

# LSAC REPORT

NEWSLETTER OF THE LAW SCHOOL ADMISSION COUNCIL

## New LLM Credential Assembly Service to Launch in April

Beginning in April 2011, LSAC will launch an array of expanded services designed to support future LLM students and law schools from the time potential applicants begin their school search through their matriculation. The rollout of these new services will continue through August 2011.

The LLM Issues Subcommittee of LSAC's Services and Programs Committee worked closely with LSAC staff to ensure that the new LLM Credential Assembly Service would be valuable for both law schools and potential applicants, and would be flexible enough to serve the broad range of LLM and other graduate law degree program offerings.

Service highlights include

- a highly visible top-level location on the LSAC.org homepage;
- a new LLM Candidate Referral Service (CRS) that invites potential applicants to provide information about their background, interests, and law school preferences so that law schools may reach out to them;
- an online database of LLM programs, searchable alphabetically, geographically, or by area of interest;
- a new LLM Letter of Recommendation Service;
- easy transcript authentication and evaluation;
- integrated online applications;
- law school access to applicant files via ACES<sup>2</sup>; and

- the potential for comprehensive data gathering and reporting on the full scope of LLM/graduate law programs in the US.

### SERVICES DEMONSTRATED AT REGIONAL WORKSHOPS

More than 120 law school admission professionals attended one of four regional workshops held this

(SEE NEW LLM SERVICE, PAGE 6)

### Let Us Know

LSAC is currently collecting information from law schools about available LLM programs to be included in the new LLM Program Guide on LSAC.org. If you have not been contacted and would like to make sure your school's LLM offerings are included in the guide, please contact your regional team leader.



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VIEW FROM  
THE CHAIR

## FlexApp!

DAN ORTIZ

John Allan Love Professor of Law, University of Virginia

## A QUIET REVOLUTION? A BIG BANG? AN UNWELCOME CHANGE? WHAT IS FLEXAPP?

For many, it probably appeared a bit of all three—at least at first. When previewed at the annual meeting, LSAC's new tool for law schools to create electronic applications received generally enthusiastic reviews. It promised to provide an additional way for schools to prepare e-apps—and one that would give them some new bells and whistles. It also promised to serve as a means of fulfilling the value shared by LSAC and law schools to make e-apps accessible to all applicants.

As LSAC moved forward with development over the summer, however, it became clear that in order for the new system to work, all schools that wanted LSAC to host their e-apps would have to start using FlexApp™ at the beginning of the 2011 admission cycle. LSAC would not be able to support schools' individual e-apps once FlexApp was implemented. What started as an optional, additional tool started looking like it had to be a requirement, and, in fact, the LSAC Board voted in August to make FlexApp the only way for schools to produce e-apps to be hosted by LSAC.

When that decision was announced, a little outreach and explanation fortunately eased most fears. The advantages of FlexApp and the ease of transitioning to it have convinced even many of the most wary that the move is good. To assuage any remaining fears, I'd like to talk about what FlexApp is, what it is not, and how the move will occur.

First, it's important to dispel a misunderstanding: FlexApp is not a "common app" to be used by all schools. It imposes no one-size-fits-all application on LSAC's robustly diverse membership. Rather, it's a helpful tool that every law school can use to create its own, individually distinctive e-app.

FlexApp allows a school to create its own application by combining common and school-specific questions. The common questions are based on a thorough review

of existing applications. They reflect those questions most schools already ask—ones about contact information, demographics, educational background, and employment, for example. Schools do not, of course, have to include any of these questions in their e-app, although most schools will want to include many of them. Using a common question on the e-app provides two advantages—the work has already been done for the school, and information will automatically flow to that school's e-app if an applicant has already answered that particular question for another application. These advantages ease the gathering of information for both the school and the applicant.

Schools may also create their own school-specific questions—as many as they wish. They can then customize the sequence of all their questions—both common and school-specific—to appear on their e-app in a specific order. (And each school can have up to nine different e-apps for different programs!) As the sample FlexApp-prepared applications for the University of Chicago, Tulane, and Villanova (which were circulated to law schools) show, schools will be able to present themselves quite distinctively.

