

## Preparing for Law School

KAITLIN HENNESSY: Hello, everyone, and welcome to the Preparing for Law School webinar. My name is Kaitlin Hennessy. I'm the program coordinator here at Global Connections. And can everyone let me know if you can hear and see us all right? You should be able to hear myself speaking, as well see the first slide. Excellent. Thank you everybody.

So here at Global Connections, our goal is to provide co and extra-curricular programming for Global Campus students anywhere they have an internet connection. And tonight presenting is Kristi Denney. She is the co-director of the Pre-Law Resource Center here at Washington State University. And she's going to be speaking about what to look for when looking at law schools, how to adequately prepare yourself, and what those procedures are if you really are seriously considering law school.

And as many of you are already doing, please use that chat to comment on the presentation. You can ask questions of Kristi. We're going to be stopping throughout the evening to answer those questions. However, you can pop them in the chat at any point. And also tonight there are going to be some polls.

So when Kristi asks you a question, you'll see a poll pop up in the center of your screen with a few different selections. And when that happens, you just choose whatever selection makes the most sense for you and where you're at. And you select it. And then at the end, about 20 seconds or so after everyone has a chance to put their answers in, we'll show the results. OK. So I'm going to turn it over to Kristi now. Thank you.

KRISTI DENNEY: Hello, everyone. Glad to be here with you. As Kaitlin said, I'm co-director of the Pre-Law Resource Center on campus. And just to give you a little background, that is a physical location on campus where students can come to get information about the LSAT exam, the path to law school, get personal guidance, and also connect with other students that may be heading towards law school.

We have student mentors that work in our office. And we are available by phone and email, as well. So we are here to serve all of you on Global Campus, as well as the students that are physically present here. And I want to start out and give you just a little bit of information about myself.

I am an attorney. And I've been practicing for about 10 years before I came to WSU this fall to help work at the Pre-Law Resource Center. I am originally from Iowa. I went to a small liberal arts school there, and then went on to graduate school at the University of Montana, getting a master's in Environmental Studies.

And while I was there, I discovered that the law was the right place for me. And so taking an environmental law class there boosted me to head on to law school. And I got my degree from

the University of Colorado. Most of my work's been environmental and energy law since I left law school. So I've spent a few years working for the US EPA, nonprofit Sierra Club, and then moved kind of into the energy sector a bit while I was in Texas, working for their public utility commission there.

So having given you a little bit of information about me and the Pre-Law Resource Center, the things I want to talk about today are the path to getting all of you to law school, if you're interested. Or at least giving you more information about what that looks like and a little bit about the practice of law, as well.

So first we're going to start off with how to get to law school. And the top two things that you're going to hear all the time are grades and your LSAT score. And those are huge components. But I want you to also remember that law schools really are looking holistically at your application. So they are also going to look at what you've been doing for work experience, community involvement, leadership, as well as reading the personal statement that you submit-- which can be a really compelling piece of information that can significantly affect your law school admissions-- and then also strong letters of recommendation.

So we'll talk more about each of those pieces as we go through today. But to help give me a sense, I would like to just do a quick poll and find out kind of where you all are at in your undergrad degree. Because that will help me kind of target what's helpful to you at this point in time. So if you'd take a minute and just let me know if you're freshman, sophomore, junior, or senior, credit-wise. That would help me know my audience.

And also, if you've already entered your poll info, please use that chat box, too. I'm not always actively monitoring it. But Kaitlin is, and finding out more about you, your major. If you have a specific interest in going into the law or law schools you're considering, go ahead and put some of that into the chat box, too. And that can help me, as well, to kind of cater this to what helps all of you out there.

KAITLIN HENNESSY: So right now the majority of folks are seniors, with the next highest amount of juniors.

KRISTI DENNEY: Excellent, good. Well, that's a really good time to be thinking about law school. We'll move on here to-- sound like a lot of you in the junior, senior range don't need to worry about selecting your major. You've already done that. But there's no prerequisites, no required major to go to law school. So you can decide anywhere along your journey that you're interested in law school and head in that direction.

I suggest for those of you that haven't picked a major yet to choose a major that you enjoy. Being passionate about what you do helps you be successful, and may also kind of help lead you in the direction of law area that might interest you. Along the way, though, do think about taking challenging courses. Law schools are looking for students that have excellent critical

thinking skills good writing skills, and also your verbal communication skills. Because those are things that lawyers are going to need to do all the time.

