

American Bar Association  
Law Student Division

# 200 Innovative Ideas



for  
*America's Law Schools*



***“There is nothing more powerful than an idea whose time has come.”***

**–Victor Hugo**

This book is dedicated to the law school leader...

Special thanks to all of the great Student Bar Association Presidents both past and present whose strokes of genius are contained within these pages. Your legacy will live on.

Thank you to the ABA Law Student Division Staff and Law Student Division Board of Governors for always making SBAs a priority within the Division. Thanks to ABA LSD Staff- Patty Brennan, Katie Dowd, Peggy Pissarreck, Carol Simmons, and Sabrina Harris, and ABA LSD Chair Daniel Suvor, LSD National Officers and Delegates.

Finally, thank you to the Florida State University College of Law Student Body and Administration for all of your support. Most of all, to the Florida State Law SBA Executive Board- thank you for allowing me to lead you this past year and committing yourself to take our SBA from good to great.

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# About the Innovative Ideas Project

This project came into existence as a simple solution to a problem.

At the 2007 ABA Annual Meeting, the SBA Presidents of America's Law Schools came together at the ABA Annual Meeting in San Francisco with the understanding that although the law schools we represent are vastly different in many ways, we each face similar problems and challenges. The question was then asked, **"If we all face similar challenges, why are we not working together to find innovative ideas and solutions to solve these issues?"** In other words, instead of dealing with these common issues independently, SBA Presidents should be talking to one another and working together to solve them. Out of this the idea for a book entitled *200 Innovative Ideas for America's Law Schools* was born. One idea for every ABA-approved law school.

These ideas were submitted by SBA Presidents from across the country and have been used and implemented with great success. As an SBA President, you have the ability to influence and impact others in a profound way. I hope that these ideas will help you to dream and think big as you take full advantage of the great opportunity before you.



Ben Gibson  
Vice Chair-SBA  
ABA Law Student Division

2007-2008 Student Bar Association President  
Florida State Law

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**WARNING:** The following innovative ideas, if implemented, will dramatically impact your law school

## Problem: Career Services

Every law student enters law school expecting to come out employed. When this does not happen as quickly or easily as a student might like, frustration abounds. Many times, whether right or not, the Career Services Office is first to blame- whether there are too few firms interviewing students, not enough out of state firms job opportunities, or on-campus interviews reserved only for the top 10%. As an SBA President, you are sure to hear plenty of complaints from your student body about Career Services. Luckily for you, there are innovative ways to improve the job search experience for all students.

## Innovative Ideas/Solutions

1. Have separate, regional legal career fairs at the law school for students interested in practicing in various areas of the country. **TIP:** If firms cannot attend in person have them send informational materials and contact information for submitting resumes
2. Conduct a small to mid-size career fair in the Spring
3. Create a Public Interest OCI for students interested in public service
4. Involve professors- they have many contacts for those practicing in their respective fields
5. Encourage Career Services to visit/call/write law firms and establish personal relationships with HR directors
6. Encourage Career Services to start a marketing campaign to promote the achievements of the law school and its students to prospective employers
7. Form a student advisory board to meet with the Career Services office once a month to share student concerns and to work together on areas of improvement
8. Regularly invite local attorneys to appropriate law school events and establish relationships with them on behalf of your law school
9. Have SBA promote the ways that students obtain jobs outside of on campus interviews (i.e. internships/externships, personal and family contacts, networking, reaching out to alumni, etc.)

10. Host informal lunches and dinners with local attorneys in specific practice areas. **TIP:** Keep the groups small to encourage interaction
11. USE ALUMNI! Work with key alumni to promote your student body to their firms. Encourage students to reach out and contact willing alumni
12. Host a mock interview event with local attorneys and alumni to improve students' interviewing skills
13. Work with the Career Services Office/professors to ensure that the peak recruiting time at your school does not fall during important school events, due dates for large assignments, or finals
14. Create a special e-mail address managed by SBA where students can submit feedback and ideas on how to improve the job search experience
15. Have career services keep track of where students are working during the summer (this information can be useful to other students interested in working at the same firm/agency down the road)

## **Problem: Involving Part-Time & Evening Students**

Law schools that have a night or part-time program often encounter the problem of how to involve part-time and evening law students and make them feel part of the student body.

## **Innovative Ideas/Solutions**

16. Create an Evening Division Liaison on the SBA Board
17. Find a time to hold events and meetings that work for both daytime and evening students (i.e. 5:00pm)
18. Archive and videotape important daytime events for evening students
19. Gear events specifically towards evening students (who is the typical Evening student? Are they married with kids, young professionals etc.)
20. Create student groups that reach out to evening/part time students: Law Family Society, Law Partners (for those with spouses)
21. Work with the Administration to ensure that evening/part-time students have the same access to services that daytime students do (whether by appt. after hours, evening office hours once a week, etc.)
22. Call night students individually and solicit their feedback and ideas for improvement

## Problem: Increasing Diversity

A lot of emphasis is placed on increasing diversity, yet many times these efforts do not always produce significant results. Other times the problem is that there is only a focus to achieve diversity in one area instead of encouraging diversity in all areas- ethnic and racial diversity, religious diversity, political diversity, diversity of ideas, socioeconomic diversity among others. We are all unique and we can learn a great deal from those whose lives have taken different paths than our own.

## Innovative Ideas/Solutions

23. Host a Diversity Week and include ALL diverse groups at your law school including groups whose ideas and thoughts differ from one another. **TIP:** Focus on areas of agreement and common ground among differing groups
24. Work on developing a Diversity Pipeline Initiative
25. Provide specific support groups for minority students once admitted to law school

**THINKING OUTSIDE OF THE BOX:** One Midwest law school wanted to attract more out of state minority students. In order to do so, they created a Diversity Committee and their own minority orientation program. They also got a new Admissions Director who targeted larger cities (mostly in the Midwest). Result: 70% increase in minority applicants.

26. Create a Diversity Committee on your SBA that focuses on diversity in the study, practice, and application of the law
27. Recruit faculty and the Dean of your law school to host monthly conversations with student groups concerning diversity issues

## Problem: Socials

If there is one thing that students expect SBAs to be good at it is planning and putting on great socials. That high expectation, many times, creates challenges- putting on diverse socials that appeal to everyone, creating a common sense alcohol policy, and budgeting for socials.

