



## Press Release For Immediate Release

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### Monterey College of Law, San Luis Obispo College of Law, and Kern County College of Law to Offer Online Courses for Fall 2020

Monterey, CA, June 22, 2020 – Monterey College of Law has announced that it will offer an online hybrid J.D. and Master of Legal Studies curriculum for the 2020 Fall Semester. First-year and upper-division evening law school courses will be offered at all three of the school's campuses -- Monterey College of Law, San Luis Obispo College of Law, and Kern County College of Law -- in a hybrid combination of live synchronous Zoom classroom sessions and asynchronous discussion boards, quizzes, writing assignments, and optional small group, socially distanced study sessions.

"Delivering high quality, hybrid law school classes is not a new experience for our school," said Academic Dean Elizabeth Xyr, who has been in charge of building and delivering the school's hybrid online J.D. program for the past three years. "Of course, no one anticipated that the Covid-19 crisis would require transitioning our entire traditional residential program into the hybrid model over a period of weeks. Fortunately, our ability to move quickly allowed our residential students to complete the Spring semester online without interruption and also start the online Summer semester on schedule," said Xyr.

The law school has offered traditional residential law school classes for almost 50 years, but made the decision to add alternative hybrid online J.D. and Master of Legal Studies programs several years ago. "Our three law schools serve a broad area across Central California that has no other option for an accredited legal education," said Assistant Dean of Admissions and Recruiting Dena Dowsett. "However, we also realized that too many working adults who want to pursue a part-time evening law degree cannot reasonably commute to one of our three residential campuses," explained Dowsett.

In 2018, the law school became one of only two California accredited law schools approved to offer a hybrid online J.D. degree. "Fortunately, when the Coronavirus crisis hit our communities and stay-at-home orders disrupted our traditional in-person classes, we had the resources to manage an uninterrupted transition into the hybrid online format," explained Xyr. "I suspect that if asked at the beginning of this transition, very few of our residential students and faculty would have ever selected online classes over meeting in-person," said Xyr. "However, I am pleased to say that our faculty and students have really stepped up to embrace the new technology. It won't surprise me if some of our residential students and faculty elect to stay in the hybrid online J.D. program even after we resume traditional in-person classes."

“The law school is also aware that many of our residential students who were unexpectedly forced to transition to the hybrid online program have less than optimum home-study situations,” said Mitchel Winick, who serves as President and Dean for the three-law-school system. “The idea of continuing law school in this challenging setting for another semester (or possibly a full academic year) is simply not plausible,” said Winick. “Therefore, to support these students, starting in the Fall Semester, all three of our law school campus locations will provide socially distanced space during regular evening class hours for students who need a quiet, safe, place to log in and attend Zoom classroom sessions using the school’s wireless Internet. We will create appropriate social distancing between desks and chairs and allow the use of common areas and break areas subject to appropriate use of masks and hand sanitizer,” said Winick.

When asked about plans for the 2021 Spring Semester, Winick commented that, “If it is safe to return to in-person classes for the Spring Semester, we anticipate offering students the option of continuing in our hybrid online classes or returning to in-person classes.” “One thing is certain,” emphasized Winick, “We will consider these decisions one step at a time, soliciting student and faculty input along the way . . . always remembering that delivering uninterrupted high quality legal education is not at odds with maintaining the health and safety of our students, faculty, staff, and their families.”

For information about enrolling, transferring, or attending as a visiting law student at any of our three law school programs, contact Dena Dowsett, Assistant Dean of Admissions and Recruiting, [ddowsett@montereylaw.edu](mailto:ddowsett@montereylaw.edu), or [www.montereylaw.edu](http://www.montereylaw.edu). The deadline for admission to Fall 2020 is July 20th.