



MAPLA Briefs

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE MIDWEST ASSOCIATION OF PRE-LAW ADVISORS

www.mapla.org

Winter 2010

From the Desk of the President

Mac Francis, Indiana University—Blomington



Greetings!

What a wonderful, informative, collegial, and well-attended

Conference MAPLA had in Chicago at the Doubletree Hotel in October! I found the sessions to be uniformly engaging and instructive, and the “Dine Around” Friday night meal was as entertaining as it was delicious. Evaluations from attendees were consistently superlative. A huge THANK YOU and CONGRATULATIONS to Gwyn Wallander of the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee for her Herculean efforts over many many months to make this Conference one of the very best---and to the many session participants and others who generously gave of their time to share their expertise and perspectives. It takes

incredibly hard work by so many people to put such an event together.

Special thanks go to William Powers at John Marshall Law School for hosting our Thursday dinner and tour, Sean Reilly of Marquette University Law School for hosting breakfast on Friday, and to Charles Roboski of Michigan State College of Law for hosting the Friday evening dinner event.

Elections to the MAPLA Executive Board were held at the Saturday morning business meeting at the conclusion of the Conference. Don Racheter was re-elected Treasurer, and Kemi Faleti, RJ Holmes, and Steve Nelson were re-elected as “At-Large” Board members. Last but certainly not least, we extend a warm welcome to newly elected, long-time MAPLA member Ruth Watry of Northern

Michigan University! We all look forward to working with Ruth over the coming year and beyond. Congratulations to all!

As reported at the Conference, after much deliberation, soul-searching, and polling of the membership, the Executive Board has decided to cease publication of *MAPLA Profiles*. There were several major reasons behind this reluctant decision. First and foremost, only a small minority of the membership reported that they actually used this resource. In addition, the actual collection of data has proven to be increasingly difficult and time-consuming. In the past, data collection was able to take place much earlier in the fall---*Profiles* then provided the most

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MAPLA Conference 2009 Recap

Steve Nelson, Northern Michigan University



I have been going to the MAPLA conferences for about fifteen years and each year I consider it to be one of the most useful conferences that I attend ---this

year was no exception.

I want to start this recap with a thank you

to the MAPLA board for an excellent conference.

I started my conference on Thursday by being amazed with all the “swag” that was included in the registration packet--- thanks to all those law schools who contributed; also to NAPLA/SAPLA for the Book of Lists. I then attended the new

advisor’s session. I probably qualify as a veteran advisor, but I find that the new advisors session provides an excellent review of the basics. This year it also gave me the chance to connect with an old friend from my days in the Ph.D. program at Iowa. A former classmate is now

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Membership News

Yvette R. Simpson, Esq., MAPLA Membership Chair, Miami University of Ohio



I hope that your fall semester was exciting and productive. As most of you know, our fall MAPLA conference was a big success, due in large part to the efforts of the MAPLA Executive Board, conference presenters and facilitators, law school sponsors, and engaged conference attendees. Thank you to all who participated!

MAPLA membership and Conference Participation

To date, we have 95 registered MAPLA members, 60 pre-law advisors and 35 law school representatives. A total of 84 members attended this year's conference. Additionally, 5 vendors participated in this year's conference.

Conference Logistics

This year, we provided an electronic option for submitting conference registration forms and fees. The majority of

conference registrants used PayPal to pay their conference fees. In addition, we sent membership and conference information electronically. Using this method was both economically and environmentally effective.

Listserv

MAPLA members received an email welcoming them to use the new MAPLA listserv. This listserv is designed to facilitate communication between new and veteran members, as well as pre-law advisors and law school representatives in our region.

If you have questions or want to provide feedback about membership or this year's conference, please feel free to contact me at simpsoyr@muohio.edu. If your colleague or friend is interested in joining MAPLA this year, they can complete a membership form at www.mapla.org.

President's Desk

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current admissions data several months before LSAC's *Official Guide* became available. In recent years, however, *Profiles* has come out progressively later. Moreover, the ever-increasing amount of data available on LSAC.org, along with its searchable and flexible database, has resulted in many prelaw advisors consistently turning to it instead of *Profiles*. Finally, while in the past *Profiles* made money for MAPLA, in recent years it has resulted in a net loss. For all of these reasons, we have decided to forego producing this publication.

