Northwestern School of Law, California

Posted by jewell - 2013/01/29 21:04

Any members here familiar with Northwester School of Law in California. I am thinking of applying for admissions but I would like to get some feedback from students who are currently attending or could give me some feedback about the school. I am also looking for a mentor to help me get started on entering law school. I am retired and decided to go back to school and because I live in California thought that this was a great school with easy entry. So if anyone is out there and need someone to mentor please leave a message and I'd be happy to get back to you. Thanks for reading.

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Re:Northwestern School of Law, California

Posted by VickyPhillips - 2013/01/30 11:44

Hi Jewell,

Thanks for posting as we get the basic question you are asking fairly often: Is it a good idea to attend an unaccredited online law school?

I think you must mean Northwestern California University (NCU) rather than Northwestern University School of Law (NU)in Illinois.

NU is a very famous Bar Approved law school in Chicago whereas NCU is a a non-accredited and non-ABA approved correspondence school that has a license to operate (state approval - NOT ABA approval) as a business in the state of California. If you mean NCU the following would apply if I were looking at this school:

My main question to you is why would you attend a non-accredited, non-ABA law school?

For background on this see these articles:

• Which are the Best Online Law Schools?
http://www.geteducated.com/justice-law-legal-studies/12-justice-law-legal-studies/267-which-are-the-best-online-law-schools

• American Bar Association May Ease Restrictions on Online Law Schools
http://www.geteducated.com/hot-careers/justice-law-legal-studies/273-bar-association-may-ease-online-law-school-restrictions

Do you want to use your law degree in the work place? If so, consult the above article for the limits of attending a non-accredited law school online.

There are many issues that make me uncomfortable about this online law school. The first is that they call themselves "Northwestern" when their is a very famous law school of this name; the second is that they are NOT straight forward about the fact that they LACK any type of accreditation.

On their FAQ page they sidestep the issue of accreditation and ABA approval --> SEE BELOW

Their FAQ Question:

Is Northwestern California University accredited? If not, will I be eligible for Bar membership in any state other than California?

Their Answer:

Our school was approved in 1982 to issue degrees by the State of California Department of Education. It is presently registered with and regulated by the California State Bar. Our students are eligible to practice law in California if they successfully take and pass the California First-Year Law Students' Examination (the "Baby Bar") after the first year of our program and later, upon completion of the program, pass the California General Bar Exam. The school, as with all distance learning and correspondence schools, is not accredited by the American Bar Association (ABA). Nor is it accredited by the California Committee of Bar Examiners (CBE) though, as mentioned above, it is registered with, and regulated by, the California Bar and our students are eligible to practice law in California after passing the Baby Bar and General Bar Exam, and are eligible to practice in certain other states and the District of Columbia (Washington D.C.) pursuant to special eligibility rules.

They write a great deal more in answering this question BUT the telling item here is that there is a very simple answer to these questions, which they have evaded entirely.

The answer to "Is NCU accredited?" is NO. (Neither registered nor approved as used in their statement mean anything like accredited or ABA approved)

The answer to "Is NCU approved by the Bar Association" is NO.

Will attending a non-accredited and non-ABA law school meet your personal and career goals? Most people want their education to meet with wide acceptance for personal and career reasons; if you just want to read the law for leisure and self improvement then accreditation may not matter to you.

But if you want acceptance and career klout for your law degree see the articles above on those limitations.

If you already have a bachelor's degree you may want to look at an online masters in law
SEE:

• New Online Law Degrees Target Non-Traditional Adult Students
http://www.geteducated.com/hot-careers/justice-law-legal-studies/458-online-law-degrees-target-non-traditional-adult-students

There are online master's degrees of this type available online from ABA approved law schools and these degrees are often taken by professionals who want to read the law for personal use or use in business as opposed as for the reason of becoming a court/trial attorney.

If you do NOT have a bachelor's degree there are a number of regionally accredited colleges that offer a pre-law or legal studies degree online also.

Just search our online degree directory under LAW

GO: http://www.geteducated.com/profiles/search/Law&SS=Search%20by%20Subject%20%3E%20Law

We only list accredited schools so you will not find any reviews or listings for NCU.

