



September 2022 Board & Stakeholders Update

Dear Stakeholders,

I recently discovered an old newspaper article of significance to COL lore. Dated January 1978, it records the news of a “merger” between the Ventura College of Law and the California Law Institute of Santa Barbara—the latter eventually becoming the SB College of Law. Beyond being an archival novelty (four inches of print copy at most), it’s a reminder of our school’s constant evolution, that while our origin story dates to 1969, our identity as one school, multiple campuses emerged later.

Afterward, this evolution continued with other milestones met: TCS Education System affiliation, introduction of online courses, WSCUC accreditation, and the launch of the state’s first accredited hybrid JD program. And now this fall we cross another historic marker with the launch of our Master of Arts in Law program and lifelong learning opportunities for graduates and the public at large.

More on these projects and other COL news of note below.

SFP - 12/4/22

Area law schools announce merger

Ventura College of Law is merging with California Law Institute of Santa Barbara to form one law school with two campuses.

Fred J. Olson, dean of Ventura College of Law, will assume leadership of both campuses. The merger is expected to be complete by June 1, Olson said.

Ventura College of Law, which was provisionally accredited by the state Bar in 1976, has about 200 students. California Law Institute has about 80.

Both schools have had a high pass rate for students. Last year, 17 of 19 VCL graduates passed the bar exams, a rate of 89 percent.

Fall Admission Returns are in: COL New JD Student Enrollment up 11% YoY

Our 54th Fall semester commenced on August 15 with 49 new onsite JD students beginning their studies. Together they join our Spring starts to form a **1L class of 72 strong (43 for the Ventura campus and 29 1Ls for Santa Barbara)**. For comparison, we seated 56 1Ls last fall.

Turning to hybrid, we welcomed an incoming 1L class of 57 (40 joining in Fall and 17 from the Spring). They gathered for the first time together at the Ventura campus this past weekend—closing our first in-person orientation in three years.

Looking to Spring 2023, early signs point to another successful admission cycle. JD applications through August stand at 55 compared to 42 at the same point last year.



Hybrid JD Cohort V at orientation

Strategic Initiatives Updates: Master of Arts in Law Welcomes first Students; Lifelong Learning Project Advances

Nearly three years have passed since administration presented to the Board of Trustees new strategic opportunities for adjacent JD academic content. The discussion yielded two projects. The first involved advancing a “stackable credential” approach to legal education—offering the option for learners to upskill through taking individual courses that could be stacked into a certificate, or even a degree program. The second was replacing our MLS program with a Master of Arts in Law (MAL) focused on the intersection of the law with business, technology, and entrepreneurship.

Both projects launched this fall. **The MAL welcomed its first five degree-seeking students with another four learners—all members of the local legal community—taking advantage of our first continuing education opportunity.** Both results met expectations and stand as something to build upon as the project matures. Recruiting is already underway for our second MAL start and lifelong learning courses to continue in October.

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Announcing COL Team Member Promotions

It is with enthusiasm and excitement that I announce the **promotions of four Colleges of Law staff members** who have distinguished themselves in service to our mission.

- **Alexis Burdick** from Manager to Director of Business Operations
- **Jennifer Mackie** from Coordinator to Student Services Manager
- **Shannon Stark** from Enrollment Counselor to Sr. Enrollment Manager
- **Shawn Taylor** from Director of Admissions to Associate Vice President for Admissions

Beyond making a difference through their work, these four colleagues also are pioneers in how we advance people at COL. We launched the Promotion Pathway project last year in partnership with TCS HR. It stands among our core strategic plan initiatives with a goal of providing opportunities for professional development and advancement for our team. I look forward to announcing more promotions through this program onward. Until then, please join me in congratulating our team members for their advancements.

Rebrand Campaign Closes Another Successful Month: June–July Inquiries Nearly Double YoY

“Built for Change,” our new brand campaign, continues this summer, anchored by advertisements on local buses, radio (terrestrial and streaming), television, online media, community sponsorships, and digital video (including YouTube).



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While there are many metrics to measure marketing, program inquiries remain a key performance indicator for COL—the higher the inquiries, the greater the volume of people interested in learning more. Scanning year-over-year results from June and July 2022 compared to the same months last year, we're seeing a significant surge in COL interest: **From 260 inquiries recorded from June 1–July 31, 2021, to 474 this past June–July.** The surge spans all program options, including hybrid JD, up 131 percent YoY; Ventura onsite, up 24 percent; Santa Barbara, up 54 percent; and our online master's program, up 171 percent YoY.

The results are encouraging and a reflection of that our message is resonating, and our campaign dollars are delivering.

Fall 2022 Calendar

Date	Meeting/Event
Sept. 20 @ Noon	Finance Committee Meeting
Sept. 20 @ 12:45p	Audit Committee Meeting
September 29 @ 4p	Fall Board of Trustees Meeting
October 15–16	Hybrid JD Lawyering Skills Weekend
October 20–21 in DTLA	TCS Biennial Board of Trustees Conference
October 25 @ 5:30p	Student Awards Night - Santa Barbara
October 26 @ 5:30p	Student Awards Night - Ventura

Remembering Trustee Carmen Ramirez

I close with a somber acknowledgment. We mourn the tragic passing of a public service icon, Ventura Co. Supervisor Carmen Ramirez. Carmen served on The Colleges of Law Board of Trustees for nine years (2011—2020). She made all of us better—bringing wisdom, humility, humor, passion, and persistence to her work. Among Carmen's many lasting legacies is a reminder that good people with noble intentions can still make a difference and bring positive change through elected office.

Carmen was remembered during last month's Institutional Advancement and Alumni Board Committee with ideas raised on how we can honor her legacy at COL and in the community. We continue to invite input from the board and other members of our community. She will be missed but not forgotten.

In service,



**Matthew Nehmer, Ph.D.
President**

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