It’s a busy spring at LSAC. We continue to see stable volumes of applicants and applications, excitement is building for the Digital LSAT, we’re putting the finishing touches on our new CRM/enrollment services software platform, and outreach efforts to build a broader and more diverse law school pipeline continue to expand. We’re also getting ready to launch the standalone LSAT Writing in June — a welcome change that will improve the experience for test takers and admission professionals. LSAC’s new agile organizational operating structure, now complete, continues to propel us to greater heights of customer engagement as we work with our member schools and candidates to promote a just and prosperous world in which diversity thrives. Through the expansion of the Discover Law campaign, increased use of the LSAT in key global legal markets, and LSAC involvement in diversity conferences as an organizer and sponsor throughout the U.S., we are working to advance access to quality legal education for all. This report highlights some of our initiatives and outcomes over the past couple of months and provides insight into test-taker volume and application trends. We are proud to serve as legal education’s trusted hub for assessment, data, and technology services as we promote quality, access, and equity in law and education worldwide. Please continue to be in close touch and thank you for your partnership.

Kellye Testy  
President and CEO  
Law School Admission Council

UPDATE ON LSAT TEST TAKERS, APPLICANTS, AND APPLICATIONS

LSAT Test Takers

LSAC recently finished its sixth and final LSAT administration for the current testing year. While we don’t yet have final test taker numbers, we can report that there was a 6.8% increase in total LSAT registrants as compared to last year. For the 2018-2019 cycle, we had about 150,000 registrants for the LSAT compared to about 140,000 registrants in the 2017-2018 testing year. For the cycle that just ended, 55% of registrants were first-time test takers. We will have final test taker counts for the 2018-2019 testing cycle in mid-May and are expecting an increase in year-over-year test taker total.

The next LSAT administration is June 3, 2019, and is the first of nine test administrations planned for the 2019-2020 cycle. We are beginning to offer the test more frequently, consistent with research on candidate preferences.

As of April 19, 2019, we had more than 18,000 registrants for the June LSAT and nearly 8,300 for the July LSAT, which is when approximately half of the test takers will take the new digital version and the rest will take the paper-and-pencil version.

Application Trends

The number of applicants to U.S. law schools for 2019 was just over 56,000 as of April 30, 2019, up 1.8% over the same date in 2018. We have about 91% of this year’s likely applicants, based on our experience at this time last year. There is a decent increase (23%) in the “other” category that includes applicants from outside the United States, as well as applicants that have not identified their residency. Finally, we are seeing small increases in the number of applicants from the South Central, Far West, and Mountain West regions.

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The total number of applications to ABA-accredited law schools for 2019 was about 355,000 as of April 30, 2019, down 2.8% compared to 2018. Last year on this date, we had 91% of the final application count.

Overall, 73 law schools are showing application volume increases, 118 schools are experiencing decreases, and 11 are experiencing no change.

Canadian member law schools are experiencing small decreases as compared to last year, with applicants down 2.4% and applications down 4.5%. LLM applicants and applications to ABA law schools are each down about 4%.

EXPANDING THE LEGAL PIPELINE

Discover Law Campaign

LSAC launched its Discover Law ad campaign in September 2018. The goal of the campaign is to expand outreach and attract a more diverse and representative set of candidates to law school. The campaign was designed to help college students and recent college graduates (and mentors), particularly those from underserved groups, to learn about the benefits of a law degree. As the campaign identifies students who are interested in law school, we work to convert initial interest into concrete action — ultimately application submission — through targeted remarketing efforts.

The Discover Law campaign, now in its third phase, is driving concrete action by first offering a downloadable version of tips for preparing for law school, then adding other elements (test preparation, etc.) in exchange for prospects’ contact information. This phase includes new advertisements that will be featured across multiple digital channels including the web and social media. These efforts will add to the nearly 300,000 people who came in through the initial launch of the campaign and, importantly, propel more serious law school prospects to act.

Blog Series on Diversity in Legal Education

LSAC’s blog, Law:Fully, features a range of stories — from law student profiles to thought-provoking posts about trends and issues in legal education. Earlier this year, we featured stories of first-generation law students who realized a legal education was within reach and could empower them to change the world.

Our latest series focuses on diversity, profiling students such as Abyan Gurase, a Somalian refugee who came to the United States as a young child and always knew she wanted to go to law school but didn’t know how to get there. Thanks to a summer prelaw program at her university, sponsored by an LSAC Diversity Matters grant, Gurase was able to prepare for the LSAT and learn how to present a strong application when she applied to law school.

