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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Approval—Acquisition of
Western State College of Law

IRVINE, CA, August 6, 2019 – A federal court in Ohio has approved acquisition of Western State College of Law by Westcliff University. Dr. Anthony Lee, President and CEO of Westcliff, said in response to the court’s approval, “We are delighted to welcome Western State into our family. We knew it would take a lot of work by many dedicated people, and today is the culmination of those efforts and a reason for celebration.”

The court order ends months of uncertainty and distress for the students, faculty, and staff of the 50-year-old Irvine-based law school. Western State was a campus of Argosy University, which was owned by Dream Center Education Holdings, LLC. Western State became the unfortunate victim of the financial problems of its parent, which entered receivership in January.

“The law school had been successful with very experienced management, faculty and staff,” said Lee, “We would not have become involved except for that. Westcliff is fully committed to helping Western State recover from its entanglement in the receivership and begin enrolling new students as soon as possible.”

Westcliff University, based in Irvine, was founded in 1993 and is accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges, Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC). Westcliff offers undergraduate and graduate degrees in business administration, information technology and computer science, and education and TESOL both on-campus and online.”

Founded in 1966, Western State College of Law is the oldest law school in Orange County, California. The college was first accredited by the American Bar Association in 1998 and counts many prominent attorneys, judges and politicians among its graduates.

“We have committed to the ABA that we will continue to comply fully with all rules and regulations governing the operation of ABA approved law programs,” Lee stated. “This day would never have happened except for the strong support and assistance of ABA officials, the U.S. Department of Education, WSCUC, the court, the incredible staff and faculty at Western State, and the receiver. Everyone wanted to save this school.”

Closing of the transaction requires final approval by regulators, which could take several months. Meanwhile, the Fall semester is about to begin. To enable existing students to continue their studies uninterrupted, the acquisition had to be structured in two phases. The first is a teach-out of current students. The second, the closing of the transaction, is expected late this year upon final regulatory approval.

“When accreditor approvals have been secured,” Lee stated, “the teach-out students will be absorbed into normal law school operations, and we will be able to enroll new students into Western State’s exceptional Juris Doctorate program. We are confident the transaction will close but, in the very unlikely situation it did not, we have contractually committed to teach currently-enrolled students to their normal graduation dates.”

Allen Easley, Western State Dean, said: “We are incredibly grateful to Westcliff University for the commitment it has made to help secure a future for Western State College of Law, and to secure a means for our students to continue their education at Western State through to earning their degrees. Through enormous effort on the part of Westcliff, and the deeply rooted loyalty and commitment of our students, staff, faculty, and alumni, we have been given the opportunity to move forward.”

Alumnus Bill Shapiro said: “Speaking for the alumni, we’re proud Western State College of Law continues uninterrupted, now part of Westcliff University. Recently, there were dim days. However, with Western’s excellent reputation, dedicated administration, staff and faculty being joined by spirited alumni, positive students and Dr. Anthony Lee and the entire Westcliff team, those challenges are behind us. Once again Western’s future is bright, and I join all in the excitement of this next chapter.”

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