Unfortunately, and also with much regret, John Little of the University of Iowa announced at the Conference that for personal and professional reasons he reluctantly must resign his position on the MAPLA Executive Board. Under John's leadership the MAPLA website has evolved into an extremely practical, professional, attractive, and sophisticated tool for prelaw advisors in general and MAPLA members in particular. He has also been instrumental in bringing Iowa onboard as a regular stop on the MAPLA Caravan in recent years, and has been its untiring site coordinator. I'm sure I speak for us all when I wish him the very best, and say that his presence on the Board will very much be missed!

The 2009 MAPLA Caravan, which took place in the week following the Conference, was a big success as well. The details are presented in another article in this issue of *MAPLA Briefs*.

Finally, be sure to stay tuned to *MAPLA Briefs* for more information about our next conference in Minneapolis. It will be MAPLA's 35th anniversary in 2010, and there may well be a few surprises in store for that event. With four outstanding law schools in the Twin Cities area eager to host MAPLA visitors and show us what they and their metropolitan area has to offer, it should be a fantastic, enlightening and enjoyable event.

MAPLA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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2009 Business Meeting Report

Steve Shafer, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and MAPLA Secretary



A new conference site for 2010, a replacement for the newly discontinued MAPLA Profiles, membership and website news, and a strong

organizational financial report, along with elections to the Board, were the news highlights to emerge from the annual MAPLA business meeting held on the last day of the 2009 Conference in the State Room at the Doubletree Hotel in Chicago.

Gwyn Wallander announced that next year's conference will take place in Minneapolis, October 14th through the 16th. The meeting will celebrate MAPLA's 35th year, and it will be coordinated with the University of Minnesota Graduate and Professional School fair, so that law school representatives should be able to participate in meetings. Among a variety of highlights, the conference will feature tours of all four law schools and a reception at the University of Minnesota for law school representatives and pre law advisors.

The PLANC Board also is expected to be meeting during the MAPLA conference possibly deciding the location of the 2012 national meeting; Chicago has been mentioned as a leading contender for the national. An excellent room rate for conference attendees has been secured for the Doubletree Hotel in downtown Minneapolis, and Gwyn reminded potential shoppers to bring walking shoes for the Mall of America. Members also were asked to submit ideas for proposals for conference sessions and possible new formats for sessions.

Also, for 2011, the Board is soliciting ideas for the conference location. Should the meeting be back in Chicago or should we look elsewhere (Indianapolis, Milwaukee, St. Louis, etc.), especially if PLANC meets in Chicago in 2012? Members are encouraged to let Gwyn or Mac know their thoughts.

For years, MAPLA has continued its

annual Profiles publication as a project listing updated information on law schools in a short, handy publication that appeared much earlier than LSAC's information, even though the cost of distributing the data without subsidies was increasingly high for the organization. But, Steve Nelson explained, with LSAC providing more data online, the viability and utility of the project came into question; accordingly, the Board had voted in May to discontinue Profiles, pending a survey of MAPLA membership to see how the document was being used and to determine if there was any sentiment to continue.

The results confirmed that a strong majority were not using the document, reaffirming the Board's decision. That outcome, however, leaves the question of what should MAPLA do as a project? Accordingly, the Board is requesting that members offer ideas and suggestions for a new project on the newly established list-serve which has been set up to enable the asking and answering of questions among the region's pre law advisors.

In essence, the Board is asking, "What would you like MAPLA to do as a project to make your life as a pre law advisor easier?" In discussion at the meeting, one possibility that emerged would be to do an annual survey of law schools, asking each of them, "What is hot and new this year at your law school?" A publication then could be prepared compiling this information for all law schools.

Because webmaster John Little had stepped down from the Board, RJ Holmes delivered the report on the website and announced plans to have the website migrated to a commercial server to permit 24/7 maintenance. Our website also will contain PDF copies of Briefs on line, though not the most current issue, which will remain a benefit of membership. A section of the website also will archive past copies of MAPLA Briefs, all of which have now been

scanned. They will be uploaded, and the plan is to provide a searchable index related to topics.

