



Pre-Law Primer

by Dr. Alice F. Bartee

Introduction

The purpose of this primer is to answer some of the basic, general questions often posed by students who are considering law as a career. Although it is not possible to answer all questions, the student who is interested in a legal vocation can begin with this booklet and then refer to other books and guides and sources of information that will be suggested.

There are many good reasons for pursuing a law degree. The J.D. (Juris Doctor) degree requires only three years of study beyond the undergraduate degree, and it equips the student to enter a vocation within which there are many options. Private practice and governmental agency positions are only a few of these options. Although salaries may vary, American Bar Association statistics show that all graduates of approved law schools are gainfully employed. Students do need, however, to understand clearly what the choice of a legal career entails. In general, it is not a glamorous career, but a practical job. It can involve routine duties and time consuming research. Cases may be dull and clients irritating. Few jobs can promise guaranteed excitement, fascinating and satisfying interpersonal relations, fame, status and money, and the law is no exception. Nevertheless, if after careful consideration you do decide to pursue a legal career, attention to the curriculum discussion which follows can be helpful in preparing you for this occupation.

Since entrance to law school is competitive, students need to work consistently to secure a high grade point average (GPA); to put together a respectable transcript in terms of difficult courses and superior grades; and finally, to perform satisfactorily on the Law School Admissions Test (LSAT). Steady progress and persistence usually pay off but there are cases where students have not been able to satisfy these entrance standards. Constant and honest self-evaluations during your undergraduate career and consideration of alternate career options can prevent the catastrophe of graduation without law school admission or job placement. If your GPA is still low by your junior year, and if your practice LSAT exams reveal a minimal score, then you must realistically consider another career option and pursue undergraduate courses to prepare yourself for it.

The SMSU Pre Law Program

Students desiring to pursue a pre law course of study at SMSU are advised first to go the Advisement Center, University Hall, Room 109 and declare a pre professional (pre-law) status. Securing an adviser and determining the area in which you wish to major and minor is the second step. The Advisement Center can supply the student with the names of faculty advisers in different fields who are prepared to assist and advise curriculum selection. Pre-law advisers at

undergraduate institutions are usually a good source of information before and during the law school admissions process. If you are considering law school, you should introduce yourself to a pre-law adviser as soon as possible. The adviser knows his or her school's course offerings quite well and will be able to direct you to courses that will better prepare you for law school. The pre-law adviser should also be quite helpful during the law school application process. Advisers have the latest information on the LSAT, the Law school Data Assembly Service (LSDAS), and even on many law school requirements. In addition, they may be able to point you toward law schools that would be particularly well suited to your needs and interests.

Students and College

Students interested in legal study should get the most from their undergraduate education. A college education should stand on its own merits as preparation for a lifetime of active involvement in a diverse and changing society. Admissions committees are usually impressed by applicants who can convincingly demonstrate that they have challenged their thinking and reasoning skills in a diverse course of undergraduate study. While no single curriculum path is the ideal preparation for law school, you should choose courses that sharpen analytical reasoning and writing skills. Law schools prefer students who can think, read and write well, and who have some understanding of what shapes human experience. You can acquire these attributes in any number of college courses, whether in the humanities, the social sciences or the natural sciences. It is not so much a matter of what you study as it is a matter of selecting courses in your major field that interest you, challenge you, and require you to use researching and writing skills. The Association of American Law Schools (AALS) makes the following statements in reference to undergraduate education: The Association can properly call attention to the quality of undergraduate instruction it believes fundamental to the attainment of legal competence. That quality of education is concerned with the development in pre law students of basic skills and insights. It thus involves education for:

- *comprehension and expression in words,
- *critical understanding of the human institutions and values with which the law deals, and
- *creative power in thinking.

The development of these fundamental capacities is not the monopoly of any one subject area, department, or division. Rather, their development is the result of a highly individualized process pursued with high purpose and intensive intellectual effort. If you are considering law school and are trying to choose undergraduate courses that might be helpful to you, keep the following suggestions in mind. Since a lawyer's work involves most aspects of our complex society, a broad liberal arts curriculum is the preferred preparation for law school. Courses in the humanities, philosophy and sociology are examples of subjects providing this background. English language and literature courses are virtually indispensable. At the same time, you should be aware of the institutional processes of government through which much of the law is made and applied. You can gain this awareness through study in political science. Because the law is

inseparable from our historical experience, you should have some acquaintance with our historical experience and you should have some acquaintance with American and English legal history. The fact that many legal subjects are intimately concerned with economic relations among individuals and with the structure and development of business enterprises makes a knowledge of macro and micro economics valuable. Statistics, philosophy, logic, accounting and computer science are other courses that will help you to understand special legal subjects and sharpen your analytical skills.