All the Best
Vicky Phillips

jewell wrote:
Any members here familiar with Northwester School of Law in California. I am thinking of applying for admissions but I would like to get some feedback from students who are currently attending or could give me some feedback about the school. I am also looking for a mentor to help me get started on entering law school. I am retired and decided to go back to school and because I live in California thought that this was a great school with easy entry. So if anyone is out there and need someone to mentor please leave a message and I'd be happy to get back to you. Thanks for reading.

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Re:Northwestern School of Law, California

Posted by jewell - 2013/01/30 14:28

Vicki many thanks for your response.

There are many reasons for me looking at enrolling at Northwestern. First, I am a retiree from the law field but not a lawyer so I have the experience. But these are the things that drove me to the school: The monthly payments are reasonable; the admission thru CLEP is within my reach; you can write the Baby Bar after one year and write the California Bar after four years, which allow you to practice law in California.

My main goal is to open a pro-bono clinic in my area and be able to help people who cannot afford the high costs of lawyers. So I just need the certification to place my signature and stamp on documents that can help someone. I am a Californian and have no intention of ever leaving. What do you think?

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Re:Northwestern School of Law, California

Posted by VickyPhillips - 2013/01/30 16:04

Hi Jewell,

Thanks for the quick clarification!

Okay, so if I get your situation and what you want/need in a law school online correctly then these conditions apply:

1) You do not have a bachelor's degree and do not want to earn one so you want to try and test into the JD degree program (a graduate degree); and this school will let you have a go at that using CLEP exams;

2)You like the cost and payment plans;

3) You are never leaving California so need a degree that will let you meet the California no-aba degree bar law rule.

4) You do intend to earn a JD degree and to sit for the bar only in California and to practice as an attorney.

Then there is one last thing I's recommend you find out from this school before handing over the dough -- has any grad of this school ever passed the bar; what are the scores for their grads on the bar; what percentage of their grads pass the bar exam in CA?

I'd compare ALL unaccredited law schools in CA on the above measures BECAUSE you want and need to pass that Bar and one huge hidden problem with unaccredited law schools is that they have a really LOW take and pass rate for the Bar. Find out of they are really going to prep you for that bar exam. What are your chances if they educate you in the law of becoming a practicing attorney?

I could not find the above data on their website AND since your goal is to be a practicing attorney and they are required to report this data when asked, see what they say.

Stay focused on your goals AND then find out who can help you pass that bar exam in CA!

Good Luck!
Vicky

jewell wrote:
Vicki many thanks for your response.

There are many reasons for me looking at enrolling at Northwestern. First, I am a retiree from the law field but not a lawyer so I have the experience. But these are the things that drove me to the school: The monthly payments are reasonable; the admission thru CLEP is within my reach; you can write the Baby Bar after one year and write the California Bar after four years, which allow you to practice law in California.

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Re:Northwestern School of Law, California

Posted by jewell - 2013/01/31 05:18

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Honestly I feel if one wants to become a lawyer one will regardless of the institution they attend.

Fortunately for me I live in a beautiful State that gives people the opportunity to become lawyers without all the hypercritical bureaucracy. Passing the exam is all up to me (as my deceased father will say) it has absolutely nothing to do with the institution I attend, especially at my age - my success of failure lies completely with me and how much I want to put into it. I determine whether I pass or fail, not the school. It is not about accredited JD or unaccredited JD, because it has been proven that there are failures on both sides of the fence. I believe times are changing, technology is taking the lead and online education is the wave of the future and I am just glad for this opportunity.

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Re:Northwestern School of Law, California

Posted by VickyPhillips - 2013/01/31 11:26

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Hi Jewell,

I'd agree everyone educates themselves in the end.
In that regard I'd just get the books and read for the law exams myself.
That's how many famous lawyers of yesteryear did it.
(Including Abraham Lincoln)

But it is also true that the pass rate on the bar is often extremely low for grads of unaccredited schools; and this can be traced back to the school not providing the best
texts, feedback and assessment in route. All these things are a part of what you are buying when you "buy" a degree; and not all schools are equal in this regard. You can be as smart as a whip BUT if you are give poor study tools and assessment feedback you won't be prepared to pass the bar.

Bar pass rates are public knowledge and this school does not post them on their website; that is a red flag to me and would be to most career and educational counselors.

Bar pass rates are important if your goal is to pass that Bar exam.

Be Well,
Vicky

jewell wrote:
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