

Cooley and Western Michigan University Offer New Joint Degree Program

In October 2001, Western Michigan University and Cooley Law School developed a joint degree program in public administration and the law.

Terms of the partnership call for WMU to administer its master of public administration degree, while Cooley will offer its juris doctor degree. Each school offers a concentration that allows students to focus their studies in public law.

"This venture is a wonderful example of the benefits achieved through partnership and collaboration," said Dr. Elson S. Floyd, president of WMU. "We're joining the resources of two premier programs that have been serving Michigan's capital city for many years and have established reputations for producing public servants who hold important leadership posts in government."

"In a democracy, nothing is more important in executing the will of the people than an informed, responsive, and capable government. Graduates of this program will possess both an understanding of the constitutional and legal framework in which governments operate and the knowledge of the processes through which governments function. We are excited that we can team with a great school like Western Michigan University in making this opportunity available in Michigan's governmental and legal center," said Cooley Dean Don LeDuc.

Students from either WMU or Cooley can start either the MPA or JD program before deciding to apply for the joint degree program. Law classes will be held at Cooley's downtown Lansing classroom building, located one block south of the Capitol, and public administration courses will be held at WMU's new Lansing regional center.



Dr. Elson S. Floyd, president of Western Michigan University

A signing ceremony was held Monday, Dec. 3, in the Cooley Center. Please contact Associate Dean and Professor Ann Miller from Cooley at

(517) 371-5140 ext. 2915 or Gus Breymann from Western Michigan University-Lansing at (517) 327-1480 if you have any questions regarding the joint degree program.

Cooley Receives Accreditation from the North Central Association

After a two-year, self-study process and a six-month, school-wide review, Cooley Law School was granted accreditation from the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association (NCA) of Colleges and Schools. The approval makes Cooley the only ABA-accredited independent law school in Michigan to receive NCA accreditation and membership. Cooley joins John Marshall School of Law as one of only two independent law schools in this region and of a handful nationally.

"Acceptance as a member of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools is an honor for Cooley Law School. The NCA's application and review procedures were challenging, and the inspectors and evaluators who conducted our review were most insightful in helping Cooley assess its strengths and weaknesses. We are a better school because we undertook this process and look forward to continued involvement with the NCA in assessing Cooley's success in meeting its mission," said Cooley President

Thomas E. Brennan.

Cooley Law School initiated a self-study in 1998 after its board of directors authorized the school to request full accreditation approval from NCA.

"The NCA judges all educational institutions from high school through professional school against the same five criteria," said Associate Dean of Planning and Programs Ann Miller.

"These criteria are central in achieving accreditation approval. They focus on the school's commitment to meeting its mission. The evaluators go through a process of determining whether or not a school is committing sufficient resources to meet its mission, plus its willingness to continue providing the necessary resources in the future. They also look at how the institution relates to its constituents and community in how it accomplishes its mission and goals." Cooley Dean Don LeDuc adds, "Cooley's mission since its doors opened in 1973 has always been to prepare its students for entry into the legal profession through an integrated program with practical legal scholarship as its guiding principle and focus. We not only feel we have kept to this mission, but we've exceeded every goal and expectation that we have put forward since its founding. Our NCA accreditation is a testament to the school's mission and the philosophies that have guided the law school for nearly 30 years."

In January 1999, the NCA staff concluded that the school had submitted sufficient information in its preliminary information application for the NCA to send an on-site evaluation team to determine if Cooley met the NCA's 24 General Institutional Requirements (GIRs). The GIRs ensure that a school shares a commonly understood mission, has authority to grant degrees, has an active and involved governing board, and has established programs, finances, and resources pursuant to its mission that are accurately described in its official documents and marketing literature.