MAPLA Membership Chair Yvette Simpson reported that as of October 17th, there currently are 61 pre law advisor members, and 35 law school members, down a bit from the 2007-8 figures when we had totals of 77 and 39 for the two respective categories. Yvette indicated that the transition to electronic registration with e-mail addresses for everyone has proceeded effectively, though the use of Paypal has been somewhat problematic. Nevertheless, 47 registrants to the conference successfully used Paypal.

Don Racheter, who had stepped in following the resignation of long-time Treasurer Lane Sunderland, reported that for the fiscal year ending March 31st, MAPLA increased its net worth by \$18,000. In essence, because Lane had taken MAPLA out of the market before the recession, MAPLA's finances are in excellent shape.

In Caravan News, Mac Francis reported that 120 law schools have registered for at least one of the four 2009 caravan sites, which compares to a total of 121 schools for 2008. Given the financial pressures and budget problems at many schools, this total is gratifying, reinforcing the continued attention that law schools across the country give to our region. 86 schools registered for all four sites. With 104 law schools going to at least three sites, that figure shows an increase from the total of 98 last year. Next year, although the conference will take place in Minneapolis, the Caravan dates still will be tied to the Chicago Forum. St. Louis will join Wisconsin, Illinois, and Indiana as sites. Final dates have yet to be established.

In her MALSA report on the most recent LSAC data, Janet Hein indicated that applications and applicants are up in every region. Applicant increases

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Law School Q&A: Loyola University Chicago School of Law

Pamela A. Bloomquist, Assistant Dean, Law Admission and Financial Assistance

Loyola University Chicago School of Law offers academic excellence and intellectual openness, with emphasis on service to others. Dedicated to preparing you for professional practice, our Jesuit-inspired tradition develops students for responsible leadership through research, scholarship and public service, in close collaboration with our distinguished faculty. Prospective applicants who get the opportunity to become students of the School of Law will eventually join the many alumni who serve as distinguished attorneys, judges, legislators and business leaders. www.law.luc.edu

Q: If you could describe your law school in a few words or a sentence what would you say? Please give us the reasoning behind that choice.

Loyola University Chicago School of Law is a student-focused law center inspired by the Jesuit tradition of academic excellence, intellectual openness, and service to others. A warm and collaborative environment encourages collegiality, and the balance between academic rigor and personal development.

The choice of a law school should be based upon the person's personal needs for the best learning experience tempered with a comfortable environment to create a successful education. The atmosphere of Loyola Chicago is the main reason students select our school as well as our great location in the city.

Celebrating 100 years of legal education, Loyola Chicago is also celebrating 25 years as a center of excellence in Health Law, 15 years for our Civitas Child Law Center, and the significant representation of our alumni in key positions in state and local government.

The University's campuses in Rome, Beijing and Vietnam encourage students to explore service to others and study outside the United States.

Q: What does Loyola Chicago look for in choosing candidates for your incoming 1L class?

While the LSAT and GPA are carefully measured, the personal statement and resume assist us in selecting individuals who will be active participants in class, vibrant members of the student body, and caring individuals eager to volunteer in the community. We seek individuals who are inquisitive, caring, and professional in their daily lives irrespective of their background.

The ultimate goal for enrolling a class each fall is to have a significantly diverse class representing not only racial, ethnic and gender differences, but also geographic, economic, religious and personal belief differences. This diversity enhances the classroom experience and discussion, as well as exposing students to the diverse composition of the world they will be working in as attorneys.

Q: What should it mean to potential applicants that Loyola is a Jesuit law school?

