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***GUIDELINES FOR APPLYING TO LAW SCHOOL
FOR FALL 2020 ADMISSION***

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This document continues my discussion of general issues concerning law school and a legal career that is contained in the document entitled PRE LAW ADVISEMENT INFORMATION FOR FRESHMEN, SOPHOMORES AND JUNIORS. You should read that document before reading this one. Also, you should access the many links on my pre law website for the most recently updated material.

WHAT TO DO IN SEPTEMBER–DECEMBER OF 2020: This is an unprecedented time to apply to law school because COVID-19 has caused major changes in all aspects of the admissions process. The LSAC provides an abundant amount of information regarding the changes. The different law schools also provide meaningful information as to how that particular school is handling the admissions process during this period. You should access the website of the LSAC and the websites of law schools that interest you.

1. Obtain the 2020–2021 LSAC Information Guide online at www.lsac.org. Applicants must register online at www.lsac.org for the Law School Admission Test (LSAT) and the Law School Admissions Council (LSAC). Note that many law schools, including Harvard Law School, Northwestern Law School, Georgetown University Law Center, Cornell University and the University of Arizona Law School, are accepting the GRE scores in lieu of LSAT scores. (See page 9 below).

a. You may have already taken the LSAT on June 14, 2020 or July 11, 2020. If not, I recommend that it be taken on August 29, 2020 or October 3, 2020, November 14, 2020 or, at the latest, on December 12, 2020. The January 16, 2021 testing date may be too late, as I will explain. The June and July dates are preferable because the test taker receives the LSAT score before the Fall semester begins, giving him/her the crucial information that is needed to intelligently apply early to appropriate law schools. However, if you did not have sufficient time to prepare for the June sitting, you should take the LSAT in the fall. If you are applying to law schools with February or March 2021 deadlines, do not plan to take the LSAT for the first time in November or February because you are likely to be disadvantaged by your late application date. Even if you receive your LSAT score by early January (assuming that you take the LSAT in November) and submit your law school application by the cut-off date, a majority of law schools follow a “rolling admission” policy (see paragraph 20 below) and, therefore, many applicants may have been admitted before your application is even received, putting you in a less than advantageous position.

As of 8/21/20, the October 3rd LSAT will be entirely online. See the [LSAT-Flex](#) website for more information. A statement from LSAC about this test can be seen [here](#).

b. When you register for the LSAT, please check that your LSAT score will be forwarded to NYU (Stern). This is extremely important. I will use this information to advise you, as well as other Stern students who will apply to law school in the future. All data will remain anonymous.

c. In order to register with LSAC, you must request that the NYU registrar’s office provide your transcript to LSAC. You can perform this process online (www.nyu.edu/registrar). The registrar’s office telephone number is 212-998-4800. You should request that the registrar’s office forward your N.Y.U. transcript to the LSAC after your Spring and Summer 2020 grades have been recorded. (Such requests are ordinarily made in late summer or early fall.) In order to make a law school aware of your Fall 2020 grades, in January 2021 you should request that the Registrar’s Office send your updated transcript to the LSAC.

d. If you are from an economically disadvantaged background, you may qualify for a fee

waiver for both the LSAT and LSAC. Fee waiver forms are now available online at <http://www.lsac.org/jd/lsat/fee-waivers>. You should complete and submit the form to Law Services as well as any law school to which you apply, together with supporting documentation (such as federal and state income tax forms and/or your undergraduate financial aid transcript). You should submit this request well in advance of the application and test registration deadlines. Please refer to the instructions contained in the Information Book.