Law:Fully also recently featured a piece that put forth LSAC’s view on the recent undergraduate college admissions scandal. LSAC further placed an op-ed by President and CEO Kellye Testy in The National Law Journal. “Admission should be based on potential, not privilege,” Testy wrote. “There’s still so much to do to make sure the education system, and the culture surrounding it, values potential over privilege. That effort is central to LSAC’s mission. We know that our world is uneven and that we must put our weight on the side of equity and access.”
We always welcome story ideas for our blog. To submit a suggestion, please email news@LSAC.org.

LSAT—India: Upcoming Administration and New Scholarship

The next LSAT—India administration will take place on June 2, 2019. The LSAT—India is one of the preeminent entrance tests for undergraduate and postgraduate law programs in India, based on the quality of the assessment, with more than 50 law schools accepting LSAT—India scores as one of their admission criteria.

To commemorate completing 11 years of administering the LSAT in India, and to demonstrate our continued commitment to nurturing and empowering law students to become world-class lawyers, LSAC announced the new LSAT—India Law Scholarship on April 1, 2019. The scholarship, which aims to provide an opportunity for aspiring lawyers to study at some of the best law schools in India, will be awarded to the student with the overall highest reported score on the June 2, 2019 LSAT—India. The scholarship will cover tuition and residence fees (up to a specified maximum) for the first year of the recipient’s law program, with the opportunity of continued benefits to cover a second year of tuition and residence fees if the recipient secures an overall score in the top 5% of their class.

For more information on the June 2 administration and the new scholarship, please visit pearsonvueindia.com/lsatindia/

Pilot test for Spanish LSAT-Chile

In December of 2018, LSAC staff met with visitors from the School of Law at the University of Chile in Santiago to explore the possibility of administering a Spanish version of the LSAT in Chile for use in law school admission. This meeting led to the determination that a new version of the Spanish LSAT would be pilot tested in Chile in April 2019. Because law school is an undergraduate program in Chile, the test was constructed at a level of difficulty appropriate for a population applying to college.

Approximately 1,000 first-year law students at four Chilean law schools were invited to participate in the pilot test, which took place on April 13. Since the academic year in Chile begins in mid-March, test subjects were about three weeks into their law school careers on the day of the pilot test. We are still compiling final test taker numbers and expect the total to be approximately 500.

Results from the pilot test will be correlated with first-year grade-point averages, when they become available, together with other data such as scores from standardized tests administered in Chile. A second pilot test, which is expected to include a larger population from more law schools — as well as fourth-year high school students, if possible — is being planned for March or April of 2020.

NEWS AND RESEARCH

Skills Analysis Survey

As mentioned in the February 2019 report, LSAC recently conducted a Skills Analysis Survey to validate the content of the LSAT and to inform LSAC test development about how the curriculum in required law school courses has changed over the past 15 years — which will, in turn, help us evaluate whether we need to change specifications for the content of the test.

The survey was reviewed by an advisory board consisting of law faculty experienced in the fields of legal education pedagogy, curricular reform, academic support, and bar preparation, and was distributed in early November 2018 to academic deans who were asked to forward it to faculty members who teach required courses at their law schools.

The survey response rate was very strong, well above that required by best practices for survey validity. Ninety-four percent of respondents reported that the survey covered “essentially all” or “most” of the tasks involved in successful performance in required law school courses. Although almost all tasks that were common to both the 2003 and 2018 survey received somewhat higher importance ratings in 2018, the rank ordering of tasks
based on the 2018 ratings was very similar to that of the previous survey.

The top five categories of tasks rated in order of overall importance were:

1. Analyzing legal problems and cases
2. Reasoning
3. Work habits and study skills
4. Reading
5. Constructing Arguments

A complete report of the findings will be available early this summer.

Digital LSAT

LSAC is busy gearing up for the Digital LSAT, which begins with the July 15 test administration, when approximately half of the test takers will be assigned to take the test on a tablet provided by LSAC, and the rest will take the traditional paper-and-pencil test.

The launch of the Digital LSAT is part of LSAC’s overall effort to use data and digital technology to improve access to, and the efficiency and affordability of, legal education. For the past several years, we have been evaluating various pathways to digitally transform the LSAT with the goal of evolving the experience to increase accessibility.

For candidates, it offers a modern, intuitive user experience, as well as a wide array of accessibility tools. In addition to eliminating any possibility of filling out the answer sheet wrong, it will also offer, in the long term, the potential for candidates to get their scores faster. The Digital LSAT will provide rich data on the test experience, including how test takers analyze questions and how each question performs in context. It will also reveal details about each test question that we could not learn from the paper-and-pencil test, and it will help improve the LSAT itself over time.

Extensive research over a number of years has demonstrated that the vast majority of students (90+%) across all demographic and socioeconomic groups are very familiar and comfortable with touch-screen technology. Based on our field testing, test takers find the Digital LSAT very easy to use. Feedback from our pilot test takers and test centers has been positive, especially about the interface and how thoughtfully it was designed.