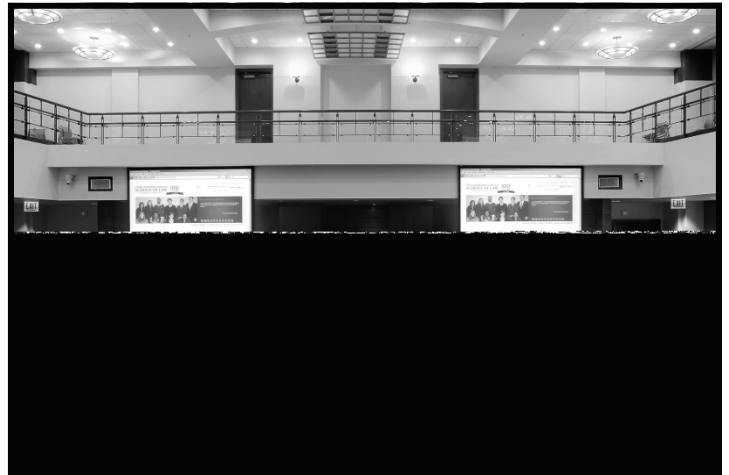
The Jesuit influence is exhibited in the daily knowledge that a lawyer's job is more than doing well - he or she must also do well. The understanding of education the whole person to realize that there is a world in need of their personal commitment is the ultimate goal of the Loyola Chicago legal education.

The faculty and staff have a commitment to providing an excellent education while encouraging students to volunteer. The law school's relationship with agencies and government of the City of Chicago affords numerous opportunities for a first hand legal experience for our students.

Q: Do you have any advice that you would like Pre-Law Advisors to share with our students?

There are three distinct suggestions to help a student have a successful law admission experience.

First, the transition to paperless due to technology has created a number of careless errors. We strongly urge the students to slow down in their submission and carefully read their application form, their personal statements and any other documents they send. We have had a significant increase in "replacement essay" or other errata submitted in the past two years due to typos, missed



New Courthouse at Loyola University Chicago School of Law

Featured Member

As we move into 2010 we have decided to try out a new feature for *Briefs*. For each edition we would like to feature a different member of MAPLA to find out more information about who are members are and what we are doing at our various institutions. Yvette Simpson, one of our Board Members was gracious enough to agree to be our first advisor to be featured. For future editions we are looking for suggestions from the membership about MAPLA colleagues that you feel would be good advisors to profile and of course if you would just like to volunteer yourself we will take that as well! Please email either Kemi Faleti-Dosunmu at kfaleti@uic.edu or RJ Holmes at rholmes@cornellcollege.edu.

Name: Yvette R. Simpson, Esq.

School & Position: Miami University, Director of Pre-Law Programs

MAPLA membership length: 2 years

Any MAPLA Board Experience (If yes please expound): MAPLA Board Member, Membership Chair & Conference Registrar – 1 year

Q: What drew you into the field of Pre-Law advising?

As a law student, I served on the Admissions Committee and as Co-Chair of our Student Legal Education Committee. After graduating, I worked as a lawyer for 3 years, recruited for my law firm, and often served as a mentor and advisor for students who were considering law school and/or wanted to learn more about the legal profession. My alma mater, Miami University, decided to create a new pre-law program two years ago, and this seemed like a great way to bring together my experience and my passion for helping students.



Q: What's something that you have found surprising or challenging about Pre-Law advising?

I was pleasantly surprised by the collegial relationship between pre-law advisors and also the helpfulness of law school admissions representatives. This is a wonderful community. My greatest challenge in advising pre-law students is getting a handle on my student population. Because the legal field is so diverse, I often don't know which students on my campus are interested in law school until they come to my door or attend a program, which is often very late in the game. I struggle to find ways to identify students earlier in their college careers, which is when we can make the most impact.

Q: What other extra services do you provide to your students outside of just traditional advising?

We provide a variety of services, including seminars and workshops, mentoring, shadowing, internships, and a living-learning community. Our living-learning community is new this year, and has helped us identify students early in the process. First-year students live in the same dorm, take a course together, and engage in all types of activities. Through this community, we have brought together fine arts, engineering, business, education, and humanities students who otherwise would not have known each other. Students have said that they enjoy meeting students who share their interest in law.

Loyola University Chicago

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or incomplete answers, etc.

Second, we strongly recommend that potential students visit the law schools to see if the program, school, and people are a good match. At minimum, students should visit if admitted.