So when you can, either as part of your major or even your electives outside, select courses that are going to challenge you in those areas. Law schools do evaluate your whole transcript. And they're going to be looking at have you taken those difficult classes that are going to prepare you to be ready for law school?

And this is one I want to highlight. And I know it may be a bit more challenging, being on the Global Campus. But you do want to seek to build relationships with your professors along the way. They're great resources, and those are valuable relationships no matter what.

But you are also going to need letters of recommendation if you do apply to law school. So seeking to build those relationships is something you should keep in mind as you're taking classes. Find those ways to check in with professors during office hours, et cetera.

And on that note, I want to talk about your GPA. It is an important component, one of the big components. And this chart I've put up here on the slides gives you a sense of what law schools are looking for for GPA. There's the 50th percentile, right there at the median, for each of the law schools that are in the state of Washington, as well as the University of Idaho, since lots of students that I see here in Pullman, anyway, are considering that as one of their options.

And so ideally you would be at or above that median for the law school. They are going to consider your full application. So don't make or break your decision just based on what the GPA is. And like I said, I put these four law schools up here. But I would encourage you all to use those links I've put at the bottom to go do your own research if there's law schools you're interested in. I'm going to pull up the first one quickly, just to kind of give you a sense of what this information looks like for law schools. It's the Standard ADA Information Reports.

So give me a second here to share my screen. And I will show you that first web link and what it looks like. So the American Bar Association is the accrediting body for all law schools in the US. And they require all law schools to put together a Standard 509 Information Report. And these can be all pulled for the law schools here on this web page.

I tend to just look at the most recent year. You can do a drop down and pick which year. It's pretty steady, year to year, what the information is on these sheets. So I tend to look at the most recent to get the best information. So 2017. And we can just pick a law school. So if there's law schools someone's interested in, maybe they're interested in UCLA. You can go up here, pick UCLA, and generate a report.

And we get PDF here. Hopefully that pulls up, as well. Can everyone see that? OK. Kaitlin's giving me the nod that we're good here. I think these are really valuable pieces of information. So if you're thinking of law school, you're going to want to pull some of these and compare law schools. Be a good consumer of law school.

You can see the acceptance rate on here of how many students were offered admission out of how many that applied. You can also see those numbers, like we were just looking at, for GPA. What the 50th percentile, the 25th percentile is for folks that were admitted. This is the incoming class of 2017 at UCLA. And you can also see LSAT. This is the sheet you can continue to refer to, here.

I'm going to scroll down a little bit. It also gives you information on the race and ethnicity of students attending this university and being awarded degrees. Gives you tuition and living expenses information, as well as some idea of how much grants and scholarships this institution gives out.

So these information reports are really valuable. They can be pulled here from the ABA website, or alternatively from that second link. There's also some information on the LSAC website that you can use to pull the same information, as well some other information.

Let me get back here. And Kaitlin, maybe you could let me know if we have any questions or any info you can share with me that folks have given us a sense of where they're at?

KAITLIN HENNESSY: Yes. So getting to where folks are at. We have a senior in human development, graduating in May, here for general interest. Another person says they want to attend a weekend or at night law school.

KRISTI DENNEY: OK.

KAITLIN HENNESSY: Another person is majoring in Social Sciences with a focus in Political Science and Economics, history minor. As well as a senior social scientist major with concentrations in history, English, and psychology, graduating in May, pursuing a master's at Gonzaga in communications and leadership. Another person is interested in law school financing, which may be better to discuss towards the end of the evening.

KRISTI DENNEY: Yep. I have a little bit more on that towards the end, and definitely an important thing to talk about, since law school is expensive. So I'll come back to that.

KAITLIN HENNESSY: Excellent. And one of the questions asked, can letters of recommendation come from employers?

KRISTI DENNEY: Ah, yes. We are also going to talk more about letters of recommendation. But they absolutely can come from employers. And that's a good question. And I think we'll talk about it a little bit more when we get down the line on some slides here. That's all for now?

KAITLIN HENNESSY: Yes. We do have someone that has a question about your availability for meetings. But I assume we'll address that later, too.

KRISTI DENNEY: OK. Sounds good. All right, so I'm going to move on now and talk a little bit about the other big piece of information, the LSAT, the law school admissions test. It is required that you take it. Your score is used by law schools to determine admission. It's a half day exam on paper. Right now it's given 6 times a year.

