



TO: The Honorable the Members of the Board of Regents
FROM: William P. Murphy *William P. Murphy*
SUBJECT: Permission to Operate: George Washington University Law School
DATE: January 2, 2020
AUTHORIZATION(S): *Sharon L. Tabor*

SUMMARY

Issue for Decision (Consent Agenda)

Should the Board of Regents grant permission for George Washington University Law School (GW Law) to offer courses applicable to its Juris Doctorate (J.D.) program in New York City, known as GW Law in New York (GWNYS)?

Reason(s) for Consideration

Required by State statute and State regulation.

Proposed Handling

This question will come before the Full Board at its January 2020 meeting, where it will be voted on and action taken.

Procedural History

N/A

Background Information

George Washington University Law School (GW Law), a school within George Washington University, has submitted an application for permission to operate with a physical presence in New York State, pursuant to Section 3.56 of the Rules of the Board of Regents. George Washington University is a private institution located in Washington, DC. GW Law has submitted this application in order to come into compliance with the requirements for the operation of out-of-state institutions with a physical presence in New

York State approved by the Board of Regents in 2017. GW Law has been offering a semester away program in New York City for its law students since 2015. This program is available solely for students who are matriculated in GW Law's J.D. program.

GWNY is designed for business law students, and its purpose is to expose aspiring New York business lawyers to New York business law practice. It comprises one semester out of six and up to 15 credits out of 84 required for graduation. The remaining degree requirements are taken at GW Law's Washington, DC campus, making this program akin to a "study abroad." GWNY students enroll in one field placement and up to four seminars taught by New York lawyers, most of whom are graduates of GW Law. Each class meets once weekly at the law firm of the respective professor, and students work in field placements in the offices of governmental agencies and nonprofits that operate in the field of business law.

Most students are second-year law students, though third-year law students are eligible. They are representative of the diversity of GW Law's student body. Tuition, fees, and other costs are substantially identical to those students incur during residence on campus in Washington, DC. Enrollment is expected to remain stable at 12 to 16 students per year throughout the initial approval period.

GW Law reports that student and employer demand exist for practice-ready lawyers, especially those who have had some experiential learning in the field. The institution further argues that the benefits of participating in the program enhance students' prospects for gainful employment and assist New York area legal employers in their recruiting efforts.

George Washington University is accredited by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education, and GW Law is accredited by the American Bar Association. A Department review has indicated that the university demonstrates an institutional quality comparable to New York State degree-granting institutions and the program for which the institution seeks authorization is comparable in quality to the standards for the registration of similar programs in New York.

In 2017, the Board of Regents approved amendments to Section 3.56 of the Rules of the Board of Regents, that established an application process for out-of-state institutions to request permission to operate in New York and made explicit the procedures for application review and terms of approval and renewal. The Board of Regents also established a fee structure for permission to operate in New York.

The Department solicited input from existing colleges and universities concerning GWNY's impact on the institutions and their programs. Three responses were received indicating that the program would have no negative impact on the responding institutions. No New York State institutions lodged any objections or statements of negative impact regarding this program.

Related Regents Items

N/A

Recommendation

VOTED: That the Board of Regents grant George Washington University permission to offer courses applicable to its Juris Doctorate (J.D.) program in New York City, known as GW Law in New York, effective January 14, 2020 and ending on January 30, 2025.

Timetable for Implementation

Subsequent renewals of this permission to operate, if sought, will be subject to the terms of Section 3.56 of the Rules of the Board of Regents. If George Washington University seeks to renew its permission to operate after its current term, it must notify the Department no later than January 30, 2024.