

Purdue Global Law School's Pursuit of Bar Exam Eligibility Sparks Debate



Concord Law School, now rebranded as **Purdue Global Law School**, is pushing for a rule change from the Indiana Supreme Court to allow its graduates to sit for the state bar exam. Currently, only graduates from American Bar Association (ABA)-accredited law schools are eligible to take the test in the state. The institution's new name comes as part of its acquisition by Purdue University, aiming to leverage the university's reputation.

Purdue Global Law School caters to a unique demographic – its students have an average age of 45 and often work full-time jobs. The institution, founded in 1998 as the first fully online law school in the United States, has three graduation ceremonies annually. However, due to its non-ABA accreditation, its graduates can only take the California bar exam.

The law school's endeavor to be recognized for the Indiana bar exam has been met with challenges. The school's petition for the rule change was submitted to the Indiana Supreme Court in 2022. A subsequent working group report highlighted the proposal's benefits and drawbacks.

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Positives cited in the report include the increasing role of online education in legal studies, with Purdue Global Law School offering high-quality online course content. The report also acknowledges Purdue University's prestigious academic standing and emphasizes the need for accessible legal education options, especially for residents in certain regions of Indiana.

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However, concerns were raised regarding the law school's lower academic credentials compared to ABA-accredited institutions, potentially affecting the overall state bar pass rate. The report noted that graduates from ABA-accredited law schools tend to perform better on bar exams than those from non-ABA-accredited schools, including Purdue Global Law School.

Faculty resources emerged as another point of contention. The law school was reported to have significantly fewer faculty resources than well-established Indiana law schools, such as Notre Dame Law School and Indiana University's Maurer and McKinney Schools of Law.

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The Indiana State Bar Association opposed the proposal, emphasizing the importance of a reliable accreditation process to ensure a quality legal education. The deans of Maurer and McKinney Law Schools and the Indianapolis Bar Association also submitted comments opposing the rule change.

Despite the challenges, Martin Pritikin, Dean of Purdue Global Law School, remains optimistic about the potential benefits of the rule change. He views the institution as an opportunity for students seeking an alternative legal education experience. Pritikin acknowledged that the court might face resistance from entrenched interests but believes that the move would ultimately benefit Indiana's legal education landscape.

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Notably, Purdue Global Law School has chosen not to pursue ABA accreditation at this time. This decision is rooted in the financial considerations associated with establishing a physical campus and in-person classes, which could raise operating costs significantly and limit flexibility for its predominantly working student demographic.

Don't be a silent ninja! Let us know your thoughts in the comment section below.