## Innovative Ideas/Solutions:

**Encourage Responsible Drinking-** Attorneys and law students suffer from substance abuse at rates higher than the general population. It is important for SBAs to take the initiative to address this problem.

28. Limit Open Bar Hours (limit free drink tickets, what is available)
29. Push Professionalism to Combat Drunkenness (including how to interact at cocktail parties/happy hours that are work related and drinking etiquette)
30. Secure specials on hotel rooms where you are hosting events

**THINKING OUTSIDE THE BOX:** One Florida law school decided to combat drinking and driving by instituting a free “SBA Cab Service”. A deal was reached with a local cab company to provide free cab rides for SBA members from SBA socials to home- no questions asked. The cab company’s number was publicized to all law students. The program was funded with SBA member dues and helped to decrease incidences of drunk driving.

31. **Provide Social Opportunities without Alcohol:**
  - Bowling with Professors
  - Dodgeball
  - Co-Ed Flag Football
  - Intramural Tournaments
  - Monthly Poker games
  - 5Ks
  - Canoe Day Trips
  - Movies & Ice Cream
  - Live music at a local coffeehouse

32. Publicize your State Bar's Lawyers Assistance Program and the resources it offers. (Visit ABA's CoLAP for more information: <http://www.abanet.org/legalservices/colap/>)

33. **Hold a Wellness Day**

- Publicize Mental Health resources on campus
- Promote Nutrition & Exercise
- Healthy Ways to Reduce Stress
- Free Massages
- Visit: [www.abanet.org/lisd/mentalhealth](http://www.abanet.org/lisd/mentalhealth) for more information on how to host a Mental Health Day at your school and on the Law Student Division's 2008 National Mental Health Initiative including the Toolkit for SBA Presidents and Law School Administrators

34. Social Themes/Ideas

- Comedy Shows
- Law School Woodser
- Casino Night
- 80s Social
- 90s Social
- Med/Mal Social (with the Medical School & Nursing School)
- Halloween Social, Valentines Social, Christmas Party
- Baseball Games
- Black & White Social
- Politico Night (Dress as Your Favorite Politician/Justice)
- Trivia Night
- Battle of the Bands
- Golf Range Nights

**THINKING OUTSIDE OF THE BOX: "Law School Woodser"**

One Florida SBA held their first annual Woodser last winter. They rented a plot of land with a giant bonfire (find an alumni with a farm or large amount of land). The SBA then secured limo buses (and old school buses) to transport law students from the law school to the Woodser site where they ate s'mores by the fire, drank their favorite beverages, and were entertained all night under the stars by a live band. SBA charged for tickets and the event sold out in 3 days attracting over 200 law students and guests.

**TIP:** Add a hayride on-site for even more fun and sell t-shirts to raise funds.

## Problem: Budgeting & Fundraising

Almost every SBA faces budgeting and fundraising challenges. Whether it is not having the financial resources to host events, not being able to attend all of the conferences you'd like, or dealing with the funding of student organizations- budget issues can limit your effectiveness and keep you from accomplishing your goals for the year.

## Innovative Ideas/Solutions

35. Create clear and consistent guidelines for funding student organizations and stick to them!
36. Create a separate entity, not affiliated with SBA, to oversee the funding of student organizations
37. Obtain corporate sponsors such as BarBri or Kaplan PMBR for your events
38. Sell slices of pizza for \$1 at socials

**THINKING OUTSIDE OF THE BOX: "Skills Auction"** A California SBA recently auctioned off the skills of prominent 3L's and 2L's. Skills such as golf lessons, a home cooked French dinner, a designated driver for a weekend, and a catered Kentucky Derby party brought in a lot of money for the SBA's graduation party.

39. Hold a golf tournament fundraiser and get alumni to participate. Solicit local law firms and businesses to donate prizes or to sponsor a hole
40. Hold a silent auction (i.e. dinner/drinks with professors or auction off a good parking space)
41. Create a Welcome Guide for incoming students that provides information on SBA events and things to do in your city. Solicit apartment complexes, bookstores, and other local businesses to place advertisements in your Guide
42. Have an up and coming local band who wants to sell CDs and gain some free publicity play at your next social... then charge cover

**THINKING OUTSIDE THE BOX:** A Florida Student Bar Association recently worked with their Administration to provide "Commemorative Bricks" to graduating 3L's. They charged \$50 for each brick to have names or (appropriate) messages placed on them. The bricks were then installed in the law school courtyard. Since each brick costs only \$15, they were able to make a substantial amount of money off of this fundraiser.

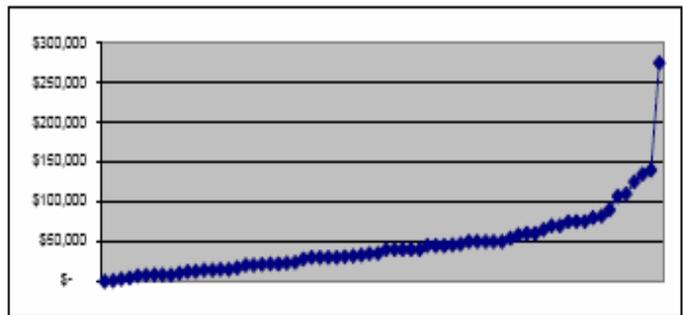
43. Encourage other student organizations to co-sponsor events with SBA. This helps with funding issues
44. Solicit former SBA Presidents and local law firms to create a special endowment for your SBA or for you as SBA President. Convince them that they want to be a part of a winning organization such as yours!
45. Organize a Professors v. Students 5K Run
46. If students are automatically SBA members see about creating "premium memberships" with added benefits
47. Charge for SBA memberships if possible, but sell sell sell the benefits attached!
48. Be innovative, create a good team. Run your SBA like a mini corporation- find a law student with a background in business to serve in a CFO role and to come up with creative ways to raise \$. Find a law student with a background in PR and put in charge of promoting events
49. Reduce wasteful spending (there's waste in every organization)
50. Lockers are a great fundraising tool
51. Bulletin Board Registration Fees for Student Organizations
52. Hold a Distinguished Alumni Event Fundraiser (ask for all the money at one time)
53. Design and sell law school merchandise (t-shirts, business cards, polos, sweatshirts, bags, coffee mugs, bumper stickers, etc.)
54. Create a separate private checking account for all SBA funds