Maintain a Rigorous Course Load

High academic standards are important when selecting your undergraduate courses. The range of acceptable majors is broad; the quality of education you receive is most important. You should acquire skills that enable you to think critically, reason logically, and speak and write effectively. Undergraduate programs should reveal your capacity to perform well at an academically rigorous level. An undergraduate career that is narrow, unchallenging, or vocationally oriented is not the best preparation for law school. Unlike the pre-medical curriculum that contains specific courses, some almost obligatory, there is no recommended set of pre-law courses. Enrolling in courses that are designated as part of a pre-law curriculum or major tends to be a less effective means of preparing for law school than enrolling in a diverse college program. While such pre-law courses may introduce you to broad legal principles and may present you with enough information to decide whether to continue with a legal education, they are rarely taught with the same depth and rigor as actual law school courses. In general, law schools prefer that you reserve your law school years for legal study and fill your undergraduate curriculum with broad, diverse courses in the humanities, mathematics, classical languages, political science, social science and the like. The following evaluations may help students assess the offerings found at SMSU.

Accounting and Business Courses:

Accounting reflects many aspects of the law, both in its generally accepted principles and in the application of those principles to realistic case situations in business. Also, as business provides a great deal of the day-to-day work for the general practitioner and as the law school subject areas of contracts, sales and property dwell on business oriented subjects, the lessons provided by courses like *Accounting* and *Business Law* are quite valuable.

Communication and English Courses:

A lawyer must be able to communicate effectively in written and in oral expression. In order to do this the pre-law student is advised to take English courses designed to improve writing skills and speech/debate courses focusing both on public speaking and interpersonal communication. Students are also advised to study a classical language. A Bachelor of Arts degree is highly desirable. The LSAT requires students to write an essay that will be sent to law schools.

Economics Courses:

Significant numbers of legal questions ultimately involve economic issues. In economics, the methods used in analyzing situations and in developing, verifying and applying generalizations, together with cautions about fallacies in logic, prepare the student for life in the real world. By this process he/she acquires the ability to discern significant similarities and appropriate difference among facts and theories for logical reasoning. The use of symbols and systems in economics can be especially valuable to prospective lawyers.

History Courses:

The American legal system derives from the English common law and courts system. Taking a course in English Constitutional History which traces the development of this body of precedent-based law in England can serve as a valuable introduction and give the pre-law student useful knowledge about common-law principles and action still valid today. After independence Americans made some unique additions and adaptations which can be understood in a course on Legal and Constitutional History of the United States. Courses in recent U.S. history can provide very helpful knowledge about the political and cultural context in which courts and attorneys must function.

Philosophy Courses:

Studies in philosophy are quite practical for the pre-law student in that they emphasize analytical reasoning, especially the reasoned analysis of language. This analysis can make the student aware that there are thoughtful differences on issues of personal and social concern, and also give the student an understanding of the relative merits of arguments about these issues. Courses such as *Critical Thinking* and *Elements of Symbolic Logic* are strongly recommended because of their rigorous training in detecting and avoiding errors in argumentation. These courses also help students with the Logical Reasoning and Logical Games sections of the LSAT. There are many philosophy courses that provide students with contemporary ideas and historical views of man and his actions that help explain the law as a human cultural institution. Formal studies of ethics and moral philosophy encompass many of the same issues encountered in the law. A developed sensitivity to the important questions of personal and public morality, such as one might acquire from the disciplined study of ethics, forms an appropriate background for the consideration of legal issues.

Political Science Courses:

Law seeks information from judicial, legislative and administrative decision making. Law and politics are closely related. Political science deals with questions of governmental authority, participation in decision making, compromise and bargaining. The making and enforcing of laws and statutes is the integral study of political science.

Religious Studies Courses:

Religious Studies courses address human rights, social justice, professional ethics, church-state relationship, euthanasia, abortion, racial and ethnic relations, war terrorism, etc., and the manner in which these concerns impact national, state, and community policies. Pre law students will find that Religious Studies courses at SMSU will broaden and deepen their understanding of society, individual and group beliefs, and the religious motivation behind many human actions. General Education courses (REL 100, 101, 102, and 210) will provide the broadest and most helpful surveys though upper level more narrowly focused courses may also serve the needs in other cases.