LSAC has worked hard to alert schools early about FlexApp in order to ease the transition to the next enrollment cycle. Right now law schools need do nothing—other than think and plan for the move. By the time schools need to prepare next year's e-app,

## LSACREPORT

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(SEE FLEXAPP!, PAGE 7)

PRESIDENT'S  
REPORT

## A First Look at the Numbers

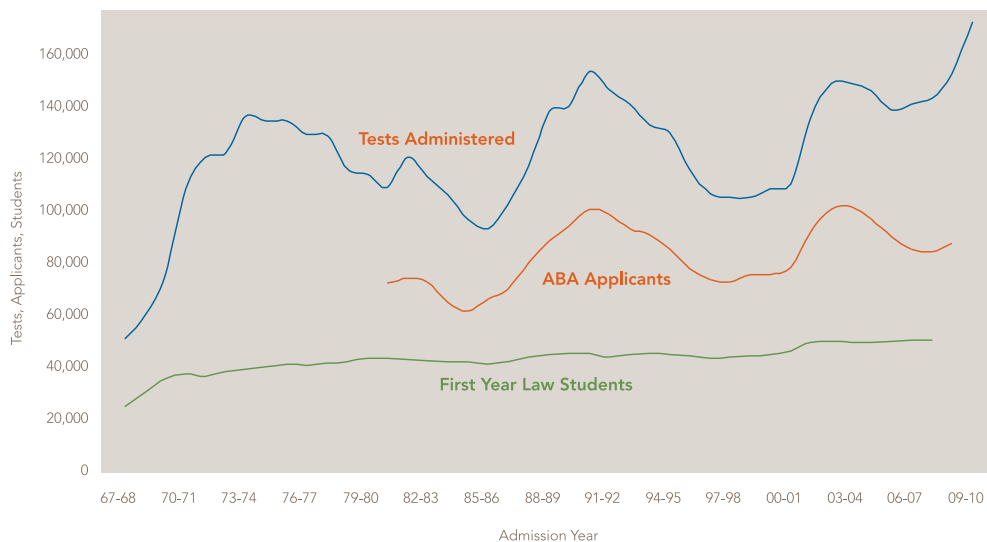
DANIEL O. BERNSTINE

President, LSAC

If you're an avid reader of ADMIT-L postings from Phil Handwerk, LSAC's institutional researcher, you'll have seen a lot of minus signs this fall. I thought it might be helpful to use my space in this column to recap some of the year-to-date numbers and try to put them in perspective. This definitely is shaping up to be a year of lower volumes for US law schools, but the sky isn't falling by any means.

For the June and October 2010 tests, the total number of tests administered was 87,318, a drop of 6 percent from those same two tests in 2009. The October 2010 test saw 54,345 test takers, down 11 percent from last year, but it was still the second largest single test administration in the history of the LSAT. Registrations for the December 2010 LSAT administration were, at press time, down 17 percent from last year, but are still quite healthy in historical context. The following graph shows historic volumes for tests administered, ABA applicants, and first-year ABA law students.

Global Tests Administered; Applicants and First-Year Students (ABA-Approved Law Schools); 1967–1968 to 2009–2010



**Note:** Due to changes in data collection methods, ABA applicant data beginning in 1999-2000 is not directly comparable to prior applicant data.

The very early read on US applicant and application volumes is similar. To date, the number of applicants to at least one ABA-approved law school is down 9 percent from last year, and those applicants have generated 10 percent fewer applications than at this time last year. However, applications are not down across the board. Currently, 5 percent of schools have an application-volume increase of 30 percent or higher, while 3 percent show a volume decrease of 30 percent or higher. Nearly one-quarter of the schools show an increase in applications, while three-quarters show a decline. Six law schools are showing no change in volume compared to this time last year.

(SEE A FIRST LOOK, PAGE 4)

## First “Diversity Matters” Award Given

Cleveland State University—Cleveland-Marshall College of Law was honored with LSAC’s first Diversity Matters Award in June 2010. The law school was one of 10 schools considered for this distinction. This award, established by LSAC’s Diversity Initiatives office, recognizes a law school for its commitment to diversity and considers the school’s success in raising awareness of LSAC’s DiscoverLaw.org website. Among the numerous programs sponsored by Cleveland-Marshall College of Law this year was a workshop for high school students in the area, outreach to community college students, and a partnership developed with Central State University, Ohio’s first and only public historically black college.