2. Prepare for the LSAT. I take no position on the effectiveness of commercial preparation courses, nor do I endorse one program over another. These courses are expensive and there is no accurate data that assesses their benefit. However, some applicants believe that such courses provide them with the confidence and discipline needed to study. You should determine how much outside assistance you need based on your previous experience with standardized tests and with the practice LSAT as a guide. Many Stern students have successfully prepared for the LSAT by purchasing exam preparation books and by using old exams. The LSAT Logic Games Bible is a useful book. It is available on amazon.com. LSAT preparation books are sold at most bookstores. You can order bound copies of official previous exams, as well as individual past exams from LSAC. “The Official LSAT Super Prep” contains a guide to logical reasoning questions, three sample LSAT exams and explanations for all of the items. It is available online at www.lsac.org. LSAC also offers a web-based LSAT familiarization tool, similar to the Test Prep with Explanations. Many students find that commercial study guides are also helpful. You can find handouts describing the LSAT, as well as copies of several recently published articles on LSAT test-taking techniques that may be useful for you on my [pre-law website](#): Finally, the Pre Law Society in the College of Arts & Science gives mock LSATs; dates are posted on the CAS Prelaw website: <http://prelaw.cas.nyu.edu/page/home>. (See paragraph 11 for more information)

3. You should not approach the LSAT with the strategy of taking it more than once, unless there was some unusual situation that occurred at your first exam sitting that negatively affected your score, such as failure of needed air conditioning or lighting at your exam site, a severe family problem, illness etc. Otherwise, by taking the exam a second time, you risk receiving a lower score. Most re-takers do not raise their scores significantly and most law schools average the two scores, although recently more law schools are taking the higher test score. (I stress that law schools’ policies vary.) Should you cancel your score? You have 6 calendar days after the test in which to make this important decision. I don’t recommend that you cancel your score based on your perception of the difficulty level of the exam. Every exam is normed and the scoring is adjusted to reflect slight differences between exams. The LSAC also reports cancellations. Most schools won’t question a cancellation on your record, but may question multiple ones. Also, remember that you cannot take the LSAT more than three times in any two-year period, and that a cancellation counts against this three-test limit if you take the test and cancel your score after you have taken it. Additionally, under the [LSAC policy](#), all exceptions to the policy will be determined by LSAC. LSAC is no longer allowing law schools to intervene on an applicant's behalf.

4. Begin to think about the law schools to which you might realistically apply. (Obviously, the fall semester’s grades and your LSAT score will greatly impact on your ultimate choices.) Be honest and reasonable in your self-evaluation. Choose a few schools for which there is a slight chance of admission, and a few to which you are assured acceptance. The majority of your applications should be directed to schools whose admission criteria most reflect your qualifications and specific interests. A helpful

reference is The Official Guide to ABA-Approved Law Schools (especially the class profile grids) that can be accessed at www.lsac.org. Also, on my website you can obtain class profile grids that have been prepared by the Boston College Career Office. Finally, graphs showing the pattern of acceptances and rejections made by the law schools to which Stern students and alumni have applied can be found in loose-leaf binders that are stored in the Stern Undergraduate Academic Advising Office. You should contact Kevin Valliere if you would like to review these binders. Based on your GPA and LSAT score, you will be able to obtain an even better idea of the likelihood of your acceptance to these law schools taking into account that every application year differs depending on that year's applicant pool. While in-person appointments will be limited or unavailable, with two weeks notice, Kevin may be able to review these materials with you digitally.

5. Read as much information as possible about the law schools that you are seriously considering as appropriate for you. Check the resources including law school catalogues that are posted online. Some law schools will send printed copies to you upon request. Of course, you should surf the internet: an excellent site for general information is <http://www.ilrg.com>. The Law School Admissions Council's homepage, which provides an abundance of information about the law school application process and the LSAT, is at <http://www.lsac.org>. Other sites that may be of interest to you include the following: Association of American Law Schools: <http://www.aals.org>; American Association of Law Libraries: <http://www.aallnet.org>; ABA Approved Law Schools: <http://www.abanet.org/legaled/approvedlawschools/approved.html>; National Association of Law Placement: <http://www.nalp.org>; American Bar Association Section of Legal Education and Admissions to the Bar: <http://www.abanet.org/legaled>; Northeast Association of Prelaw Advisors (NAPLA): <http://www.naplaconference.org/>. The American Bar Association's book entitled "The Official Guide to ABA-Approved Law Schools" includes statistical information on ABA approved law schools (such as enrollment, LSAT scores, curricula, faculty, career placement, etc.). You can research this database by going to: <http://officialguide.lsac.org/>.

6. I also recommend that you look at the materials posted on the website of the Northeast Association of Prelaw Advisors (NAPLA): <http://www.napla.org/>. For those of you who are international students, I believe you should carefully read the documents that advise international students about applying to law school and then practicing as a lawyer upon graduation from law school.

