Foreword

Access Group offers this 2015 Legal Education Data Deck for the use of the legal education community, policy-makers, and others interested in viewing a snapshot of certain data and trends organized around the three driving principles of Access Group’s research agenda: access, affordability, and value. This is a living document that will be updated periodically—Access Group welcomes comments, criticisms, and suggestions so that this document will be a useful tool to those whom we serve.

In compiling this data deck, we have utilized publicly available datasets from third parties, including but not limited to the Law School Admission Council, the National Conference of Bar Examiners, the National Association of Legal Placement, and the American Bar Association Section of Legal Education and Admissions to the Bar. We are grateful to these and other organizations that make such data available.

Access Group uses these data as the basis for the presentation, analysis, and commentary contained herein, and takes sole responsibility for the quality and accuracy of such presentation, analysis, and commentary.
About Access Group

Founded in 1983, Access Group is a nonprofit membership organization comprising 196 nonprofit and state-affiliated ABA-approved law schools. The organization works to further access, affordability, and the value of legal education, specifically, and graduate and professional education more broadly, through research, policy advocacy, and direct member and student educational services.

About Access Group Center for Research & Policy Analysis℠

(Launching in Spring 2015)

The Access Group Center for Research & Policy Analysis collects and analyzes data, conducts research, and provides grants to other organizations to address some of the most critical issues facing legal education, including the following:

- Enhancing access to law schools for students from diverse backgrounds;
- Increasing affordability for students pursuing legal education; and
- Expanding the value of a legal degree.
Law Schools in the United States

Fall 2013 JD Enrollment at Access Group Member Law Schools, by State


Note: This map only includes the 196 Access Group member schools.
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Despite a slight uptick between 2008 and 2010, applicants to JD programs have declined substantially since 2004, with admitted applicants and matriculants declining steadily since 2010.

**Law School Applicants, Admits, and Matriculants, 2000-2013**

*Note:* Values are rounded to the nearest hundred persons.
With fewer individuals applying to law school, a greater proportion are being admitted. The ratio of admissions to applications increased from 2 in 3 to more than 3 in 4 between fall 2000 and fall 2013.

The law school applicant pool is nearing a 50/50 gender split. However, a higher proportion of female applicants than male applicants are ultimately admitted.


Note: Excludes gender unknown/not reported.
The percentage of law school applicants who identify as ethnic minorities has increased over time.

Diversity of Law School Applicants, 2010-2013

Note: Applicants who identify as more than one race/ethnicity are reported in each. Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander excluded because number of applicants is too small to report.
A higher percentage of white and Asian applicants compared to other racial/ethnic groups are admitted to law school. Applicants who identify as black/African American have the lowest admission rate.

Note: Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander excluded because number of applicants is too small to report. Applicants who identify as more than one race/ethnicity are reported in each.
Matriculation rates of accepted applicants were similar across ethnic groups in fall 2013. Matriculation rates of accepted Asian applicants declined more than 10 percentage points over a 4-year period.


Note: Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander excluded because number of applicants is too small to report. Applicants who identify as more than one race/ethnicity are reported in each.
Prior to the 2000s, male and female JD enrollment moved inversely, with male enrollment falling as female enrollment increased. Over the last decade, they have moved in tandem.

The increase in the proportion of first-year law school students who are minorities mirrors the change in the proportion among bachelor’s degree recipients over the past 4 years. However, the percentage of undergraduate degrees awarded to minorities is slightly higher than the percentage of minority first-year law students.

**Percentage of Bachelor’s Degrees Awarded to Minority Students and Percentage of First-Year Enrolled Minority JD Students**

The proportion of students enrolled in graduate and professional programs who received Pell Grants as undergraduate students varies by discipline. In 2011-2012, less than 25 percent of law school students previously received a Pell Grant to help fund their undergraduate studies.

**Percentage of Students Enrolled in Graduate and Professional Programs Who Received Pell Grants as Undergraduate Students, 2011-2012**

Minority students make up a greater percentage of part-time than full-time first-year JD students, comprising over 40 percent of part-time law students in 2013.

Non-JD students make up a greater share of law school enrollment than 10 years ago. The percentage of non-JD students has nearly doubled, growing from 5 percent to 9 percent since 2003.

The number of JD degrees awarded per year increased overall between 2003 and 2012. In 2011 and 2012, more than 46,000 JD degrees were awarded by ABA-approved law schools.
The proportion of law degrees awarded to racial and ethnic minorities has increased over the last 30 years. In 1984-1985, almost 9 percent of law degrees were awarded to racial and ethnic minorities; by 2012-2013, that figure had grown to 25 percent.

Due to an increasing proportion of women earning law degrees, the percentage of men and women being awarded law degrees is nearing parity. Forty-seven percent of JDs were awarded to women in 2010-2011.

AFFORDABILITY
Average tuition and fees have increased across all sectors during the last three decades. Over the past 10 years, average private law school tuition and fees have increased 29 percent, public non-resident tuition and fees have increased 43 percent, and public resident tuition and fees have increased 74 percent.