55. Design special t-shirts for special events and sell them
56. Create an SBA fundraising committee to come up with ideas to reduce spending, budget, and raise money for events
57. Establish relationships with local businesses and restaurants and negotiate discounts for SBA and its members
58. Use the "law school network": there are students at your school right now who know people who can create t-shirts for you at cost and can supply further discounts to SBA- use the multitude of contacts you have right now at your law school!
59. Hold a school-wide welcome back cookout sponsored by SBA to raise funds

**SBA INSIGHTS**

*What is the budget of your SBA?*

|                   |    |         |
|-------------------|----|---------|
| <b>Average</b>    | \$ | 45,676  |
| <b>Percentile</b> |    |         |
| 25%               | \$ | 19,250  |
| 50%               | \$ | 37,500  |
| 75%               | \$ | 58,500  |
| <b>Range</b>      | \$ | 1,000   |
|                   | to |         |
|                   | \$ | 275,000 |



| 7. Where do you get your funds for your SBA Budget (select all that apply)? | Number of Responses | Response Ratio |
|---|---------------------|----------------|
| Allocation from the Law School  | 28                  | 39%            |
| Allocation from the Full University/College                                 | 20                  | 28%            |
| Student Dues (1 time dues)  | 9                   | 13%            |
| Student Dues (annual dues)  | 33                  | 46%            |
| Fundraising   | 36                  | 51%            |
| Donations   | 12                  | 17%            |
| Alumni Contributions  | 7                   | 10%            |
| <a href="#">View</a> Other, Please Specify                                  | 15                  | 21%            |

\*Data from 2006 SBA Presidents Survey

## **Problem: Dealing with Administration**

Establishing a working relationship with your Dean and Administration is essential to an SBA's success and ability to serve as the voice of students on important issues. Not all Deans and Administrations are easy to work with though and sometimes you will have the extra obstacle of overcoming bad relationships established by previous SBA leaders. Is there a way to work effectively with your Dean and Administration?

## **Innovative Ideas/Solutions**

### **THINKING OUTSIDE THE BOX: "Dessert with the Dean"**

One California SBA each month hosts what is called "Dessert with the Dean". The Dean of the school addresses the student body about their concerns and the general state of the law school. The Dean has tackled issues concerning diversity and the U.S. News and World Reports Rankings while opening up the lines of communication between the student body and Administration.

60. Write a welcome letter to all faculty at the beginning of the year introducing yourself as SBA President and expressing a strong desire to work together with both faculty and administration
61. Arrange weekly meetings with your Dean or Dean of Students. Let them know that you as SBA President can be a great ally of theirs by always keeping them up to date on the concerns and issues of the student body. In turn, a positive relationship with your Dean can create great benefits for your SBA and allows you to accomplish more for the student body
62. Know your Deans and their personalities- tailor your message and approach accordingly
63. Look at rival schools and see if you are "lagging behind." Raise this concern with the Dean
64. Set up one lunch a semester with the Dean and all student leaders to sit together and discuss issues and solutions to problems at the school
65. Lobby to have a student representative on all Faculty/Dean Search Committees

## TIPS ON IMPROVING THE SBAs REPUTATION WITH STUDENT BODY AND ADMINISTRATION:

Your SBA's reputation with your student body and Administration will play a large role in determining your level of effectiveness and success in accomplishing big goals. Does your student body think that the SBA is a joke or do they admire its ability to meet student needs? Can your Administration rely on your SBA? Does your Administration regularly talk about the SBA to incoming students?

Building the foundation for a successful SBA and improving its reputation does not happen overnight, but you can take steps immediately to begin the process...

66. Make sure you and your SBA Executive Board are always exhibiting the utmost professionalism at all times- dress sharp, be on time for meetings, return emails/calls, follow through, take the initiative, reach out to the students, Faculty and Administration
67. Hold regular town hall meetings with the student body to listen to student concerns and issues. Make a list of these big issues and come up with a plan to tackle them
68. Even if you and your SBA cannot immediately solve the "horrible Civil Procedure Professor" problem be there to listen to students always, that goes a long way
69. Run your SBA Elections like a real election. **TIP:** Many local Supervisor of Elections offices will run your election for free with printed ballots and all. Make sure you give them advanced notice. Having a professionally run SBA election gives more legitimacy to the positions that students are voting for
70. Deliver a "State of the Law School" address via YouTube at the beginning of the year and talk about all that the SBA plans to do to meet student needs in the coming year
71. Regularly call/email/send letters to students and organizations congratulating them on their accomplishments
72. Support other student organizations by attending their meetings and events- they will then return the favor

## Problem: Technology and Communication

How can your SBA best use the technological tools available to communicate with students and spread the SBA's message?

## Innovative Ideas/Solutions

73. Use Facebook/MySpace to advertise upcoming events, create an SBA group, application, page
74. Use Twitter and Txt Messaging to promote SBA events
75. Create an SBA email account through gmail or yahoo that is easy to remember and that students can contact for any SBA related question
76. Create an SBA gmail chat or AOL IM account so students can ask questions to an SBA Representative live while they are in class
77. Create an SBA website. See: [www.fsustudentbar.com](http://www.fsustudentbar.com), [www.usdsba.org](http://www.usdsba.org), [www.gwsba.com](http://www.gwsba.com), [www.vanderbilt.edu/vba/](http://www.vanderbilt.edu/vba/)
78. Publish a weekly/monthly SBA newsletter. **TIP:** to save \$ publish an online newsletter to send to all students
79. Use TWEN online interactive forums to post announcements and to allow students to discuss relevant issues in an open forum
80. Create a global calendar through Google to coordinate clubs and organization events
81. Use electronic surveys (i.e. Zoomerang)
82. Regularly communicate the accomplishments of your SBA to the student body. They need to know all that you do
83. Create funny YouTube videos to promote events- then spread through e-mail/facebook
84. Hold conference calls with student leaders over the summer to discuss the upcoming year and find opportunities for collaboration