7. In the pre COVID-19 period, I would recommend that law school applicants visit at least some of the law schools that are being considered. I would recommend that applicants take the formal tour given by the admissions offices and talk to as many students, faculty and administrators as possible. However, in the era of COVID-19, these options are generally unavailable. Alternatively, you should consider contacting the Admissions office to see about setting up virtual meetings with staff and current students. In such meetings, you should pose questions about the qualifications/strengths of the faculty, faculty student ratio, the library and other physical facilities, curricula, special programs and academic activities, student organizations, career services and employment opportunities. You may even be able to attend a remote law school class session. This is one of the questions that I suggest you pose to the Admissions Office representative. Of course, you should realize that typically "better" and/or more popular professors' classes are featured to prospective students – whether in person or online.

8. In the pre COVID-19 period, you would attend Law School Forums that are sponsored by the LSAC where you would pick up Law School catalogues, application packets, and financial aid information. Sadly, the Law School Forums will not be taking place

this year due to COVID-19 restrictions. Instead, a Digital Forum will take place on the following dates: September 26, October 13, November 4, and December 12. More information [here](#).

~~9. In the fall of each year, the LSAC sponsors a Law School Forum in New York City, as well as in other selected cities throughout the country. Call (215) 968-1001 or click on <http://www.lsac.org/jd/choosing-a-law-school/law-school-recruitment-forums> for more information. Representatives from over 160 of the nation's law schools answer your questions and bring catalogues, bulletins and applications, and the LSAC provides shopping bags so that you can collect and carry home virtually everything you ever wanted to know about legal education, specific law schools and their admissions criteria. This is an opportunity to speak directly to representatives from the admissions offices—an opportunity that you should not miss.~~

10. Join the Stern Business and Law Association (SBLA). The Association typically arranges for recruitment visits during the fall semester by admissions officers of law schools from around the country, including NYU's School of Law and other law schools in the metropolitan New York area. At these meetings students would have the opportunity to ask for an estimate of their chances of admission to their programs, but the principal object of such meetings was to gather first-hand information about schools to which students might be considering. During the fall 2020 semester, the SBLA will hold all of its meetings on a remote basis. There will not be any meetings held in Tisch Hall during the fall semester. However, there will be many remote presentations by NYU Stern and Law School faculty, graduates and current students, as well as presentations by practicing attorneys from the private and public sector who will speak to SBLA members about current legal events, legal practice and careers, etc. Visit SBLA's website at www.stern.nyu.edu/~sbla or e-mail at sbla@stern.nyu.edu to find out how operations will be held during the Fall 2020 semester.

11. Also, you should be aware of the NYU Pre Law Society at the College of Arts and Science. (See paragraph 4 above.) It is a very active and worthwhile organization (<http://www.nyu.edu/clubs/prelaw.society/>). Note that many more students from CAS apply to law school than do students from Stern. To contact the Pre Law Society, you should send an e-mail to prelaw@nyu.edu.

12. You can learn more about CAS pre-law events by subscribing to: join-prelawsociety@forums.nyu.edu. To subscribe, send the following message from your NYU e-mail address: Join prelaw first name, last name.

13. Typically during the fall semester, the Admissions Office of NYU School of Law hosts information sessions where an admissions officer and a current law student discuss application procedures, the curriculum, placement opportunities, financial aid, student life and answer your questions. NYU Law Admissions will be changing and scaling back opportunities for in-person visits (such as meetings with students and class visitations) for at least the Fall 2020 semester. For the most up-to-date information, visit the [website](#).

14. Typically, I suggest that you approach appropriate faculty members to provide letters of recommendations on your behalf. It is best to talk to these professors as soon as possible; before their memories of you begin to fade and/or before they leave NYU. (See paragraphs 23 and 24 below for further information, especially with respect to the

Interfolio service). Obviously, during the Fall 2020 semester, all contact should be initiated by email and most likely any meetings will be held remotely rather than in person.