It includes five multiple choice sections that last 35 minutes each, exactly, and a 35-minute essay at the end. They are testing-- the sections are reading comprehension, analytical reasoning, the logical reasoning-- there's always two of those sections-- and then the essay exam.

There is also always a test section on the LSAT, which is tricky. You don't know which one is the test section. It's not graded. But you don't know when you're taking it. Let's see, I see a quick text-- can you retake if you don't like your score?

And this is a good point. I can just answer that one as I saw it pop up. You can retake it. You can take the LSAT as many times as you want to. The score reports that they send to the law schools gives all of your scores. But at this point, most law schools are saying they're going to take your highest score.

And so that's what they'll be looking at. They used to say average, and it's up to each law school how they treat it. But for the most part, they are going to be looking at your highest score. But it's a lot of work.

So I always suggest that you study really hard, be well-prepared the first time you take it. And try to just get in, do it once, and get out, or else you have to go through it all again. So time-wise, money-wise, really shoot for one time is my suggestion.

And yeah, it costs \$180. And there's a link down there, the LSAC, the Law School Admissions Council, is a place you're going to go to really frequently if you are considering law school. They are the ones that administer the LSAT exam. They're also going to be where you submit your law school applications.

And so more info can be found there. And it's a great starting point as you're thinking about the LSAT. And so the scoring on the LSAT is based purely on the number of correct answers to the multiple choice questions. All questions are equal.

And then the LSAC takes and converts your raw score to a scaled score. That accounts for differences in difficulty between the exams. Because they always have new questions each time they give them. And the scale goes from 120 to 180. That doesn't mean much yet. I'll flip to the next slide and you'll be able to get a better sense of where folks score on that.

And then the essay portion is not scored. But it is given to law schools when you apply. So it's something that, while it's not part of the score, you still want to prepare for it, too, because law

schools are going to evaluate it as an indicator of your cold writing abilities, something that hasn't been refined by others.

So as far LSAT scoring, like I said, it goes from 120 to 180. And up here on this slide, on the left side, shows all test takers' scores over a three-year period. And this is pretty consistent, even if we were looking at a different period. And so you can see what this means, for instance, is folks that score 180 score better than 99.9% of test takers is how you read this table.

And so that means the median is right around 151. You can't see it exactly on this table, because I've just done the gradations. But that gives you a sense of what these scores mean. Because they don't equate to like an x number correct. And they aren't the same consistently up through the chart.

And then on the right hand, to give you another idea of what the scores mean, and what our local schools are looking for-- again, our three Washington schools and the University of Idaho-- showing the median at 50th percentile, as well as the 25th and 75th percentiles to give us a sense of this would be where the scores were for the incoming class of 2017.

Again, those sheets that we looked at on the 509 Information Reports are going to have this for every single law school. So if these law schools aren't what's on your mind, you can check it out for other ones. And like I said, it's 6 times a year. These are the next upcoming LSAT test dates, if you are thinking of heading to law school.

If folks want to go to law school directly after their senior year, I suggest taking the LSAT in the summer after your junior year. The law school applications are going to be in the fall. And so taking a summer test date after your junior year will have those scores ready for your applications, as well as leave you a bit of time to take a backup exam if you need to.

So like I said, shoot for one. But things happen. You have a bad day. You're sick. You may want to allow time for that second exam to try to get a higher score. So if you took it in June and you got your score-- it usually takes about a month to get your score.

So it's going to be early July when you get your score. And that's going to be pretty late to prepare and sign up for that July exam. So your backup exam is usually going to be the next one, September. So June, back up to September. If you took the July, your backup would probably be the November test date.

And I think I said this. But the LSAT is testing things that you can definitely improve on. It does not require you to have any innate background knowledge or have studied in a certain area to do well on it. A lot of the things it's testing is, you know, that reading comprehension was mentioned. That's one of the sections.

And the other sections are really testing your critical thinking skills. It's going to be short passages that you have to answer questions about the argument that's presented in there. And

then there's another set of questions that are called logic games that really test your ability to put things into different places, into how they sequence and interact with each other when you're given a set of rules.

And so everybody benefits from studying. So it's really important to make a plan for the LSAT and begin your test preparation three to six months in advance of the time you plan to take the test date. This is kind of my suggested approach for getting yourself ready, is first take a little bit of time to familiarize yourself with the types of questions you'd see on the LSAT, and some basic kind of tips and things for how to do well on the LSAT.

