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The Law School Survey of Student Engagement (LSSSE) documents dimensions of quality in legal education and provides information about law student participation in effective educational activities that law schools and other organizations can use to improve student learning.

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The Law School Survey of Student Engagement is part of Indiana University's Center for Postsecondary Research, a research center in the School of Education devoted to studying the student experience.

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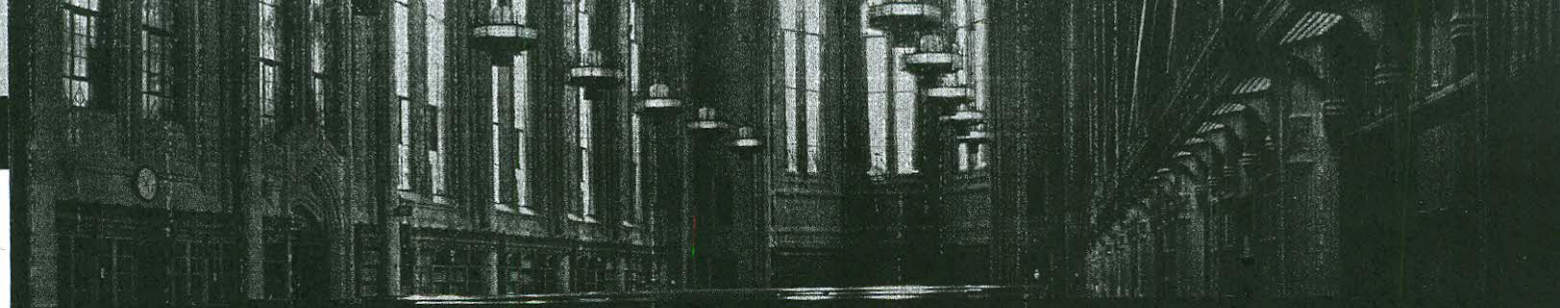


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Quick LSSSE Facts



Foreword

As law teachers, we think of ourselves as experts in the subjects that we teach. We even pay attention to how we teach. We tend to be profoundly ignorant, however, about how our students study, learn, and grow. Each year, the Law School Survey of Student Engagement (LSSSE) gives us insight into that kind of important information.

This year is no exception. Forty-three percent of the nation's law students received the web-based 2011 LSSSE survey. Of those, 52%—more than 33,000 students—responded. As this 2011 report demonstrates, students who responded closely mirror the characteristics of law students in general and give a substantial basis for confidence that the survey findings are representative and reliable.

By this year, almost all students now in law school began their study after the recession started in 2008. When they elected to study law, not all of them fully appreciated the declining demand for new lawyers that recent graduates have experienced. Surely few of them are still in denial about the world that they face.

Given the tough job market, it is impressive that 83% of those surveyed report they are satisfied with their legal education. Almost one-third rate their legal education “excellent” and more than one-half rate their education “good.” My own less-systematic impression of student satisfaction is similar, but it is reassuring to see that a large majority of law students believe their law schools are doing a great deal right.

A closer look at the data in this 2011 report, however, suggests that many law students still seem to think of law school as an educational hurdle to surmount rather than as preparation for professional life. As just one example, in 2011, 13,249

students at 51 law schools responded to a set of experimental questions that probed student initiative. Of these, 77% of law students reported that they frequently attended review sessions for their examinations and 74% frequently took advantage of practice exams and other opportunities to review. Still, 38% of the students never discussed the substance of course material with their professor after completing a course.

My own work on challenges facing lawyers in the future suggests that law students will enter a legal marketplace far different than the one their predecessors faced. The differences will take several forms, but I will mention three.

First, the large number of U.S. lawyers and the likely competition for legal work from foreign service providers means lawyers will need to focus their practice more than prior generations did. It will not be enough simply to be a good generalist. It will be critical to stand out as doing some work better than others can do it.

Second, as the expertise of individual lawyers narrows, practice will require being able to work constructively with other lawyers and with non-lawyer experts. The ability to work in teams is likely to be one of the prime skills of tomorrow's lawyers.

Third, lawyers will have to recognize that at least parts of their work will have an international dimension. They will need to know some foreign law and they will profit from an ability to call on contacts around the world.

The LSSSE questions do not completely illuminate law student development in each of these areas, but the data suggest that students may not be taking full advantage of the opportunities law school affords them to prepare for the world they are about to enter.



In terms of developing a practice concentration or a better understanding of what future practice will require, 41% of students said they were likely to seek out a professor or practitioner who acted as a mentor. But 27% of the students said they never sought out such a person. Third- and fourth-year students report working in a law-related job seven and 13 hours respectively, but it is less clear how significant the students see that work as preparation for their future ambitions.

On the question of learning to work in teams and with non-lawyers, fewer than one-third (28%) of students surveyed reported frequently working with other students on projects during class, much less working with non-lawyers or support personnel, and 24% reported never working together on projects during class. This is not surprising; law schools have tended to stress working alone so as to grade students on their own work. Ultimately, however, preparation of future lawyers is likely to diminish the role of grading convenience and accentuate the role of helpful experience.

But on the issue of international contact, the LSSSE data are particularly troubling. This year's survey asked several questions about it and the results are disturbingly consistent. Responses were collected from 7,501 students at 22 law schools. Many of the surveyed students are at schools with a well-developed international LL.M. program whose students could represent lifelong professional contacts. Yet less than 6% of the U.S. students said they frequently interact with international students in study groups, completing assignments, or informal study activities. Just over half reported some social interaction, and that is a start. The

data make clear that students and their law schools are missing an important opportunity to contribute to the future careers of both their international and domestic students.

My point in these observations is not to cast doubt on the significant student satisfaction with their education. It is to suggest that readers of this report make an effort to think about what the numbers are saying about law schools, our students, and the future. Most important, law schools should be working to be sure that when their students look back on their education a few years hence, they will continue to conclude that they had significant exposure to matters of lasting significance.