15. During the Fall semester, you may make an appointment to meet with me with me via ZOOM if you are actually applying to law school. I reserve my pre law office hours during this semester for students who are engaged in the law school application process. Prior to our meeting, you should send a completed Pre Law Student Information Sheet to me. The information provided on this Information Sheet will remain confidential. While not necessary, a draft of your personal statement (see Appendix A, below), as well as a brief resume, will enhance the effectiveness of these sessions. I may suggest law schools to which applications would be appropriate (though I strongly recommend that—before you meet with me—you’ve carried out your research and have a strong sense as to which law schools you will apply). I also will comment upon the suitability of the draft of your personal statement, although I will neither edit nor rewrite it for you.

During the Fall semester, if you are not applying to law school but are interested in a legal career, please arrange for a meeting with Kevin Valliere, the Assistant Director of Stern’s Undergraduate Advising Office. He assists me with pre law advising and is very knowledgeable about the topic. My e-mail address is jcaldero@stern.nyu.edu. Please contact me via e-mail. Kevin Valliere’s office is located in Tisch Suite 616. His email address is kvalliere@stern.nyu.edu Most fall 2020 meetings with Kevin will be held remotely, but there will be a very small number of in-person appointments.

16. During the Fall 2020 term, all of my courses will be taught remotely: two sections of Law, Business and Society and the Real Estate Transactions courses that are offered in the undergraduate and MBA programs.

17. I am an attorney who practiced with global law firms in New York, Washington, D.C. and Los Angeles before I joined academia. I also have taught law school courses at several law schools. I graduated from the Georgetown University Law Center in Washington, D.C. and Cornell University in Ithaca, New York many years ago.

18. For the past 7 years, I have sponsored research projects through the SPUR program (Stern Program for Undergraduate Research) in which undergraduate students (who I select through the SPUR application process) to assist me with my academic research and analysis. I strongly encourage you to consider applying to the SPUR program. Your participation in this program will improve your research, analytical and writing skills - all critical skills for legal professionals. More importantly, you will learn a great deal about new and often very important topics. Unfortunately, during the fall 2020 semester, I will not be sponsoring any SPUR projects.

19. As the prelaw adviser, I can assist you in deciding whether to apply to law school and suggest choices of law schools. Any senior or Stern alumni who wishes to discuss the personal statement required as part of the law school application, or who seeks advice on any other matter relating to attending law school, should make an appointment to meet in my office or speak with me by telephone during the months of September, October, November, and December of the senior year.

Please remember that I do not prepare law school applications, nor do I assist in the nuts

and bolts requirements of the LSAT/LSAC registration materials. It is expected that seniors and graduates making applications to law school have the capacity to read instructions and to follow the directions contained in law school application materials and in the Information Book provided by the LSAC.

20. On Monday, October 5th at 12:30pm I will hold a digital law school advisement session (VIA ZOOM) to introduce myself, provide applicants with the information that is contained in these Guidelines and answer questions about the application process. This session will be recorded and subsequently posted online for those students who will be unable to attend.

21. As stated previously, the NYU Law Admissions Office will be changing and scaling back opportunities for in-person visits (such as meetings with students and class visitations) for at least the Fall 2020 semester. For the most up-to-date information, visit the [website](#).

22. You should begin to prepare the Personal Statement that must accompany most law school applications (my suggestion on content appears in Appendix A.) Think back to the personal statement type essays that you composed during the undergraduate college application process.

23. Line up faculty members to provide letters of recommendation. In soliciting such letters, remember that most law schools display a strong preference for (or require) faculty letters over those from employers or family friends. If possible, one letter should be from a professor or instructor in your major field of study, or from a faculty member who has read a substantial amount of your written work and who knows you well enough to comment upon your weaknesses and strengths. When requesting a recommendation, discuss your goals for the proposed letter. You should supply the recommender with copies of your resume, personal statement, and any other insightful information. Two letters (in addition to the “Dean’s Letter” or “Dean’s Certification” discussed below) are sufficient, although a third letter from a long-term employer is acceptable (for applicants who are Stern alumni and not current students).