85. Create a website that can be regularly updated by you

**BENEFITS OF A PROFESSIONALLY DONE SBA WEBSITE:**

- Dramatically increases communication with student body
- Helps promote your SBA and school to the outside legal community
- Ability to sell merchandise and event tickets online
- Ability to reserve student organization rooms online
- Law School Blogs and Discussion Boards allow SBA to always be on top of what students are thinking and enable them to meet those concerns
- Potential for advertisements on website = increased funds for SBA
- Reduces paper waste- archive of SBA meeting minutes, Constitution, and other important documents can all be kept at one location for students
- Gauge student opinion on issues through online polls
- Online voting for SBA elections
- Ability to set up online bookstore through Amazon for law students
  - See [www.fsu-lawbooks.com](http://www.fsu-lawbooks.com)
- Link students to important legal opinions and national news
- Increase communication and accessibility to professors and Administration by allowing a favorite Professor to write a weekly blog on website
- Student Organization pages where student leaders can post upcoming events to an Online Calendar

## **Problem: Interaction with Undergraduate Campus**

Some SBA Presidents would rather have nothing to do with their respective undergraduate campuses and students. However, by not reaching out to these leaders you can miss out on a great opportunity to build important relationships that can benefit your law school and your SBA. This is especially true if the undergraduate students at your school control your funding. It is vital that you interact with and engage the undergraduate student leaders. Many of these students hope to one day be in your shoes- so take them to lunch or buy them a cup of coffee, tell them about your law school experience; they will not forget it.

## **Innovative Ideas/Solutions**

86. At the beginning of the year meet with and establish a strong working relationship with the University President, the Student Body President, undergraduate Senate President, and any other important leaders
87. Regularly invite the University President and other undergraduate leaders to law school events, they will appreciate you keeping them in informed about what is going on
88. Contact the undergraduate pre-law organizations and ask if you can set up a panel of law students at their next meeting to talk about "how to succeed in law school"
89. Support Student Government candidates and parties willing to help the law school
90. Recruit law students to serve in Student Senate and while there to serve as a strong voice for the law school and all graduate students
91. Appoint a law student "Undergraduate Liaison" to reach out and promote the law school to the undergraduate campus
92. Have your SBA participate in school-wide events. (i.e. the Homecoming Parade)

## **Problem: Rising Tuition & Fees**

Have your tuition and fees gone down lately? I didn't think so. In fact, rising tuition (and rising student debt) is a common concern among law students nationwide.

## **Innovative Ideas/Solutions**

93. Hold town hall meetings with students to discuss the issue and establish a plan to address
94. Have students attend faculty meetings and address the issue
95. When addressing rising tuition costs- relationships are key. Improve your relationship with your law school Dean and University President- lobby them to take a stand on the issue
96. Contact the school newspaper and local media and raise the issue
97. Write your state legislative leaders and members of congress
98. Work with other SBA Presidents in your state to lobby your state legislature
99. Contact your ABA Division Delegates and encourage them to pursue this issue with Congress: <http://www.abanet.org/lcd/legislation>. Volunteer to help
100. Some schools have a cap on tuition increases per year- see about establishing one at your school
101. Organize a letter writing campaign among law students in your state

## Problem: Community Service Opportunities

As law students, we know the importance of giving back to those less fortunate than ourselves. But are you still searching for philanthropic events that will excite your student body? Below you will find ideas for community service events that have worked at other law schools.

## Innovative Ideas/Solutions

102. Partner with other graduate schools and dedicate one day for students to work in the community, including schools, homeless shelters, soup kitchens, and animal shelters
103. Participate in the ABA Law Student Division's Work-a-Day held every October
104. Hold a croquet tournament/Chili Cook-off. **TIP:** One SBA in Michigan did just this and established 28 3-member teams. Each team paid \$20 to play and all proceeds went to the Marine Corps Law Enforcement Foundation. The chili cook-off coincided with the croquet tournament and attracted a large number of students for a great cause
105. Set up Alternative Spring Breaks. **TIP:** An SBA in Washington State sends 30+ students to South America each Spring Break to build schools
106. Hold a "No-Talent Show" and use proceeds from ticket sales to go to a local charity
107. Throw a Halloween Party that provides entertainment for children in a local domestic violence shelter and a break for the mothers who care for these children
108. Hold a Thanksgiving dinner for a battered women's shelter and a homeless shelter. **TIP:** Put it on at the school and have students make and provide the food. Provide childcare. One SBA did this and over 150 people from the local community attended
109. Hold tournaments for flag football, softball, dodgeball, and basketball. **TIP:** One SBA raises between \$10,000 - \$12,000 annually from these events for local, national, and international charities
110. Class Gift Program for graduating 3Ls- designate money towards a philanthropic cause

111. Raise money to send underprivileged kids to a local sporting event (i.e. minor league baseball game). Attend the game with the kids and take them out for pizza afterwards

**THINKING OUTSIDE THE BOX: “Charity Poker Tournaments”**

A poker tournament is a great way to get students involved in raising money for a worthwhile cause. Many SBAs do this every year and raise a significant amount of money. One SBA in California does this and recently raised over \$2,000 for a local children’s after school program. Students, faculty members, deans, and local attorneys played in the tournament or acted as dealers.