Sociology and Psychology Courses:

Law does not emerge out of a vacuum, nor is it interpreted and enforced in a vacuum. It comes out of and is interpreted and enforced in a social context; it is intimately tied to the values and norms and institutions of society. There is a close tie between the law and social norms and customs. Legal issues such as women's rights illustrate the importance of the social context in which the law operates. Law school places a high premium on verbal skills. You should take as many courses as you can which demand that you read and write extensively. In order to score well on the LSAT and do well in law school, you should be able to read at a reasonable speed with good comprehension, to think clearly and logically, to analyze what you read rather than merely absorb it, and to grasp both implications and possible deceptions which appear in many verbal statements.

The Pre-Law Handbook emphasizes three general areas of undergraduate education: comprehension and expression in words; critical understanding of human institutions and values; creative power in thinking. Obviously, no single department or field has a monopoly on these sorts of education. If you are learning how to read, think and write well, you are in a good undergraduate pre law major. If your major is intellectually stimulating, then you will probably do well in it. A high GPA and a high LSAT score are essential for entrance to and success in law school.

Suggested Courses for Pre-Law Students

Communications: COM 120 – College Debate; COM 322 – Introduction to Argumentation; COM 328 - Persuasion

Economics: ECO 155 - Principles of Macro-economics; ECO 165 - Principles of Micro-economics; ECO 435 – The Economic Analysis of Law

English: ENG 310 - Writing II: Writing in the Discipline; ENG 312 - Introduction to Shakespeare; ENG 321 - Writing II: Beginning Technical Writing; JRN 407 - Media Law

Finance and General Business: RIL 235 - Legal Environment of Business; RIL 341 - Introduction to Legal Research; ACC 201 - Introduction to Financial Accounting

Modern and Classical Language: LTN 101 - Elementary Latin I Language and Literature; LLT 121 - Classical Mythology

History: HST 517 - Legal and Constitutional History of the U.S.; HST 565 - English Constitution, Courts and Common Law

Political Science: PLS 397 - The Role of Lawyers; PLS 419 - The Judicial Process; PLS 451 - Criminal Law and Its Enforcement; PLS 515 - Constitutional Law; PLS 517 – Civil Rights and the 14th Amendment; PLS 519 – Civil Liberties and the 1st Amendment; PLS 537 - International Law

Philosophy: PHI 105 - Critical Thinking; PHI 206 - Elements of Symbolic Logic; PHI 340 - Philosophy of Law

Sociology/Crime and Society: SOC 380 - Sociology of Law; CAS 360 – Criminal Courts in Society

Applying to Law School

You can make the process of applying to law school much easier if you read and follow instructions carefully and research the law schools to which you will apply. Most law schools have a variety of application requirements and deadlines that you must meet to be considered for admission. If you are applying to a number of schools, the various deadlines and requirements can be confusing. It probably will be helpful if you set up a detailed calendar that will remind you of when and what you must do to complete an application.

The Law School Admission Test (LSAT)

All American Bar Association (ABA) approved law schools and many non-ABA approved law schools require that you take the LSAT. The LSAT is a half-day standardized test. The LSAT is designed to measure skills that are considered essential for success in law school: the ability to read and comprehend complex texts, the ability to manage and organize information, and the ability to process this information to reach conclusions. Applicants come to law schools from many backgrounds. Differences include field of study, undergraduate institution, graduate and post-graduate education, ethnicity, employment experience, extracurricular activities, and personal accomplishments. Although student diversity enriches the education process and is actively sought by law schools, the LSAT helps schools make sound admission decisions by

providing a standard measure of academic aptitude that is common to all applicants. The exam consists of five 35-minute sections of multiple-choice questions containing a total of approximately 100 questions. Your score is based upon your performance on four of those sections:

*one reading comprehension section,

*one analytical reasoning (a.k.a. logic games) section, and

*two logical reasoning sections.

There is a fifth experimental section containing new questions that are being pre-tested for possible inclusion on future exams. Your score is not based on your performance on this fifth section, but you will not be told which section it is. In addition, you are given 30 minutes to compose a writing sample that addresses a decision problem that is supplied for you. It does not count toward your LSAT score. It may, however, be considered if your score is marginal, or if you are in competition for an award. The sections of the LSAT consist of:

Reading Comprehension Questions

These questions measure the ability to read, with understanding and insight, examples of lengthy and complex materials similar to those commonly encountered in law school work. The reading comprehension type consists of passages of approximately 550 words, each followed by six to eight questions that test reading and reasoning abilities. Many are based on law review articles.

