

August 8, 2017

Barry A. Currier
Managing Director, Accreditation and Legal Education
ABA Section of Legal Education and Admissions to the Bar
American Bar Association
321 North Clark Street
Chicago, IL 60654-7598

Dear Director Currier:

We write as the deans of the University of California law schools in strong support of the action taken by the Council in June with regard to the new Employment Outcomes Public Disclosure Form.

The University of California puts enormous emphasis on public service, including helping our graduates who wish to pursue careers in public interest law. Indeed, in 2016, University of California President Janet Napolitano created a new initiative for fellowships for graduates from the University of California law schools. These fellowships provide \$47,500 per year for graduates who spend a year in a public interest or government organization, and thanks to this system-wide investment, all of our schools were able to expand our already-substantial commitment to post-graduate fellowships. Our experience is that the vast majority of these students receive permanent offers at these organizations after their fellowship year or have the opportunity for employment at similar organizations. Fellowships like this are crucial for graduates who want to pursue careers in public service.

We are extremely grateful for the \$4.5 million annual investment made by the UC system into summer and post-graduate public service employment opportunities for our students. These fellowships spur public service careers and help our students gain superb experience that they simply could not otherwise receive. They are an investment in our students for the public good. As President Napolitano said in announcing this program, "It is exactly what public law schools should be doing — encouraging and supporting students who want to give back to their local communities, the state of California, and the country as a whole. It will clearly demonstrate that all of UC's law schools prioritize public service and are committed to making public service opportunities available to all law students, no matter their financial circumstances."

We strongly believe such employment should be treated the same as all other full-time employment. The new Employment Outcomes Public Disclosure Form does this, whereas the prior form treated such positions differently. Law schools that provide such fellowships, like the University of California system along with its individual law schools, are making a substantial investment in public service and should not be penalized for doing so.

The failure to treat positions the same regardless of funding gives prospective law students and the public a misleading picture of actual employment numbers. Reporting should reflect the number of students actually employed; the source of funding – so long as it meets the ABA definition of employment – should not matter.

We thus applaud the change in the Employment Outcomes Public Disclosure Form and urge that it be implemented.

Sincerely,

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