112. Organize a team of students to train for a triathlon, 5K, or marathon in an effort to find sponsors and raise money for the cause of your choice
113. Visit a local nursing home or hospital and spread some good cheer
114. Organize a coat drive or can food drive for a local shelter

**THINKING OUTSIDE THE BOX: SBA’s “Make a Difference” Week**

Last fall, an SBA in California hosted "Make a Difference" Week teaming up with all student organizations to create activities for law students to participate in. Events included:

**Sunday:** Susan G. Komen Walk Against Breast Cancer (co-sponsored event with Women & Law organization and raised over \$5,000)

**Monday:** Community Service Fair where all of the student organizations on campus set up tables with information on how students could get more involved in the community

**Tuesday:** Toiletry package drive for the local homeless shelter. SBA bought toiletries and had some donated. SBA set up an area in the Lounge for students to make toiletry packets

**Wednesday:** Work-Life Balance Panel, where professors and attorneys discussed how they balanced busy professional careers but still found time for community service

**Thursday:** Each student organization set up letter-writing campaign tables, so students could write letters for different causes

Week ended with the school's annual Benefit for Social Justice, a fundraiser to benefit students working in the public interest field for the summer

## Problem: Barrister's Ball

Barrister's Ball a.k.a. the "Law School Prom" is an annual tradition at most law schools nationwide. It is essential that your SBA pulls this one off without a hitch.

## Innovative Ideas/Solutions

115. Get local law firms to sponsor tables
116. Secure your venue and catering a year in advance
117. Set your budget in advance and base your ticket prices off that. A recent SBA Presidents survey found that ticket prices range anywhere from \$20-\$100 a student. Think about subsidizing tickets for SBA members. Most subsidized ticket prices range from \$30-\$40
118. To save money- skip the live band and hire a DJ. Buy your own decorations
119. Food is optional and can range from light appetizers and desserts to a full sit down meal
120. Alcohol at most Barrister's Balls range from open bar the entire night, open bar part of the night, drink tickets, to cash bar
121. Think about providing alternative entertainment (i.e. a full casino with money going to charity, or a jazz band in one room and a DJ in another)
122. Decide if you want your event to be black tie, formal, or semi-formal
123. Have your event at a unique and fun location and attach a theme to it. **TIP:** Barrister's Balls have been held at many diverse locations around the country including hotel ballrooms, convention centers, science centers, Central Park, downtown clubs, yacht clubs, beachside restaurants, football stadiums, train stations, farmer's markets, art museums, and even Disneyland
124. Vote for Professor of the Year, Organization of the Year and announce the winners at Barrister's Ball. (Some law schools also vote on funny awards for law students as well)

## Problem: Parking

It is safe to say that parking is a challenge at most law schools across the country. And believe it or not, parking is one of the top frustrations experienced by the average law student. Will your SBA be able to solve the problem?

## Innovative Ideas/Solutions

125. Take a big picture approach and lobby your Dean & Administration and University officials for parking expansion
126. Encourage alternative forms of transportation- biking, subway, train, etc. Provide some tangible benefit to students who choose these methods of transportation
127. Lobby your Administration to subsidize offsite parking
128. Charge for parking- this will probably not play well politically but will reduce the number of users
129. Regulate parking based on time
130. Encourage carpooling by creating specific parking spots only for carpoolers
131. Plan ahead for times of increased demand and larger events. Communicate with student body about times of limited parking availability
132. Enforce current parking regulation

**THINKING OUTSIDE THE BOX:** With rising gas prices, limited parking, and concerns about being environmentally friendly, carpooling is becoming more and more popular. Now, there are many ride matching software programs available that allows students who want to carpool to find other students who live in close proximity to them and have similar class schedules. For a list of ride matching software available please visit the University of South Florida's site at:

<http://www.nctr.usf.edu/clearinghouse/ridematching.htm>

## Problem: Internal SBA Management

In order to best serve the student body that you represent, your SBA must be functioning well internally. This requires LEADERSHIP from the top and the setting of a positive, ambitious agenda that the whole organization can feel a part of. Set an agenda that your law school will benefit from and will see the effects of, long after the current leaders are gone.

## Innovative Ideas/Solutions

133. Increase institutional knowledge and SBA continuity- create event sheets to fill out after every SBA event with details such as who, what, when, where, how, and tips for future success. Make sure all of your hard work in planning events does not go to waste
134. Regularly communicate with each member of your team. Set goals for your SBA at the beginning of the year, create the big vision and regularly come back to it throughout the year when making decisions
135. Plan an SBA Executive Board Retreat at the beginning of the fall semester to help your SBA leaders get to know each other and to set goals for the coming year. **TIP:** find a law student who has a beach house or vacation home to cut down on lodging expenses
136. Attend the ABA Law Student Division Fall and Spring Leadership Summits in your Circuit. Start developing relationships with other law school leaders in your state and region and regularly exchange ideas with them
137. Recruit Talent. There are many talented law students who have skills and abilities where you do not. Find them, reach out, and make them a part of your TEAM
138. Create accountability and regularly praise even the smallest accomplishments of those within your SBA
139. LEAD by example. Your hard work and passion for SBA and your law school will become contagious and others will soon follow
140. Create a positive TEAM environment where everyone is in this together and if one fails we all fail.
141. Don't worry about who gets the credit, focus on the results

142. If your Constitution is outdated, revise it and help shape the future of your SBA for years to come
143. Find a Faculty advisor and tap into his/her wealth of knowledge. Have him/her reach out to other faculty members and the Administration on SBA's behalf
144. Think professionalism in all aspects of your meetings:
  - start meetings on time & end on time
  - create an agenda and do not divert from it
  - record substantive minutes at every meeting and post them
  - type up lengthy motions and all motions requesting money and provide copies for all Board members
  - follow Robert's Rules even when it seems "unnecessary" ([www.robertsrules.org](http://www.robertsrules.org))
145. Before a Board member brings up a problem at a meeting, make sure they know they also are expected to have thought out 3 possible solutions beforehand
146. Do not allow one Board member to dominate a meeting. Fair to all
147. Build consensus FIRST among members of your SBA before bringing forth a new proposal or initiative. **TIP:** Ask specific Board members to do something pertaining to the new cause or initiative, so that they will take ownership of it
148. Appoint a talented member of your SBA as "PR Chair"- have this person in charge of promoting all SBA events and clearly communicating the accomplishments of SBA on behalf of the student body **TIP:** Do not overlook the fact that you must communicate with the student body and take credit for your accomplishments. The student body must be aware of all the hard work that the SBA does for them
149. Create and maintain a Calendar of Events in your SBA office
150. Establish "office hours" for each SBA Executive Board member to be available to students
151. Return all e-mails and phone calls promptly. **TIP:** If you do not know the answer to a question right away respond that you will look into the matter and get back to the person. This will let them know that you and the SBA care about their problem

