

# LSAC REPORT

NEWSLETTER OF THE LAW SCHOOL ADMISSION COUNCIL

## Out with the Old ...

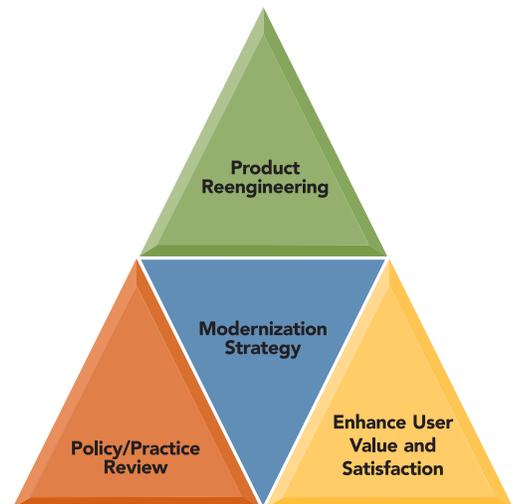
The business of admitting law school classes has changed a lot over the last twenty years, but in the last five years, that change has accelerated exponentially. The sudden and continuing decline in the number of applicants and applications to law school has had the most obvious impact on the way we do our work. A less publicly visible, but very significant, change has been the decreasing reliance on paper in the admission process, in favor of the increased use of technology.

To keep pace with this new environment, LSAC is embarking on a modernization program. Many of our systems and services are reaching (or maybe have surpassed) the stage where they need to be updated. New capabilities need to be created to meet the changing needs of the admission office and the applicants they serve. The objective of our five-year program is the modernization of our current systems, infrastructure, and technology, with a renewed emphasis on bringing value and satisfaction to our user communities. Some of the ways that we intend to do this are to:

- Create innovative new products and/or enhancements to existing products, with an eye on the future;
- Examine existing services, practices, and policies to ensure that they are consistent with the “new normal” in law school admission; and

- Develop new end-user-driven processes that will consistently deliver quality products and services that meet the needs of our user communities, with accompanying performance metrics that will measure our level of success.

We intend to continue building on our solid base of services while incorporating updated user-interface techniques. Each system will be examined with an eye toward reengineering for both near-term and



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VIEW FROM  
THE CHAIR

## A Retreat to Move Forward

**ATHORNIA STEELE**

Professor of Law, Nova Southeastern

**E**arly in August, the LSAC Board of Trustees and LSAC senior staff engaged in a day-and-a-half retreat. The retreat had two major objectives: (1) meaningful engagement of the Board members in relevant strategic discussion and (2) development of the Board's collective best thinking on major issues. The goal was not to make quick decisions but to engage in a rich discussion that would begin to identify matters for future consideration and action by LSAC standing committees and the Board. Six areas of focus were identified: Test Development, Psychometrics, and Test Administration; Support Services; Diversity Initiatives; Communications/PR; Technology Infrastructure and Services; and Governance. LSAC senior staff provided context papers for each of the areas, outlining history, current initiatives, and background information.

Following are some of the questions used to guide the discussion:

- Should LSAC develop tests other than the LSAT?
- Should LSAC develop online test preparation/test orientation courses?
- Should LSAC create a larger marketing effort to promote the value of a legal education?
- To what extent should LSAC support new and emerging law school markets (e.g., LLM, Master of Laws, Certificate programs)?
- Should LSAC make disadvantaged students a part of its diversity focus, and what kind of services should we provide them?
- How might LSAC deepen law schools' engagement in diversity initiatives?
- How do we best support prelaw advisors?
- How can we be more effective in informing our membership and others of the nature and value of what LSAC does?
- Is LSAC's 5-year technology plan seaworthy?
- How do we better identify, develop, and retain leadership for the Board, committees, and Board chair?

These and the other questions, most of which do not lend themselves to easy answers, are important questions for LSAC. The results of the retreat were

disseminated to each standing/board committee with specific instructions to the Diversity, Finance and Legal Affairs, Services and Programs, and Test Development and Research committees to discuss the retreat topics relative to their committee's role and to provide feedback and recommendations to the Board.