And then take a full-length test. They are available. LSAC, one of the websites we already talked about, does have a free exam available for download that you can take and score it yourself. So you can get a sense of where your LSAT score comes out. And I suggest doing that at the beginning of your practice, because it's good to know your baseline.

Everyone's is going to be a little different. Some people have a bit more innate skill in these areas. But everyone can definitely improve from where you start. And it's good to know that starting point. And then you're going to want to take a look at what law schools are thinking of going to, and what are their LSAT scores, to give you a sense of how much do you need to study to get to your goal law school or schools?

And then make a plan for studying. And there's lots of different ways to study. The next slide here, we talk a little bit about approaches. There are all kinds of prep books that you can purchase through the LSAC or Amazon. And they're just going to be LSAT prep books by companies like Kaplan, the Princeton Review, Blueprint, a few others.

And a lot of people are very successful self-studying. So that's definitely an option. There are also in-person classes, online classes through a variety of providers. And some people even seek one-on-one tutoring. But what I like to say is plan to study two hours a day for three months.

Scholarship money and, depending on what law school you get into, your future salary can depend on it. So take the time to really be ready to take the LSAT. I am going to see if we have any questions that I haven't covered coming from the chat room about the LSAT.

KAITLIN HENNESSY: Nope, not right now.

KRISTI DENNEY: Not right now. OK. Then I was going to talk a little bit about the application process. Applications, if you're going straight to law school, are submitted in the fall of your senior year. And those deadlines can vary. But it's always good to get your applications in early.

The applications are reviewed on a rolling basis. So that means at the beginning of when they open up the applications, there may be 160 slots to fill. But by the time it's getting close to the official deadline of March 15-- or February 15, depending on the law school-- those spaces are disappearing.

So that's a reason to apply early. And it also shows you're on top of things and you're dedicated to law school. So you want to be applying earlier in that application cycle if you can.

And again, this is if you're heading straight to law school. You apply fall of your senior year. Lots of people take some time off and do something else before they head to law school. And so you can just adjust this timeline if that is you and you want to do something else before you head into law school.

Your application will require two letters of recommendation. So I know someone had asked about letters of rec earlier. And least one of those letters of rec, if you have a good connection with a professor, it's good if it comes from a professor. They can speak to your academic abilities, how you compare to other students, if you excel in writing, if you're a great participant in the classroom. And those things are really important to law schools, because they want to know that you're going to succeed in the classroom.

But it is also great to have a letter of recommendation from a supervisor, or someone you've worked closely with in a volunteer opportunity, a club, et cetera. So the most important thing is to have a close connection with the person that writes the letter for you. The more they know about you, the better they will be able to craft that letter highlighting those things that will help make you a great law student and a wonderful lawyer down the line.

Another opportunity to really sell yourself is through a personal statement. It's usually about two pages. And the main gist of it is, why law school? Or why this law school? And it's something where you usually want to tell something that's unique about you. What makes you tick, something you've overcome to get to law school, why you want to be a lawyer. And you want to highlight something about you as you submit that application.

I always think it's best if you can do that with kind of a short story that tells a little bit, it kind of builds intrigue at the beginning and tells something about you. Maybe it's something as simple as one summer during law school I went on a road trip with a bunch of friends. Or, I mean during-- one summer while I was in undergrad, I went on a road trip with a bunch of friends and x happened.

And then it can be about how it made you overcome this obstacle. Or you learned about working with other people, and how that can kind of lead into telling something about you that will help make you a successful lawyer and an attribute to the law school.

And I think, too, highlight your life experience in these personal statements. If you bring something unique to the table, such as a family or working during school, those are great things to tell to a law school, because it's different than others. And they're always looking for people with different perspectives. And then, of course, a resume. Include your jobs. Talk about the activities you've been involved in outside of school.

So that may be volunteer or community work, or taking on a leadership role in your church, or any of those kinds of things are all really interesting to law schools. Because they are looking for people who are going to be future leaders in their community. And so those are the kinds of things that can help build your resume and make you attractive to law schools.

That is a good point to see if I had any questions come in. I wasn't watching the chat board very closely-- about the application process?

KAITLIN HENNESSY: I think the couple questions we got are more broad. So we'll hold those till the end. If anyone does have any specific questions for the application process, please get those in the chat now. And everyone else, I do have your questions. And we'll address those at the end, too.