152. Personally call/e-mail the other SBA Presidents in your state once a semester
153. End of the Semester/Year Reports- have each Executive Board submit them including self analysis of the good and bad and future goals for their position
154. Select Committee Chairs early (April/May) and do not hesitate to change/remove Committee Chairs who are not performing
155. Purchase SBA letterhead, envelopes, and stationary and use them
156. Delegate work... no seriously, do it
157. Pass a budget for the year by your second meeting
158. Maintain accurate records of all monies. Develop a careful system of accounting for the inflow of funds. Follow this system rigidly during the year
159. Organize an adequate transition time for the SBA Board that succeeds yours. Provide them with the tips and knowledge they need to be successful
160. Regularly motivate and inspire your SBA Executive Board in creative ways
161. Ban laptops from meetings (except the Secretary) to prevent unneeded distractions
162. Pass out *Kudos* bars at meetings to Board members who have recently gone "above and beyond"
163. Create an SBA Executive Board listserve for all internal Board communication

## **Problem: Improving Law School Facilities**

Law school facilities have the ability to enhance or diminish one's law school experience. Improving facilities requires a strategic long term plan. SBA can lead this effort and bring the issue to the forefront of the power players and ensure that the facilities are meeting the needs of students.

## **Innovative Ideas/Solutions**

164. Survey students and find out what their top facilities needs are. Then schedule a meeting with your Administration and discuss the findings and make a plan for addressing each area
165. Many facility changes require little capital. **TIP:** Simple things like added power cords, ensuring that soda and snack machines are functioning and stocked, obtaining free printing, increasing nighttime access to buildings, and fixing the squeaky chairs in a classroom goes a long way in reducing frustration among your student body
166. Lobby Administration for big facility changes, be persistent and sell the vision of nicer facilities having an impact on your entire law school
167. Use a wheelchair at your law school for a day- how handicap accessible is your campus? Talk to your Administration about what can be done to improve access for those with disabilities

### **THINKING OUTSIDE THE BOX: Emergency Preparedness Plan**

An SBA in New York, sharing a campus with an undergraduate institution, spent time this year ensuring that the school's Emergency Plan was sufficient. Keeping in mind that there is no issue more important than student safety, the SBA President formed an ad hoc committee to research the issue and to see what local schools did to prepare their student body for emergencies. All issues were looked at ranging from a gunman on campus to snow emergency plans. The SBA President said, "The important thing is that student leaders engage their Deans and Administration on the issue."

168. Use the "class gift" to purchase a big ticket item at the law school
169. Discover areas on your campus where wireless internet access is weak. Schedule a meeting with your technology department about increasing the strength of the wireless signal campus wide

## Problem: Exams/Grading Policies

If there is one hot issue that affects all law students it is exams and grades. No doubt that students at your law school have concerns about both.

## Innovative Ideas/Solutions

170. Some law schools are moving towards self-scheduled exams in an effort to encourage students to enroll in classes without regard for when the exam is scheduled. Talk to your Administration about this idea
171. Make sure the way your school calculates gpa and class rank is clearly understood by prospective employers
172. Compare your grading scale and curve to surrounding law schools in your region and other law school's of similar size and rank. Discuss recommended changes with your Administration
173. Institute a mandatory uniform curve and grading system for all classes
174. Expand opportunities for taking exams prior to the scheduled examination period
175. Create a week "study buffer" between the time classes end and the first exams begin
176. Provide free massages for students during exam week. **TIP:** Many local massage schools will provide students to give massages for a reduced price or sometimes even free
177. Provide free coffee in the library for students during exam week
178. Create an outline bank on your SBA website. **TIP:** Be sure to provide a disclaimer that SBA cannot guarantee the content of the outlines
179. Establish a clear academic policy for the ranking of Transfer Students and the opportunities available for Transfer Students to be involved in Moot Court, Mock Trial, and Journals
180. Ask professors to make their lectures available via the web and MP3 downloads so students can review important concepts taught in class

## **Problem: Bar Passage Rate**

A low bar passage rate hurts a school's ranking, its recruitment of prospective students, job placement for graduates, recruitment of new faculty, and even its ABA accreditation. How can your SBA contribute to the raising of your bar passage rate?

## **Innovative Ideas/Solutions**

181. Heavily promote Bar Prep courses such as BarBri, Kaplan PMBR, and MicroMash
182. Encourage the law school to offer a bar preview course for 3Ls during the fall

### **THINKING OUTSIDE THE BOX: "Demystifying the Bar"**

Many law schools are now holding their own bar preparation courses in addition to BarBri and Kaplan PMBR. One California law school recently instituted a free, weekend, year-long bar study program called "Demystifying the Bar" to better prepare their students for the exam both psychologically and academically. These efforts are assisted by the addition of a full time academic support director to help underachieving students prepare for the challenge of the bar exam.

183. Book a block of hotel rooms for students in advance close to the bar examination site
184. Provide a free, healthy lunch at the bar testing site for all students from your law school
185. Highly publicize important dates and deadlines for the bar application and examination
186. Meet with your State's Lawyer's Assistance Programs Director to discuss substance abuse and mental health questions on your state's bar application. Communicate this information to the student body
187. Organize a day for students to get bar forms notarized, pictures taken, fingerprints, etc.

## Problem: SBA Programs/Initiatives

Imagine if your SBA was more than just an organization that planned weekly socials. What big initiatives and programs can you institute this year to take your SBA from good to great?

## Innovative Ideas/Solutions

188. Make sure your student organizations are connected to their corresponding state bar entities and ABA sections. Great networking opportunity!
189. Create a Mentoring Program, pairing incoming students with 2Ls and 3Ls
190. Create a forum to share ideas, propose new directions and debate student issues. SBA town hall meeting
191. Increase the law school's visibility nationwide by placing qualified students in national leadership positions- a great start is the regional and national ABA Law Student Division positions and as liaisons to the ABA entities.  
**For more information:** [www.abanet.org/lld/leadership/home.html](http://www.abanet.org/lld/leadership/home.html)
192. Lead the effort to acquire a new journal at your law school

### **THINKING OUTSIDE THE BOX: "SBA On-Campus Book Exchange"**

Recently, a California SBA created the first ever on-campus book exchange for their law school. This tremendous undertaking allowed students to sell their books to each other without involving the bookstore. SBA collected, catalogued, and sold students' used books to other law students. They ended up selling \$35,000 worth of books and cut checks directly to the previous owners of the books.