Although the work of the Board and committees with respect to these questions will be an ongoing process, here are some thoughts, conclusions, and/or recommendations from the committees:

- TD&R created a work group to look at the development of other assessment instruments.
- TD&R will also look at developing online LSAT test orientation study modalities. LSAC already publishes LSAT-preparation books, ebooks, and software. Providing test preparation and orientation in a more robust online format may add a valuable resource for applicants who prefer to study online and for applicants unable to pay for a commercial test-prep course.
- Every year members of the Board, and the Diversity and Services and Programs committees, discuss ways in which we can assist prelaw advisors in providing students with good and consistent

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### LSACREPORT

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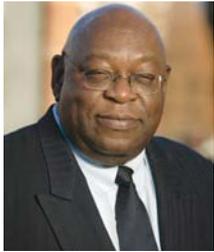
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**PRESIDENT'S  
REPORT**



# Decrypting Standard 503

**DANIEL O. BERNSTINE**  
President, LSAC

**(a) It is not a violation of this Standard for a law school to admit no more than 10% of an entering class without requiring the LSAT ...**

*American Bar Association, Section of Legal Education and Admissions to the Bar  
Revised Standards for Approval of Law Schools  
August 2014*

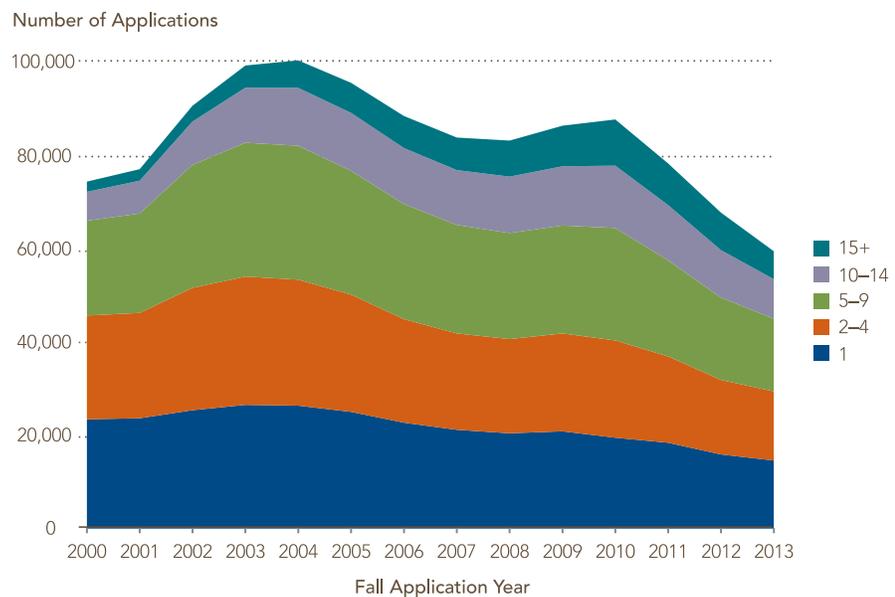
When the ABA published its revised Standards this summer, the partial statement above was the takeaway for many news outlets. In my travels to the forums and committee meetings this fall, I have been asked many times about the impact the new interpretation of Standard 503 will have on LSAC. I can answer that question very simply here: In my opinion, it will not substantially affect our test volumes, but it will affect how we process admission credentials for a very small number of applicants. I am confident in saying this because the full text of the interpretation makes it very clear that the statement above only applies to:

- (1) Students in an undergraduate program of the same institution as the JD program, and/or
- (2) Students seeking the JD degree in combination with a degree in a different discipline.

Those students for whom (1) above applies must also score at or above the 85th percentile on the ACT or SAT; those for whom (2) applies must score at or above the 85th percentile on the GRE or GMAT; and all must rank in the top 10 percent of their undergraduate class through six semesters of academic work or achieve a cumulative GPA of 3.5 or above through six semesters of academic work.

One key outcome is that law schools will no longer have to request exceptions from the ABA for programs that allow for the streamlined admission of top performers from their undergraduate schools or of dual-degree candidates who have already taken another test that measures critical

Number of Fall ABA Applications 2000–2013



Source: LSAC Applicant Trends, November 2014

(SEE DECRYPTING, PAGE 11)

## Transcript Requests Streamlined Under New ABA Standard

The new ABA Standard 502, Interpretation 502-1 permits law schools to use LSAC CAS-generated transcripts as “official” transcripts, eliminating the need for matriculants to request another transcript from their academic institutions. Law schools now have the option of producing their own paper transcripts by printing them from LSAC’s ACES<sup>2</sup>, or they may simply access the electronic copies through LSAC.