Finally, here are some suggestions regarding candidates who are waitlisted. It is important to share with students to: complete the FAFSA; visit the schools; and create a hierarchy of schools. Each year when we call someone on the waitlist we are surprised they have not accomplished these tasks, despite us including the information with our letter placing them on the waitlist. Many law schools have implemented a process of asking the student to decide within 24 hours and the more information they have in hand prior to a phone call will facilitate their decision. As you may have seen this past summer, there are schools that do have funding available in the summer, but also are on a short turnaround.

Annual Conference Recap

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doing prelaw advising up at Bemidji State and was attending his first MAPLA conference—another good reason to attend the annual conferences—seeing old friends.

The Thursday afternoon sessions provided a nice combination of business and pleasure. First we were introduced to changes on the LSAC website. I am sure that many of our advisees have been asking questions—hopefully this presentation will make us better prepared to provide accurate answers. The second half of the afternoon was spent at the “theater.” Steve Shafer entertained us all with a wide range of film clips. I think that everyone was truly impressed with the depth of his knowledge in this area, and also his enthusiasm. Heck, there was even popcorn!

The Friday morning breakfast was very early, but since I live in the Eastern Time zone, it was still manageable. Fortunately the food was warm, plentiful and tasty and it was fun to see the plans for Marquette’s new law school. After breakfast the two sessions provided us with some ideas about how to get your alumni involved, without upsetting your Development Office, as well as some more food for thought in regards to personal statements. As is always the case, we were reminded of the importance of the personal statements—while all the time knowing that our student’s numbers continue to drive their application process. I liked the idea of having the student provide their letter writers with a copy of their statement so that there could “hopefully” be a coherent theme to the non-numerical aspects of the application.

Lunch was with Anne Brandt of LSAC. She is always a wealth of information. She is also one of the most helpful

“As is always the case, we were reminded of the importance of the personal statements—while all the time knowing that our student’s numbers continue to drive their application process.”

people that you will ever meet. If you have a question or problem, she will either answer it, solve it, or connect you with someone who can. Thanks Anne!

The first afternoon session “Mock Admissions” is the conference’s perennial favorite. This is what we all need to know—what really happens in the admissions process. I particularly enjoyed Charles Roboski’s follow-up reports—telling us how the successful candidates did in law school. This session alone was worth the registration fee.

I was unable to attend the second afternoon session as I had to assist my students with their hotel check-ins for the Forum. But the reports on the Mock Trial session were very positive. I can safely say that this panel was filled with heavy hitters - Don Racheter, Bradley Bloch and Richard Calkins are the godfathers of the American Mock Trial Association. The other presenter, MaryLynn Neuhaus, a fellow Iowa Law grad, has also been a pillar of this organization for years. If these individuals could not sell you on the advantages associated with having a Mock Trial program, no one would be able to.

Saturday’s breakfast was thankfully not as early, and was followed by MAPLA’s annual business meeting. I always find the MALSA (Midwest Alliance for Law School Admissions) report to be useful. Once again Janet Hein provided an overview of trends in applications and admissions at Midwest law schools.

News from the Law School Front

Janet L. Hein, Assistant Dean, Director of Admissions & Financial Aid, University of Dayton School of Law



Greetings from Dayton, OH – where the snow is FINALLY starting to melt. This is peak time for law school application reading....our eyes are starting to spin from all the application reading. This year we are tracking to have a slight increase in applications. Not all schools have an increase, though – 60% of schools have an increase over last year, and 40% have a decrease.

This dichotomy is reflected in students’ financial choices - some potential applicants are scared to outlay the money for law school, while others out of a job or don’t have a job, and can get loans to live on if they go to school – so they are taking advantage of furthering their education.

In the next month or so, students will be making decisions as to where they will commit. I encourage *you* to encourage *them* to visit as many schools as they can; read the fine print on all scholarship offers; research faculty, curriculum, and grading at each law school; meet as many people connected to the law school as possible; think very seriously about the work-load commitment; and make sure all their finances are in order. This is a serious undertaking and a huge financial commitment – they should re-think this commitment and make sure this is exactly what they want.

It going to be an interesting summer – with the application/applicant ratio still high, and the continued emphasis on affordability, many of us can only guess about our seat deposits. There will be a lot of shifting of commitments as the spring continues and major movement on wait lists this summer. It is going to keep us all busy – and stressed! But, we will all get our classes in with your great help, as we always do.