Please note that you can request that letters of recommendation be sent to LSAC through its Letter of Recommendation (LOR) service, and some schools will require that you use the LOR service. Visit <http://www.lsac.org> for a list of law schools LOR preferences. The process is fairly similar to the one outlined above, although there are a few differences. You will need to print out and provide a letter of recommendation form that you print out from your LSAC.org account to each recommender. After LSAC receives the forms and recommendations from your recommenders, LSAC will include copies of their letters with your Master Law School Report sent to law schools to which you apply. (See the LSAT/LSAC Registration and Information Book or visit <http://www.lsac.org/jd/applying-to-law-school/cas/lor-evaluations> for complete rules and instructions.)

24. Interfolio, Inc. (Paper Processing Center, 1900 L Street NW, Suite #603, Washington, DC 20036; tel. no.: 1-877-77-FOLIO, website: <http://www.interfolio.com/>, email: help@interfolio.com) offers (for a fee) a service that enables students to request and store letters of recommendations. This service is especially convenient if you know a potential faculty recommender will be leaving the university or before you have made a final decision as to whether to apply to law school. It is also useful for those students who are planning to “take time off” after graduation before applying to law schools and

are nervous that their professors will no longer be at Stern or will not remember them when they get ready to apply.

25. Applicants taking the Fall LSAT who have LSAC online accounts will receive their LSAT scores by email approximately three weeks after taking the exam. LSAT test takers who do not have an LSAC online account will receive their scores in the mail approximately four weeks after taking the test. The intervening weeks should be used to fill in essential information on all applications. Once the LSAT score has been reported, a final selection of schools should be made based upon the LSAT/GPA profile, and then letters of recommendation should be obtained.
- a. If financial assistance is necessary (and it usually is), you should refer to www.accessgroup.org. The Access Group offers free on-line assistance to potential student borrowers. You should prepare your federal income tax returns for the previous year in early February and submit a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) as early as possible. These forms may also be obtained at the Financial Aid Office and are usually available in early January. For help on making wise decisions regarding debt, refer to <https://www.accessgroup.org/financing-your-education>. You may also wish to review the MAX Pre-Law website: <https://www.accesslex.org/maxprelaw>

FACTORS TO CONSIDER BEFORE APPLYING

Note that as of August 2018, many law schools, including [Harvard Law School](#), [Northwestern Law School](#), Cornell University, Georgetown University Law School and University of Arizona Law School are accepting the results of the [Graduate Record Exam \(GRE\) as a substitute for the LSAT](#). Presumably, this is partly an effort by these law schools to encourage students who majored in STEM subjects, rather than the liberal arts, to apply to law school. Stern students, many of whom have especially strong quantitative skills, should be benefited by this new approach.

Also, note that since the election of Donald Trump as President in November 2016, the number of people applying to sit for the LSAT and applying to law school has increased significantly. Obviously, it is unknown whether this trend will be short term or will continue for the long term.

Despite the recent uptick in the numbers, over the past few years, many law schools have been cutting the size of the first year class in order to maintain high academic standards as applications to law schools drop throughout the country. You should seriously consider this data and perhaps consider an alternative to attending law school immediately after graduation. Given the increased competitiveness of the applicant pool for the more prestigious law schools, if you are a borderline candidate you may enhance your chances of admission by delaying your application for one or more years to gain additional experience in the marketplace or through graduate study. You will gain valuable experience in the marketplace or through graduate study. Also, you will have an opportunity to submit a full senior year transcript with any honors you may have received. If you are intending to delay your application, before graduation you should nevertheless lineup faculty members to provide future letters of recommendation for you (see paragraphs 23 and 24 above).

However, a law degree, even from a more prestigious law school, does not provide a guarantee of legal employment. Since the severe economic crisis that began in late 2008, the legal sector has dramatically suffered and its future remains more and more problematic. Also, many lawyers complain that the hours they put into their work rob them of a

satisfactory private life. While it is impossible as an undergraduate to be absolutely certain of how you intend to earn a living, given the high cost of law school and future downside employment trends, one should be fairly committed to the calling of law before embarking on a legal education. My prelaw website has links to recent articles and blogs about the legal job market. I recommend that Stern students read this material.

