



NEWSLETTER

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Law School Loans Testimonials

John B. Chicago, IL says...

I had many lenders to choose from. One lender in particular solicited me heavily. I was almost going to choose that lender to consolidate my law school loans. But a loan consultant at Law School Loans talked me into going with them instead. She did a great job of telling me all about federal student loan consolidation program. She answered my questions thoroughly and spent a lot of time making sure I had all the facts straight. The loan consultant handling my consolidation emailed me more than some of my closest friends and relatives. The customer service at Law School Loans is MUCH BETTER than the other lender I was considering.

LEGISLATION COULD SIMPLIFY FINANCIAL AID APPLICATION PROCESS

- CARINA ZARAGOZA

In a bipartisan effort, both Democrats and Republicans are calling for a simplification of the financial aid application process. Both parties last month voted in approval of a bill that would allow applicants to simply check a box on their tax returns. Certain information required for financial aid would then be directly sent to the Department of Education. This information would automatically answer questions found on the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).

The proposed legislation is so popular it is anticipated that the bill will be made into law later this year. Recent studies and reports are in part responsible for the move to simplify the financial aid application process. One such study was conducted by Susan Dynarski and Judith E. Scott-Clayton, economists at Harvard University. The study, *Complexity and Targeting in Federal Student Aid: A Quantitative Analysis*, finds that it takes 10 hours for families to complete the FAFSA. Having to use previous years' tax returns initially and then revising the application with the current year's tax return is part of the reason it takes so long.

These findings are in direct contradiction to the Department of Education's assertion that it takes families only one hour to complete and submit the FAFSA. The FAFSA is comprised of 127 questions, most of which ask about specifics of income.

Some critics of the proposed change, among them Dynarski and Scott-Clayton, indicate the new, streamlined method would allow some wealthy families to inappropriately collect financial aid. Others point out that the new method would not help the sector of the population that most needs financial aid. Lower-income families might not file their tax returns online, which is how the new check-box system would work. Thus, these families

would still have to use the traditional method of filling out and submitting the FAFSA. Plus, lower-income families may not file tax returns, so the check-box method would be of no use to them.

Further deliberation of the bill has not been scheduled.

Meanwhile, the recent trend of Ivy League schools completely restructuring their financial aid programs continues. Just this week Brown University joined the list by replacing loans with grants. Loans will be completely eliminated from financial aid packages for families earning less than \$100,000. Contributions of any amount will not be required from families earning less than \$60,000. Similar moves were recently made by Stanford University and Washington University in St. Louis.

On the Net

U.S. News & World Report
www.usnews.com/articles/education/2008/02/21/making-it-easier-to-fill-out-college-financial-aid-forms.html

Financial Aid Study
www.nber.org/papers/w13801

Brown University Revises Financial Aid Program
www.brown.edu/Administration/News_Bureau/2007-08/07-105.html

Stanford University Revises Financial Aid Program
news-service.stanford.edu/news/2008/february20/finaid-022008.html

Washington University Revises Financial Aid Program
record.wustl.edu/news/page/normal/11100.html



NEWSLETTER

LAW SCHOOL BOASTS ABOUT FACULTY TO BE SCRUTINIZED

- CARINA ZARAGOZA

The Green Bag, the self-described “entertaining journal of law,” has announced it will join in on the rankings of law schools by examining the claims made by law schools about their faculty and comparing them to the actual performance of faculty members.

The methods *The Green Bag* staff will undertake are as follows:

1. Gather each law school’s faculty webpages, course catalogs, and publications.
2. Analyze the data with close attention paid to *recent* scholarship and teaching.
3. Rank the faculty according to a combination of teaching, research, publications, and service.

The preliminary findings will be sent to each law school’s dean, giving her or him a chance to review the results and make any corrections. The final report will be published in the journal.

The Green Bag essentially wants to determine, and make public, whether faculty are doing what their respective law schools profess they do. Are faculty members teaching courses regularly? Are faculty members publishing scholarly works? Are faculty members engaging in community service or performing pro bono work?

The goal of the report, suggestively named “The Deadwood Report,” is to determine whether “faculty members do the work the law schools say they do.” The journal is referring to the practices of law schools around the country in trying to boost their admissions. To this endeavor, law schools, via their websites and marketing materials, oftentimes boast about their faculty members, their tremendous amount of research and publications, and their stellar records of public service. In light of this, *The Green Bag* asks how applicants are supposed to know whether faculty and their respective institutions are living up to the hype.

Traditional ranking organizations, such as the Association of American Law Schools and the American Bar Association, *The Green Bag* suggests, may be biased as both organizations have law schools as members. *U.S. News & World Report*,

as a publication outside the legal field, also annually ranks law schools but does not assess the achievements of faculty.

The Green Bag hopes to fill this gap with “The Deadwood Report” and provide applicants with more detailed information about the faculty at each law school. *The Green Bag* is committed to transparency and will reveal its methodology, where data was collected, and how rankings were finalized. A second motive is compelling law schools to adopt a similar level of transparency.

There have been mixed reactions to the announcement of the upcoming report, from both rankers and the would-be ranked. Some profess that there already exist too many rankings. Others applaud *The Green Bag’s* scrutiny of faculty members and claims made by law schools. Reaction from law school deans has likewise been mixed. Some welcome the additional factual information that will be made public. Others fear the report will be riddled with personal opinion and thus its credibility will be muddled.

As for the title of the report, *The Green Bag* editor Ross E. Davies is adamant that it is not intended to be mean. However, he does admit that “when you say ‘deadwood,’ people know what you mean.”

The Green Bag was originally published from 1889 to 1914. The current version of the journal is run by Ross E. Davies, associate professor of law at George Mason University School of Law.

On the Net

Inside Higher Ed
www.insidehighered.com

The Green Bag
www.greenbag.org/index.php

George Mason University School of Law
www.law.gmu.edu/curnews/story.php?ID=910



NEWSLETTER

NEWS IN BRIEF

NYU RAKED IN MORE THAN \$43 MILLION LAST YEAR

With donations worth more than \$43 million received, New York University School of Law finished second only to Harvard Law School in terms of monetary contributions. The law school raised more than \$285 million between January 2002 and January 2008. The donations are expected to fund the recruitment of new professors, provide scholarships to students, and allow for expansion of the campus.

WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY'S UNIQUE TRANSNATIONAL LAW PROGRAM

Washington University's ongoing partnership with Utrecht University in the Netherlands has led to a unique transnational law program for students in the U.S. as well as those in Europe. The new program will allow students from the United States to study at both Washington University and Utrecht. The students will

acquire their J.D. degrees in the U.S. and will pursue their LL.M. degrees in the Netherlands. A growing need for lawyers who understand both American and European law has led to this development. The program also includes Queen's University Belfast, the University of Trento in Italy, and the Catholic University of Portugal.

UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII WILL OFFER NIGHT LAW CLASSES

The ABA has approved night classes for the University of Hawaii at Manoa William S. Richardson School of Law. The part-time law program will admit 24 students for the fall semester. The program is designed to help students complete their legal degrees in five years. The law school's dean commented that the part-time program would increase access to legal education in the Hawaiian Islands. Applicants will need to have passed the LSAT before applying.