Four categories determine the winner of the award: website promotion, registration, DiscoverLaw.org Months events, and bonus points for volunteering. LSAC will present this award to a law school each year, and the winner will be recognized at the Annual Meeting and Educational Conference each spring.

Other schools that were considered for the award this year were Arizona State, Chapman, Cleveland State, California-Davis, Hofstra, Nova Southeastern, Phoenix, Texas Wesleyan, Wake Forest, and Wayne State. ■

## A First Look *(continued from page 3)*

What seems to be happening is that we may be losing from the test-taking pool some of the people who were never very committed to the study of law. For example, in 2008-2009, 54 percent of all test takers applied to at least one ABA-approved law school. In 2009-2010, that figure dropped modestly to about 51 percent. It’s too early to tell whether this trend will continue or whether the smaller number of test takers this year will be comprised of proportionally more people who are committed to the study of law.

At this very preliminary stage, it does appear that the applicant pool remains robust in terms of LSAT credentials. For example, last year at this time, 54 percent of applicants had a highest LSAT score between 150 and 164. This year, 53 percent of applicants to date fall within that range. More data, including finer cuts at the LSAT ranges, are available in the following table.

Year-to-Date\* Number of Fall 2010 and Fall 2011 ABA Applicants by Highest LSAT Score.

Highest LSAT	Fall 2010 Number Applicants	Percent	Fall 2011 Number Applicants	Percent
< 140	1,131	5%	937	4%
140–144	1,373	6%	1,275	6%
145–149	2,537	11%	2,402	11%
150–154	3,862	16%	3,494	16%
155–159	4,317	18%	4,008	19%
160–164	4,934	20%	4,027	19%
165–169	3,513	15%	3,176	15%
170–174	1,912	8%	1,861	9%
175–180	567	2%	435	2%

\*As of 12/3/10.

(SEE A FIRST LOOK, PAGE 5)

## Evaluation Service: An Update

In August, LSAC launched the new Evaluation Service for law school applicants. The service is an adjunct to, but separate from, the Letter of Recommendation Service. Evaluations provide member law schools with an additional tool to assess whether an applicant is a good fit for law school and the legal profession. The Evaluation Service includes online-only ratings of 30 individual noncognitive attributes and skills in six categories, including

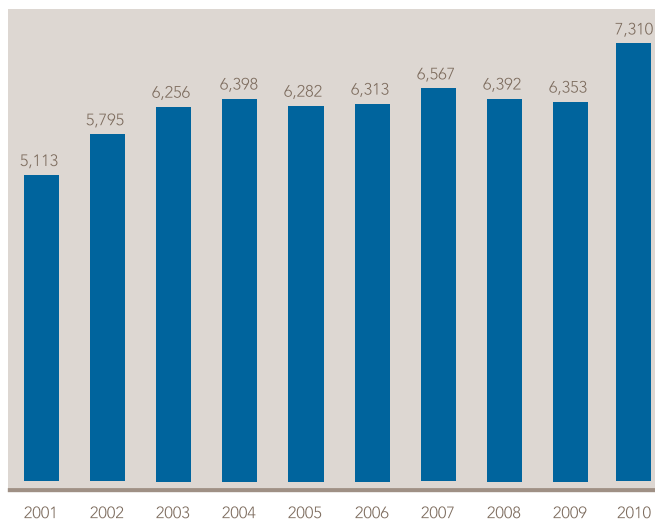
- intellectual skill;
- personal qualities;
- integrity and honesty;
- communication;
- task management; and
- working with others.

As of mid-November 2010, 178 schools either require, accept, or recommend that applicants submit evaluations through the new service, and more than 16,000 evaluations have been submitted by evaluators. ■

## A First Look *(continued from page 4)*

We have much less data available about the volume picture in Canada but can report that the number of applications to Canadian law schools is up about 6 percent from last year at this time. Also, the number of LSATs administered at Canadian test centers is running about even with last year. The following graph shows historic applicant volumes for our member schools in Canada.