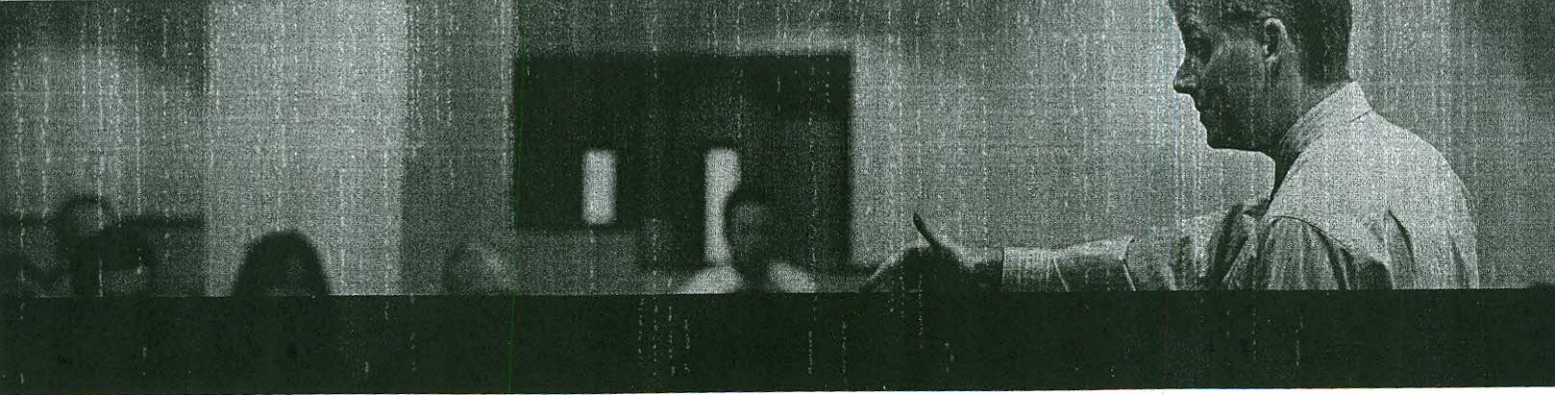
Thomas D. Morgan

Oppenheim Professor of Antitrust and Trade Regulation Law
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As law teachers, we think of ourselves as experts in the subjects that we teach. [...] We tend to be profoundly ignorant, however, about how our students study, learn, and grow.



Director's Message



in the core academic activities of law school. In fact, this is not the case. Class participation, for example, is nearly identical for full- and part-time students. But, as described more fully in *The Part-Time Student Experience*, part-time students participate in clinical and pro bono activities less frequently than full-time students, and two-thirds of part-time students who work are working in jobs unrelated to law. Consequently, they may miss an important experiential aspect of legal education.

Second, are students well-served by transferring to a new law school? Press reports on transferring describe students' desire to game the law school admission regime by moving to a school with a higher *U.S. News & World Report* ranking in order to gain the associated prestige. Transfer students' reports of their law school entering credentials support this account: transfer students admit to having lower entering credentials than their new peers. But their motivation and work-ethic at their new schools outpace those of their peers, and they report grades on par with their classmates at their receiving schools. Our analysis in *Experiencing Law School as a Transfer Student* finds that transferring requires a period of adjustment, and during the first year post-transfer (the 2L year), transfer students participate less frequently in certain important co-curricular activities. However, they also report significantly greater gains with regard to a variety of lessons compared to 2Ls who have not transferred.

Finally, how is the experience of JD students transformed by having international graduate law students in their schools?

Many law schools point to their international graduate students as evidence of a global approach. But according to our analysis of a set of experimental questions administered to students at 22 schools in 2011 in *Internationalizing the Law Student Experience*, this alone is insufficient to meaningfully expose JDs to an international peer group. To effectively capitalize on globalization, law schools must be more intentional about choreographing interaction among students from different countries and backgrounds who share classes but pursue different degree programs.

These results and other LSSSE data offer opportunities for law schools to challenge their assumptions about what they know for sure. The voice of students reflected in the data provides an essential ingredient in gaining a comprehensive picture of a school's well-being, but it is only one part of the story, a complement to other methods of learning about legal education.

We at LSSSE look forward to working with law schools to help them discover what they know for sure.

Carole Silver

LSSSE Director

Indiana University Center for Postsecondary Research

Professor of Law

Indiana University Maurer School of Law

The voice of students reflected in the [LSSSE] data provides an essential ingredient in gaining a comprehensive picture of a school's well-being.



Selected Results

The Law School Survey of Student Engagement focuses on activities that affect learning in law school. The results show how law students spend their time, what they think about their experience in law school, and guide schools in their efforts to improve engagement and learning.

The selected results reported in this section are based on responses from more than 33,000 law students at 95 law schools in the U.S. and Canada who completed LSSSE in spring 2011. We also draw upon responses to a set of experimental questions appended to the survey and given to a subset of the 2011 respondents.

The results presented in this report represent just a small sampling of the information LSSSE collects each year. In addition to the three themes featured on the following pages, LSSSE data let us learn more about how certain law school programs, practices, and curricular efforts relate to student success and student engagement; changes in the law school experience from year to year; how various types of students experience law school; and much more. These findings can yield important lessons about the law school experience writ large, and, at the school-level, about the experiences of students in the classroom and the wider school environment. Below, we highlight just a few results to provide a better idea of the breadth of issues that LSSSE data can inform.

Promising Findings

- The vast majority of students rated their overall law school experience favorably; 83% reported that their experience in law school was good or excellent.
- Eighty percent of students said that they definitely or probably would attend the same law school if they could start over again.
- Students with high levels of law school-related debt more often used and were satisfied with career support at their law school. Of students who expected to owe more than \$80,000 in law school-related debt after graduating, 64% used and were satisfied with job search support, and 84% used and were satisfied with career counseling at their school.
- Nearly 80% of students discussed their career plans with faculty at some point during law school.
- Ninety-three percent of students have had serious conversations at some point during law school with students who are very different from themselves in terms of their religious beliefs, political opinions, or personal values, and 62% of students have had these conversations frequently.
- A large majority (91%) of students have had serious conversations during law school with students of a different race or ethnicity.
- Nearly four in five students (79%) reported that their law school placed a substantial emphasis on encouraging the ethical practice of law.
- Half of students (51%) rated their relationships with faculty very highly (6 or 7 on a 7-point scale) in terms of availability and helpfulness.
- Nearly nine in 10 students (88%) felt that their law school experience contributed substantially to the acquisition of a broad legal education.



Disappointing Findings

- Forty percent of law students felt that their legal education had so far contributed only some or very little to their acquisition of job- or work-related knowledge and skills.
- Nearly half of all students (49%) never or only sometimes included diverse perspectives (in terms of race, religion, sexual orientation, gender, or political beliefs) in class discussions or writing assignments.
- Twenty-three percent of law students who expected to accrue more than \$80,000 of law school-related debt reported that they would not or probably would not attend the same law school if given the opportunity to start over.
- Relatedly, though the majority of JD students who have incurred higher amounts of law school-related debt were satisfied with their overall law school experience, more of these students (18% of students who expect to graduate with law school-related debt greater than \$80,000) rated their experience as fair or poor. In comparison, only 14% of students with an expected law school-related debt of less than \$40,000 rated their experience unfavorably.
- Twenty percent of students have not used any job search support from their institution and 14% have never used career counseling.
- Seventeen percent of students said that law school contributed very little to their development of clearer career goals.
- Female students were less likely than their male classmates to frequently ask questions in class (51% of female students frequently raised questions compared to 68% of male students).
- Forty-one percent of students reported that they never or only sometimes worked harder than they thought they could to meet a faculty member's standards or expectations.

