November 2, 2018

Dear ABA Council Members:

LSAC has an abundance of news to share with you since our last update. Of particular note are the nearly final results of the matriculation data we are certifying for 2018, which show that total enrollees are up 3% from 2017 (40,389 for 2018 vs. 39,154 for 2017); 17 schools were up 25% or more, and 8 schools were down 25% or more. The matriculation certification is on track to be completed by November 15, nearly month earlier than last year, thanks to the strong efforts of and collaboration between LSAC and Section staff.

The attached newsletter provides volume data, details, and more news in addition to the following highlights.

1. Academic deans and faculty teaching first-year and required courses at all member law schools have been invited to participate in LSAT content validity survey.

2. Early data indicates that LSAC’s Official LSAT Prep with Khan Academy is succeeding in helping prepare students from underrepresented groups to succeed on the LSAT.

3. The LSAT will begin its transition to a digital format with the July 2019 test, and the test will be fully digital in North America starting in September 2019.

4. AALS, LSAC, and Gallup released *Beyond the Bachelor’s: Undergraduate Perspectives on Graduate and Professional Degrees*, based on the research conducted by AALS and Gallup for the *Before the JD* study.

5. LSAC Equality Conference on best practices for supporting LGBTQ law students, December 9-11 in Orlando, is sold out.

6. In collaboration with Harvard’s Center on the Legal Profession, LSAC is hosting a conference, titled *The Future of Legal Education in India*, at the Taj Mahal Hotel in New Delhi on November 16-17, 2018.

7. LSAC is collaborating with iLaw to host a monthly live dialogue about the present and future of legal education, Live with Kellye and Ken, on the first Monday of each month.
The fall has been a busy and productive time at LSAC. We are vigorously expanding our assessment, data, and technology services to benefit the future of legal education as it continues to evolve along with the legal profession. Notably, LSAC re-engineered its operational structure from the ground up over the summer for a high level of agility and an even higher level of service. At the same time we accomplished this comprehensive redesign, we also both kept pace with a high volume of ongoing work and made enormous progress on several major initiatives that are described below.

Kellye Testy
President and CEO
Law School Admission Council

Applicants

At this early stage in the 2019–2020 admission cycle, there is positive news for the number of applicants overall as well as the number of applicants in high LSAT score bands. As November begins, both applicants and applications are running higher than last year at this time, with over 11,007 applicants submitting 51,607 applications for JD programs. Of 201 law schools, 20 are showing an increase in applications of 50% or more. Applicants with 160+ LSAT scores are up about 26%. In addition, so far over 32,000 candidates have already started an application; at this time last year around 29,000 had started an application. Please note that early volumes can be highly volatile and comparisons to last year’s data will change on a day-to-day basis until more of the cycle is complete. Daily updates are available in the members area of LSAC.org.

LSAC will be introducing several initiatives over the next few months to provide more and better data and research to our member law schools and to generally advance the availability of reliable data on legal education. For starters, beginning the first week of November, LSAC research scientist Dr. Josiah Evans will host a new podcast Keeping Up to Data. The first episode will dig deep into what the early volume data means. Each podcast will break down the latest volume data and other data of interest to law schools. Announcements with links will be sent via email before each podcast, and episodes will be available at LSAC.org. Stay tuned!

Because over 99% of applicants begin their enrollment journey by taking the LSAT, testing volumes also provide insights into the future applicant pool. Test volumes in one year will influence the applicant pool for the following year. Because we have expanded test dates significantly, test volumes for this year are not directly comparable to prior years. However, using the most comparable figures available, test registrations for the June through September time frame show volume comparable to this same time last year at over 69,000 test takers, with two-thirds of those first-time test takers (that percentage has been very stable over many years).

ABA Applicants
and Applications

ABA Applicants Year-to-Date as of November 2, 2018

ABA Applications Year-to-Date as of November 2, 2018

Last year at this time, we had 15% of final applicant count.
**Skills Analysis Survey Launched**
Academic deans and faculty teaching first-year and required courses at all member law schools have been invited to participate in an important survey that is part of our routine (but critical) process of aligning the questions on the LSAT with the skills law faculty deem most important for success in law school. The response rate thus far has been extremely high, and we look forward to sharing the results with the legal education community and the legal profession at large in the very near future.

Known in the field of assessment as a “content validity study,” it captures any changes law schools may be making in their expectations for skills students need to have at admission to succeed in law school. The point of this study is not to ask about all skills a student needs to graduate, become licensed, and then thrive in the legal profession. The three years of legal education should add significantly to the development of the student’s knowledge, skills, and values and, of course, experience and continuing education add still more. Rather, these are the building blocks that need to be there at the start of law school for a student to have a fair opportunity to succeed.

