What You Need To Know *Before* Applying To Law School

By: Alexandra Filutowski  
Attorney at Law  
UW Lecturer, B CUSP 202  
November 2, 2009
Biography

• Owner, The Filutowski Law Firm, PLLC
  – Civil litigation firm focused on representing individuals in personal injury, insurance, employment and landlord-tenant matters.

• UW Lecturer, BCUSP 202

• Education
  – Seattle University School of Law
    • Moot Court Board
    • National Moot Court, Order of the Barristers
  – University of Washington
    • B.A., Business Administration
Outline of Discussion

• Overview of lawyers
• So, why do you want to go to law school?
• What’s the LSAT?
• Does it matter which law school I attend?
• What’s the bar exam?
Who Are Lawyers?

• Advocates for the down & trodden
• Sharks
• Type A, analytical, curious, argumentative
• Out-of-box thinkers, linear thinkers, talkative, argumentative, studious, policy shapers
Why Do You Want To Go To Law School?

1. Be a well-informed individual
2. I love Judge Judy, People’s Court and Law & Order: I want to be in the court room!
   → LITIGATOR
3. I want to do business deals
   → TRANSACTIONAL
4. I have no clue; better than looking for a job in this market
Thinking About Law School

➢ Research...
  ○ Law School Admissions Council (LSAC)
    http://www.lsac.org/aboutlawschool/getting-started.asp

➢ Talk to...
  ➢ Law School Admissions Counselors
  ➢ Talk to current law students
  ➢ Current lawyers

➢ TOUR a law school! Sit in on a lecture.
What *Is* The LSAT?

• Law School Admissions Test (LSAT)
• Administered by Law School Admissions Council (LSAC) [http://www.lsac.org/index.asp](http://www.lsac.org/index.asp)

• Standard Test:
  • Logic
  • Reading Comprehension

• Many schools place significant weight on grade; perfect score = 180
What *Is* The LSAT?

• Costly *and* you pay a fee to have your scores sent to each school you apply ($30-$75/school)

• Be Selective With Your Applications
  • Top
  • Middle
  • Safe
LSAT Prep Courses

• Kaplan

• Steven Klein Company: costs $1,095.00 as of Spring 2009.
  – Feb. 6th 2010 LSAT, class starts Dec. 1st
Getting *Into* Law School

- In economic recession, applications are increasing, so admissions is more competitive

- **To add-value** to your application:
  - Practice for LSAT to get best score possible
  - Earn a good undergraduate G.P.A.
  - Get work experience
  - Volunteer community service
  - Get some unique life experience: teach overseas, volunteer overseas, work with inner city youth, start a non-profit, etc.
Law School, Generally

• 3 years of copious amounts of:
  • Reading
  • Writing
  • Analyzing

Repeat.....
Law School: Negatives

3 years that are:
• Competitive
• Stressful
• Life-consuming (you lose your social life)
• Expensive
Law School: Pluses

• Knowledgeable
• Enabled to make change
• Get a joint degree:
  – JD/MBA
  – JD/MD
  – JD/PhD
• Some law schools are now only 2 years:
Law School

• 3 years: 1L, 2L and 3L

• 1L G.P.A. matters most; top 10%, 1/3
  • On-campus interviews & Law Review

• Law Review – school journal on various scholarly topics; citations

• Moot Court – oral advocacy

• Legal Clinics – practical experience w/ clients
1L year: “scare you to death”

- 1 section comprising 60-85+ students
- Socratic method
- Bar exam subjects: Tort, Contract, Civil Procedure, Criminal, Property
  - @ SU Law – Legal Writing I
1L year: “scare you to death”

• Grade depends on 1-2 exams for entire year: mid-term and final
  • Essay format, issue-spotting
  • IRAC model: Issue, Rule, Analysis, Conclusion
• 1L grades determine eligibility for 2L summer associate internships at BIG firms, only.
• 1L summer: Study Abroad
2L year: “work you to death”

• Possibly smaller classes, depends
• Different lecture styles
• Some courses focus on practical skills:
  • Pre-Trial Advocacy, Trial Advocacy
• Legal Writing II (SU Law has #1 program in nation)
• Start specializing, if you want: International, Business, Intellectual Property
2L year: “work you to death”

• Extracurricular activities, optional:
  • Law Review
  • Moot Court
  • Internships
3L year: “bore you to death”

• A repeat of 2L year, more or less
• No required classes
• Further specialize in a concentration, if you want
Law School Pedigree *Does* Count

- ABA-approved (American Bar Association)
  
  [http://officialguide.lsac.org/Search/QuickSearch.aspx](http://officialguide.lsac.org/Search/QuickSearch.aspx)

- Rankings – U.S. News & World Report

- *Where* do you want to practice?
  - Washington – local schools are fine
  - International – top 10
  - National – top 10, top 25 school
Law School *Specialty*

- Public Interest? SU Law
- International? Look at D.C. law schools
- Do tailored searches online for exactly what sort of specialized school you’re looking for

**Do your homework:**
- talk to current students;
- sit in on classes;
- meet with an admissions counselor
- *job shadow* a lawyer
Cost of the Juris Doctorate (J.D.)

- Averaging $25,000-$35,000/year, tuition ONLY
- Plus room, board & books
- 3 years
- Total debt = $90,000 - $100,000+
- Avoid debt:
  - Merit-based scholarship
  - Work part-time
  - Savings
What Is The Bar Exam?

• Each state has its own bar exam.
• Some state exams are “more difficult” than others, i.e., lower pass rate: CA, NY
• Except WA, all other states require the MBE (multi-state) 200 multiple-choice test. WA has essay questions.
• Limited reciprocity among states
• $1,000+ to just take the exam; review course addt’l
Post-Bar Exam

• July exam
  – Results: October

• February exam
  – Results: April/May

• Typically employers won’t hire until you are licensed, or they make conditional offer

• Market is over-saturated with lawyers

• Alternative careers with your J.D.
Resources

• Movies:
  – The Paper Chase (1970s) – Harvard Law School, 1L
  – A Lawyer Walks Into A Bar

• http://www.jdjournal.com/
  – Current postings re: law schools & more

• www.bitterlawyer.com
  – Associates at big firms vent
Questions?

alexandra@filutowskilaw.com