the California State Bar as employing CNSL students who graduated between 2013 and 2018. In that a vast majority of CNSL graduates are solo practitioners, 22 employers were surveyed of which 9 responded (41%). Employers were asked to rate their levels of satisfaction on a number of performance measurements, including

WSCUC's core competencies (i.e., written communication, oral communication critical thinking, quantitative reasoning and information literacy) and CNSL program objectives. 89% of the employers surveyed were satisfied with CNSL's graduates Overall Job Performance and the majority of CNSL's program objectives and 100% were satisfied with 5 out of 6 of the graduates' performance on WSCUC's core competencies.

In addition, as evidence that CNSL has built its quality assurance methodologies and practices sufficient for initial accreditation, CNSL has completed a comprehensive Three-Year Program Review which includes data on students' achievement of program learning outcomes, admissions data, enrollment data, retention and graduation rates, placement data, student demographics, bar exam results, alumni, student satisfaction survey results, employer survey results, in addition to data on faculty, fiscal resources, staff, technology and information resources, space and facilities, and the future ([CFR 2.7-3](#)).

List of Attached Evidence:

- [CFR 2.7-1](#) Program Review Plan
- [CFR 2.7-2](#) Annual Program Review 2018/2019
- [CFR 2.7-3](#) Three-Year Program Review 2015-2017
- [CFR 2.10-1](#) Campus Climate Survey Report
- [CFR 2.10-2](#) Focus Group Report
- [CFR 4.1-1](#) Employer Satisfaction Survey Report

Institutional Learning and Improvement

CFR 4.6: *Reflection and planning with multiple constituents; strategic plans align with purposes; address key priorities and future directions; plans are monitored and revised.*

Institutional Response

CNSL is expected in the SAV3 review to give specific attention to the following issues:

Develop a comprehensive strategic plan that goes beyond assessment of student learning to include evaluating the alignment of purpose core functions, and resources in order to define the future direction of the institution.

After the SAV2 the Strategic Planning Committee met and revised CNSL's strategic plan which includes specific and actionable goals aligned to CNSL's mission. With the revised 2017-2022 Strategic Plan, CNSL has set a clear direction for the future through four strategic goals, each supported by objectives, future actions and indicators of progress. Finally, program learning objectives have been defined for each program by the faculty and approved by the Board. While these various goals have recently been articulated they are rapidly being integrated into the law school's planning and processes.

CNSL's revised 2017-2022 Strategic Plan was drafted to further position itself to meet the four standards of WSCUC accreditation: Defining Institutional Purposes and Ensuring Educational Objectives; Achieving Educational Objectives Through Core Functions; Developing and Applying Resources and Organizational Structures to Ensure Quality and Sustainability; and Creating an Organization Committed to Quality Assurance, Institutional Learning, and Improvement ([CFR 4.6-1](#)).

One can see these objectives encompassing the Plan's four goals:

1. Assessment of Student Learning
2. Financial Stability
3. Operational Effectiveness
4. Regional Accreditation

In the decades preceding this Strategic Plan, program assessment at CNSL was almost exclusively defined by Bar Pass rates. Because of the first goal, CNSL has implemented program assessment plans to identify and measure learning objectives.

The plan's second goal addressed the need for continued financial stability, including further developing the school's fundraising capabilities toward a goal of more student scholarships. On the latter, CNSL developed its scholarship and loan programs to further our diversity and to provide more need and merit-based awards to incoming students.

Today, we have the CNSL Scholarship Program which offers two applicants a 50% Tuition Reduction Scholarship, one merit-based and one need-based; and two applicants a 25% Tuition Reduction Scholarship which may be merit or need-based. We also have the Legal Opportunity Scholarship which offers one applicant 100% Tuition Reduction Scholarship and was created to encourage racial and ethnic minority students to apply to law school and to provide financial assistance to ensure that these students have the opportunity to attend law school.

The Loan Program offers students the opportunity to defer payment of half of their tuition and fees (excluding the cost of Bar Bri or any other bar review course offered by CNSL) until graduation (or upon withdrawal or disqualification from CNSL.) Interest rates are fixed at six to ten percent APR and zero percent interest is charged while the student is enrolled at least half time. The program is available to qualified students regardless of income. The number of loans approved varies from year to year. More than \$95,000 have been awarded to students over the past two years through these programs, with the hope of providing more support in the years ahead.

The third goal focused on strengthening the school's learning community and finding new opportunities for engagement among students, faculty, staff and alumni. Progress indicators included student satisfaction data, student diversity and more alumni engagement.

CNSL witnessed progress in each of these areas. Starting with student demographics, the Fall 2015 census reported the Race/Ethnicity identifications as White (86%), Hispanic (7%) and Asian (7%). By the Fall 2017 census, the same demographics were White (71%), Asian (16%), Hispanic (8%) and African American (3%).

Student satisfaction over this same period witnessed some gains as well going from 91% in 2015 to 94% in 2017. Both facets of the CNSL experience were areas of focus in the 2017-2022 Strategic Plan.

Goal 3 also stressed strengthening CNSL's information technology infrastructure with an emphasis on new engagement channels, including an updated website and digital gateways for members of community. These objectives have been accomplished with the updated website and the new digital gateway, Populi. Faculty and students have access to schedules, grades, syllabi, transcripts and student and faculty accounts. Through the Giving link on the website, friends and alumni now have an online opportunity to give to CNSL which provides vital and irreplaceable support to enhance CNSL's current academic and student programs, expand educational opportunities, and ensure that any student can attend the law school, regardless of economic status.