The student body also SAVED about \$75,000 by NOT purchasing from the bookstore. Law students loved the exchange, particularly because of commercial outlines which don't get dated like textbooks. The volunteers for the book exchange came from student organizations which were granted \$10/man-hour for sitting at the exchange. Most clubs 'earned' about \$400 by working at the exchange.

193. Create a mandatory pro bono requirement to graduate
194. Fall Break- bring it back

195. Start a Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program (VITA) at your school. **TIP:** Contact the VITA National Student Director for more info: <http://www.abanet.org/lsd/vita/home.html>

**THINKING OUTSIDE THE BOX: “State Legislative Preview”**

An SBA in Florida holds an annual State Legislative Preview every Spring right before the Florida Legislative Session begins. This yearly event which attracts the attention of local media and a large number of law students consists of a bipartisan panel of Legislative Leaders who give a preview of the upcoming issues that will be addressed during the Legislative Session. Students are able to submit questions about these policy issues and directly discuss the important hot-button issues facing the State with their elected leaders.

196. Sponsor a “Family & Friends Weekend” for 1Ls during the fall semester. **TIP:** Give tours of the law school and have guests sit in on a mock class
197. Have SBA members plan and run a significant portion of 1L orientation- promote SBA and the services it offers here
198. Wine and Cheese social event for students and faculty at the start of the year
199. Contact your ABA Law Student Division Circuit Governor about hosting your Circuit’s Fall or Spring Leadership Summit- then help run the meeting and showcase all that your SBA is doing
200. Start an SBA Speakers Bureau dedicated to bringing in high profile and entertaining speakers to your law school

**BONUS IDEAS....**

201. Hold a “Get Fit” month where you challenge students to exercise, eat right, get adequate sleep, and reduce stress. Organize competitions among the student body to promote each healthy lifestyle skill.
202. Organize a “Lobbying Day” with the other law schools in your state to lobby your state legislature on important issues affecting the law students in your state. **TIP:** Partner with your State Bar’s Young Lawyer Division or the ABA Law Student Division Delegates (<http://www.abanet.org/lsd/legislation/home.html>)

203. Hold joint events with your local bar association's Young Lawyers Division- provides great contacts, a potential revenue source, and goodwill for the law school

**THINKING OUTSIDE THE BOX: SBA's Stress Free Week**

An SBA in Tennessee, during the week that grades were released worked closely with their Office of Student Affairs and the Tennessee Lawyers Assistance Program to host a stress free week, with two panels, free massages, comfort food and much more. The SBA also tabled and raised awareness for a "dry week" pledge. Those who participated in the dry week and promise not to drink during stress free week were able to enter their names to win an iPod courtesy of the Tennessee Lawyers Assistance Program.

The week included:

**Mon:** "Grades: Myths and Realities" Panel Discussion (with pizza lunch provided)

**Tues:** Comfort food courtesy of SBA offered during lunch. Afternoon included a "Supportive Practices Session" led by experts specializing in Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction

**Wed:** Chair Massages courtesy of SBA

**Thurs:** "Substance Abuse Issues in the Legal Community" Panel Discussion. Social that night at a local bar serving a menu of non-alcoholic "mocktails"

**Fri:** Drawing for free iPod, remarks by Dean of law school

204. Organize an intramural tournament among all graduate schools at your University to compete for the coveted "Dean's Cup"
205. Recruit prominent local attorneys and professors to participate in a series of lunchtime panel discussions focusing on specific areas of law that students wish to practice in (corporate, land use/real estate, criminal, government, etc.)
206. Organize an inter-faith panel discussion with the religious organizations at your law school discussing how faith has informed the legal system
207. Go directly to the student body and ask them to set SBA's agenda by identifying the top issues they would like SBA to address within the next year

208. Take the issues the student body raises and implement innovative ideas to solve them. Keep the student body regularly updated on your progress
209. Lead the effort to organize the SBA Presidents in your state to address issues affecting law students **TIP:** when addressing issues as one “state delegation” of law school SBA Presidents use all avenues media, print, lobby your State Legislature, contact your Senators and members of your State Congressional Delegation

**THINKING OUTSIDE THE BOX: “State SBA Presidents Summit”**

There are 20 law schools in California, but thanks to the leadership of one they are now speaking as one voice for the law students of California. In February of 2008, the University of San Diego’s Law School President organized and hosted the first ever California Association of Law Leadership Summit (C.A.L.L.). SBA Presidents from all over California convened in San Diego for a discussion about California-specific law student issues and SBA issues in general. Each SBA President in attendance was responsible for presenting one aspect of the program and thanks to an endowment they each were able to receive travel funds.

The purpose of the conference was twofold:

1. To facilitate discussion among the various Presidents about "what has worked." The discussion was largely pre-planned with each President sharing things about their school that have gone particularly well.
2. To discuss law school issues that are unique to California—i.e. the creation of a new law school, the low bar passage rate, financial aid, and developing a Loan Repayment Assistance Program. Resolutions on each were then passed by the California Presidents.