"I hope that you will publish the results of this survey and take measures to fix any problems that appear, as well as highlight any areas that appear favorable (and there should be many)."

—Comment from 2L student



The Part-Time Student Experience



school again if they could start over. It is not clear what might explain these differences; it is possible that the influence of employment and family commitments anchor evening students to a particular locale, resulting in fewer choices in selecting a law school.

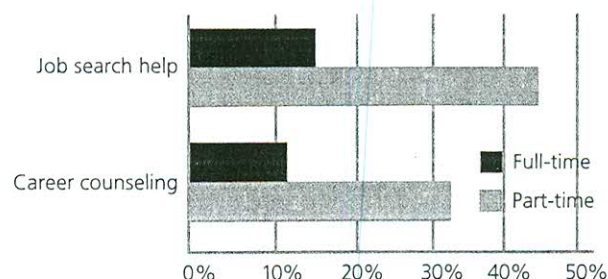
Table 3 Students' Self Reports of Gains^a in Select Areas

	Part-time	Full-time
Acquiring a broad legal education	3.35	3.31
Acquiring job or work-related knowledge and skills	2.71	2.71
Writing clearly and effectively	3.11	3.06
Speaking clearly and effectively	2.86	2.83
Thinking critically and analytically	3.37	3.33
Using computing and information technology	2.61	2.51
Developing legal research skills	3.08	3.11
Working effectively with others	2.47	2.49
Learning effectively on your own	3.22	3.21
Understanding yourself	2.74	2.69
Understanding people of other racial and ethnic backgrounds	2.20	2.20
Solving complex real-world problems	2.62	2.60
Developing clearer career goals	2.40	2.47
Developing a personal code of values and ethics	2.52	2.49
Contributing to the welfare of your community	2.35	2.41

^a Mean scores where 1=Very little, 2=Some, 3=Quite a bit, 4=Very much

While part-time students generally were satisfied with law school services, a smaller proportion of these students made use of career counseling and job search help (Figure 3). One-third (31%) of the part-time students who did not use job search help and 20% of those who did not use career counseling services were unemployed during the school year. Despite this finding, part-time students were just as likely as full-time students to report that they expected to practice law following graduation.¹¹ It is not clear from these data whether part-time students, by keeping a foot in the workforce, have access to networking opportunities that render career services

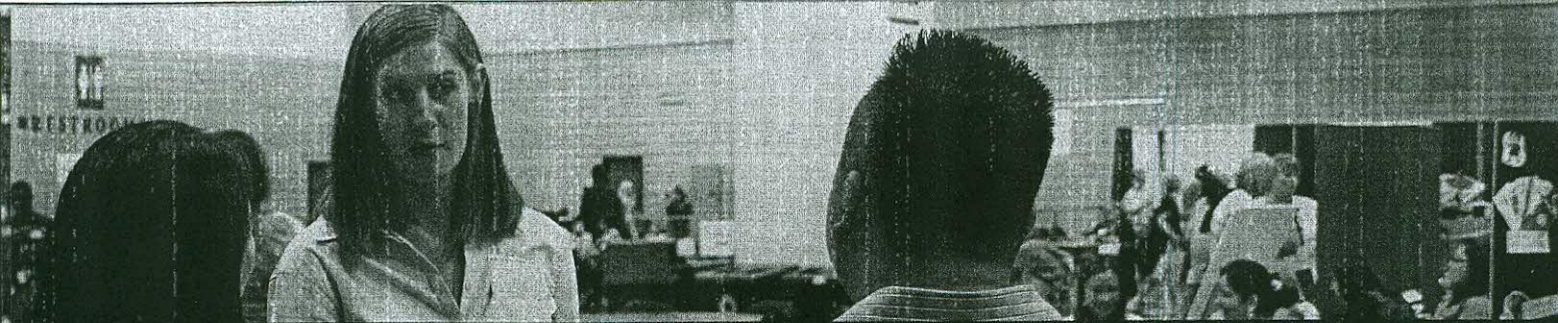
Figure 3 Percent of Students Who Do NOT Use Law School Career Services by Enrollment Status



less relevant, or whether busy schedules prevent them from taking advantage of interview opportunities and career counseling.

Part-time students were as positive about the intellectual rigor of their programs as full-time law students. In 2011, part-time and full-time students reported similar gains in knowledge, skills, and personal development, including effective speaking and writing, critical thinking, and legal research skills¹² (Table 3). Similarly, part-time students were just as likely as full-time students to report that their law school coursework emphasized higher-order learning skills such as analyzing and synthesizing ideas or theories, making judgments about the value of information, and applying theories or concepts in practical situations.

These data suggest that the experience of part-time students was largely comparable to that of full-time students with at least two important caveats. First, part-time students were less likely to take advantage of career services. However, it is not clear whether this disadvantages part-time students with regard to their early career opportunities. Second, part-time students interacted less frequently with others in the law school and participated less frequently in experiential learning opportunities. By identifying these differences, we hope to help law schools address the challenges unique to part-time students.



Experiencing Law School as a Transfer Student

Students may transfer to new law schools for many reasons. While some may transfer to pursue life changes unrelated to law school, each year a number of law students seek to improve their status by moving to a more prestigious law school.¹³ LSSSE data reflect this: transfer students have significantly lower undergraduate GPAs and LSAT scores than other students at the same schools,¹⁴ but they work hard to prove themselves once they matriculate in their new law school. While transferring affects the nature of a student's experience, LSSSE data show that the quality of legal education for transfer students in terms of several engagement measures remains strong.

In 2011, 3% of 2L and 3L students in the LSSSE sample of U.S. law schools started law school at a different school than the one they were currently attending. Our focus here is the transfer students' assessment of their experiences at their new law schools. These students seem content with their decision to switch schools. Transfer students were significantly more likely than other students to report that they were satisfied with their current law school experience, and that they would choose the same law school again (Table 4). An above-average debt load as compared to their peers did not seem to affect students' satisfaction.¹⁵ LSSSE data show that transfer students expected to owe significantly more in law school debt at graduation than non-transfer students.¹⁶ The median law school-related debt for non-transfer students falls in the \$80,000–\$100,000 range, while median debt level for transfer students is in the \$100,001–\$120,000 range.

