

## Harvard Law School to Waive Tuition for 3Ls

*By Carina Zaragoza*

Harvard Law School recently announced it will waive tuition for third-year law students. These students may see a savings of more than \$40,000. The condition is that they must pledge to work for five years with the government or a nonprofit organization. Harvard Law already offers loan forgiveness programs to students choosing public service work upon graduation.

The main impetus for creating this new, and unique, tuition incentive is to encourage students to enter the public service sector. From 2003 to 2006 only about 10% to 12% of students entered public service jobs. Many students who would have entered public service may have been dissuaded by the high salaries law firms offer, in many cases well over \$100,000.

Harvard Law is also addressing the issue of the large amount of debt students graduate with. Harvard recently introduced a new financial aid plan that increases aid to undergraduate students. Students who enter the public service sector typically receive lower salaries than their counterparts who enter the corporate world. Both groups graduate with the same amount of debt, but it is the public sector attorneys who feel the financial pressure. Thus, many recent graduates are pushed into high-paying private sector jobs, if only to manage their education debt.

How many students will take Harvard Law up on its offer remains to be seen. Harvard Law is anticipating the waiver program will cost \$3 million per year. Plus, there are already systems in place to track whether students remain in the public service sector for the entire five years that is required. If they don't, Harvard Law will ask for its money back.

The Public Service Initiative will begin with the entering class of the fall 2008 semester. Students currently enrolled are eligible for smaller tuition grants. Qualifying public service jobs include any full-time job with a government agency, any full-time job with a nonprofit organization, any full-time job for a political campaign, and clerkships.

In other Harvard Law news, the Global Poker Strategic Thinking Society rallied against the Massachusetts State House to oppose a bill that would penalize individuals who participate in online poker. The Global Poker Strategic Thinking Society supports online poker as an educational tool, claiming the game teaches skills like strategic thinking, risk assessment, and money management. The Poker Players Alliance is also in opposition to the bill. Should the bill pass, anyone playing online poker would receive criminal penalties and, if convicted, could face two years in jail and a fine of up to \$25,000. The president of the Global Poker Strategic Thinking Society is Charles Nesson, a professor at Harvard Law.

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