In order to support this new standard, LSAC has already taken measures to change the watermark produced on each transcript. The new watermark will say “PROCESSED AS REC'D BY LSAC CAS” along with the date the transcript was processed and the institution from which the transcript was received. In cases where LSAC has determined that a transcript is the final transcript (i.e., contains the confirmation of degree conferred by the undergraduate degree-granting school), the watermark will indicate that the transcript is final.

The ABA is going to provide one or more “guidance memos” to schools about compliance with changes to the standards, including Standard 502. ■

## CRS Data Six Days a Week

Candidate Referral Service (CRS) data is now being updated six days a week, Monday through Saturday. This means that the most recent data on forum, LSAT, and CAS registrants is available every day (except Sunday). In addition, application status along with LSAT scores and GPA information are also updated daily. The increased frequency is designed to offer schools more flexibility in the accessibility and usability of data. ■

### Recommendation Letters Now Mostly Electronic

Fully 91 percent of all letters of recommendation are now submitted electronically, judging by the current application cycle.

A redesigned website called the Applicant Reference website, incorporating the LORs and the Evaluation Service, is host to the submission mechanism for the recommender.

LSAC’s Electronic Letter of Recommendation (E-LOR) Service, implemented in August 2012, has benefitted law schools, law school candidates, letter writers, and LSAC as well. The service is fast: delivery of requests and submissions happens instantaneously. Recommenders and candidates are able to manage their LORs using LSAC web products. LSAC staff no longer need to process (open, scan, and index) the paper for these electronic LORs. Finally, the process is “green” in that it consumes less paper than the traditional LOR process.

In August 2015, LSAC will expand the service to provide electronic letters of recommendation for LLM letter writers, with the intent to bring the same level of success to the many international letter writers. ■

## Second Spanish LSAT Administered in December

The Spanish LSAT, which was given successfully for the first time in February 2014 in two centers in Puerto Rico, was administered for the second time on December 6, 2014.

A total of 297 test takers sat for the test at two test centers in Mayagüez and Rio Piedras, Puerto Rico.

The JD programs at the three LSAC-member schools in Puerto Rico—Inter American University School of Law, Pontifical Catholic University of Puerto Rico School of Law, and the University of Puerto Rico School of Law—all use Spanish as the primary language of instruction. The Spanish LSAT is intended to increase the potential value of LSAT scores for informed admission decision-making by the Puerto Rican member schools for students whose dominant language is Spanish. ■

## LSAT—India Continues to Expand Its Reach

In 2014, LSAT—India was administered to 3,553 test takers. This represents a 17 percent increase over 2013. The test was given in 17 test centers across 16 cities (see map), and 54 law schools accepted those test scores.

Looking at the year ahead, LSAT—India will be given on May 17, 2015.

LSAT—India is administered in English for admission to Indian law schools where the primary language of instruction is English. It is modeled on the LSAT, but is adapted specifically for use in India. The test is administered by Pearson Vue. ■

### Digital LSAT

LSAC is conducting research involving LSAT delivery options for the future. We are studying the feasibility of a tablet-based LSAT administration system, which will likely be field-tested sometime in 2015. No decision has been made regarding future implementation of such a system. In the 1990s, LSAC began researching the potential for electronic delivery of the test, and this is a continuation of those efforts. ■



## Out with the Old

*(continued from page 1)*

projected long-term needs. Modernization will have an impact throughout LSAC, including systems, infrastructure, technology, services, policy, procedures, and organization.

Six key technical initiatives have been identified:

- **Internal Infrastructure/Software:** Many of our internal systems are still written in the original Visual Basic language using client/server computing techniques. This architecture is out of date and will become unsupported in a few years. Systems and software must move to the modern .NET programming environment, with modifications as required to meet current and future needs.
- **Applicant Usability:** The basic candidate/applicant online account functions, including registering for the test, applying to law school, providing information for the Credential Assembly Service (CAS), and tracking status, were designed in 2005. Since then, many new functions have been added, and over the years the interface has become overly complicated for the applicant. In addition, the reliance on smartphones and other mobile devices has changed the way the core segment of our candidate/applicant population is used to working with computers.
- **Mobile Strategy:** Because of this reliance on mobile devices, it is incongruous that virtually everything LSAC offers with respect to its online services is designed for use on a desktop system with browser access to web-based applications. In order to meet the needs of this important user segment, LSAC must devise a strategy for providing some of its critical functions (notification, status access, some data input) on mobile devices. In addition, we need to examine the use of mobile devices by admission professionals in order to provide important functionality to them.
- **ACES<sup>2</sup> Updates:** Continuing to add new functionality to ACES<sup>2</sup> for the benefit of both JD and LLM admission offices.
- **ACES<sup>2</sup> Usability:** The ACES<sup>2</sup> user interface dates back to 2003. We must examine how users interact with the system and determine whether or not the information and functions in ACES<sup>2</sup> are presented in a way that is consistent with the way admission offices function today.
- **Customer Relationship Management (CRM):** The reduction of the applicant pool has caused an unprecedented need for enhanced marketing and recruiting by law schools (both pre-application and post-admission). In order to produce a comprehensive, integrated admission solution, CRM functionality in ACES<sup>2</sup> must be strengthened.

