# Diving In: Starting a Legal Master's Program

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# Introductions

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# Starting a Legal Master's Program – Gaining Support

- Champion for the program
  - Dean must be on board
- Strong program coordinator/director
- Faculty
- Law School Administration
  - Registrar, Financial Aid, Marketing, IT, etc.

- Main Campus
  - Provost, Graduate Program Administration, Registrar, Financial Aid, Marketing, IT, etc.
- Admissions
  - Recruiters vs local vs partner program

# Starting a Legal Master's Program – Early Decisions & Conversations

- Existing campus program or brand new program
  - Leverage the reputation of a Center/Institute or a distinguished faculty in a topical area
- Topical area or generic
- Define program outcomes
- Online, campus, or hybrid
  - Asynchronous, synchronous, or asynchronous with synchronous component
  - Required immersion weekend(s)
  - Online is ok
  - Working with a partner

# Starting a Legal Master's Program – Early Decisions & Conversations Continued

- Accreditation
  - Regional accreditors
  - ABA acquiescence
  - Title IV funding
  - SARA (State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement)
- University approvals - Law School, President, Board of Trustees
- Academic calendar
- Academic policies

# Starting a Legal Master's Program – Challenges

- Being a Graduate Program within a Law School
- Educating the market on a program that people aren't familiar with
  - MLS, MSL, MSCJ, MJ, etc.
    - Degree program for non-lawyers
- Negative social media comments
  - Bar exam
  - Cost

# Starting an Online Legal Master's Program – Should You Partner?

| Benefits |
|---|
| Marketing |
| CRM |
| LMS |
| Training |
| Instructional design |
| Leveraging existing staff |

| Challenges |
|---|
| Change of status quo |
| Learning and teaching new process(es) |
| New terminology |
| Virtual meetings |
| Cost |

# Starting a Legal Master's Program – Curriculum

- Outcome mapping
- Assessments throughout courses
  - Grading and feedback
  - Final Exams
  - Proctoring

# Starting a Legal Master's Program – Online Curriculum

- Working with other online programs on campus

- Asynchronous vs synchronous
  - Curriculum development vs teaching
  - Pre-recorded lectures
    - Range of options for different budgets and skill-sets

- Working with an instructional designer
  - Faculty are subject matter experts
  - Instructional designers help translate traditional campus teaching into the online environment

# Starting a Legal Master's Program – Support for Students

- Everyone must play a part

- Academic advising
  - Role of school advisors vs. partner advisors

- Career services
  - Tricky because law career counselors don't know about MLS positions
  - Fear of taking positions from the JDs

- Tech Support (online programs)

# Starting a Legal Master's Program – Questions and Additional Discussion

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