The 2017-2022 Strategic Plan closed with a fourth goal, regional accreditation, which would become one of the heaviest lifts in the school's history. CNSL has improved significantly as an institution in the process of preparing for the SAV3. Most significant has been the development of its independent governing board, culture of evidence-based decision making, assessment of student learning, and the implementation of its student information management system.

Progress toward the plan is reviewed each year and the plan itself is reviewed every five years with contributions from at least as many constituents. The plan's priorities are advance through the review of the Strategic Plan-Progress Report in December when the Board of Trustees approves the new budget. The Progress Report also includes measures for determining progress toward the goals and for success ([CFR 4.6-2](#)).

List of Attached Evidence:

- [CFR 4.6-1](#) Strategic Plan 2017-2022
- [CFR 4.6-2](#) Strategic Plan-Progress Report 2019

Standard Four: Synthesis/Reflections

- 1. After completing this analysis, what are the 2 or 3 most important issues that should be emphasized in the Review under this Standard?**

CNSL provides an important role in the changing environment of legal education, not only for its students but for the communities it serves. In many ways, CNSL exemplifies the rational future of legal education, as urged by the State Bar and critics of the legal academy with its focus on practical skills training, affordable tuition and dissemination of legal knowledge to non-lawyers.

Building on its quality assurance processes demonstrates that CNSL has effectively integrated a more systematic approach to evidence-based decision-making; and has demonstrated that it is capable of such decision-making and has improved its program.

- 2. Looking overall at the quality and effectiveness of the institution's data gathering processes and systems to support the review process, what are institutional strengths?**

The changes CNSL has taken since seeking WSCUC accreditation are its strengths. To become a more evidence-based decision-making institution, the law school has shifted its focus into evaluating the effectiveness of teaching and student learning processes. Adapting our long-standing practices to a new approach toward planning and action has empowered faculty, staff and Trustees to embrace new models for our students.

- 3. Looking again at the overall quality and effectiveness of the institution's data gathering processes and systems to support the review process, what are areas to be addressed or improved in the foreseeable future?**

Additional data gathering, reflection and evidence-based decision is needed by all-the Trustees, faculty and staff, as well as timely dissemination of data to be incorporated in institutional review, planning and decision-making. Providing opportunities for professional development are an ongoing challenge for the future.

Section 5: Identification of Other Changes or Issues the Institution is Facing

This section of the report should briefly identify any other significant issues or changes that are likely to occur at the institution in the upcoming five years that are not described in preceding sections (e.g., changes in key personnel, major new anticipated programs, modifications in the governance structure, or significant financial results). This information will help the evaluator team gain a clearer sense of the current and anticipated future status of the institution.

With the CBE change that will eliminate “registered” law schools, distance-learning JD programs will soon become accredited. CNSL may want to consider whether changes should be made in its programs or practices to stay competitive and will periodically review opportunities. Should CNSL decide to offer online programs we will need to seek training in good practices in online pedagogical approaches and curriculum development.

Section 6: Conclusion: Reflections and Plans for Improvement

In this concluding component, the institution assesses the impact of the self-study, reflects on what it has learned in the course of the self-study, and discusses plans for improvement. This component also provides the institution an opportunity to make a case for whether compliance sufficient for Initial Accreditation has been achieved with the relevant Standards and Criteria for Review.

CNSL has improved significantly as an institution in the process of preparing for the SAV3. Most significant has been the development of its independent governing board, culture of evidence-based decision making, assessment of student learning in an effort to improve teaching and learning, and the implementation of its student information management system.

Populi now allows us to systematically compile and analyze retention, enrollment and graduation data. The School regularly measures student achievement, in terms of retention, completion and student learning and reports retention, graduation data and satisfaction results as required on its website.

The shared governance has been improved by the expanded involvement and growing sophistication in governance by the Board of Trustees and the Faculty Senate. Roles have been defined between the Board of Directors, Board of Trustees and Faculty Senate and the corporation and the law school no longer commingle funds.

Faculty are embracing assessment of student learning based on learning outcomes and are engaged in assessments. With the assistance of CNSL's Assessment Coordinator/Director of Institutional Research, Martha Wilson and the newly formed Assessment Committee, faculty are increasing the use of formative assessment modalities in their courses and have completed several assessment projects, with more underway. As a result, faculty are changing the way they teach.

We will use what we have learned to further improve our programs. Data collection will be refined to improve the value of the data and expanded to increase understanding of student achievement. We will devote resources to strengthening teaching in our programs, by assessing and improving our faculty development.

CNSL's Board of Trustees, faculty and staff are dedicated to teaching and learning and is capable of and deeply committed to improvement. As has been shown in this Self-Study report, it is now in compliance with WSCUC's relevant Standards and Criteria for Review sufficient for Initial Accreditation.

While still tethered to tradition, the Board of Trustees, faculty and staff have changed their way of thinking and teaching and are ready to join the ranks of WSCUC regionally accredited institutions.

Section 7: Required Attachments

Institutions are required to provide the following form as part of report submission. Also include all the evidence used to substantiate claims made in the report or illustrate compliance sufficient for Initial Accreditation. Please upload the material to the folder in Box.com when you submit the report (see pages 1 and 2 of this document).

- An updated [Inventory of Educational Effectiveness Indicators](#)