Making a new start in the second year impacts students' involvement in co-curricular activities and their ability to connect with classmates. Transfer students were less likely than other students to participate in law journal, moot court, and law school organizations (Table 5). In the 2L year, transfer students also were less likely to participate in pro bono activities and to work in law-related settings, suggesting that transfer students may lose some opportunity for beneficial experiential education. In addition, transfer students were less likely to work with classmates outside of class to prepare assignments (Figure 4) or have serious conversations with students who differ from themselves. These data suggest that some opportunities for connection and integration are most salient during the first year of law school, and that transfer students might suffer the loss of such opportunities.¹⁷ For certain activities, the disadvantage related to transferring disappears in the 3L year, perhaps as students become integrated into their new schools.

Table 4 Significant Differences^a in General Satisfaction with Current Law School by Transfer Status^b

	Transfer	Non-transfer
Likely to choose current law school again ^c	83%	75%
Positive rating of entire experience at current law school ^d	86%	80%

^aStatistically significant at the $p < .001$ level.

^bIncludes 2L and 3L students at U.S. law schools.

^cIncludes those students who reported that they would "probably" or "definitely" choose the same law school again.

^dIncludes those students who responded 6 or 7 on a 7-point scale.

Table 5 Participation^a in Select Activities by Transfer Status and Class Year^b

	2L		3L	
	Transfer	Non-transfer	Transfer	Non-transfer
Clinical internship	39%	43%	75%	75%
Volunteer or pro bono work	40%	48%**	65%	65%
Student-faculty committee	5%	13%***	9%	19%***
Work on a legal research project with faculty member outside of class	11%	19%***	25%	29%
Law journal member	25%	32%**	27%	37%***
Moot court team	10%	16%**	16%	21%*
Law student organization member	52%	70%***	55%	71%***
Law student organization leader	16%	38%***	30%	43%***

^aIncludes percentage of students who reported having "done" the activity. Response options include "undecided," "do not plan to do," "plan to do," and "done."

^bStatistically significant differences are noted at the following levels: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

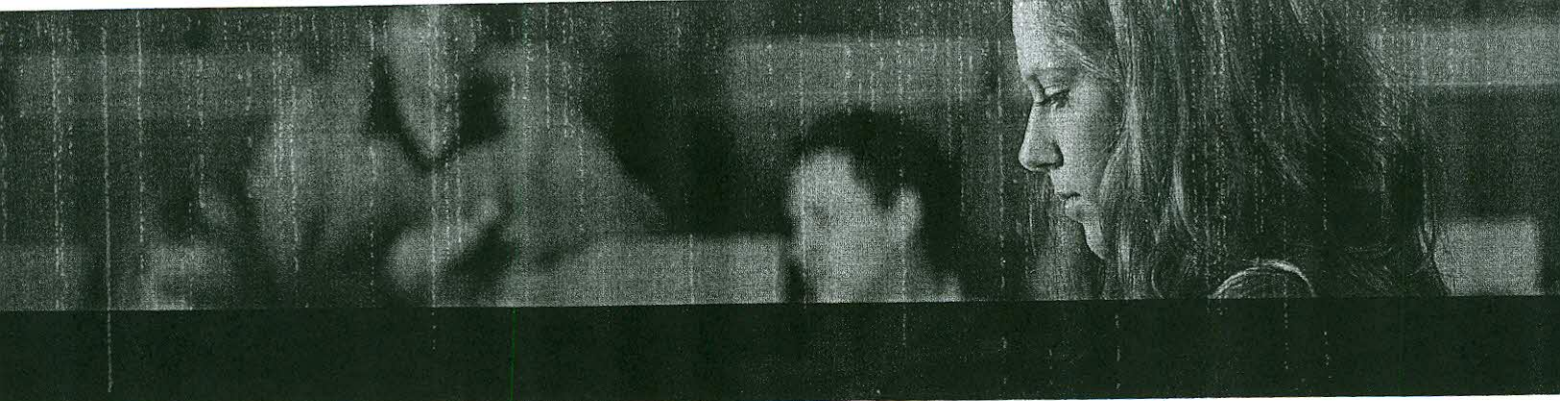
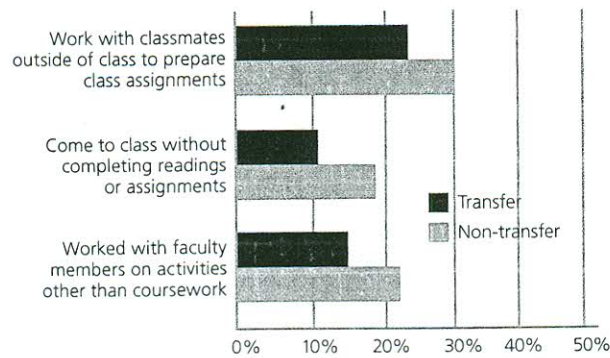


Figure 4 Frequent^a Student Behaviors by Transfer Status



^a Frequent participation includes those students who responded "very often" or "often."

Transfer students also reported greater personal and academic gains than non-transfers. Self-reported gains in several areas—particularly those related to individual development—were significantly higher among transfer students (Table 6). Students who transfer reported greater gains in self-understanding and the development of clearer career goals compared to those who began and ended law school at the same institution. LSSSE data do not reveal whether these findings are attributable to self-selection on the part of transfer students, or whether the transfer process itself contributes to these differences.

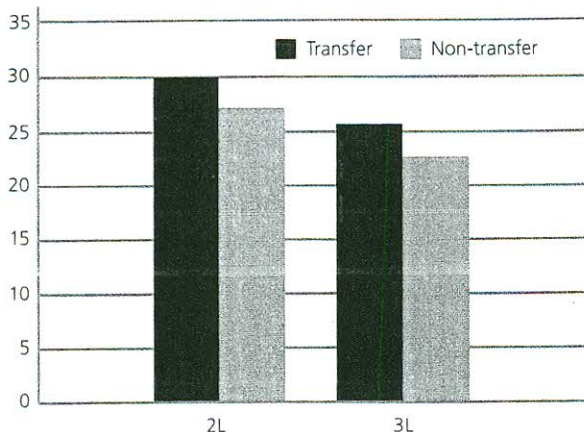
Table 6 Significantly^a Higher Gains for Transfer Students Compared to Non-Transfer Students

Self-Reported Gains:	2L	3L
Acquiring a broad legal education	**	
Acquiring work-related knowledge or skills	**	
Speaking clearly and effectively	*	
Using computer and information technology	*	
Learning effectively on your own	***	*
Understanding yourself	**	*
Understanding people of other racial and ethnic backgrounds	***	*
Solving complex real-world problems	***	
Developing clearer career goals	***	*
Developing a personal code of values and ethics	***	

^a Asterisks indicate statistically significant higher gains for transfer students than non-transfer students. Statistical significance is flagged at the following levels: *p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001.

