

Suffolk Law School Interview:

Karianne Papantones from the Law School Admissions Office

1.) Everyone knows that both the application process as well as law school itself are a very grueling process that isn't meant for everyone. Based on your knowledge of the law school application process, how could an undergraduate student, say sophomore or junior year, with an interest in law determine if law school is indeed the correct career path for them?

Well first of all, sophomore or junior year might be a little too early to make your final decision of either going to law school or not. Instead, what I recommend is to use these years as an opportunity to learn more about yourself and your own interests. I suggest students taking as well-rounded a set of classes as possible, so as not to limit themselves. Don't be afraid to explore your interests and take classes that are diverse and that can help to better and enhance your overall educational experience. I also recommend that students take classes that test your analytical, listening, reasoning, reading, and writing skills.

Furthermore, take opportunities to do volunteer work and summer internships. Experiences at law firms or participation in some sort of law related activities will enable you to better see if a career in law is indeed right for you. And don't narrow your focus too much early on—I can't stress enough the importance of helping yourself to be as well rounded as possible.

Law school is not like medical school; any and all majors can be successful in law school—not necessarily just pre-law or political science. Just make sure to do and pursue something that interests you—this is the best way to achieve success once you are set to apply to law schools.

2.) If LSAT score and GPA were irrelevant, describe the type of applicants you like to see apply to your school?

There is no one specific type of applicant that we tend to favor over others. Remember that we are interested in forming a community within every first year class; obviously, a homogenous one is not what we would like to build. Rather, we are looking for a student body that is diverse in regards to ethnicity, age, gender, socioeconomic, and geographic backgrounds.

However, the attributes that we look for in an applicant that are constant are a willingness and interest in learning, that they have had interesting and enriching learning and academic experiences, and have had interesting work experiences as well.

3.) How important are one's undergraduate extra-curricular activities in relation to GPA and LSAT scores?

There is no set pie chart that dictates how important one aspect of your application is in regards to another. And although the LSAT score would probably be most significant, with GPA being second, it is the overall package that will determine acceptance and matriculation into our law school.

We try to factor in everything. For example, if we find out that you juggled a job with schooling, that is something that we take into consideration, and this not only applies to one's undergraduate years, but what you have done after that as well. So again, try and be as well rounded as possible, and present that in your application to law schools, because it is the whole package that we look at.

4.) Approximately when should undergraduate students begin the law school application process, and what have you determined to be useful in terms of a student preparing for law school as an undergraduate?

First off, I think my responses to question 1 would be helpful answering this one as well.

I think the process should begin the summer before your senior year. I highly recommend students to take the June LSAT's of that summer. This way, after you receive your score, you can know your law school "ranges", e.g. reach schools, solid schools, and the backup ones that you can definitely get into. This way, once the fall semester of your senior year begins, you can concentrate solely on the application process itself. I stress, DO NOT WAIT TOO LONG TO TAKE THE LSAT'S—most law schools will not even accept a February LSAT in an application for the following fall.

In terms of when a student should begin law school, there are actually very many schools of thought out there in regards to answering this question. Unlike business schools, where applicants are required to take two years off to gain good work experience, there is no similar requirement for law schools.

Personally, I believe it is beneficial to take a little time off after your undergraduate career; maybe experience the adult working world, and gain some good life experiences along the way. It takes a certain level of maturity to succeed in law school, and a couple years to grow up a little usually prove to be most beneficial.

In addition, doing so would allow one to personally gage the financial process and how it factors into law school (e.g. the cost of paying off student loans after graduation, etc.)

Many students are afraid of losing their academic edge and would rather start law school right after they finish their undergraduate studies. Personally, I think it would be more beneficial for a student to take care of their LSAT's while they are still in school and do have that edge. Records with the LSDAS stay good for up to 5 years, so once your LSAT's are completed, I think it would still be good to do what you want for two

years, and then apply to law school. Many students are apprehensive of the work force and the bad economy that is presently out there, and figure that law school would be a better option after graduation. But like I said, I have found that one or two years of work and life experience in-between undergraduate and law school can be extremely beneficial for a potential law school applicant.

5.) *Based on your experiences in the law school admission process, how strongly would you recommend a student taking an LSAT prep course, if at all?*

I have mixed feelings about this question, but the one thing I would like to stress is that you NEED to be prepared to take that exam.

On this note, I have seen both end of the spectrum. Some students find LSAT prep courses to be extremely helpful, whereas others have found them to be a complete waste of (A LOT of) money. One must always keep in mind that these are private companies that are mainly in this for profit, and there is a 50 percent chance that you will gain nothing from the course—regardless of what some advertisements might lead you to believe, there is no real guarantee of success when you actually take the real thing.

Many people go to their local bookstores, do self-study, and do just as well if not better than those who decide to take a course.

I know that the LSDAD sells old exams that if utilized, can do nothing but help you. This would be another more economical alternative. But if you do decide to use a course, I recommend finding special deals through your university for discounted prices.

So like I have said, I do have my reservations about LSAT prep courses, but I put it on the applicant. It's like a gym membership. Some people need a set schedule (and the knowledge that good money is at stake) to keep them honest with their studying. Then again, some people don't. It is all up to you as to whether or not you feel the money would be worth it. On a side note, the biggest problem I've seen is people running out of time when taking their practice LSAT. Good time management when taking the exam is just as important as being able to answer the questions correctly.

6.) *Courses such as Intro to Business Law, Constitutional Law, Psychology and Law, and Cyber Law For Business, as well as others, are offered to undergraduate students here at Boston College. How beneficial do you perceive these classes to be, or are more writing and analytical courses to be preferred?*

If it's interesting to you, take them. If they aren't honing your analytical, reasoning and writing skills, then they're not necessarily going to give you any sort of competitive advantage in applying to or once in law school... but maybe, you'll have better knowledge on whether or not law school is right for you.

Students can benefit from undergraduate classes such as these, but keep in mind that these are not law school classes. The same courses are on a completely different and

much more difficult level in law school, so it really isn't proper to compare these classes to their law school equivalents.

7.) Are there any general closing comments you would like to add?

Many students from Boston College apply to our law school, and have gone on to do very well here at Suffolk Law. We are always more than happy to help out Boston College, so please don't hesitate to contact us with any other questions or concerns.