Analytical Reasoning Questions

These questions are designed to measure the ability to understand a structure of relationships and to draw conclusions about that structure. The test-taker is asked to make deductions from a set of statements, rules, or conditions that describe relationships among entities such as persons, places, things or events. They simulate the kinds of detailed analysis of relationships that a law student must perform in solving legal problems.

Logical Reasoning Questions

These questions are designed to evaluate aptitude for understanding, analyzing and criticizing a variety of arguments. Each logical reasoning question requires the examinee to read and comprehend a short passage, then answer one or two questions about it. The questions test a variety of abilities that might be appropriately described as subtypes of the ability to reason logically and critically.

LSAT Preparation

Most law school applicants familiarize themselves with test mechanics and question types, practice on sample tests, and study the information available on test taking techniques and strategies. Though it is difficult to say when examinees are sufficiently prepared, very few people achieve their full potential without detailed preparation. The Law Services Information Book contains sample LSAT questions and explanations, a sample test, a sample answer sheet and an answer key. This book is available free of charge from Law Services, Box 2000, Penn Street, Newtown, PA 18940, telephone (215) 968-1001 and from law schools and pre-law advisers. If you feel additional practice on sample tests would be helpful, you may purchase from Law Services the Official LSAT Prep Tests.

Helpful Hints for Applying to Law School

When students apply to law school they often overlook many small but important details and may thereby create a less than optimum impression. You can avoid this by following these nine common sense hints from Dr. Renie Wilson, Law School Dean and SMSU alumna:

1. Fill in all the blanks on the school's application. Although the reason for a particular question may not be obvious to you, the school does need that information or else the question would not be asked. An incomplete application may be returned to you or an admissions officer may have to phone you. Either way, the ultimate decision on your admission is delayed.
2. Be meticulously neat. Type, or print in blue or black ink, your answers on the application. Avoid scribbles in the margin. If you have an explanation for an answer refer to a supplement and attach it to the application. Definitely have someone, perhaps a teacher, proofread your application. Always remember that you are applying to a professional school and the Admissions Committee forms its first impression regarding your seriousness from your application. You want the application to be as polished as possible.
3. Ask someone not affiliated with your undergraduate school to look at a copy of your transcript and tell you what each course name represents and what grade, if any, you received. This can reveal whether any information on the transcript is unclear. Attach a supplement to your application explaining any course names that are not self-explanatory. An entry such as ENG 1440 Expository Writing is self-explanatory, but an entry such as RNP 6229, Guns and Butter, is ambiguous. The Admissions Committee would hesitate to guess whether this course was in English Literature, Military Science, Economics, History or Political Science. A simple statement, for example, that RNP 6229, Guns and Butter, is an upper-level economics course examining the economic consequences of the military industrial complex, would aid the committee in their evaluation of you. Only the side of your transcript on which the course listings appear is sent to the committee; therefore, they often do not receive any information explaining your school's grading

system. Grades such as AA and AB are understandable, but grades such as AN, AV, and AZ are not. Either attach a copy to your application or explain any unusual grades in a supplement.

4. Use your personal statement to explain irregularities or disparities. If, for example, your two LSAT scores are very different due to your illness during an exam, express this reason in your personal statement. Or explain that your freshman grades were low because you started as a pre med major. You should approach problem areas in your background frankly rather than having the Admission Committee wonder.

5. Sell yourself in your personal statement. Convince the committee that they should take a chance and admit you. Talk to many of your undergraduate school professors to determine what characteristics they value in students. Most law schools search for students with those same characteristics. Demonstrate that you have the characteristics to be a successful law school student. Bear in mind that humility and false modesty have their important place in life, but not in your personal statement. Let your true drive and determination shine through but tailor your achievements to characteristics related to being a serious student. You may be very proud that you have trained your Russian wolfhound to howl upon command but the Admissions Committee will be hard pressed to find a connection to future potential academic performance.

6. As with the application, have someone proofread your personal statement. If you generate your personal statement on a computer, critically assess the quality of your printer's output. Many dot-matrix printers produce a product that is very difficult to read. You should consider using a high quality printer or typing your personal statement rather than risk having the committee only skim over it.