These data on transfer students reveal much that is positive about transfer students' assessments of their new law schools. In addition, the results indicate that transfer students bring with them a sense of academic motivation and diligence. But their experience is not equivalent in important respects to that of non-transfer students. Law schools can use these results to consider how to help transfer students become better integrated into their new school communities.

Figure 5 Hours Per Week^a Spent Studying and Preparing for Class by Transfer Status



^a Includes mean number of hours per week derived from two survey items: time spent reading assigned textbooks, online class reading, and other course material; and time spent preparing for class and clinical courses other than reading (studying, writing, doing homework, trial preparation, and other academic activities).

LSSSE data show that transfer students are academically diligent. They were less likely than non-transfer students to come to class unprepared (Figure 4), and they spent significantly more time reading and preparing for class (Figure 5). In their new schools, transfer students reported earning grades that were on par with those of their classmates.

Internationalizing the Law Student Experience

Globalization's influence penetrates the economy both through commercial activities as well as the mobility of individuals, and predictions are that its influence will be as significant for the work of future lawyers as the role technology has played in recent years. What are law schools doing to prepare their students to work in a more internationally diverse environment? LSSSE investigated this by asking 7,501 JD students at 22 of the 2011 participating law schools about their awareness of and interaction with international graduate law students (IGLSs) enrolled in their law schools.

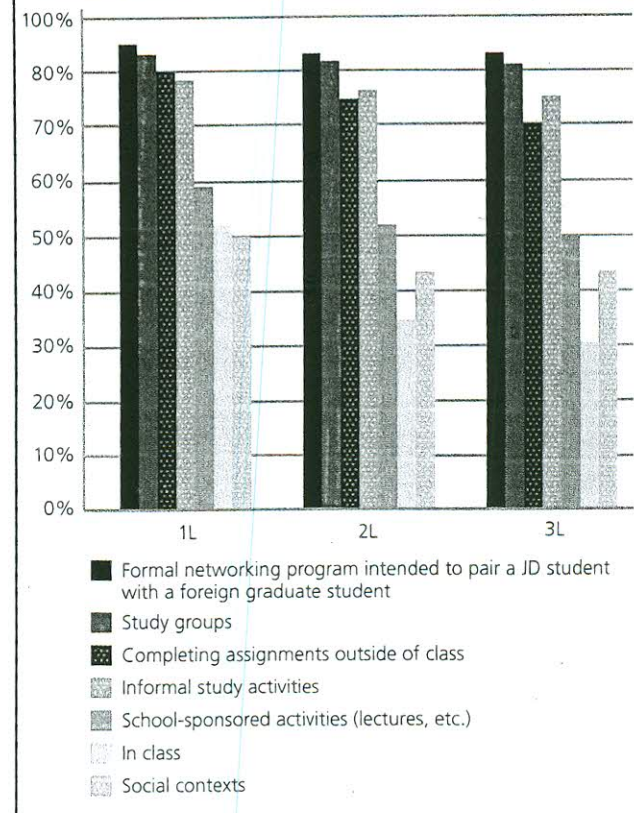
The presence of IGLSs in U.S. law schools offers students born and educated in the U.S. the opportunity to interact with individuals from other countries and cultures while still in law school, which will better prepare them for practice in an increasingly global environment. But is the structure of law school helping these U.S. students¹⁸ take advantage of this opportunity?

Overall, JD students reported that their interaction with IGLSs was quite limited. For some students, even simple awareness of the presence of IGLSs in the law school community was unclear. Approximately one-third of JDs were uncertain whether there were IGLSs at their law school at all, despite each law school having a graduate program in which IGLSs were enrolled.

The absence of interaction between JDs and IGLSs in many settings is pervasive. Among all JDs, regardless of their year in school, more than half reported never interacting with an IGLS in five of the seven settings we addressed, including outside of class for the purpose of studying informally or completing a class assignment (Figure 6). These results reveal an important lost opportunity for U.S. JD students in gaining experience working collaboratively with IGLSs and preparing themselves for the global economy.

To the extent that JDs and IGLSs interact at all, it is most likely to occur in class. However, only 20% of all students (15% of 1Ls, 21% of 2Ls, and 23% of 3Ls) reported interacting with IGLSs frequently (combination of response options "often" and "very often") in class. The lower level of interaction by 1Ls is explained by the fact that IGLSs tend to take primarily upper level courses at most law schools, reducing the likelihood of course overlap between the two cadres until later years. Interestingly, the lack of interaction is particularly pronounced in clinical courses, notwithstanding that these courses are taken later in the law school sequence. Of the students who reported

Figure 6 Percentage of Students Who Never Interacted with IGLSs in Selected Settings by Class Level



having at least one class with an IGLS, only 3% identified a clinical class as the place of meeting. This is of extra concern because clinics are significant to student learning and an important part of U.S. legal education.¹⁹

Apart from class, JDs are most likely to meet IGLSs in social contexts. Formal networking programs—a typical mechanism used by schools to encourage interaction between IGLSs and JDs and designed explicitly for the purpose of helping IGLSs become integrated into the law school community—reach very few JDs and were the *least* likely setting for interaction. These findings represent an opportunity for improvement for many schools.

Ideally, JDs will learn to work with IGLSs in the same way that they learn to work with their JD classmates, including in study groups and by working on assignments outside of class. This sort of interaction is infrequent, however. Fewer than 16% of all JDs reported interacting frequently with IGLSs in such academically oriented settings (Figure 7).



JDs who frequently interact with their JD peers to complete assignments outside of class reported substantially lower interaction with IGLSs. Thirty-one percent of all JDs reported frequent interaction with other JDs for the purpose of completing assignments outside of class. The interaction of this group with IGLSs, however, is dramatically lower in the same setting (Figure 8). Only 9% of this group also worked frequently with IGLSs to complete assignments outside of class, while two-thirds reported never working with IGLSs in this setting. These data illustrate that JDs are not working with IGLSs voluntarily on academic projects, despite class being the most common meeting point.

