I hope you will accept this brief statement regarding the placement collection data. I am in Colorado and it is still December 1, 2010.

There are a number of things that take much higher priority in adjusting the questionnaire than attempting to write it in a way that can prevent schools gaming the numbers on placement. I have absolutely no doubt that happens, and I also appreciate the frustration it produces. However, the concept of making law schools do the kind of tracking and reporting at some more granular level will not effect this gaming at all. How can it? At one level, the NALP collection system would have to be designed to collect the same information in the same way. Moreover, law schools that are upping their employment data by hiring people for short periods of time to report them employed, or funneling money to support graduates taking 'test drive' employment at firms or public organizations are not going to be deterred by trying to parse the numbers more finely on ABA annual questionnaire

This is particularly irksome when the ABA could do something which would directly affect the large scale gaming by law schools which cut back on their entering classes to artificially increase the LSAT and GPA for us news purposes, and then literally recruit people they rejected for to transfer---even having "early admission transfer" programs. So they get a pretty picture for us news and then recruit students they rejected to get their tuition for the remaining two years when the data isn't collected by the ABA.   A look at the data in the ABA questionnaire results will show that some law schools essentially double the size of the class in the second year with transfer students.

There is a very simple fix---change the questionnaire to report the credentials of the all the students in the JD program without distinguishing one class from another. That is a MUCH MORE accurate description of a student body, and much better information for the public.   And if that is what is collected, that is what will be used for USNEWS. The result will be much greater accuracy as well as much less manipulation of actual human beings in the admission process.

I made that suggestion about four years ago. And was informed that wasn't going to happen. To turn around and decide that law schools in general are not giving accurate or helpful information on the placement portion of the questionnaire, and contemplate changes that could be difficult to fulfill for schools, while looking aside at an issue which would be simple to correct and wouldn't place an increased burden on any school, seems to be driven by politics and media rather than by legal education standards. HRA

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