7. Choose carefully the people you ask to write recommendation letters. Unless you have actually clerked for a politician who can attest to your characteristics, general letters from politicians are usually viewed as constituent back-patting. Letters from religious officials, such as ministers, and letters from relatives are also not given great weight. Coaches can pen letters that are given some weight, as long as they touch on characteristics such as leadership and determination; however, coaches, as proud as they may be, should refrain from commenting on your backhand or curve ball. The best letters are from undergraduate or graduate school faculty members, lawyers, and law school professors.

8. Waive your rights to see the recommendation letter. The committee senses the author may give a more candid appraisal if the student does not see the letter. Ask the author to reference the letter to your full name, the date of the entering class to which you are applying and your LSDAS identification number.

9. Strictly observe all deadlines and send the correct items to the correct schools. Committee members recognize that students apply to multiple schools and that many students use the same personal statement, with minor changes, for each school; however, committee members are always amused to read a personal statement, incorrectly mailed to them, in which a student makes a passionate plea to attend another school.

Choosing a Law School

You should only apply to law schools that have been accredited by the American Bar Association. In this section are listed a large number of factors one can consider when deciding to which schools to apply. Your likelihood of admission is certainly the most important. But the importance of other factors depends upon your personal preferences. University pre law advisors have a variety of sources that will help you assess the extent to which individual schools meet your specific criteria.

1. Likelihood of Admission: The undergraduate GPA and LSAT scores are the primary criteria law schools use in determining whom to admit. Therefore, comparing your GPA and LSAT scores to the median (middle) scores of recent admittees to specific law schools will give you a sense (although a rough one, given that other factors are considered) of your chances of admission. Information about the median GPA and LSAT scores of students who were admitted to specific law schools are available in publications such as the Official Guide to U.S. Law Schools (published by the Law School Admissions Council (LSAC)). Based on a comparison between your GPA and LSAT score and the median scores of recent admittees, you should develop three lists of schools to which you should apply: * those where you will likely be admitted, * those where you will be competitive for admission and * those where you will have a long shot for admission. It is important to remember that the median GPA and LSAT scores of recent admittees to a law school are just that: the middle numbers - half of those admitted to a particular law school fell above the median and half fell below it. Thus, scores below the median do not mean automatic denial of admission. On the other hand, schools do not admit everyone who falls on or above the median scores. There are at least two reasons why median GPA and LSAT scores are imperfect indicators of chances for admission. *Law schools do not always weight GPA and LSAT scores evenly. At most schools, LSAT score will be considered more important (thus assessed greater weight). At other schools, GPA will be given greater importance. Still other schools will treat these two criteria evenly. *As discussed above, although GPA and LSAT score are the primary factors there are others that schools use to determine who gains admission. These criteria will partially offset GPA and LSAT scores.

2. Geographic Location: There are three reasons why geography is potentially important: *Personal - Attending law school means that you will spend three years of your life in one area. You must consider the extent to which specific quality of life issues (proximity to family, size of city, weather, crime rates, cultural events, etc.) are important to you. Law school is hard enough; do not attend a school located in an environment you find unpalatable. *Admissions - Publicly funded law schools heavily favor applicants who are residents of the state in which the law school operates. *Employment - It is generally the case that law schools are more adept at placing their graduates in the city/state/region in which the law school is located. This does not mean, however, that by attending a particular school you are committing yourself to practicing law in the school's geographic area. Most law schools are able to place their graduates all over the country (though gaining a placement outside of the school's region may require additional effort on the part of the law student).

3. Career Placement: This matters because the job market for law school graduates is tight. There are a number of considerations related to placement: placement rates and the nature of the jobs graduates are obtaining, placement support programs, bar passage rates, and salary range. There is a very limited number of law schools with such strong reputations that their graduates will be very competitive for employment anywhere in the country. Beyond those who attend this small number of schools, where a student attended law school is much less important to post- graduation placement opportunities than are:
 *performance in law school (reflected in class rank and law school GPA),
 *extracurricular activities (such as law review, moot court, etc.), and *work experience.
 As stated above, most law schools are particularly adept at placing their graduates in the geographic area of the school.

4. Ranking/Reputation: Ranking law schools is an extremely tricky and rather superficial endeavor. You should judge rankings very carefully, with some amount of skepticism. You should pay very close attention to the criteria upon which the ranking is based and determine whether those criteria matter to you personally. Be assured that you will receive a quality legal education from any law school that is accredited by the American Bar Association. The American Bar Association offers some very sound advice regarding law school ranks. But, if you must know how particular law schools compare, a variety of rankings are available courtesy of the Internet Legal Resource Guide at the University of Texas. The most important question is not what is the best law school, but rather, what is the best law school for you? To get a better sense of what criteria are important to you and how particular law schools rate, check out the Ranking Game software.