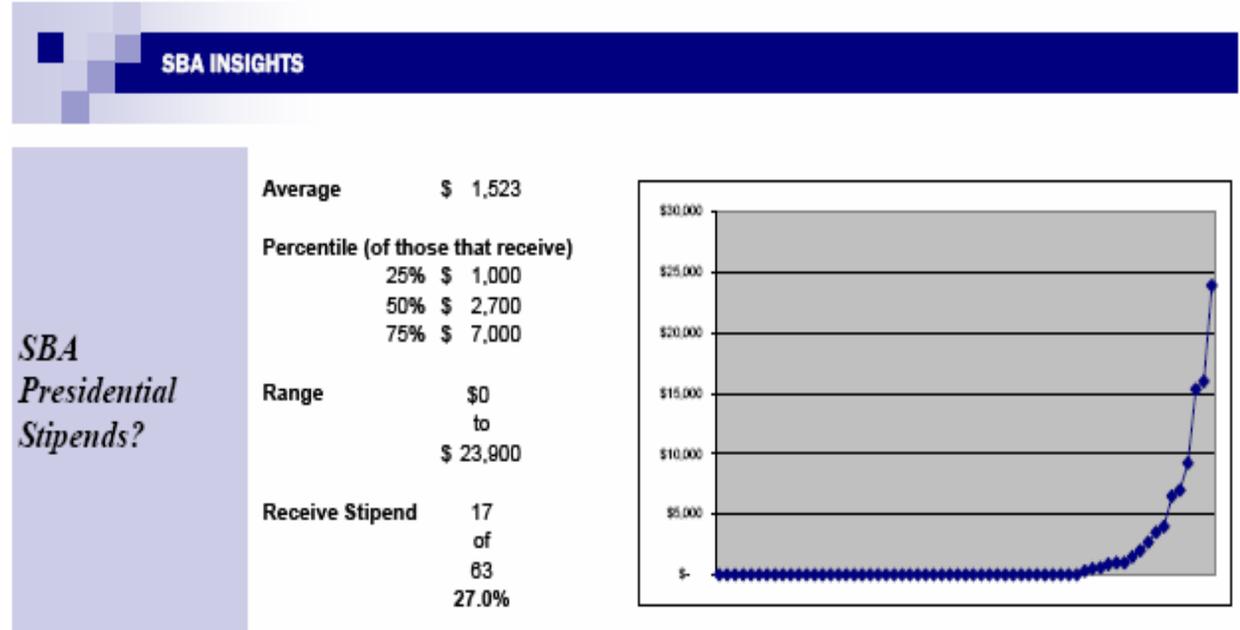
The SBA Presidents in California, not only were able to exchange ideas, but they also showed what powerful voice they possess when they act together on issues that affect all law students in California.

210. Get a Blackberry, exercise regularly, learn how to go to bed at 3am and get up at 6am, and make friends with the Baristas at Starbucks
211. Wake up every morning knowing that you have influence over your student body like no one else... and then armed with that knowledge, choose to do something great

# Compensation for SBA Presidents

Among SBA Presidents there seems to be no hotter topic of discussion than- do you get paid? And if so, how much? While the data is not complete the most comprehensive study of this issue occurred in 2006 by then Vice Chair-SBA Eric Koester.

**Bottom Line:** Most SBA Presidents still receive no compensation for their work (according to the 2006 study: less than 27%). Among those who do receive compensation the average amount is \$1,523. A more complete study of this issue is recommended, but for those of you who receive no compensation for your hard work, know that you are not alone.



## **ATTENTION: SBA PRESIDENTS**

You are the LEADER of your law school that means:

1. You are very busy
2. Your "To Do" list is very long
3. Your time is very precious
4. You're only interested in things that will benefit **you & your** law school

Imagine if there was something that helped you be a **better** SBA President. Something that helped you solve the issues you are facing **right now** at your law school.

**Solution: Make Your Job Easier, Get Involved Right Now in the ABA Law Student Division.**

### **Direct Benefits to YOU:**

- Meet SBA Presidents from around the country
- Discuss common issues you are facing right now at your law school with fellow SBA Presidents and learn from their innovative ideas
- Discover programming ideas and ways to strengthen your law school
- Exchange ideas and network with the SBA Presidents in your State and Region
- Access to SBA Presidents Listserve, Discussion Board, and Handbook
- Have a problem? Parking, Career Services, Communication? You're not alone. Start talking with other SBA Presidents- they have ideas and solutions that will help.

### **Direct Benefits to YOUR Law School & Student Body:**

- National exposure opportunities for your law school
- Countless Leadership opportunities for your students
- Have a voice on issues that affect your law students and others nationwide
- ABA grants to your student organizations for new programming

### **NEXT STEP:**

1. Go to <http://www.abanet.org/lsd/sba/home.html> for all of the valuable info. you need.
2. Attend the ABA Annual Meeting, your Circuit's Fall and Spring Leadership Summits
3. Contact Vice-Chair/SBA, Ben Gibson with any questions or concerns:  
[vicechairsba@gmail.com](mailto:vicechairsba@gmail.com)

**Don't Delay. Receive the Benefits of ABA Involvement Today.**

## **ABA Law Student Division Involvement**

If you have not already done so, learn about and participate in the American Bar Association Law Student Division. Contact the ABA Representative at your school and seek to create a mutually supportive working relationship. Each law school is entitled to two voting seats in the Law Student Division Assembly: the ABA Representative and the SBA President. Attendance at your Circuit's Fall and Spring Leadership Summits and the Annual Meeting enables you to represent your law school and express its vote on important law student issues and lets you meet with other SBA Presidents and exchange ideas about what is working and what is not working at your respective schools. The Division also offers information and services useful to the students you represent.

**The ABA Law Student Division is the ONLY national organization that provides a forum for the SBA Presidents of America's Law Schools to connect and interact with one another.**

For more information: [www.abanet.org/lsd](http://www.abanet.org/lsd)

SBA Presidents: [www.abanet.org/lsd/sba](http://www.abanet.org/lsd/sba)

As an SBA President you are part of a very select group of leaders known as the SBA Presidents of America's Law Schools.

Together, the SBA Presidents of America's Law Schools daily represent, impact, and influence over 150,000 law students nationwide.

Together, you are currently influencing and impacting future U.S. Supreme Court Justices, U.S. Presidents, Governors, Members of Congress, CEOs, Attorneys General, and heads of the largest international law firms. In short, the future leaders of this nation and the world.

Together, you have the tools and voice necessary to address big issues facing law students today.

A great opportunity has now been laid before you, and it is time for you to...

**LEAD.**



American Bar Association  
Law Student Division  
321 North Clark Street  
Chicago, IL 60654

[www.abanet.org/lsd](http://www.abanet.org/lsd)

