Academic & Bar Dispensations — June 4, 2020

The Court of Appeals has approved a number of dispensations to alleviate the challenges presented by the public health crisis. On April 21, the Chief Judge signed a comprehensive order providing for, among other things, a programmatic waiver of distance learning limitations that enabled law students to continue their coursework virtually. That waiver applied broadly to all categories of students, including J.D. students, LL.M. students, and students who have completed fewer than 28 credit hours. Pursuant to the distance learning waiver, any classroom-based course that has been converted to a virtual course as a result of the public health crisis will count fully as a classroom-based course – not a distance education course.

Today, the Chief Judge signed an order extending the waiver of distance learning limitations through the Fall 2020 term. The extended waiver similarly applies to all categories of students, including J.D. students, LL.M. students, and students who have completed fewer than 28 credit hours.

Given the unique considerations presented by LL.M. programs, and the critical nature of the Court's residency requirement for LL.M. students, law schools and students are advised that the Court does not expect to extend the distance learning waiver for LL.M. students beyond the Fall 2020 term. However, to allow increased flexibility, the Chief Judge's order also includes a waiver of the limitation on the number of credit hours that may be earned towards an LL.M. degree during the Summer 2021 term. This additional waiver will enable law schools to offer fully residential LL.M. programs that begin at the start of the Spring 2021 term and continue through a full Summer 2021 term.

The Court is mindful of the disruption and stress felt acutely by law students and law school representatives, and remains committed to addressing each issue in a manner that balances the concerns of affected students and institutions, the interests of the public, and the integrity of the legal profession.

Prior updates can be **accessed here.**