Responders are asked to indicate the skills required for a student to succeed in their courses. The sum total of these responses then guides the development of the LSAT’s content so that it provides a fair assessment for the benefit of the applicant and the school. The LSAT is the only admission test designed and validated for legal education and this is an important part of that process. The survey questions were designed by assessment experts and reviewed by an advisory board consisting of law faculty experienced in the fields of legal education pedagogy, curricular reform, academic support, and bar preparation.

**Expanded Testing**
LSAC continues to expand the frequency of LSAT administrations so that candidates can take the exam in the months they prefer. While we had initially planned an every-other-month schedule, we have moved aggressively to add an additional three months to that schedule for the 2019–2020 testing year. We will continue to survey candidates as to their preferences and will respond accordingly to maximize access.

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**Free LSAT Prep with Khan Academy Exceeding Usage Expectations**
LSAC launched Official LSAT Prep with Khan Academy on June 1, 2018. Post-LSAT questionnaires sent to June, July, and September test takers showed that nearly one-third of respondents reported using Khan Academy to prepare for the test. Significantly, 43% of the Black/African American respondents reported using this free, online prep program to prepare for the September LSAT, compared to 31.3% of Hispanic/Latino respondents, and 32% of the total population of respondents. These results certainly lend support to our belief that free, high quality LSAT prep helps even the playing field for candidates from underrepresented groups.

**Digital LSAT Launch**
On October 3, LSAC announced that the LSAT will begin its transition to a digital format with the July 2019 test, and the test will be fully digital in North America starting in September 2019. Field test results have been very positive, with candidates finding the Digital LSAT easy to use. Other advantages of the new format will be faster score reporting, enhanced accessibility (built on universal design principles), and increased data analytics. LSAC will have further announcements in early November about this exciting development.
Law School Forums
LSAC conducts national forums to connect candidates to our member schools. The forums include an opportunity for the JD and LLM candidates to visit tables staffed by each school’s personnel and to attend substantive sessions that LSAC organizes to educate candidates about legal education, admission, and financial aid.

Law School Forum attendance can vary depending on the date, the weather, competing events, and many other factors. Thus far, several cities saw increased attendance this year (Chicago, DC, Los Angeles) while three saw small declines (Atlanta, Toronto, and Miami [likely weather-related]). There are more to come, including New York (the largest) and San Francisco.

The stars aligned for the Chicago forum, where there was a 26.2% increase in attendance over last year. The Chicago forum featured the first-ever deans’ panel, and candidates lined up with questions for Deans Margaret Raymond (Wisconsin), Kevin Washburn (Iowa), and Darby Dickerson (John Marshall). The panel, moderated by Kellye Testy, was a great success, and we now feature a deans’ panel at every forum. We thank all of the deans who have graciously participated, and all of the candidates who were so engaged and asked such great questions.

Digital Discover Law Campaign
The Discover Law campaign, a major national digital ad campaign launched in July by LSAC to highlight the importance of the rule of law, promote the value of a law degree, and build a diverse pipeline of new lawyers, has brought more than 2,000 new potential law students to the LSAC website to explore their interests in pursuing a law degree. Students interested in technology, entertainment, and other pathways to a legal education are being served ads on targeted websites and social media (Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter). To date, social media ads have been the most popular, drawing more than 7,000 likes, shares, and comments on our posts. Students who click the ads spend nearly two minutes per visit to LSAC.org and visit more than two pages each session—longer than any other landing page on the website.
The Future of Legal Education

Live with Kellye and Ken
November 5
2:30–3:30 p.m. ET
LSAC is collaborating with iLaw to host a monthly live dialogue about the present and future of legal education. The first “Live with Kellye and Ken” livestream event featured Dean Mark Alexander, Villanova; Dean Heather Gerken, Yale; Dean Jennifer Mnookin, UCLA; and Dean Blake Morant, George Washington, discussing “Why Now is a Great Time to Go to Law School.” These will be held the first Monday of each month, and the next one is scheduled for Monday, November 5, at 2:30–3:30 p.m. ET, with Dean Erwin Chemerinsky, Berkeley; Dean James Hackney, Northeastern; Dean Laura Rosenbury, Florida; and Dean Douglas Sylvester, Arizona State, discussing “The Dean as Entrepreneur.” Register here.

