



February 2004

BELLARMI PRE LAW COUNCIL

# Pre Law Review

## WHAT'S NEWS?

Save that DATE!

### ***MENTORING PROGRAM With BC LAW***

*This is a new opportunity for students...  
Interested in helping the planning stages?  
Contact [bla@bc.edu](mailto:bla@bc.edu)*

### ***PICK UP FLAG FOOTBALL GAME***

*@ the Seminary Fields  
COMING SOON...*

***Can you be more creative than this?***

*The BLA is looking for a CARTOONIST to assist the  
Pre Law Review with caricatures, cartoons and  
other creative pictures.*

*Interested? Contact [bla@bc.edu](mailto:bla@bc.edu)*

*Questions about Pre-Law, Law School, the LSAT? Visit our  
newly revamped website:*

[www.bc.edu/BLA](http://www.bc.edu/BLA)

# The Application Process

## By Ashly Hanna

As I wait to receive my law school admissions decisions in my McElroy mailbox, I have some time to reflect on the application process. I did some things correctly, but looking back, there are some things that I would do differently.

Essentially, I started the application process by registering with LSDAS in August before my senior year. I went abroad spring semester of my junior year, and because my study abroad program ran until mid-June, this prevented me from registering for the June LSAT administration. Going abroad was important to me, but I wish I had the opportunity to take the LSAT twice before early admissions deadlines started approaching.

You never know what will go wrong on the day of the LSAT – my room was about 90 degrees, and I have heard other unfortunate stories about timing mistakes. Since every second counts on the LSAT, you can't have any distractions. I would definitely give yourself the opportunity to take the LSAT twice by taking it in June following your junior year, just in case something you can't control goes wrong.

By taking the LSAT in June or October (of your senior year), you give yourself the opportunity to apply early decision or early action to your first choice schools. In addition, most law schools that I applied to have rolling admissions, which means that the admissions committee evaluates applications as they arrive. In a rolling admissions process, you are disadvantaged by waiting until the last minute to apply. All of my applications were in by the beginning of December, which took a lot of pressure off me over Christmas break. It also gave me a glimpse into how the 2004-2005 admissions process was unfolding. By receiving decisions from a handful of schools before Christmas, I was able to apply to a few more safety schools before the general application deadlines in February and March.

The components of law school applications are tedious. Most schools require two recommendations, a personal statement, a dean's certification, and a transcript. Three schools I applied to required supplementary essays. I gave my recommendation forms to professors at least three weeks before they had to be mailed out. Generally, applicants give professors addressed, stamped envelopes not only for their convenience, but also to avoid mailing errors. I asked for recommendations from professors who know me personally as well as academically. Ideally, the people recommending you will know you well enough that they can comment on what kind of student you are, as well as speak to the personal characteristics

that they believe will help you succeed in law school. You don't have to limit yourself to professors, but most law schools request at least one academic recommendation.

The personal statement is the hardest part of the application. Basically, law schools want you to describe your plan for life in 1-2 typed pages. There is also pressure to make it sound different from other personal statements, so that your application will make an impression on the admissions committee. I would suggest starting the writing process as early as possible in order to have time to revise your work several times. Do not compare your statement to others; read samples to get an idea of what people talk about, but make sure your idea is all your own. I suggest having friends, family members and professors read your statement and ask them for honest feedback. It is important that you discover the impression your statement gives about you. Often times, the personal statement is the only way the admissions committee gets to know you, so you want it to give a quick snapshot of what you are like and why you would make a great law student at their institution. This was really difficult – don't underestimate the amount of time it will take you to make sure it's perfect.

The dean's office makes getting dean's recommendations simple, as long as you have never been involved with any kind of disciplinary action. Transcripts are handled by LSDAS. You send one transcript to LSAC, and they send copies to every law school that requests one. This is mandatory and expensive. It is also a good idea to send LSDAS an updated transcript after the fall semester, especially if you did well in your courses.

All in all, the law school application process is time-consuming and the best time to start is the summer between junior and senior years, when you don't have the added pressure of schoolwork. Completing everything in the midst of midterms and papers is stressful and unnecessary. The good part of the process is that once you get your applications in early, you have 1-4 months to do nothing and wait for admissions decisions. I am at that point now. Although I would like to know where I am going to be next year, I can take comfort in the fact that I have done everything I can do. It is up to the admissions committees now.



## PLEASE HOLD: Some thoughts on second semester

This year, I decided to finish my law school applications early. I wanted to have them complete and in the hands of the schools by mid November. After spending hours modifying my personal statement, re-taking the LSATs in October and asking about a million questions of my parents and advisors, I had sent in about eight applications by Thanksgiving. After the holiday, I returned to Boston College to finish my first semester of senior year. Having “finished” the first step in determining what I (was) going to do next year, I felt a load off of my shoulders. After finishing my exams, I returned home to Connecticut to enjoy a relaxing Christmas break with my family and friends.

As most college breaks go, I became a bit antsy and bored after the first two weeks at home. As more family and friends asked the unavoidable question, “what are your plans for next year?” I was reminded that my applications had been in the hands of the schools for several weeks. I thought I might hear over break. I began to check the mail. The nervous waiting period began.