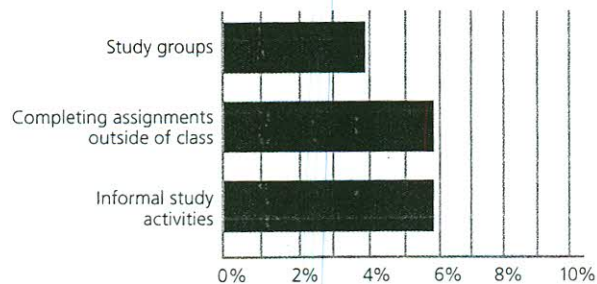
When JDs do interact with IGLSs, what do they talk about? The most common topic is the law of the IGLS's home country. This likely relates to those in-class settings for discussion, when a common way of bringing an IGLS into a conversation is to ask about how a particular problem would be resolved in his or her home country. The frequency of these discussions in individual courses varied enormously according to student comments.

Notwithstanding the generally limited interaction between JD students and IGLSs, certain JD students were more likely to interact with IGLSs than others. A greater proportion of JDs who were members of an international law society or who studied abroad before law school reported talking with IGLSs about a variety of subjects, including the IGLS's home country law, legal education, and their plans for working after law school.

If law schools want their students to learn in a more internationally diverse environment, they must affirmatively structure the law school experience to encourage interaction. LSSSE data reveal that JDs do not understand that their schools consider interaction with IGLSs important. Rather, students reported that their level of interaction with IGLSs is more frequent than their law schools suggest.

These data are an invitation for law schools to revisit how they prepare students to work in a global economy. Schools can both clarify their message about the importance of interaction and use LSSSE as a guide in developing structures to facilitate conduct that will better prepare all students for the increasingly global world they will face.

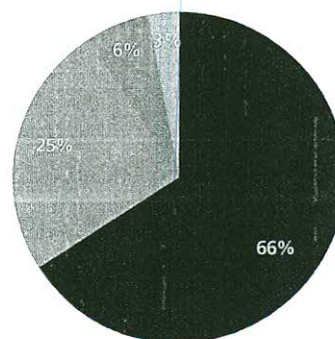
Figure 7 Frequent^a Interaction between JDs and IGLSs in Selected Settings Outside of Class



^a "Frequent" interaction includes students who responded "very often" and "often."

Figure 8 Interaction of Collaboratively Inclined JDs^a with IGLSs in Settings Outside of Class

- Never interacted while completing assignments outside of class
- ▒ Sometimes interacted while completing assignments outside of class
- ▓ Often interacted while completing assignments outside of class
- ▔ Very often interacted while completing assignments outside of class



^a Collaboratively inclined JDs are those who frequently collaborated with other JDs in out-of-class settings.



Using LSSSE Data

Here we highlight several ways in which law schools use their LSSSE data, from providing a basis for a broad and continuing discussion about how to improve the law school to supporting a focused investigation into a single area of interest.

Creating a Shared Vision

The University at Buffalo School of Law first participated in LSSSE in 2010. Based on that first year of data, Buffalo convened a LSSSE Committee to consider issues raised by the survey data as well as other issues of concern to students. “LSSSE was a great launching pad,” according to Stephen Paskey, who teaches Legal Analysis, Writing, and Research at Buffalo and serves on the school’s LSSSE Committee. The Committee was comprised of students, staff, and faculty, and its activities throughout the year are sure to help Buffalo strengthen the sense of community within the school. The Committee identified several themes on which to focus their work by drawing from LSSSE data and other sources of information in the school. These themes were then discussed with students, faculty, and staff in various settings, including all-school public forums and small dinners at faculty homes; in this way, the Committee was able to foster a meaningful dialogue among different segments of Buffalo’s community. Among the topics related to LSSSE data tackled were academic advising and mentorship, and use of career services. For each, LSSSE provides much information for Buffalo. The LSSSE Committee at Buffalo has been reconstituted in 2011–2012 to assess change and continue the discussion.

As at Buffalo, other schools have used LSSSE to develop a school-wide conversation among faculty, students, and staff. This method of using LSSSE data helps schools establish a culture of transparency and shared vision.

Managing Resources

St. Thomas University School of Law’s centralized approach to financial aid counseling provided services to all students—including law students—through the University’s financial aid office. The School of Law learned through LSSSE that its law students were not as satisfied with financial aid advice as were students at peer law schools. The School of Law used these data to successfully seek funding for a dedicated financial aid advisor to serve its students.

Phoenix School of Law and Santa Clara School of Law also have used comparative LSSSE data to successfully advocate for more dedicated administrative support for law students.

Linking LSSSE Data to External Information

Southwestern Law School has investigated the relationship between engagement and passing the bar by linking their LSSSE data to bar pass results. Their findings suggest both that students who are engaged are more likely to pass the bar, and that students who are not engaged are less likely to pass. Southwestern also undertook a follow-up study that linked bar pass results to various aspects of engagement in law school and students’ own perceptions of the likelihood that they would pass the bar exam on a first attempt. They discovered that students who were more engaged—more likely to come to class prepared, discuss assignments with faculty members, perceive a positive law school environment—reported higher confidence that their law school was preparing them for success on the bar when they first sat the exam, and this, in turn, correlated with students being more likely to pass the bar exam.

Other schools are in the process of developing connections between engagement, as reported through LSSSE, and a variety of external information, including students’ participation in academic support programs, their law school academic records, and bar pass results.

Charting Progress

Marquette University Law School has used LSSSE to work with its Multicultural Student Council to identify diversity issues of concern. By comparing each year of data on questions related to these issues, they are able to track progress and evaluate the success of new initiatives.

Lincoln Memorial University Duncan School of Law is using LSSSE data to set goals. Duncan’s in-house assessment coordinator works with administration, which creates benchmarks that address those areas that could use more attention and that respond to the law school’s areas of strength. The law school used both internal data and comparative data from its selected peer schools to identify these areas for increased attention. For example, when Duncan discovered that its students were not writing as many short papers as their peers, they instituted a school-wide writing initiative to increase the writing emphasis going forward. Future administrations of LSSSE



Outreach Services

LSSSE staff members are available to visit individual law schools to conduct workshops for various groups and to facilitate school-specific interpretation and analyses.

LSSSE User Workshops.