In addition to the six technical initiatives described above, LSAC users will have additional modernization projects that will increase efficiency and enhance services for law schools, test takers, applicants, prelaw advisors, and researchers.

[\(SEE OUT WITH THE OLD, PAGE 9\)](#)

### Reporting of Older LSAT Scores to End

As of July 1, 2015, LSAC will no longer provide scores older than five years either to law schools or to candidates. LSAC's current policy of reporting LSAT scores to law schools automatically for a period of up to five years plus the current year will continue. Notices about this change will be disseminated broadly to encourage score holders to obtain their older scores while they are still available. ■

## LLM CAS Usage Climbs

The number of law schools that have signed on to use LSAC's LLM Credential Assembly Service (LLM CAS) has increased from 122 in April 2014 to 152 as of November 1.

Between August 1, 2013, and July 31, 2014, there were a total of 15,642 completed LLM CAS registrations. This is a 12 percent increase from the 13,833 registrations the previous year. During the same period, LSAC processed 15,745 transcripts and accompanying documents, a 15 percent increase from 13,775 the previous year.

There were 27,780 letters of recommendation processed, a 5 percent rise from the previous year. Electronic TOEFL scores received increased by 17 percent, and AACRAO analyses completed increased by 22 percent.

The majority of LLM service registrants are from the United States (3,394), with China a close second (1,933) and India following (931). India has surpassed the United Kingdom this year; last year they were tied, both with 689 registrants. ■

### LLM Applicants by Country (First Degree in Law)

China	1,933
India	931
United Kingdom	847
Brazil	593
France	457
Nigeria	428
Saudi Arabia	413
Korea, Republic of (South)	344
Mexico	334
Japan	306

## A Retreat

*(continued from page 2)*

advice about law school. LSAC is in a position to marshal law school expertise to develop high quality materials for prelaw advisors and students. DiscoverLaw.org is a great example of an LSAC-sponsored prelaw resource. The Services and Programs Committee will be assigning a work group to work on this topic.

- LSAC receives many requests for assistance to support new academic programs (e.g., LLM, Master's, and Certificate) at law schools. The needs of individual schools vary as widely as the programs and operations vary among law schools. The conversation regarding the nature of support that should or can be provided will be a continuing one for the Services and Programs Committee, the Board, and technology staff at LSAC.
- LSAC has and always will have an active role in promoting diversity in legal education and the legal profession. There are many factors affecting diversity that are outside of LSAC's control (negative news challenging the value of legal education, the cost of legal education, legal employment opportunities, court and legislative attacks on affirmative action, and *US News* rankings, to name a few). The question for us is how best do we promote diversity, how do we strengthen our current initiatives, and what new initiatives might we consider?
- LSAC's volunteer structure is a matter of great interest to its members. The questions are many and the balancing of factors difficult. How do we identify those who would be good volunteers at all levels of LSAC (Board, committees, work groups, and panelists at LSAC-sponsored events)? What is the best way to make room for new volunteers without losing those individuals who have developed leadership experience in the organization? Are there some leadership roles that require special knowledge and skills? How do we ensure diversity in our governance/volunteer structure while addressing these other considerations. These and other questions will occupy LSAC committees and the Board.
- LSAC is in a position to talk about the value of a legal education. It is not, however, in a position to conduct a marketing campaign for all of legal education. We have been having some preliminary conversations about identifying the audience LSAC should attempt to address, the nature and content of the message, and the mode of delivering the message. DiscoverLaw.org and panels at forums are two examples of efforts to get "Why Law School?" messages to potential law school applicants. The outstanding question is whether there can be a comprehensive message that can be delivered to a wider audience.