The Future of Legal Education in India
Showcase and Symposium
November 16–17, 2018
The Taj Mahal Hotel, New Delhi
Delhi, India

The Future of Legal Education in India
As the largest democracy in the world today, India has a critical role to play in protecting the rule of law. LSAC has been deeply engaged with the Indian legal profession for the past decade, working in multiple ways to advance global legal education and to provide heightened visibility for collaborative opportunities with our member schools. Since 2009, we have also offered the LSAT—India, an assessment designed specifically for the legal education system in India.

In collaboration with Harvard’s Center on the Legal Profession, LSAC is hosting a conference, titled “The Future of Legal Education in India,” on November 16–17, 2018. The event will bring together key leaders from the legal profession, academia, government, and the private sector to discuss the critical challenges—and the important opportunities—facing Indian legal education.

One of LSAC’s priorities is to assist our member schools that seek to extend their global reach and connections. Advancing understanding of law and legal education around the world benefits us all as, together, we build the future of justice.

LSAC Equality Conference
LSAC is hosting a sold-out conference on building, promoting, and maintaining an inclusive LGBTQ environment in law school on December 9–11 in Orlando, Florida. Law school administrators and faculty have a unique opportunity to learn about best practices for recruiting, welcoming, and supporting LGBTQ students. LSAC has subsidized travel costs for one attendee from each member law school.

Beyond the Bachelor’s and Before the JD
AALS, LSAC, and Gallup hosted a very successful event at the Gallup offices on October 23 to release Beyond the Bachelor’s: Undergraduate Perspectives on Graduate and Professional Degrees, based on the research conducted by AALS and Gallup for the Before the JD study. The event was well attended and was also livestreamed. The video of the event will be available in the coming weeks at LSAC.org and AALS.org. This follows the release of the Before the JD study, which we also sponsored, a very rich snapshot of data on the pipeline to law school. LSAC will be including many of the Before the JD questions into annual surveys we conduct and publish so that the legal education community will have longitudinal data to inform enrollment efforts. LSAC is especially grateful to Judy Areen and her team at AALS for their leadership and collaboration on these key reports.
Matriculation Certification Simplified
A simplified Matriculation Certification process has sped up processing time by nearly a month over last year, leading to a completion date of no later than November 15. This streamlining has been made possible by reducing by half the number of handoffs among schools, the ABA, and LSAC. We all benefit from the efficiencies that come from collaboration, and we are grateful to Barry Currier and his staff at the Section of Legal Education and Admissions to the Bar for their partnership in streamlining reporting processes for law schools.

New Enrollment Management Assistance
Individual law schools often ask LSAC for enrollment assistance that goes beyond ACES support. LSAC will soon offer customized enrollment management services for individual schools interested in maximizing their data for more informed recruiting, admission, and scholarship decisions. Susan Krinsky, longtime admission dean and LSAC’s new Director of Enrollment Management, is heading up the development of this valuable service. Watch for details this winter.

Coming in July—the New ACES with CRM
Want the best CRM on the market and the only one tailored for legal education? Our member schools will have it. Starting next summer, ACES will have CRM built in. The new ACES will be the one tool admission offices need to manage candidates from when they first appear on a school’s radar as prospects until the time they matriculate. Easy-to-create workflows will build marketing campaigns from segmented lists that are already in ACES; easy-to-use, drag-and-drop templates will make it easy to create compelling marketing pieces; all interactions with candidates, such as open rates, links clicked, and responses, can be tracked at the individual level; and form templates and survey tools are built in. For information contact JoAnn Sabol at LSAC: jsabol@LSAC.org; 215.968.1118.

Correlation Studies, Regression Studies, and Validity Studies
From their shorthand name, it is easy to overlook all that LSAT’s free, annual statistical studies for each law school offer. While they have become known as the “correlation studies,” they have always done far more. LSAT’s annual studies incorporate school-specific regression analyses and tools that are extremely valuable in supporting the admission decision-making process. No member school needs to pay for or risk transmitting data for a regression or other similar study—all member law schools already have it for free.

LSAC’s regression results describe the optimal weighting of LSAT score and UGPA to most accurately predict FYA within an individual law school. A contextual analysis is also included to help a law school understand its results in relation to those of other law schools. Please contact us if you need clarification on what is available to your school. Our skilled team of psychometricians is at your service; please contact Nazia Rahman at CorrStudy@LSAC.org.

Relatedly, because LSAC supports every aspect of the law school admission process, we are also able to provide your school predictive validity evaluations safely and securely without the need for you to go to the trouble or expense of sending sensitive, private data to a commercial vendor for such analyses. If your law school is interested in a customized validity study, please email Nazia Rahman at CorrStudy@LSAC.org.

SAVE THE DATE
2019 LSAC Annual Meeting and Educational Conference
May 29–June 1, 2019
Boston Marriott Copley Place