Applicant Volumes to Canadian Law Schools



**Note:** Data as of Preliminary End-of-Year 8/8/YYYY.

In the US, we have known that the recent historically high volumes could not be sustained indefinitely. It now seems that our volumes are beginning to return to more customary levels. ■

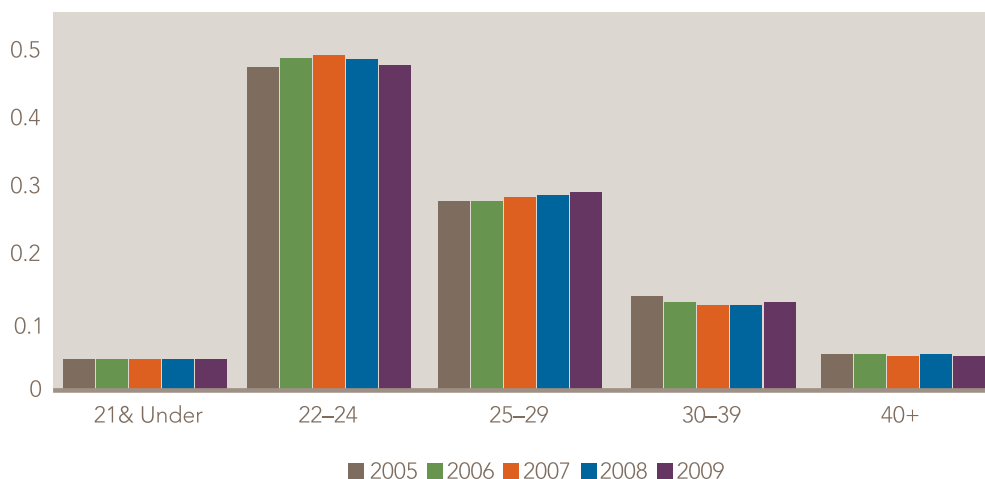
### CRS Fees: Gone for Member Law Schools

The LSAC Board of Trustees approved the recommendation of the Services and Programs Committee to eliminate all fees related to Candidate Referral Service (CRS) transactions for LSAC-member schools only. Nonmember schools will continue to incur charges for CRS transactions. This new policy went into effect when the new CRS cycle began on June 5, 2010.

Previously, LSAC-member schools were charged \$.02 per name for CRS searches and a \$200 fee that was applied to the first search of the year for which the e-app fee waiver option was selected. This option waived the e-app fee for everyone included in a CRS file who subsequently used an e-app to apply to the law school. As of June 5, the CRS e-app fee waiver option can benefit member-school recruitment with no fees attached.

LSAC's regional support teams are available to assist with CRS, fee waivers, and all LSAC services. ■

### 2005–2009 Percentage of ABA Applicants by Age



**Note:** The age distribution of applicants changed little from 2005 to 2009. About half of the applicants each year were between the ages of 22 and 24. Nearly one in five were over the age of 30, with 5 percent being 40 or older.

## ACES<sup>2</sup> Browser Compatibility—Preparing for the Future

LSAC's ACES<sup>2</sup> team is working on enhancing support for the various Internet browsers used by member law schools. The team has already updated Internet Explorer (IE) compatibility, and Firefox enhancements are coming next.

Earlier this year, LSAC contracted with a local company that performed extensive browser-compatibility testing. Twelve different configurations were tested—including a variety of operating systems running IE8, Firefox, Chrome, and Safari. In all, more than 800 compatibility tests for 70 different ACES<sup>2</sup> features and functions were completed.

From August 2010 through October 2010, LSAC helped member schools upgrade ACES<sup>2</sup> from IE6 to IE8; in fact, IE9 is already on the list for evaluation.

Meanwhile, at a recent meeting of the LSAC Information Services Division Advisory Group (ISDAG), member schools shared additional requirements for browser support. Mobile strategy was discussed at this meeting. All agreed that it is unlikely that ACES<sup>2</sup> will be used on smartphones, so support for Opera or Android browsers will probably not be a priority. However, with the growing use of Apple iPads, support for the Safari browser will be a priority.