In preparation for the launch, we have increased communications with constituents, including training for test center supervisors and staff, to ensure that everyone is ready for the transition to digital. LSAC has also created a Digital LSAT familiarization site with tutorials that demonstrate all of the features and functionality of the Digital LSAT. Students do not need to have a tablet to access the familiarization site and learn about all the features of the Digital LSAT. The familiarization tutorials are available via any internet-connected device, including PCs and Macs, tablets, and smartphones.

LSAC has published three full digital practice tests to the familiarization site to give candidates the ability to practice taking the LSAT using the digital interface. We will continue to add more practice tests in the months ahead, as the LSAT moves toward becoming fully digital in September 2019. Our goal is to ensure that prospective test takers have a variety of tools and content to develop their skills and prepare effectively for the Digital LSAT. This comprehensive digital learning and assessment platform will ultimately increase understanding of how students learn and where they are strongest and most challenged, with the goal of creating tools and systems that better support the educational journey of every student.

On April 17, we conducted a dry run of the Digital LSAT using about 100 LSAC staff members who wanted to immerse themselves in the test-taker experience firsthand before it goes live. Feedback was overwhelmingly positive, with users impressed by the tablet’s “completely intuitive functionality” as well as the variety of options that allowed them to customize their experience — from the contrast and larger font settings, to being able to tilt the tablet up or lay it flat, to deciding whether to use their stylus or their finger. The overall impression was that the test taker was more in control.
of their experience, as compared to the paper-and-pencil test. Additional dry runs will be held leading up to the official launch of the Digital LSAT in July.

**LSAT Writing Coming in June**

We are excited to debut LSAT Writing, a modern approach to the LSAT writing section that will ease the burden on test takers by shortening the test day and allowing them to compose their writing samples at a time and place that is convenient for them — for up to one year after their test administration date. This proctored, on-demand, timed writing exam will launch with the June 3, 2019, test administration. Designed in response to test taker feedback, LSAT Writing will be administered online using secure proctoring software that is installed on the test takers’ own computers. LSAC.org offers a thorough listing of FAQs to inform and prepare candidates for this change. This new approach to the LSAT writing section aligns with our work to increase accessibility and efficiency for all who wish to impact the world through their pursuit of a legal education.

**Next Generation of ACES**

LSAC’s proprietary online admission platform, Admission Communication Exchange System (ACES) simplifies and strengthens the application and enrollment management processes for law schools. After analyzing the results of a comprehensive user satisfaction survey, followed by an extensive research project that included on-site observations and interviews with over 100 schools in 2017, LSAC envisioned an even more powerful people-centered enrollment management platform. The next generation of ACES, designed with feedback from law school admission professionals, will begin its rollout later this summer.

The new system will provide visibility into the admission pipeline, so schools can take action from anywhere on any device, allowing for real-time reporting and data insights. Through LSAC’s collaboration with Microsoft, the next generation of ACES will be paired with Microsoft Dynamics 365, a customer relationship management solution that will centralize prospect and applicant information and interactions from point of first inquiry to beyond graduation. It will also enable law schools to create multichannel marketing campaigns to effectively reach and engage their targeted audiences. Finally, the next generation of ACES and Microsoft Dynamics 365 will be fully integrated, providing a synchronized environment for various users at a law school to work together, using a single data source.

LSAC is currently in discussion with more than 25 schools that have indicated their preferences to transition to the new system first. Our goal is to onboard all law schools by the end of 2020.

We are looking forward to the LSAC Annual Meeting and Educational Conference at the end of May in Boston, during which we will host an informative lunch session to demonstrate the various capabilities of the new system as well as share information on the plan to transition schools from ACES² to the next generation of ACES.

**EVENTS AND UPDATES**

**Annual Meeting and Educational Conference**

This year’s LSAC Annual Meeting and Educational Conference will be held from May 29 to June 1 at the Boston Marriott Copley Place in the heart of downtown Boston.

Our theme this year is “Gateway to Justice.” This theme is a call to action, born out of our desire to help law school admission decision makers to enhance and expand their expertise as, together, we work to build a just and prosperous world. Participants will have the opportunity to network, learn about the latest trends and best practices in law school admission, and see presentations and demonstrations on the latest law school admission tools and resources — from the Digital LSAT
and Khan Academy to diversity, recruiting, use of social media, and more. As of April 19, 2019, approximately 600 law school admission professionals, deans, faculty, and others involved in admission decisions plan to attend this gathering to honor and celebrate the essential role they play in shaping the future of justice.

