Insiders’ Guide to Gaining Admission and Receiving Scholarship Aid at US Law Schools

PRESENTER:
Charles Roboski
Michigan State University College of Law
Topics to be Covered:

• Timeline and Typical Application Requirements
• Factors Considered by Admission Committees
• Recommendations for Assembling Your Strongest Application
• Review of Law School Scholarship Opportunities
• Q and A
Representative Timeline

August –

October 1: Law Colleges begin to accept applications
November: First round of decisions made
February 1: Priority application deadline for scholarship consideration

March: Visit Programs hosted for prospective students
April 1: Deposit due for candidates admitted through March 1
April: Committee begins to extend admission offers to candidates on the Wait List

Most law schools operate on a “rolling admission” basis, so applying early is recommended
Components of a Typical Application

» The application form
» CAS Report, including LSAT score(s), writing sample, and copy of undergraduate transcript(s)
» Personal Statement
» Resume
» Letters of recommendations (2)
» Optional/additional documents
» Application fee or fee waiver (be sure to check!)
1. Does this candidate have the ability to be *academically successful*?

2. What *qualities, skills, or experiences* does this applicant possess that we consider to be important to the *study/practice* of law?

3. How does this candidate compare to others?
The Law School Admission Test (LSAT)

- Predictive value (performance in first year)
- A common measure

**College Performance**

No preference in terms of undergraduate major, but instead gives consideration to:

- Overall performance and grade trends
- Rigor of courses and college attended
- Extenuating Circumstances/activities
- Length of time since graduating
- Graduate work, if applicable
Preparing for the LSAT

Methods of Study

- Preparation Course
  - Offers structure
  - Classroom versus Online
- One-on-one coaching
- Self-Taught

Prep Time

- Plan to commit 3 – 5 months

Re-take?

- December
- February
Personal Statement Recommendations

• Treat it as your interview with members of the Admission Committee
• Set the goal of writing a compelling opening paragraph
• No need for creativity, but strive for authenticity
• Make it a quality piece of writing and ensure that it is error free!
• Include one paragraph that describes your reason(s) for applying to the law school
• Circulate to others (prelaw advisor, career service staff, friend, family member)
Your Law School Resume

» Give appropriate space and placement to relevant accomplishments, employment, ECs, etc.

» Include relevant specifics (e.g., hours worked during academic year, skills developed)

» Minimize academic information that can be readily found elsewhere in the application

» Format in such a way that draws the reader's attention to especially significant information

» Does not need to be limited to one page
Soliciting Letters of Recommendations

• Most schools accept either LoRs or Evaluations…but be sure to consult schools of choice
• Faculty LoRs are generally preferred for college students and very recent graduates
• The best LoRs are written by individuals who know you well and who wish to support your candidacy

*TIP:* Provide the letter writer with a copy of your resume and Personal Statement

*TIP:* Allow the letter writer as much time as possible to write the LoR

*TIP:* Ask the potential letter writer: “Do you believe you have enough information to provide me with a strong letter of recommendation?”
Supplemental Statements

**Used to explain:**

- Diverse personal/professional life experience
- Significantly lower grades
- History of poor standardized test taking
- Noticeable gap in education/employment
- Health issues
- Rigor of courses/program
- Character and Fitness issues
2015: the national pool for 2015 could be 0-10% smaller than 2014
Sources of Information

- ABA-LSAC Official Guide
  - Bar Passage—states/percentage
  - Placement Data—states/foreign countries
  - Judicial Clerkships—number/percentage
- National Association of Law Placement
- Rankings
- Prelaw Advisor
- Graduates who are currently enrolled
16-10 Months Prior to Enrollment

- Prepare for and take (or re-take LSAT) (spring/summer/early fall)
- Research law schools (academics, admission standards, scholarships, etc.)
- Formulate list of 8-12 law schools where you will apply and then submit applications (summer or early fall)
- Draft, circulate, and revise Personal Statement and resume (summer and early fall)
- Request letters of recommendation from faculty (early fall)
- Submit applications in fall (prior to January 1)
Sources and Types of Law School Financial Aid

**Scholarships and Grants**
- Institutional (from Law School)
- External (local bar association; national organization)
  - NO federal grants

**Loans:** Stafford; GradPlus; Private

**Other Resources**
- Family
- Savings
- Budgeting

**Work-Study or Employment Income**
### Grants and Scholarships (from prior year)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Full-Time</th>
<th>Part-Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>#</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>#</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total # of students</td>
<td>704</td>
<td>446</td>
<td>258</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total # receiving grants</td>
<td>212</td>
<td>30.1</td>
<td>160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>35.9</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 1/2 tuition</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>18.3</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>20.2</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Half to full tuition</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full tuition</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than full tuition</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median grant amount</td>
<td>$11,000</td>
<td>$3,941</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Academic Awards

- 40 full-tuition awards ($105,000 over three years)
- 50 partial-tuition awards (up to $75,000 over 3 years)

Intellectual Property and Indigenous Law Awards

- Up to 10 full-tuition awards and 10 partial-tuition awards

Trustee Awards

- 10 full-tuition awards ($105,000 over three years)
- 15 partial-tuition awards (up to $75,000 over three years)
Competition for Admission

25%/75% UGPA 25%/75% LSAT

University of Florida 3.31-3.76 156-162
Michigan State University 3.27-3.71 152-159
Syracuse University 3.06-3.45 152-156
### Competition for Admission

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>University</th>
<th>25%/75% UGPA</th>
<th>25%/75% LSAT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>St. Louis University</td>
<td>3.15-3.66</td>
<td>151-158</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duquesne</td>
<td>3.21-3.64</td>
<td>150-155</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Golden Gate</td>
<td>2.74-3.41</td>
<td>147-153</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>