Additional priorities for ACES<sup>2</sup> browser support will be discussed starting in January 2011. Although it may never be possible to address all inconsistencies that can occur among the many browsers available, LSAC will be continually working to stay ahead of major browser upgrades and industry trends. ■

### New LLM Service

*(continued from page 1)*

fall to provide details and answer questions about the new services. The workshops were offered in San Francisco, Boston, Chicago, and Atlanta.

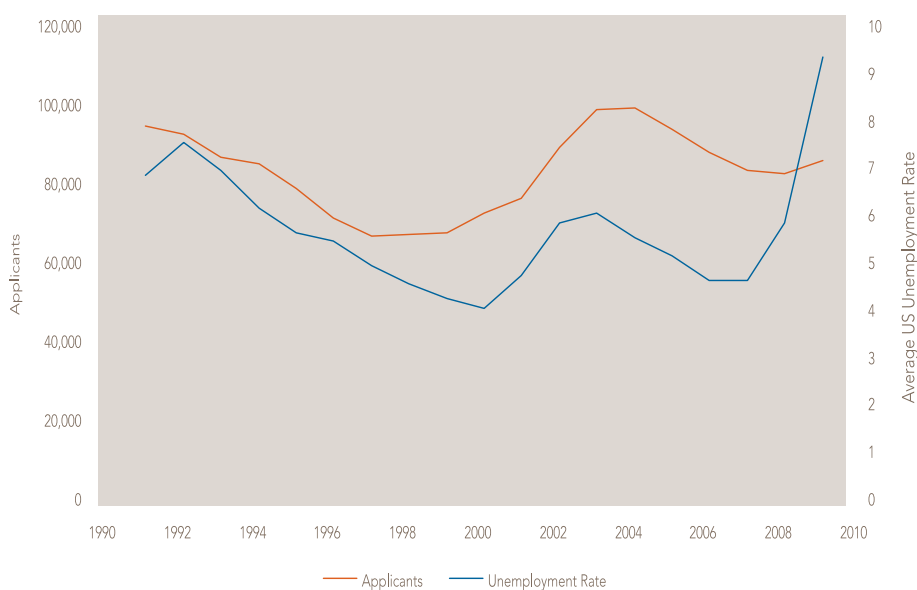
They featured lively discussions about the unique needs of international applicants and ways that the LSAC service enhancements could simplify the process. Workshop participants provided many helpful suggestions, some of which will be incorporated prior to launch, with others likely to be implemented in later phases.

Because so many schools have expressed an interest in learning more about the new LLM services, LSAC is currently investigating dates and locations for an additional conference. If you are involved with an LLM program, were unable to attend one of the four conferences, and would like to learn more about the new LLM services, please contact your regional support team.

Regional team members will be working closely with each participating law school to determine the ideal time for conversion to the new system.

Regional team members are also available at any time to answer questions about the new services. ■

Fall ABA Law School Applicants versus US Unemployment Rate



Over the years, LSAC has looked at various potential predictors of ABA applicant volume. Most recently, we took a look at the relationship between US unemployment, the Consumer Price Index, and US Gross Domestic Product (GDP). All of them bore a positive relationship to applicant volume. Unemployment had the strongest relationship, with a correlation coefficient of 0.49. The chart above plots US unemployment and ABA applicant data over the past 20 years.

## Research Reports Available on the LSAC Website

This list includes reports published online since May 2010. These and many other LSAC-sponsored research reports (RR), computerized testing reports (CTR), statistical reports (SR), grants reports (GR), and LSAT technical reports (TR) can be downloaded at LSAC.org.