Live with Kellye and Ken

“Live with Kellye & Ken” is an online running dialogue about the present and future of legal education. Each month, Deans Emeritus Kellye Testy (LSAC CEO) and Ken Randall (iLaw Founder and President) lead expert panels of law school deans in engaging online discussions of today’s important topics surrounding legal education and leadership.

Please join Kellye and Ken on Monday, May 6, from 4:00 to 5:15 p.m. ET (3:00-4:15 p.m. CT; 1:00-2:15 p.m. PT) for the next live dialogue about bar passage, titled “Declining Bar Passage and the Role of Law Schools in Bar Exam Prep and Reform.”

The discussion will feature deans Aviva Abramovsky (University at Buffalo), Len Baynes (University of Houston), and Jon Garon (Nova Southeastern University), as well as Judy Gunderson, president and CEO of the National Conference of Bar Examiners.

Please join us for this engaging discussion by registering at: ilawventures.com/live-with-kellye-and-ken/


Diversity Officers Conference

In March, LSAC hosted a Meeting of Law School Diversity Officers at the Hilton Cincinnati Netherland Plaza in Cincinnati, Ohio. The meeting was open to the chief diversity officer of each LSAC member law school and was designed to identify services that LSAC could help initiate or advance to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion at our member schools.

The meeting was organized by LSAC’s Vice President and Chief Diversity Officer Kent Lollis, who reported that attendee feedback was overwhelmingly positive. Participants enjoyed the opportunity to talk about their roles as diversity, equity, and inclusion experts, as well as the issues they confront in their field and the various organizational structures for providing DEI services in law schools.

National People of Color Conference

Kent Lollis also attended the fourth National People of Color Conference in March at American University’s Washington College of Law. He was accompanied by LSAC’s Deputy for Legal and Global Higher Education Camille deJorna and inaugural Presidential Innovation Fellow Miguel Willis. This was the largest gathering of faculty of color, with nearly 600 in attendance and over 150 law schools represented. LSAC has been proud to sponsor this conference since its inception.

The National People of Color Conference provides an opportunity for minority faculty to share their research and writing projects. At this year’s conference, plans were discussed for revamping and expanding Youth Day events for the annual convention of the National Bar Association, the oldest organization of African American lawyers in the United States. LSAC has sponsored NBA Youth Day for over 15 years. The day-long program provides high school students with a chance to learn about careers in the legal profession, with the goal of increasing the number of diverse students in law school.

National Black Law Student Association Conference

LSAC sponsored the National Black Law Student Association’s 51st National Convention, “Speaking Truth to Power,” held in March at the Little Rock Marriot in Little Rock, Arkansas. The convention is held each year as part of an effort to increase the representation of black/African American students in law school. This year, NBLSA executive leadership members organized a prelaw symposium for local students and graduates interested in law school.
The symposium was an all-day event that kicked off with a keynote speech by LSAC’s Miguel Willis. Willis’s keynote focused on inspiring and encouraging students on their journey to and through law school, while discussing helpful resources they could take advantage of while pursuing their legal education.

The prelaw symposium also focused on law school readiness, with an emphasis on LSAT preparation. LSAC Ambassador Isabelle Ramos spoke with participants about the format and content of the LSAT and delivered an overview of the free and personalized LSAT preparation we offer through Khan Academy — provoking positive feedback from those who had used Khan Academy’s LSAT preparation tools and videos. “It’s really helped me prepare better for the LSAT,” said Lewis Stevens, a junior at the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff. “I have not taken it yet, but I feel very confident in my ability to take the LSAT in July.”

Participants were very engaged, with many visiting the LSAC table, where they could get information and questions answered. LSAC aims to support future NBLSA events as well as regional BLSA events.

National Federation of the Blind Conference

LSAC’s Senior Vice President for Legal and Corporate Affairs and General Counsel Leanne Shank attended the National Federation of the Blind’s 12th Annual Jacobus tenBroek Disability Law Symposium in Baltimore, Maryland, in late March. The theme of the symposium was “The Impact of Public Attitudes and Stigma on Our Right to Live in the World.” Plenary and discussion sessions focused on how public attitudes about disability create negative stereotypes of persons with disabilities — and how these attitudes influence their treatment in education and the criminal justice system, among other areas.

“The sessions were inspiring and impactful, and I came away humbled and energized to ensure that LSAC’s processes for assisting LSAT candidates with qualifying disabilities are fair and equitable, and that these test takers are treated with the dignity and respect that they so rightly deserve,” said Shank.

Through LSAC’s commitment to equity and access to justice, we are expanding our outreach to the disability community to better understand their needs, with the goal of working with related associations and law schools to support the journey of disabled individuals through law school admission to their entry into the legal profession.

LSAC was a proud sponsor of the symposium and will continue to engage with NFB and other disability associations as we seek to expand our support and engagement in this area.