You should think seriously about how dedicated you are to securing a legal education and practicing law before you make the commitment. There will always be room for one or more good lawyers, particularly someone who views law as a helping, serving profession, and where the undertaking, as in medicine, is regarded as more of a calling than a business. These are the people who tend to be the most satisfied with the practice of law. If you have any doubts about just why you are going to law school or you are doing it at the last minute or on a whim, put it off for a year or two and try something else, whatever holds your interest, or, you might try to find work as a paralegal in a law firm or governmental office to better acquaint yourself with what it is lawyers actually do. Given today's marketplace as well as the cost of (and time/effort required for) legal education, the decision to attend law school can no longer be taken lightly or taken just to broaden one's knowledge.

DEAN'S CERTIFICATION PROCEDURES AND APPOINTMENTS WITH KEVIN VALLIERE

Kevin Valliere, Assistant Director of Academic Advising for undergraduates (Tisch 616), is also available to meet with students considering law school (regardless of class year). He can discuss making appropriate law school selections and the application cycle. Please visit [Albert](#) to make an appointment. As a reminder, during the Fall 2020 semester, Professor Calderon will only meet (VIA ZOOM) with students who are engaged in the law school application process.

Dean's Certification Forms

Some law schools require that applicants complete and submit a "Dean's Certification" form either during the application process or after an applicant has been accepted. For more information about the request form and to obtain one, you should visit the [Stern Pre-Law Advisement](#) page. A Dean's Certification form is generally a verification of an applicant's academic record and a method for law schools to determine whether there have been any disciplinary actions taken against the applicant. (While academic and disciplinary infractions are not an absolute bar to law school, it is critical that applicants are upfront about any problems.) A Dean's Certification does not replace the need for positive letters of recommendation that should be obtained from faculty members (see above).

If you are applying to a law school that requires a Dean's Certification, please download, print out, and complete the [certification request form](#). You must provide all materials specified in item IV of the form. (Although it is often labeled a *Dean's* Certification, prelaw advisors typically complete such forms.) After Kevin receives the completed request [form](#) and all materials in item IV of the form (i.e., resume; completed dean's certification form; and stamped, pre-addressed, self-sealing envelope and/or a digital copy of the form with an email address), it takes about two weeks for the certifications to be completed. If you are applying early decision and need a faster turnaround, please e-mail Kevin (uc.advising@stern.nyu.edu) to see if anything can be arranged. Exception: If you have taken a course from Professor Calderon and know her well or if you have taken a course or have worked closely with one of the Stern deans, you may ask one of them to complete the Dean's Certification form for you and write on your behalf. As an alternative, you may ask one of them to write a Letter of Recommendation for you.

A FEW FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS - COVID-19 HAS TEMPORARILY (AND PERHAPS PERMANENTLY) CHANGED SOME OF WHAT IS SET FORTH BELOW.

"If I take time off after graduation, what kind of job should I seek?"

This is a choice you should make to meet your needs. As I indicated above, applying to law school two or more years after graduation may in fact enhance your chance of admission. Some law school candidates find it useful to experience the atmosphere of a law firm or other legal environment to assist in their decision about pursuing a legal career. Others would prefer to work in another field and conduct informational interviews with lawyers in various specialties and settings, attend some law classes, and perhaps "shadow" a lawyer to see what a typical day is like. Remember if you go directly

to law school (an expensive investment) without any exposure to the field, you run the risk of changing your mind about a legal career and being left with limited professional options and a huge debt.

As Stern graduates, you should take advantage of the business skills that you have acquired and work in your field of expertise for several years after your graduation from Stern before applying to law school. It is doubtful that once you graduate from law school that you will be employed in the same type of position as you would have taken immediately after graduating from Stern. Those internship positions that many Stern graduates accept at banks, consulting firms, hedge funds, private equity firms, etc. are valuable and will make you a better lawyer – if you even decide to pursue a legal degree – after working in these business areas for one or more years.

“What do law school admissions committees evaluate?”

The LSAT (possibly the GRE) score and GPA are the key criteria for admissions. Studies have shown that these two factors are the most valid predictors of first year law performance. Other factors can distinguish among candidates of equal numerical qualifications—e.g., course of study (pass/fail grades should be at a minimum), quality of college (not based on a specific uniform formula), improvement in grades, college activities, ethnic background (under-represented groups have received special attention), letters of recommendation, personal statement, and experience after graduation. Law schools differ in the weight they give these factors.