### RESEARCH REPORTS

RR 09-02: *Distributions of Kullback-Leibler Divergence and Its Application for the LSAT*  
Dmitry I. Belov and Ronald D. Armstrong  
October 2009

RR 10-01: *Application of the M-Index for the LSAT*  
Dmitry I. Belov and Ronald D. Armstrong  
March 2010

### GRANTS REPORTS

GR 10-01: *The Educational Diversity Project: Analysis of Longitudinal and Concurrent Student and Faculty Data*  
Charles E. Daye, Abigail T. Panter, Walter R. Allen, and Linda F. Wightman  
March 2010

### LSAT TECHNICAL REPORTS

TR 09-02: *Analysis of Differential Prediction of Law School Performance by Racial/Ethnic Subgroups Based on 2005–2007 Entering Law School Classes*  
Lynne L. Norton, Deborah A. Suto, and Lynda M. Reese  
October 2009

TR 09-03: *Predictive Validity of the LSAT: A National Summary of the 2007–2008 Correlation Studies*  
Lisa Anthony Stilwell, Susan P. Dalessandro, and Lynda M. Reese  
October 2009

TR 10-01: *Analysis of Differential Prediction of Law School Performance by Gender Subgroups Based on 2005–2007 Entering Law School Classes*  
Deborah A. Suto, Lynne L. Norton, and Lynda M. Reese  
March 2010 ■

## FlexApp!

(continued from page 2)

they will have to understand only a new corner of ACES<sup>2</sup>, one which LSAC anticipates will provide no real challenges. And once a school has learned to use FlexApp to create its e-app, subsequent revisions should be easy.

Here's the timeline. FlexApp will be up and running for schools to use sometime in April 2011. That's a busy time in most admission offices, but nothing will necessarily have to be done then. Law schools will just have to follow their usual schedule for producing e-apps—this time using FlexApp to create them—and they should all be available to applicants, as usual, in August 2011. Then it's all done—until the next application cycle rolls around.

One great advantage to FlexApp is accessibility. The e-apps it creates should be easily accessible—24/7—to blind and visually disabled applicants. From this vantage point, it looks like a win/win/win situation—for schools, sighted applicants, and the visually impaired alike.

Start thinking about the transition now, but also relax. The transition to FlexApp shouldn't be a hard one. ■

## LSAT Handbook Added to Prep Lineup

A brand new primer on all of the LSAT item types started shipping in June 2010. The book is available for \$9.95 at LSAC.org and introduces the test taker to the skills that the LSAT is designed to assess. It includes sample questions and detailed explanations for Analytical Reasoning, Logical Reasoning, and Reading Comprehension questions, including Comparative Reading.

Other new LSAT prep products are in the planning stages; watch for announcements as they are developed. ■



## LSAC CALENDAR

### DECEMBER 2010

- 11 LSAT Administration
- 13 National Recruitment Calendar Work Group  
New Orleans, LA
- 13 DiscoverLaw.org PLUS Subcommittee  
New Orleans, LA
- 13 LSAT Administration

### JANUARY 2011

- 24–25 Prep 2011 Conference  
Orlando, FL
- 28–29 Past Presidents  
Santa Monica, CA

### FEBRUARY 2011

- 12 LSAT Administration
- 14 LSAT Administration

### MARCH 2011

- 18 Services and Programs Committee  
Jacksonville, FL
- 19 Diversity Committee  
Jacksonville, FL
- 25 Grants Subcommittee  
San Francisco, CA
- 25 Finance and Legal Affairs Committee  
San Francisco, CA
- 26 Test Development and Research Committee  
San Francisco, CA

### MAY 2011

- 6–7 Board of Trustees  
Vail, CO

### JUNE 2011

- 1–4 Annual Meeting and Educational Conference  
Hollywood, CA
- 6 LSAT Administration
- 18 Law School Recruitment Forum  
Washington, DC

### JULY 2011

- 16 Law School Recruitment Forum  
Bay Area, CA
- 23 Law School Recruitment Forum  
Chicago, IL

### SEPTEMBER 2011

- 10–14 New Admission Personnel and Faculty Members of Admission Committees Workshop  
Philadelphia, PA
- 17 Law School Recruitment Forum  
Boston, MA
- 24 Law School Recruitment Forum  
Los Angeles, CA

### OCTOBER 2011

- 1 LSAT Administration
- 4 LSAT Administration
- 14–15 Law School Recruitment Forum  
New York, NY
- 22 Law School Recruitment Forum  
Miami, FL

### NOVEMBER 2011

- 5 Law School Recruitment Forum  
Atlanta, GA
- 19 Law School Recruitment Forum  
Houston, TX

## LSACREPORT

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