User workshops allow faculty and administrators an opportunity to learn more about how they can use LSSSE results at their law school. Workshop participants gain insight into student engagement—what students do, what they gain, and how they perceive their experiences—at their law school. In addition, LSSSE analysts share strategies for interpreting and analyzing data. Participants work through their customized data reports and several sample analyses to give them ideas and models to employ with their own results. Presentations from previous user workshops are posted to the LSSSE Web site, lsse.iub.edu/pastpresentations.cfm.

School Visits and Consultations

Schools ready to probe more deeply into their results may wish to plan a strategy session or one-on-one training at their law school. LSSSE staff members are available to visit participating law schools to discuss the data in detail. Often such conversations lead to instructive discoveries about differences in the quality of the legal education experience for various types of students (e.g., full-time versus part-time students, or older students versus traditional-aged students), changes in results over time, or important areas of focus for further inquiry.

User Resources

LSSSE has developed several print resources to help participating law schools use their data most effectively. Download copies of all of these tools from the LSSSE Web site, lsse.iub.edu.

Guide to the LSSSE Survey Items

Use this guide to organize the survey items by themes of engagement. This LSSSE instrument was developed to probe each aspect of student engagement in multiple ways. The Guide offers several groupings of items that schools can use as they analyze results.

Working with Your LSSSE Data Guide

Similar to an instructor's manual, this guide provides a detailed description of each section of your *Law School Report*, along with definitions of key statistical terms that are utilized in the analyzed data reports. Review this guide for a step-by-step strategy for understanding your results.

Predict Your Results Worksheets


These worksheets can be used as part of a LSSSE presentation to generate interest in the findings. The worksheets ask participants to contemplate their own assumptions about student behaviors, and then to compare those assumptions to their school's actual results. Two different versions are tailored to faculty and administrators.

Accreditation Toolkit

The Accreditation Toolkit offers guidelines for incorporating LSSSE data into accreditation self-studies. Further, the Toolkit provides a map that aligns specific items from the LSSSE survey instrument to ABA accreditation standards.

LSSSE PowerPoint Template

To facilitate presentations to faculty and administrators using results from your own law school, customize LSSSE's sample PowerPoint template. The template outlines some of the important aspects of student engagement and provides talking points along with space to drop in data from your school. Adapt the template to suit your audience and needs.



Looking Ahead

As we issue these Annual Survey Results, reporting on the 33,413 law students who responded to the LSSSE survey in 2011, one might well wonder why we need more information about legal education. Over the past year, there have been numerous news articles, blog postings, and public statements about what is and is not happening in U.S. law schools. But missing from most of these is the voice of current law students. This is our focus at LSSSE.

The data generated through LSSSE are used by participating law schools to help their students learn more effectively and efficiently. This happens by schools learning through LSSSE how their students are spending their time and how they are not spending their time, how their students are interacting with others in the law school and how they are not interacting, and what their students feel they are learning and what they feel they are not learning. While it is not all good news for participating law schools, the results paint a more nuanced and balanced picture than that often reported in the press. Of course, LSSSE is only one source of information about legal education, but by learning from these and other data, participating schools have the means to address weaknesses and build upon strengths.

At LSSSE, our job is to learn from the data, and we cannot imagine a more fascinating perch. Our work over the past year has included an investigation of how law students learn about professionalism; our findings point to the importance of clinical education as a way to increase learning generally among students.²⁰ In a follow-up project, we will consider whether alternative experiential learning environments lead to the same gains in student learning. We also are undertaking a long-term review of the survey instrument as part of our research on engagement in the context of legal education. Our goal is to collaborate with law schools by producing useful research and continuing to provide a valid, reliable survey instrument.

Law schools participate in LSSSE to invest in the future. Schools are choosing to learn how to improve the experiences of their students. This is a responsible approach to the challenges facing law schools today, and we look forward to our ongoing partnership.

"I am enjoying the law school experience. There is great potential at [my law school], including phenomenal students and faculty."

—Comment from 1L student



Notes

Participating Law Schools: 2004–2011

ALABAMA

Faulkner University,
Thomas Goode Jones School of Law
Montgomery

Samford University,
Cumberland School of Law
Birmingham

The University of Alabama
School of Law
Tuscaloosa

ARIZONA

Phoenix School of Law
Phoenix

ARKANSAS

University of Arkansas at Little Rock,
William H. Bowen School of Law
Little Rock