“To how many schools should I apply?”

Undergraduates usually apply to 6–10 big schools and alumni/ae to 5–7. (Obviously, you must take into account the expense of such applications.) You should check acceptance grids and choose a cross section of schools including those where chances are strong along with a few backup or “safety” schools, which you would be willing to attend. You may also wish to apply to one or two “long shot” or “reach” schools.

“What opportunities exist for me as a minority applicant?”

The underrepresentation of minority groups in the legal profession has been a long-standing and serious problem in this country. For this reason, over the past twenty years law schools have actively recruited minority applicants and have established policies to insure that qualified candidates are given the opportunity for a legal education. These affirmative action type policies are still in force to some degree despite the U.S. Supreme Court’s relatively recent decisions that do not fully support affirmative-action programs. But the future of such affirmative action programs under the Trump administration is bleak.

If you are a minority student, it is wise to be well informed about the opportunities that may be available to you. You should make certain to identify yourself as a member of a minority group at the time you register for the LSAT and with the LSAC. This will enable interested law schools to contact you through the Candidate Referral Service. Thereafter, you might wish to contact minority student organizations at the law schools you are considering. It will be to your advantage to discuss your interests and application with members of these organizations because in some instances they will track your application and may have a part in the admissions decision. These students can also inform you of special problems or special advantages for minority students at their particular school.

Each year, the Council on Legal Education Opportunity (CLEO) helps economically and educationally disadvantaged students enter law school. This has been accomplished through a six-week summer program designed to introduce college graduates to the study of law (as well as through other programs). All participants who successfully complete the six-week program are awarded an annual stipend for each year of law school. Information on CLEO is available from law school admissions offices or from CLEO's national office at 1101 Mercantile Lane, Suite 294, Largo, MD, 20774 or call 240-582-8600. CLEO's website is <http://www.cleoscholars.com>.

After you have received your letters of admission from law school(s), don't forget to pay your seat deposit on time to guarantee a seat in the law school's first year class (even if you are still waiting to receive a positive reply from other, possibly preferred, law schools). Please note that some law schools have instituted a policy regarding accepting admission to more than one law school. Verify each law school's admissions policy. Finally, please keep me updated throughout the application process.

The ABA Section of Legal Education and Admissions to the Bar, via its Curriculum Committee, recently published A Survey of Law School Curricula. The report reviews curriculum revisions, added emphasis on skills and professionalism, and expanded electives, specializations and other degree granting offerings at 152 of the 202 ABA-approved schools as of 2014. The Section also assembled data from its national sample of law school graduates – from the class of 2004 – with respect to their early careers, in After the JD Study (www.abanet.org/legaled).

Another relatively new resource is the Consumer Guide to Public Interest Programs at Law Schools, which is a comprehensive, user-friendly search tool that will fill the information gap regarding public interest, *pro bono* programs, and law school curriculum. (See <http://www.equaljusticeworks.org/>).

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: The Personal Statement

The draft of the personal statement should be typewritten, double-spaced, and two-to-four pages in length. Essentially, the statement should be treated as your five-minute interview with a member of the law school's admissions committee. In drafting the statement, remember to treat the application as a whole. Avoid simply repeating information (courses, extracurricular activities, employment, or honors) stated elsewhere in the application unless it is of such special significance that it helps to focus upon who you are personally.

Before drafting the personal statement, you should engage in a pre-writing process of introspection and reflection, asking the following questions:

- Why am I interested in law as a career?
- Why am I applying to this particular law school?
- What abilities and traits will serve me well as a law student?
- What abilities and traits will serve me well as a lawyer?

When writing the personal statement, you should:

- Plan to write multiple drafts.
- Share those drafts with others and solicit their suggestions. Be sincere and succinct.
- Support claims with specific examples.
- Be sensitive.

Among possible topics for the personal statement, you should consider the following:

- In what ways am I distinctive?
- What people, events, or things have shaped me and how have they done so?
- Why am I interested in earning a law degree?
- Do I have particular career goals? If so, what are they?
- What skills, talents, or abilities do I have that will allow me to be an outstanding law student or lawyer?
- If I have had significant life experiences or hardships, how might these benefit the law school?
- Would it be helpful to the admissions committee to have a "context" for my undergraduate course work as my transcripts are reviewed?
- Why have I chosen to apply to this particular law school?