5. Area of Specialization: You should not choose a law school on the basis of the fact that it claims to specialize in an area of law that interests you. *Your ability to specialize in a particular area of law is severely limited by the fact that most law schools require that you be exposed to courses covering a wide variety of substantive legal areas in addition to courses that hone legal skills. There is relatively little time, then, in which to take a number of classes in one area of law. *You will probably change your mind as to what type of law you wish to practice once you have been exposed to the various areas of the law. *There seems to be some level of consensus among attorneys that one becomes a specialist in an area of law by practicing that area, not by taking a given number of courses in the subject during law school.

6. Financial Considerations

7. Facilities: *Student housing *Library *Buildings *Classrooms *Study space

8. Student Body: *Demographics *Level of satisfaction *Attrition rates *Collaborative v. competitive

9. Faculty: *Legal training, specialties and expertise *Accessibility *Demographics

10. Enrollment and class sizes

11. Academic Programs: *Support counseling *Internship/Clinical Studies *Study abroad
*Joint degree

12. Extracurricular Programs: *Law Review *Moot Court *Student organizations

Gathering Information

There are a number of methods of gathering information about particular schools. You should contact the various law schools that interest you to obtain their standard information and application materials. Read the materials the law school publishes very carefully. If the information you seek is not covered in that material, you have every right to call the admissions office of the school and ask for such information. It is probably best to wait until late summer to contact specific law schools to request information. It is generally the case that late summer is when the most up-to-date application materials are published. If possible, visit the law school(s) you are considering. This is the best method of assessment. Before visiting, call the law school's admissions office to see whether there are particular things you can take advantage of while on campus, such as a formal tour, attending a class and speaking to current law students and members of the faculty. It may also be the case that you can set up a formal interview with an admissions officer (some schools do this, others do not). Be sure to go to the school's library at some point in order to assess characteristics like computer facilities, number of volumes, journal collections, etc. Law schools are pretty uneven in this respect. Also pay close attention to the physical plant. Perhaps the best source of information about a law school is the current student body. Do not hesitate to call a law school in which you have some interest and ask to speak with currently enrolled students.

Lawyers and Their Skills

*how to analyze legal issues in light of the existing state of the law, the direction in which the law is headed, and relevant policy considerations;

*how to advocate the views of groups and individuals within the context of the legal system;

*how to give intelligent counsel on the law's requirements;

*how to write and speak clearly;

*how to negotiate effectively.

Fields of Law

About 74% of American lawyers are in private practice, most in small, one person, offices and some in large firms. Roughly 13% of the profession work for government agencies (including

approximately 10,000 judges), 12% work for private industries and associations as salaried lawyers or as managers, and 1% is in legal education. Many lawyers develop expertise in a particular field of law. Large law firms that provide a full range of legal services tend to employ more specialists. The sole practitioner, who must handle a variety of problems alone, may have greater opportunity to work in several areas. Some of the major areas of specialization are: corporate law, securities law, tax law, criminal law, family law, labor law, energy and environmental law, etc.

Employment Prospects

Jobs will always be available for well-qualified law school graduates. Because the number of practicing lawyers in the United States continues to increase, it may become more difficult for recent graduates to find jobs in some fields and in certain parts of the country. Opportunities will vary from locality to locality and among legal disciplines. Future lawyers may have to devote considerable time and energy to secure a first job that they consider acceptable. Competition for certain positions will continue to be intense, while opportunities in other fields may expand. Future demand for people with legal training is almost impossible to predict. Rising case loads in the nation's courts and continuing federal and state regulations suggest that the need for lawyers is growing. Whether this expanding need will match or fall short of the parallel growth in the number of practicing lawyers is a question no one can answer with certainty. Lawyers with outstanding academic credentials will continue to have little difficulty in obtaining desirable positions. In addition, the legal profession itself may adapt to changing job markets by encouraging the entry of lawyers into fields that have not traditionally been considered law related. For instance, the increase in and complexity of various business arrangements require more and more diverse lawyers than ever before. Also, there are still many populations in varying locales who currently are under represented by lawyers. Thus, prospective law students should evaluate their personal career goals, including geographic preferences, when considering the legal job market.

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