### The Timeline...

Some advice from Amherst Career Center...

After you have sent in your applications, it is a good idea to check with them to affirm that your file is complete. If your file is not complete, they will not start to read it which will lengthen your waiting time.

Many schools operate on a “rolling admission” schedule. Applicants will hear within four weeks of sending applications, others may hear later. Amherst warns that students not panic if they do not hear right away. All schools operate on their own schedules; the time that an applicant hears is not necessarily an indication of whether or not they have been accepted.

Applicants typically hear from schools between late March and the middle of April. It is a good idea, however, to check your application guideline’s for the specific school application timetable.

Early Action/Early Decision applicants typically hear between late December and the middle of January.

### The Decisions...

“Wait List”/ “On Hold” – This decision, depending on the specific process of the school, could mean that an applicant is being held to be considered with the entire applicant pool. It could also mean that a school has taken a longer than expected time to consider applications. Students who are put on the “wait list” should consider the following suggestions to keep “in touch” with their application file: send the school additional letters of recommendation send the school additional writing samples (perhaps from a “long term” paper or project) send the school a letter indicating and reaffirming your interest in the school, any updates to your file.

The application process can be stressful, especially the waiting time. While you wait it is important to keep grades and activities consistent and not stress over the mailbox. The decisions will come; all applicants face the same challenges. Once your decisions have been mailed, don’t forget to check deposit deadlines for the schools where you have been accepted. Keep in mind that you may have to deposit at one school while you stay on the ‘wait list’ for another. If the decision of your top, or only, choice is not in your favor, you don’t have to give up all hope. Many schools offer applicants the opportunity to reapply. It may be a good opportunity to take a few years off and work as a paralegal at a law firm. This will give you a different type of experience that will prove beneficial in your ‘reapplication’ process and when it comes time to apply for jobs while in law school. It may also be a good idea to check the school’s other programs; many schools offer part time/night courses which enable you to get your legal degree in, often, four years while giving you the opportunity to work during the day.

By Elizabeth Sartori

Amherst College Career Center

<http://www.amherst.edu/~careers/newlawwaitingtohear.html>

# LSAT Sample Questions

16. Private industry is trying to attract skilled research scientists by offering them high salaries. As a result, most research scientists employed in private industry now earn 50 percent more than do comparably skilled research scientists employed by the government. So, unless government-employed research scientists are motivated more by a sense of public duty than by their own interests, the government is likely to lose its most skilled research scientists to private industry, since none of these scientists would have problems finding private sector jobs.

Which one of the following is an assumption on which the argument depends?

(A) Government research scientists are less likely to receive acknowledgment for their research contributions than are research scientists in the

private sector.

(B) None of the research scientists currently employed by the government earns more than the highest-paid researchers employed in the private sector.

(C) The government does not employ as many research scientists who are highly skilled as does any large company in the private sector which employs research scientists.

(D) The government does not provide its research scientists with unusually good working conditions or fringe benefits that more than compensate for the lower salaries they receive.

(E) Research scientists employed in the private sector generally work longer hours than do researchers employed by the government.

17. Using fossil energy more efficiently is in the interest of the nation and the global environment, but major improvements are unlikely unless proposed government standards are implemented to eliminate products or practices that are among the least efficient in their class.

Objection: Decisions on energy use are best left to the operation of the market.

Which one of the following, if true, most directly undermines the objection above?

(A) It would be unrealistic to expect society to make the changes necessary to achieve maximum energy efficiency all at once.

(B) There are products, such as automobiles, that consume energy at a sufficient rate that persons

who purchase and use them will become conscious of any unusual energy inefficiency in comparison with other products in the same class.

(C) Whenever a new mode of generating energy, such as a new fuel, is introduced, a number of support systems, such as a fuel-distribution system, must be created or adapted.

(D) When energy prices rise, consumers of energy tend to look for new ways to increase energy efficiency, such as by adding insulation to their houses.

(E) Often the purchaser of a product, such as a landlord buying an appliance, chooses on the basis of purchase price because the purchaser is not the person who will pay for energy used by the product.

18. Dobson: Some historians claim that the people who built a ring of stones thousands of years ago in Britain were knowledgeable about celestial events.

The ground for this claim is that two of the stones determine a line pointing directly to the position of the sun at sunrise at the spring equinox. There are many stones in the ring, however, so the chance that one pair will point in a celestially significant direction is large. Therefore, the people who built the ring were not knowledgeable about celestial events.

Which one of the following is an error of reasoning in Dobson's argument?

(A) The failure of cited evidence to establish a statement is taken as evidence that that statement is false.

(B) Dobson's conclusion logically contradicts some of the evidence presented in support of it.

(C) Statements that absolutely establish Dobson's conclusion are treated as if they merely give some support to that conclusion.

(D) Something that is merely a matter of opinion is treated as if it were subject to verification as a matter of fact.

(E) Dobson's drawing the conclusion relies on interpreting a key term in two different ways.

19. Nearly all mail that is correctly addressed arrives at its destination within two business days of being sent. In fact, correctly addressed mail takes longer than this only when it is damaged in transit. Overall, however, most mail arrives three business days or more after being sent.