When writing the personal statement, you should:

- Strike a positive tone.
- Concentrate on personal experiences, traits, interests and goals.
- Use active verbs (e.g., "researched," "managed," etc.).
- Support statements with examples.
- Indicate why you are applying to a particular law school.
- Plan to write multiple drafts.

Above all, you should pause or halt in writing before:

- Making a judgment that the reviewer(s) may not share or which could offend.
- Expounding on theories of law and society.

- Writing a personal statement that focuses exclusively on one topic.
- Sending a single personal statement.
- Using less than 12-point type.
- Exceeding the stated page maximum.

In summary, if you cannot think of what to write about in the personal statement, the following areas might offer a “handle” with which to begin:

ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE. You might include: choice of major and what it has provided in terms of personal growth and development; comments on unusual grades or a particularly poor semester; a brief description of honors work completed or in progress; the nature and significance of an internship or independent studies program.

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES AND EMPLOYMENT. Describe participation in activities, both on campus and off, particularly if it involves significant amounts of time and energy and involves working for the benefit of others. Such efforts provide tangible evidence of non-academic interests and may assist in evaluation of academic performance.

PERSONAL HISTORY. If English is not your first language or you are a foreign student or a first generation American, you might describe how that has affected your college experience, your plans for the future, etc. You can discuss a particular event that you believe had a significant effect on your personal and/or educational development.

INTEREST IN LAW. An application may ask you to describe why you wish to study law. Avoid giving a civics lesson or a naïve lecture on “justice”. Instead, you should consider who and what influenced your decision to apply to law school, what contacts you have had with the profession, what use you plan to make of your future legal training.

I strongly urge you to put your “best foot forward” in the personal statement. Do not set forth a page of excuses as to why your GPA and/or LSAT score is not higher. If you believe that the Admissions Committee should be made aware of the reasons for your poor academic performance, attach an addendum to your personal statement that explains the situation. Remember that the personal statement is a marketing tool—it is a substitute for a personal interview with the law school’s admission committee. In conclusion, here are a few Do’s and Dont’s to think about while drafting your personal statement:

DO...

1. Write well—make it flow.
2. Have a good first sentence.
3. Double space it and leave good margins.
4. Type it or use a word processor; make sure ink is dark.
5. Keep it within reasonable length (if length is prescribed, keep it within that length, otherwise plan on no more than two pages).
6. Put your name on each page.

7. Explain why you desire to attend this particular law school – avoid generics. Be specific and accurate.
8. Be truthful.
9. Have statement support that is supported by the rest of the file.
10. Look beyond fraternity/sorority offices or athletic experience.
11. Acknowledge negatives in your files.
12. Turn negatives into positives.
13. Mention sensitive subjects in an appropriate way (not over dramatic).
14. Tell them why you've chosen law.
15. Show them who you are—this is your interview. Show your warmth and humanity.

DON'T...

1. Overuse a thesaurus.
2. Use clichés or quote others extensively.
3. Misspell words.
4. Use third person.
5. Title your statement.
6. Send multimedia presentations/modeling photos, etc.
7. Gush about law school or philosophize about the role of law in society.
8. Include wrong name of law school; it might end up on the wrong envelope.
9. Pat yourself on the back too much.
10. Be too cynical.
11. Come across as a victim.
12. Be too specific as to what you will do with your law degree unless your experience shows that it is a logical extension of what you've already done.
13. Focus too much on another person, even if he or she has been influential in your life.
14. Give a narrative resume, listing activities that are already in the application.

The preparation of an application may take several months. Plan ahead and spend the extra time to produce the most professional, well-written application possible.

Please see my pre law website for postings of such news articles. Also, I recommend that you visit LSAC's website for information on studying for the LSAT; applying, choosing and financing law school, as well as many other related topics at: <http://www.lsac.org>

In addition, you should periodically consult:

1. [Wall Street Journal Law Blog](#)
2. [NY Times Law School Blog](#)