KRISTI DENNEY: OK, great. All right. And I would just add that oftentimes taking a year or a few years off between your undergrad degree and your law degree can be helpful to your application, and can kind of help you find focus, as well. Some things that can help boost your likelihood of getting into law school are getting some legal or policy-related work. Some people work in a law firm.

Another thing that can be very attractive to law school is doing some service-oriented work during that year. Peace Corps, Americorp, Teach for America are all great options that really help bolster your law school application, as well. And even if you just need to work to save money during that time you take off, if you can find some time to volunteer in your community and kind of show that commitment to giving back, that is also helpful.

So law school-- it takes, at most places, three years to earn a JD. There are a few places that do accelerated programs that shorten it a bit. And there are some places that do night school, which would take a bit longer, as well, just depending on the pace at which you tackle it. The curriculum at law schools is pretty similar across the board. You're going to get that same degree, the JD.

But you also have opportunities to take classes that interest you, or classes that are going to be tested on the bar exam. And so some people go in knowing they want to specialize in a certain area of law, like immigration law. And they may want to take all the classes they can in that area while they're in law school. While other people really just take a broad approach and try out different things, kind of to see what they like, as well as to keep job opportunities open. And so both are possible.

And if you are someone who has a very specific area, then you're going to want to look for a law school that has that. But most areas of law you can go to law school and be well-prepared to practice in any given area. The JD lets you-- once you pass the bar exam-- practice any type of law. You're qualified to do it with that JD-- with the minor exception of patent law, which is just a really unusual area.

And law school is really expensive. And so it is something to give significant consideration to. People going to law school-- we got some tuition for in-state and out-of-state up here on a chart on the slide for you to see. But the average law grad has over \$100,000 in debt, those that have debt. And 87% of law grads do have student loans to repay.

And so it is something to think really hard about. We'll talk a little bit in a few minutes about what salaries look like for lawyers, because you want to kind of weigh the cost benefit when you're thinking about law school. Personally, I went to law school. And I had to take out student loans. And I'm still paying them. And for me it was something that has been worth it. I've gotten to work in a profession that I really enjoy. And I wouldn't have made as much money if I hadn't gone to law school.

And so for me, that cost benefit has worked out. But you should spend a little time, if you're thinking seriously about law school, reading about student loan debt. And you know, just go out on the blogosphere and see what people are talking about. Because there definitely has been-- law school keeps getting more expensive. And some folks who graduated, especially during the recession, had more difficulty finding jobs.

And so there are people out there talking about is law school worth it? And you should think really hard for yourself if that's true. It's hard to know what your salary will be in your situation when you get out. But do know that law school is going to be an expensive adventure. Anything on cost popping in?

KAITLIN HENNESSY: We did have a question on the accelerated programs. Where do they accelerated programs?

KRISTI DENNEY: That is an excellent question, and one that I don't know off the top of my head. I could do, if Kaitlin can get your name and email, I could do a little research and get back in touch with you about which ones might be options for that. OK.

So since it is so expensive, I say be a smart consumer of law school. If you're going to go, make sure you're keeping your options broad. Look at lots of places. Look at different costs. Apply to schools that are safe schools for you. And that is usually one where your GPA and your LSAT are close to the median listed on those ABA fact sheets that we looked at at the beginning.

But also, don't rule anything out. Apply to your reach schools, because you may be a more excellent candidate than you think you are. Or you might not be. But that's why you want to apply across a broad range of law schools.

At every law school, there's going to be an admissions committee that looks at your application. So it's not just one person. And different people have different perspectives on what makes for a good law school candidate. So apply broadly. But I always want everyone to try to look for those safer schools where you may be more likely to get scholarship money. Because that can help you in your consideration.

At least at the end of the day, you can say, OK. I got in at UW, but I'm going to pay full tuition. Or I got in at the University of Idaho with a 50% scholarship. And look at what you really want out of law school, and what the pros and cons are of each of those locations, with at least one option on the table that brings the cost down for you.

There are scholarships available to students. And that LSAT and GPA are really big factors in scholarship awards. So that's why those are often highlighted as really important things for law school, and ways that you-- if you can score really high on that LSAT, you can bring the cost of your law school education down a bit, hopefully. And so yeah, go compare law school before you go, as well.

Those-- first one we pulled up about the required disclosures give you that what's the incoming student class look like? But there's also another ABA form that law schools complete. And that's an employment summary. That is also something to take a close look at. It gauges graduate employment 10 months after graduation.