If the statements above are true, which one of the following must be true?

(A) A large proportion of the mail that is correctly addressed is damaged in transit.

(B) No incorrectly addressed mail arrives within two business days of being sent.

(C) Most mail that arrives within two business days of being sent is correctly addressed.

(D) A large proportion of mail is incorrectly addressed.

(E) More mail arrives within two business days of being sent than arrives between two and three business days after being sent.

\*\* The Official LSAT Sample PrepTest  
October, 1996

16)D 17)E 18)A 19)D  
PRACTICE LSAT Answers...

# You Asked, We Answered

By Lisa LoGerfo

Senior contributors respond to questions by students considering law school after Boston College. Clearly we are not members of admissions committees—although we certainly wish we were!—so all advice reflects our ideas and those of resources we have consulted in preparing for the law school application process.

**Q:** What classes should I take if I'm thinking about applying to law school?

**A:** We've found that law schools don't seem overly concerned about your classes or majors as much as they are about your G.P.A. Taking a couple of law classes can't hurt—and will help make sure you're interested in the subject, but no one gets into law school just because of their class choices. Some students like to take logic and writing classes as ways to help them prepare for the LSATs, but again, personal preference wins out. If you're a great writer, there's no need to take a writing class unless you want to.

The BC career center recommends that pre-law students take courses in three areas: skills useful in law school (for example writing, analytical reasoning, public speaking, and debate), substantive areas of law and legal reasoning, and courses about law and the legal system. The following list of classes is posted on the career center's website at <http://www.bc.edu/offices/careers/gradschool/law/courses/>

## Skills useful in law school

PL 264 Logic  
CL 010 Elementary Latin  
EN 412 Prose Writing  
MA 021 Financial Accounting  
MA 022 Managerial Accounting  
MF 021 Basic Finance  
CO 030 Public Speaking  
CO 105 Debate  
CO 375 Argumentation Theory

## Substantive areas of law and legal reasoning

MA 405 Federal Taxation  
MJ 021 Law I - Introduction to Law and Legal Process  
MJ 022 Law II - Business Law  
MJ 148 International Law  
MJ 152 Labor and Employment Law  
MJ 154 Insurance  
MJ 156 Real Estate  
MJ 161 Corporate and S.E.C. Law  
PO 321 American Constitutional Law  
PO 376 Seminar: Current Constitutional Issues  
CO 443 Ethical Consideration of the Mass Media  
SC 423 Internships in Criminology II

## Courses about law and the legal system

EC 338 Law and Economics  
EC 353 Industrial Organization: Competition and Antitrust  
EC 354 Industrial Organization: Public Regulation  
PL 449 Corporations and Morality  
PL 538 Law, Business and Society  
PO 671 Seminar: Liberalism in Politics and Law  
PS 039 Psychological Perspectives on Social Justice  
PS 108 Psychology and Law  
CO 450 Freedom of Speech  
CO 249 Communication Law  
SC 022 Sociology of Crime and Punishment  
SC 144 Legal & Illegal Violence Against Women  
SC 030 Deviance and Social Control

**Q:** What activities look good for law school admission's officers?

**A:** Our answer to activities choices is the same as it was for classes—choose things you enjoy and will do well at. Joining the debate team will not get you into your top choice law school any more than being a marathon runner will. That said, it is important to have activities that inspire you to grow as a person, and of course, put on your resume. Law schools want to see that you are involved in some type of activity beyond academics. Leadership positions show that you are responsible enough to organize a group of your peers. Student government activities show an interest in politics, and community service activi-

ties demonstrate a commitment to contributing to society. An added bonus to being involved in different activities is that you may develop a passion that will help you construct a personal statement and give you direction as to what branch of law interests you.

**Q:** When should I take the LSAT if I want to apply to law school during my senior year?

**A:** It's a good idea to take the LSAT in June before senior year. Not only are you taking the test when school's out so you won't be burdened with the stress of classes, but it gives you enough time to retake in October or December if necessary. Most schools will accept scores as late as December, but getting your application complete as soon as possible during an admission cycle is beneficial, especially because many schools having rolling admission (meaning that they begin reviewing applications as they come arrive, instead of waiting until a specific date to begin the review process).

**Q:** Should I take a prep course before I take the LSATs?

**A:** Be smart when you are deciding whether to take a prep course. If you can study diligently on your own you might be able to do fine with a books of tests you can buy and use independently. If not, the investment of a class can be helpful both to keep you on task and give you the benefit of an instructor's knowledge. We definitely recommend taking free LSAT practice tests offered on campus so you'll be able to gauge how much you want your score to improve. If you do decide to take a class, shop around. They vary in price, amount of class time, and flexibility make-up classes.

**Q:** How many schools should I apply to?

**A:** Unfortunately, decisions from law schools can be as unpredictable as they were for undergraduate admissions. Check the school's statistics on median LSAT and GPA of admitted students and go from there to see where you should be a sure bet and what schools are reaches. Although you can usually find out the percent of admitted students and score range on each school's website, it's also helpful