University of Arkansas School of Law
Fayetteville

CALIFORNIA

California Western School of Law
San Diego

Chapman University School of Law
Orange

Concord Law School
Los Angeles

Golden Gate University School of Law
San Francisco

Humphreys College Laurence Drivon
School of Law
Stockton

Loyola Law School
Los Angeles

Pepperdine University School of Law
Malibu

Santa Clara University School of Law
Santa Clara

Southwestern Law School
Los Angeles

Thomas Jefferson School of Law
San Diego

University of California at Davis
School of Law
Davis

University of California Hastings
College of the Law
San Francisco

University of California at Los Angeles
School of Law
Los Angeles

University of the Pacific,
McGeorge School of Law
Sacramento

University of San Diego School of Law
San Diego

University of San Francisco
School of Law
San Francisco

University of Southern California
Gould School of Law
Los Angeles

Western State University
College of Law
Fullerton

Whittier Law School
Costa Mesa

COLORADO

University of Colorado Law School
Boulder

University of Denver
Sturm College of Law
Denver

CONNECTICUT

Quinnipiac University School of Law
Hamden

University of Connecticut
School of Law
Hartford

DELAWARE

Widener University School of Law
Wilmington

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

American University
Washington College of Law

The Catholic University of America –
Columbus School of Law

The George Washington University
Law School

Georgetown University Law Center

The University of the
District of Columbia,
David A. Clarke School of Law

FLORIDA

Ave Maria School of Law
Naples

Florida Coastal School of Law
Jacksonville

Florida International University
College of Law
Miami

Nova Southeastern University,
Shepard Broad Law Center
Ft. Lauderdale

St. Thomas University School of Law
Miami

Stetson University College of Law
Gulfport

University of Florida,
Levin College of Law
Gainesville

University of Miami School of Law
Coral Gables

GEORGIA

Emory University School of Law
Atlanta

Georgia State University
College of Law
Atlanta

John Marshall Law School, Atlanta
Atlanta

Mercer University
Walter F. George School of Law
Macon

HAWAII

University of Hawai'i at Mānoa
William S. Richardson School of Law
Honolulu

IDAHO

University of Idaho College of Law
Moscow

ILLINOIS

The John Marshall Law School
Chicago

Loyola University
Chicago School of Law
Chicago

Southern Illinois University
School of Law
Carbondale

University of Illinois College of Law
Champaign

INDIANA

Indiana University
Maurer School of Law
Bloomington

Valparaiso University School of Law
Valparaiso

IOWA

Drake University Law School
Des Moines

KANSAS

The University of Kansas
School of Law
Lawrence

Washburn University School of Law
Topeka

KENTUCKY

Northern Kentucky University,
Salmon P. Chase College of Law
Highland Heights

University of Kentucky College of Law
Lexington

University of Louisville,
Louis D. Brandeis School of Law
Louisville

LOUISIANA

Louisiana State University,
Paul M. Hebert Law Center
Baton Rouge

Loyola University
New Orleans College of Law
New Orleans

Southern University Law Center
Baton Rouge

Tulane University Law School
New Orleans

MAINE

University of Maine School of Law
Portland

MARYLAND

University of Baltimore School of Law
Baltimore

University of Maryland
Francis King Carey School of Law
Baltimore

MASSACHUSETTS

Harvard University Law School
Cambridge

Northeastern University
School of Law
Boston

Suffolk University Law School
Boston

Western New England College
School of Law
Springfield

MICHIGAN

Michigan State University
College of Law
East Lansing

Thomas M. Cooley Law School
Lansing

University of Detroit
Mercy School of Law
Detroit

Wayne State University Law School
Detroit

MINNESOTA

Hamline University School of Law
Saint Paul

University of Minnesota Law School
Minneapolis

University of St. Thomas
School of Law
Minneapolis

William Mitchell College of Law
St. Paul

MISSISSIPPI

Mississippi College School of Law
Jackson

The University of Mississippi
School of Law
Oxford

MISSOURI

Saint Louis University School of Law
St. Louis

University of Missouri – School of Law
Columbia

University of Missouri –
Kansas City School of Law
Kansas City

Washington University School of Law
St. Louis

MONTANA

The University of Montana
School of Law
Missoula

NEBRASKA

Creighton University School of Law
Omaha
University of Nebraska College of Law
Lincoln

NEVADA

University of Nevada, Las Vegas,
William S. Boyd School of Law
Las Vegas

NEW HAMPSHIRE

University of New Hampshire
School of Law
Concord

NEW JERSEY

Seton Hall University School of Law
Newark

NEW YORK

Albany Law School
Albany
Brooklyn Law School
Brooklyn
City University of New York
School of Law at Queens College
Flushing
Fordham University School of Law
New York
Hofstra University,
Maurice A. Deane School of Law
Hempstead
New York Law School
New York
Pace University School of Law
White Plains
St. John's University School of Law
Queens
Syracuse University College of Law
Syracuse
Touro College
Jacob D. Fuchsberg Law Center
Central Islip
University at Buffalo Law School
Buffalo
Yeshiva University,
Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law
New York

NORTH CAROLINA

Campbell University
Norman Adrian Wiggins
School of Law
Raleigh
Charlotte School of Law
Charlotte
Duke University School of Law
Durham
Elon University School of Law
Greensboro
North Carolina Central University
School of Law
Durham

University of North Carolina
School of Law
Chapel Hill
Wake Forest University School of Law
Winston-Salem

OHIO

Capital University Law School
Columbus
Case Western Reserve University
School of Law
Cleveland
Cleveland State University,
Cleveland-Marshall College of Law
Cleveland
Ohio Northern University
Claude W. Pettit College of Law
Ada
The Ohio State University
Michael E. Moritz College of Law
Columbus
The University of Akron
School of Law
Akron
University of Cincinnati
College of Law
Cincinnati
University of Dayton School of Law
Dayton

OKLAHOMA

Oklahoma City University
School of Law
Oklahoma City
The University of Oklahoma
College of Law
Norman
The University of Tulsa College of Law
Tulsa

OREGON

Lewis & Clark Law School
Portland
University of Oregon School of Law
Eugene

PENNSYLVANIA

Earl Mack School of Law
Drexel University
Philadelphia
Temple University –
James E. Beasley School of Law
Philadelphia
University of Pittsburgh School of Law
Pittsburgh

RHODE ISLAND

Roger Williams University
School of Law
Bristol

SOUTH CAROLINA

Charleston School of Law
Charleston
University of South Carolina
School of Law
Columbia

SOUTH DAKOTA

University of South Dakota
School of Law
Vermillion

TENNESSEE

Lincoln Memorial University –
Duncan School of Law
Knoxville
The University of Tennessee
College of Law
Knoxville
Vanderbilt University School of Law
Nashville

TEXAS

Baylor University School of Law
Waco
St. Mary's University of San Antonio
School of Law
San Antonio
South Texas College of Law
Houston
Southern Methodist University
Dedman School of Law
Dallas
Texas Southern University
Thurgood Marshall School of Law
Houston
Texas Tech University School of Law
Lubbock
Texas Wesleyan University
School of Law
Fort Worth
University of Houston Law Center
Houston
UTAH
Brigham Young University
J. Reuben Clark Law School
Provo
University of Utah
S.J. Quinney College of Law
Salt Lake City

VERMONT

Vermont Law School
South Royalton

VIRGINIA

Regent University School of Law
Virginia Beach
University of Richmond School of Law
Richmond
Washington and Lee University
School of Law
Lexington
William & Mary Law School
Williamsburg

WASHINGTON

Gonzaga University School of Law
Spokane
Seattle University School of Law
Seattle

University of Washington
School of Law
Seattle

WISCONSIN

Marquette University Law School
Milwaukee
University of Wisconsin Law School
Madison

WYOMING

University of Wyoming College of Law
Laramie

CANADA

University of Alberta – Faculty of Law
Edmonton, AB
University of Calgary – Faculty of Law
Calgary, AB
University of British Columbia –
Faculty of Law
Vancouver, BC
University of Victoria – Faculty of Law
Victoria, BC
University of Manitoba –
Faculty of Law
Winnipeg, MB
University of New Brunswick –
Faculty of Law
Fredericton, NB
Dalhousie University,
Schulich School of Law
Halifax, NS
McGill University – Faculty of Law
Montreal, ON
Osgoode Hall Law School
of York University
Toronto, ON
Queen's University – Faculty of Law
Kingston, ON
Université d'Ottawa –
Faculté de droit, Section de droit civil
Ottawa, ON
University of Ottawa –
Faculty of Law, Common Law Section
Ottawa, ON
University of Toronto – Faculty of Law
Toronto, ON
University of Western Ontario –
Faculty of Law
London, ON
University of Windsor –
Faculty of Law
Windsor, ON
Université de Montréal –
Faculté de droit
Montréal, QC
University of Saskatchewan –
College of Law
Saskatoon, SK