So to see are those grads of that law school getting employment? And are they getting the type of employment that requires them to have a law degree? Or are they simply finding work that they may have otherwise been qualified to do with or without that JD?

So I want to just pull one of those up here so you can get a sense of what it looks like. The employment summary is put out by the ABA. So select a school. You can see the most recent year they have here is 2016. And you can get a report for the school of your interest. We'll just stick with UCLA today. And generate a report. And let me get that up.

And so this is showing summary for the 2016 grads. And important things to look at are unemployment numbers. UCLA's unemployment numbers are pretty low for law schools. So this is a good place to look. And so you want to find something that you know is a solid law school, and look at where folks are getting employed. First category is getting employed in a job that requires you to pass the bar, which means your JD was absolutely worth it, and you had to go pass the bar, and you're a practicing lawyer.

And then the second category is JD advantage. And those are the kinds of places where it helps to have that law degree. But it's not required for the position they're in. And so really both of those top two are the types of jobs that people want to get, usually, when they head to law school. Some people are looking for nontraditional approaches, and that may be under some of these other categories.

But go look at these statistics as you're starting to think about law schools to make sure you're choosing one that has successful graduates, and that you will be a successful graduate, as well. And I do put a stop sign here on this slide we were at, in that there are law schools out there that don't have great numbers on employment, that don't have great bar passage rates. And in fact, recently there have been some law schools losing their accreditation from the ABA.

And so there are a few links I've put up here. I think one of them might have got cut off on my slide. But Kaitlin just slashed them for you. These are some law schools that I would ask you to think really hard about before you decide to attend there. I generally advise against them. It's those that are unranked are US News and World Reports, or those that have some of those really high unemployment rates. And both of those links can help you find that type of information.

So we talked about how expensive it is. So I'd like to ask you all one more poll question here to get you in the mix, and see what do you think was the median starting salary for 2016 law school graduates?

KAITLIN HENNESSY: All right. It looks like most folks think it is the second option, \$65,000.

KRISTI DENNEY: You guys are brilliant. Nice work. Well, I think that oftentimes people assume that lawyers are going to go out and make a ton of money. And so I had a student focus who'd think it was a little bit on the higher end. And so you do want to weigh that median starting salary of \$65,000 against what you might have to take out in debt, or just the time and money you expend to go to law school.

But there's more to it than just the money, too. You want to think about, qualitatively, is it the type of occupation you would enjoy? And you know, there's the prestige. There's the autonomy. And really, you get to make a difference with a law school degree. You get to go out and help people. So there's a lot more to it than just the money. But think hard about it.

And so here's a little bit more background and details kind of on that money front. This is some of the statistics for a starting salary for the class of 2015. And as you can see, there is a significant difference between if you're working in private sector or a law firm-- those are synonymous-- or if you're working in the public sector, which would be government or nonprofit work.

So it depends where you're headed out of law school. There's different ranges for those kinds of salary. And also beyond just the starting salary, there is also long-term average salary for attorneys that I'm just going to put up here on another slide. And this one, you can see all attorneys across the board, not deciphering between new or had been practicing for 20 or 40 years. The average salary that the Bureau of Labor Statistics gives us is \$118,160.

So it does go up over time, is what you can garner from that number. And then also the unemployment rate I put up here. You know, as we were talking about, be a smart consumer. Go look at the unemployment rate for recent grads. Across the board in 2015, the unemployment rate was around 8%. That's 10 months out for graduates of law school. And whereas for all attorneys, that drops below 1%, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

But as we know, it can be difficult to track unemployment. And I think in the case of attorneys, they had to have been employed in an occupation that was considered to be a lawyer and then

become unemployed. And so there's oftentimes lawyers that are practicing in nontraditional areas that may not be captured in the statistic, as well. OK.

And as you all may know, there are so many different types of law practice as well. This is just a smattering of some of the subject areas you could practice law in. And it's across the board. You know, there's so many things that you could do. And then it also varies, the practice of law, as to what skills you're using, and what you're doing on a day-to-day basis.

There's litigators, people doing criminal law in court all the time, like you see on TV. There's people that work in corporate law, and they're advising corporations on how to best protect their interests, handling employment matters, workplace safety, et cetera. And then there's folks who are doing mediation, or writing contracts. And so there really is a very diverse area of practice for attorneys.