Note: Figures shown are inflation adjusted using the Consumer Price Index for all urban consumers (CPI-U) from July of the year indicated, with 1982-1984 as the base years.
Nearly half of enrolled law school students are carrying undergraduate debt. In 2011-2012, the median amount of debt still owed among those with outstanding undergraduate loans was $18,000.

**Percentage of Law Students Who Still Owe on Undergraduate Loans, 2011-2012**

- 55% do not owe on undergraduate loans
- 45% still owe on undergraduate loans

**Median amount owed:** $18,000

Loan debt accumulated for law school averaged over $120,000 for 2011-2012 graduates of ABA-approved private law schools. For 2011-2012 graduates of ABA-approved public institutions, the average was nearly $85,000.

Note: Figures shown are inflation adjusted using the Consumer Price Index for all urban consumers (CPI-U) from July of the year indicated, with 1982-1984 as the base years.
The overall total of grants and scholarships provided by ABA-approved law schools has increased over the past 20 years. Since 2002-2003, total grant and scholarship awards have almost doubled.


Note: Figures shown are inflation adjusted using the Consumer Price Index for all urban consumers (CPI-U) from July of the year indicated, with 1982-1984 as the base years.
The average amount of grants and scholarships awarded per ABA-approved law school has increased in the last several years. On average, each ABA-approved law school awarded over $5 million in grants and scholarships in the 2011-2012 academic year.


Note: Figures shown are inflation adjusted using the Consumer Price Index for all urban consumers (CPI-U) from July of the year indicated, with 1982-1984 as the base years.
The latest occupational outlook from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics projects lawyer positions will have the most job openings among positions requiring a graduate or professional degree.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>From growth</th>
<th>From replacement</th>
<th>Total Job Openings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lawyers</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>197</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physicians and surgeons, all others</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>153</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical therapists</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pharmacists</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health specialties teachers, postsecondary</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


**Note:** Number of job openings is shown in thousands. Job openings from growth represent projections for job creation. Job openings from replacement are projected based on expected retirement and other employment departures.
Overall first-time bar passage rates for graduates of ABA-approved law schools ranged from 79 percent to 85 percent from 2007 to 2013.

In 2013, 81 percent of all first-time exam takers from ABA-approved law schools passed the bar. However, the proportion of these exam takers passing varies from state to state.

First-Time Bar Passage Rates for Graduates of ABA-Approved Law Schools by State, 2013


Note: Bar passage is shown by the state of bar administration, not the location of the exam taker’s law school.
The majority of law school graduates obtain employment requiring bar passage, though the proportion has decreased over the past 6 years. At the same time, the proportion of law school graduates obtaining a position where the JD is an advantage (but not required) has increased, along with the proportion of law school graduates who are unemployed but seeking work.

**Recent JD Graduates by Employment Status, 2007-2013**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Bar passage required</th>
<th>JD advantage</th>
<th>Unemployed-seeking</th>
<th>All others</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


*Note: These data are based on law school graduates whose employment status was reported to NALP and may not be fully representative of the total law school graduating class indicated. Use caution when interpreting. “All Others” includes those in other job positions, full-time degree seekers, and those not currently seeking employment.*
The percentage of employed law school graduates taking part-time positions increased between 2007 and 2011, but the trend has abated.


Note: These data are based on law school graduates whose employment status was reported to NALP and may not be fully representative of the total law school graduating class indicated. Use caution when interpreting.
The percentage of employed recent JD graduates working in private practice declined from 56 percent in 2009 to 50 percent in 2011. During the same period, the percentage of employed graduates in the business sector increased from 13 percent to 18 percent, and has remained at this level.

**Recent JD Graduate Employment by Sector, 2007-2013**


*Note:* These data are based on law school graduates whose employment status and sector were reported to NALP and may not be fully representative of the total law school graduating class indicated. Use caution when interpreting. Percentages less than 5 percent are not shown.
The median salary for a recent JD graduate working in private practice was $95,000 in 2013, down from the high point of $141,000 in 2009, but up slightly from $88,000 in 2011. Other sectors show smaller fluctuations.

Median Salary (in 2013 dollars) of Recent JD Graduates by Sector, 2007-2013


Note: These data are based on law school graduates whose salaries and employment sector were reported to NALP and may not be fully representative of the total law school graduating class and sector indicated. Use caution when interpreting, as some median values are based on low response rates. Figures shown are inflation adjusted using the Consumer Price Index for all urban consumers (CPI-U) from July of the year indicated, with 1982-1984 as the base years.
Regardless of the type of employment, the median salary of recent JD graduates is less in 2013 than it was in 2007.

Note: These data are based on law school graduates whose salaries and employment sector were reported to NALP and may not be fully representative of the total law school graduating class and sector indicated. Use caution when interpreting, as some median values are based on low response rates. Figures shown are inflation adjusted using the Consumer Price Index for all urban consumers (CPI-U) from July of the year indicated, with 1982-1984 as the base years.


Detailed Data Sources (Continued)


