

ADMISSION TO LAW SCHOOL:

IMPRESSIONS AND IDEAS

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I have discovered that the process of trying to gain admission to law school can indeed be a very disheartening one. Through lack of information easily available to the students, many interested in law school do not meet certain deadlines or perhaps become exasperated early in the "struggle". The obstacles can be conquered, however, and with the aim of shedding some light on how to reach this goal I would like to enumerate a whole list of my impressions and ideas.

The most conspicuous aspect of the process which causes great anxiety for many students is with regard to the undercurrent of intense competition, with an increasing number of students each year applying for a small number of openings. Consequently, it is becoming commonplace for law schools to give equal worth both to one's cumulative grade point average primarily during the first three years of college, and also to the score earned on the Law School Admission Test(LSAT). This means a colossal affront to any genuine accomplishments achieved outside the confines of the classroom. The weeding-out process in the area of admission dilutes the student's record to the point of insipidity. There are exceptions to this trend because some schools maintain a certain integrity by also utilizing a comprehensive inquiry into the important outside activities and areas of involvement that have contributed to the student's liberal education. The important factor to remember is that even without a superior grade point

average and/or LSAT score, one's outside accomplishments might aid in getting admission to several schools.

No pre-legal program of study is required for admission to law school, though many colleges and universities have the advantage of such a program. What is desirable is a student with a broad liberal education - you know, the well-rounded student. From my own experience I know that the absence of courses in statistics and economics creates a great deficiency.

I want to turn now to the important "sending away for" phase which should begin the summer before the senior year. First, send for the Pre-Law Handbook. It can be obtained from the Educational Testing Service, Princeton, New Jersey 08540. The Handbook includes materials on the study and practice of law, a sample LSAT, and invaluable information on the law school application process. The major part of the Handbook deals with an individualized profile of admission standards for most schools, plus estimates on costs, availability of housing, and other important bits of information. Be careful not to become discouraged by the charts listed in the book that calculate one's chances for admission to a particular school based on grades and the LSAT score. I am familiar with two cases where students were admitted to schools when their chances appeared to be nil. Also, disadvantaged students often receive special consideration.

Second, send for the Law School Admission Bulletin (same address as the Handbook). This includes important information on registering for the LSAT.

Third, send postcards to the schools that interest you, asking for information bulletins and application forms. Be conscious of deadlines for the applications, fees, etc.

The LSAT can really be quite a traumatic experience. It has been the worst ordeal in the process as far as I am concerned. If one is blessed with a computer-like mind for solving problems, the test will pose no difficulty. Do not put too much emphasis on any of the various books of practice tests that are published, because they can be misleading. I found the books handy in acquainting me with the directions at the beginning of each section of the test and thus saving several precious moments for answering the questions. It is also to your advantage to guess when you do not know the answer to any question on the LSAT.