And just a little bit more about where attorneys go out and work when they graduate-- newer graduates tend to work in business and industry and government, nonprofit, at slightly higher rates than the overall percent of attorneys. As you can see, over time, more attorneys tend to go into law firms. But that encompasses small law firms as well as huge law firms. So the majority of the jobs are going to be in law firms. Some of them are going to be in-house, in business and industry.

A segment works in government-- state, local, federal, all across the board for all the different government agencies, and the judiciary. Oftentimes, recent law grads seek to clerk, which is kind of an apprenticeship, with a judge, and a very valuable way to jump start your career. And so you can see that's a higher percent for recent grads that are working in the judiciary.

And that is really about the end of what I have that I wanted to go over today, other than your all's questions. Here's a site that has some resources. These are some websites. You can do research and start your own. It looks like maybe some of these went blank. But I think Kaitlin has some ways to share some of these links with you, as well.

So with that, my last slide, I'll just put up for you all to-- is questions, the Pre-Law Resource Center-- oh, my web didn't make it in there. You can email us, call us. You can get to me individually. Or you can call our student mentors if I'm not in the office or available to answer your question. Our web page is [prelaw.wsu.edu](http://prelaw.wsu.edu). And now I would just like to turn to any questions that folks had that I can help with.

KAITLIN HENNESSY: Yes. The first question is, as a future-- sorry. Are there any WSU-specific 300 or 400 level courses one could take that would be beneficial towards attending law school or the LSAT.

KRISTI DENNEY: Yes. I'm going to say this is another one-- there are. One that's really beneficial for the LSAT-- I'm not sure if this is a 300 level. But it is the philosophy department's elementary logic course. Those LSAT questions tend to test your understanding of an argument. And the

logic games, specifically, it can be helpful to have a background in logic. Someone's flashing me Philosophy 201. They may know this more than me.

But that can be helpful. And then again, it would just be-- I suggest 300 and 400 level courses that have a writing component and require you to strengthen those critical thinking skills. I can't tell you off the top of my head any other specific ones. I do have a list of them. And if Kaitlin can make a note of who and your email address, I can definitely send you. We've compiled a list of three and 400 level courses that are related to law and policy.

And so none of them are anything you would really need to take. But then if they interest you, they may be good classes to explore that could help you build your skills for law school, as well.

KAITLIN HENNESSY: OK. Our next question is what about students that are older? I've been out of school for 20-plus years, and just recently began undergrad. And specifically, this is looking at the prospect of starting school. Definitely want to go directly from undergraduate to law school. But I have life work experience.

KRISTI DENNEY: That is excellent. I know it could probably be more challenging to get back into it. But having that life experience is really valuable in pursuing a law degree. We just had pre-law day on campus two weeks ago, where a group of attorneys came in. And several of them are managing partners with their law firm that make hiring decisions, et cetera.

And one of them definitely emphasized it is valuable when they see applicants for their legal positions that have life experience. You know, you just gain some maturity. You gain the ability to interact effectively with clients. And so absolutely go for it. Law schools are looking for folks who have that life experience. And so are law firms.

KAITLIN HENNESSY: Excellent. And this kind of gets into that life experience, as well. Another question asks, I'm a single dad of a nine-year-old daughter and have a full time job. What's the outlook on that type for the application? Or what's the outlook on that type of application? Any tips?

KRISTI DENNEY: Absolutely. Again, the same kind of thing-- I really think bringing in that life experience, and your perspective being a parent, having worked, done something else before you come to law school-- those are things that law schools are looking for. You have a different perspective than someone who's coming straight out of undergrad and hasn't had that other time in life to experience those things. So absolutely, you know, you are an excellent candidate.

I think you just have to think about your own life balance of starting law school with kids. And going through a good law school is definitely more challenging than an undergrad degree, and more time consuming. So it would just be-- you'll need to think about those things and whether it will require you to relocate. But absolutely. You can, and likely are, an excellent law school candidate.

KAITLIN HENNESSY: Our next question asks what area would you say makes the most, in terms of salary? This came up when you showed the slide with all the types--

KRISTI DENNEY: That's a great question. One thing that is really clear about who makes the most money is those that go to work at big law firms. They actually just call them big law. And they're some of the big international law firms that tend to look for students that have gone to the Ivy League schools and the highly ranked schools and been very successful. They get plucked to go to the big law firm. So that's kind of one type of employment where you can make big money.