These are a few ideas from the Board retreat and fall 2014 committee meetings. There is much work to be done. I hope to have more to report at the 2015 Annual Meeting and Educational Conference. As always, we welcome your suggestions. Please don't hesitate to send your thoughts to any Board or committee member; the LSAC Directory lists them with all of their contact information. I look forward to seeing you all at the 2015 Annual Meeting and Educational Conference in San Diego. ■

## Diversity Initiatives Prime the Pipeline

- A number of member law schools hosted the DiscoverLaw.org Prelaw Undergraduate Scholars Program (DLPP) this summer: University of Arkansas School of Law; University of Missouri—Kansas City School of Law; Rutgers—The State University of New Jersey—School of Law—Camden; Suffolk University Law School; and SUNY Buffalo Law School. Over 100 diverse students from around the country participated in the four-week programs.

The goals of DLPP are to provide an intense focus on the skills required to succeed in law school, to explain the law school admission process, and to highlight legal career opportunities. As a reward for completing the program, each participant is given fee waivers for two LSATs. The 2015 call for proposals was issued in March.

For more information about this program, please contact Kent Lollis at [klollis@LSAC.org](mailto:klollis@LSAC.org).

### Out with the Old

*(continued from page 6)*

At the core of this modernization program, as well as all of LSAC's products and services, is our commitment to bringing value and satisfaction to our user communities. To inform our modernization program, this fall we reconvened the Information Services Division Advisory Group (ISDAG), a group of approximately 25 volunteers from a variety of law schools who meet through conference call or web conference to provide input as needed. The group has already been active in the analysis of changes for the Applicant Status Online (ASO) features of ACES<sup>2</sup> and in advising us on the priority and direction of software functionality to be reengineered. As we progress, we expect to reach out for additional input from our various user groups so that we can ensure that our efforts are on target to support admission efforts for a long time to come. ■

- The HACU/HBCU/Tribal Colleges (HHT) Subcommittee of the LSAC Diversity Committee hosted a dinner on September 16 in New Orleans just prior to the SAPLA/SWAPLA Joint Conference. The preconference reception and dinner was a follow-up to a national HHT prelaw advisors meeting held in San Antonio last January that addressed the issues of advancing diversity in the legal profession. The New Orleans dinner was conceived as a way to reconnect and continue that conversation. At dinner, the prelaw advisors discussed a number of ideas about how to assist new and current prelaw advisors with advancing diversity; their ideas were shared with the Diversity Committee at the October meeting in Denver. Among the ideas proposed were a newcomers manual, the creation of how-to videos, an LSAC webinar series, LSAC presentations on campus, an online LSAT practice course for students, creation of a search engine for new prelaw advisors, and simultaneous webcast events. The subcommittee is reviewing the list and will work with LSAC staff to determine the best way to proceed.
- Congratulations to Marquette University Law School, winner of the 2014 Diversity Matters Award. This is the fifth year that the award has been given and the first time the award has been received by Marquette. The annual Diversity Matters Award is given to a law school that has demonstrated the highest level of outreach to racially and ethnically diverse students from the target audience during LSAC's DiscoverLaw.org Months initiative.

Receipt of this award demonstrates to prospective students that a law school is seriously committed to diversity. It enhances a school's recruitment efforts directed toward racially and ethnically diverse candidates.

The contest runs from July 1 to April 30 each year. In determining the winners, the Diversity Initiatives office considers creativity, event attendance, and overall use of all funds. Other criteria are website promotion, student registration on DiscoverLaw.org, school participation in DiscoverLaw.org Months events, and bonus participation (such as being a volunteer on diversity panels or on webinars and podcasts). ■

## Law School Forums Attendance Results Mixed

This year, LSAC contracted with Momentum Communications Group in New York to provide enhanced marketing for the forums. The primary components of the campaign were intensified email marketing; continuous outreach via social media, including LinkedIn, intern networks, and Meetup groups, as well as Facebook and Twitter; calendar listings in all forum markets; online newsletters linked to interactive content; expanded, direct outreach to prelaw advisors; search-engine optimization; and digital advertising in conjunction with relevant partners. The campaign was monitored as it was implemented in order to adjust the focus as needed. We will continue to analyze the results of this year's campaign in the context of the many other factors that affect forum attendance as we plan our strategy for next year's forums. ■