As far as areas of practice, it's practicing in corporate law, patent law-- patent law is a specialized area. So that's one where you have to have a science background and pass a separate bar exam called the patent bar. So that's a unique area. And because of the limited number of people that can funnel into that practice, it tends to be a high-paying one. And that's one, too, that works a lot with high tech.

And so as folks are kind of trying to patent and protect their ideas, their intellectual property, that is in high demand right now, and is also a higher-paying area of law. Generally, as you think about overall pay, the types of things that big companies need usually pay more than the types of things that everyday people need.

So if you're going to negotiate mergers and acquisitions and write contracts, that tends to be the type of thing bigger corporations need. Law firms are going to do it. You're going to get paid more money. Whereas things like family law, divorce, immigration are more a person-to-person type of contact in what you do. And they tend to pay a little bit less. But they're the type of thing that are done in smaller law firms, and even solo practice.

So sometimes you're weighing big law, big salary, against the opportunity to interact with a person one-on-one who needs your help, and have some more autonomy in what you do, maybe. In the smaller law practice, you can have some more decision-making.

KAITLIN HENNESSY: Next, someone asked is the PhD the way to get to the Supreme Court of United States?

KRISTI DENNEY: The way to get to the Supreme Court of the United States is to go to an Ivy League school. Right now, that is where they all come from. They're Yale, Harvard, Princeton type of graduates. And they immediately go clerk with another judge when they come out. And so getting that early judicial experience, doing something called Law Review is also very important to becoming a Supreme Court Justice.

I'm actually not sure if any of them have a PhD. But I do know they have law degrees from highly-ranked law schools. They go on to judicial clerkships. They get lots of litigation experience. And that is generally the path towards heading to the Supreme Court.

KAITLIN HENNESSY: Our next question asks is WSU Pre-Law Resource Center resources available to WSU graduates?

KRISTI DENNEY: Yes.

KAITLIN HENNESSY: Perfect. And how do grades with set-aside notation on transcripts factor into GPA for law school admissions?

KRISTI DENNEY: I have to admit that I don't know what the set-aside means. So I'm not sure if I can answer that.

KAITLIN HENNESSY: I'm not sure, either. Let's see if this person can clarify that. Anyone else has questions? That is our last one so far, unless anyone else has any thoughts they'd like to share. Great. If you have a clarification for set-aside, please do let us know. Oh, in the meantime, someone did ask, Kristi, are you available in the next few weeks to chat with someone?

KRISTI DENNEY: Yes, absolutely. So send me an email. And we can set up a time. Or call. And if you missed me, you can also try that pre-law phone number. They can help schedule an appointment for you, as well. But I am.

KAITLIN HENNESSY: And I'm waiting for the rest of Greg's answer right now.

KRISTI DENNEY: And if you asked a question today and I didn't have the answer here, please feel free to email me. And I'll get back to you. I know someone wanted a hand out and then some information about-- I think someone else wanted information about the compressed options for law school, the shorter option. So please, if I don't get back to you in a few days, email me. And I'll get you an answer.

KAITLIN HENNESSY: And Greg did clarify. It's from Clark College. Suddenly they do not count the grades in my GPA.

KRISTI DENNEY: I'm wondering if this-- this is one thing. I'm going to talk a little bit broadly about GPA calculation for law school. And I think I might get to your answer. But we'll see here if this happens.

So when you apply to law school, you apply through the LSAC. And they have a Centralized Application System, CAS. And when you do that, they actually calculate your GPA. They have a standard way of doing it. For most people, it's going to be what your WSU GPA is.

But if you had running start credits or transferred some credits in, all of those grades will also count towards your GPA. And so I think maybe you were asking, Greg, if you transferred credits to WSU from Clark College. And the answer is that those will still count towards your GPA when it's calculated for law school, even though they're not calculated into your WSU GPA.

One other thing I'd like to point out is that some folks have-- at WSU they have a policy that you can retake a course if you've gotten a C minus or below and replace that grade. If you do that, both grades do still show on your WSU transcript, even though the first lower grade isn't calculated into your GPA. And thus, both grades do still go into your calculation for your law school applications.

So while you can replace the grade for WSU purposes, law schools are still going to calculate both when they're looking at what your GPA was. Did I get anything else to clarify? Any other follow up on that--

KAITLIN HENNESSY: No, he just said thank you for the answer.

KRISTI DENNEY: OK, good.

KAITLIN HENNESSY: And that's all the questions we have here. And thank you all so much for coming out this evening.