City	2014 Attendees	2013 Attendees	Percent Change
Atlanta	747	895	↓ 16.5%
Bay Area	413	305	↑ 35.4%
Boston	419	320	↑ 31%
Canada	384	437	↓ 12.1%
Chicago	432	537	↓ 19.6%
Houston	318	530	↓ 40%
Los Angeles	725	1021	↓ 29%
Miami	474	612	↓ 22.5%
New York	1344	1361	↓ 1.2%
New York LLM	76	116	↓ 34.5%
Washington, DC	596	952	↓ 37.4%

# SAVE the DATE

May 27–May 30

LSAC Annual Meeting and Educational Conference 2015



## Hotel del Coronado

Coronado, CA

## Decrypting

*(continued from page 3)*

thinking skills. However, in 2013, about 24.6 percent of applicants applied to only one law school. The majority of applicants by far (65.3 percent) filed from 2 to 14 applications in 2013. It is likely that the LSAT will still be a part of the application process for most applicants.

According to the ABA, law schools will still have to obtain official transcripts for these applicants and count them for purposes of the matriculant certification process and creation of the UGPA percentiles. These applicants will need a CAS account so that LSAC can collect their data and generate the law school report. LSAC is modifying ACES<sup>2</sup> so that schools will be able to identify these applicants and obtain a law school report without an LSAT score in the file. The system changes for handling “10 percent rule” applicants should be in place in the spring of 2015.

### AND ON THE SUBJECT OF MATRICULANT CERTIFICATION ...

In 2012, the ABA and LSAC established the voluntary program that allows participating law schools to obtain an LSAC-certified report of their entering-class credentials. The first year, 195 schools participated in the program, and it took about six months to deliver the certified reports. The 2013 cycle was very much improved: of the 201 US law schools, 199 participated in the certification program. Improved communication, creative development, and a strong collaborative effort between LSAC, the ABA, and the law schools led to a 60 percent reduction in the time it took to deliver the reports. The 2014 cycle is currently underway, and we believe all member law schools will participate this year. Because about half of the law schools now maintain up-to-date decision information in ACES<sup>2</sup>, the process has moved significantly faster, and law schools have already begun to download their reports for this cycle. ■

## Korean Delegation Visits LSAC



On November 21, 2014, LSAC welcomed four visitors representing the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Korea. These guests met with Dan Bernstine, President of LSAC, and LSAC staff members. From left to right are James Lorié (Test Development), Bob Meshanko (Candidate Services), Peter Pashley (Psychometric Research), Dan Bernstine (LSAC President), Daehyun Kim (Director of the Legal Profession Division, Ministry of Justice), JaeBong Choi (Deputy Director of the Legal Profession Division, Ministry of Justice), Lynda Reese (Psychometric Research), Sanghyun Kim (Prosecutor, Cheonan District Prosecutors' Office), Lily Knezevich (Test Development), and Woong Kyu Sung (Attorney, Permanent Mission of the Republic of Korea to the United Nations).

## LSAC CALENDAR

### JANUARY 2015

23–24 Past Presidents  
TBA

### FEBRUARY 2015

7 LSAT Administration

27 Investment Committee  
New York, NY

### MARCH 2015

14 Diversity Committee  
TBA

14 Services and Programs Committee  
TBA

27 Finance and Legal Affairs Committee  
TBA

28 Test Development and  
Research Committee  
TBA

### APRIL 2015

8–10 2015 Diversity Retention Workshop  
Las Vegas, NV

### MAY 2015

1–2 Board of Trustees  
TBA

27–30 Annual Meeting and  
Educational Conference  
Coronado, CA

### JUNE 2015

8 LSAT Administration

### JULY 2015

25 Law School Recruitment Forum  
Washington, DC

### SEPTEMBER 2015

9–13 Newcomers' Conference  
Philadelphia, PA

26 Law School Recruitment Forum  
Miami, FL

28 Canadian Law School  
Recruitment Forum  
Toronto, ON

### OCTOBER 2015

3 LSAT Administration

10 Law School Recruitment Forum  
Los Angeles, CA

16–17 Law School Recruitment Forum  
New York, NY

19 Law School Recruitment Forum  
Houston, TX

29 Law School Recruitment Forum  
Boston, MA

### NOVEMBER 2015

7 Law School Recruitment Forum  
Chicago, IL

12 Law School Recruitment Forum  
San Francisco, CA

## LSACREPORT

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