Law Student Reflection: Economic Downturn

John Steffan, 2L, St. Louis University School of Law



As a caveat, let me say: my sample size is not large or controlled, nor is my reflection based on conversations with the most important law firm strategic decision makers.

That said, my impression of the legal employment landscape is one of irreversible change in summer and permanent hiring practices.

The narrative, as I've gathered, is that most big firms were slow to react to the economic slowdown. Once they figured out the balloon was falling, firms scrambled to find expendable weight to cast overboard. Over-hiring inexperienced law students for expensive summer positions was a practice jettisoned in the attempt to avoid disaster. Predictably, there was fallout for all law students, even the ones who were never gunning for those posh jobs in the first place. The ratio of students to positions was much higher than usual

But at least my class knew the landscape had changed. I was perfectly happy landing a good federal government internship, especially when my supervisor threw me right into important projects that gave me great experience. My classmates, no matter where they landed during their first summer, shared similar stories: meaningful work, smaller firms and government agencies maximizing

the cheap-or-free help. Places assessing for post-graduation employment gave brutally honest feedback, and a higher percentage than usual was not invited back for a second summer. The legendary summers of free baseball games, swanky dinners and nights out were over for those top-five-percent, and the rest of us had to deal with more competition for each other position, since jobs were fewer and further between.

“While the availability of jobs has changed from when I applied to law school, the strategies for landing them remain the same...”

Lawyers are, as I've been told since before coming to Saint Louis University, a notoriously risk-averse bunch. When risk-averse people get scared they don't forget it, and take extra precautions not to ever be so scared again. The economic crunch scared a lot of attorneys. Those that remain in a hiring position in 2010 have not forgotten it. My impression is that the employment environment ---a lot of competition for fewer open spots---will stay closer to its current state rather than regress to the halcyon days of yesteryear, if only to help ensure firms are never so over-extended and vulnerable as they were a year ago.

Which brings us to now. A few folks have jobs lined up for their 2L summer. I was lucky enough to get my foot in the door and score five or ten great interviews, but nothing panned out among that first round of on-campus interviews. So I join the ranks of my still-searching brethren as we keep worrying and keep scurrying for a summer position.

While the availability of jobs has changed from when I applied to law school, the strategies for landing them remain the same: network, keep grades high, and refine what I want to do post-graduation. Networking through a hobby (in my case, swimming for and coaching a local swim team) helped me land a small, one-day a week job that's helped pay the bills and given me some more experience.

The economic environment has stabilized to the point where employment opportunities, while more difficult to come by than in some years prior, are at least predictable. But there are jobs out there, and one important thing has crystallized for me: law is important, challenging and rewarding work, and it's worth the effort to find a job in the field. It's nice to know that, even though economic times are difficult, the choice to become an attorney was the right one for me.

2009 Business Meeting

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ranged from a 2.1% to as high as 8.6%, and applications were up from a low of 0.2% to as much as an 11.2% increase.

Nationally applications were up 6.5%, and the total of applicants was up 5%. In the Midwest region, the number of applicants was up 5.2%, and the total of applications was up 1.1%. In the Great Lakes region, the corresponding numbers were 2.1% and 4.1% respectively. Final numbers will be posted after the first of the year. Applicants sent 6.56 applications per applicant. Costs are increasingly a determining factor in final choices for students, and the first two questions coming from students concern scholarships and jobs. One intriguing factor in the data showed a 2.8% decline in the female applicant pool.

Finally, in the elections for the Board, and after nominations from the floor, Don Racheter was elected to a two year term as Treasurer; Kemi Faleti and RJ Holmes won two year at-large terms as co-editors of MAPLA Briefs; and Steve Nelson and Ruth Watry were elected to at-large one year terms.

Words of Advice on Building a Professional Brand

Tony Waller, Assistant Dean for Career Planning and Professional Development, University of Illinois College of Law



As a Career Planning professional, the most common question I get from prospective law students is “what do I need to do now to prepare for the practice of law?” While I understand people usually want a simple “go read *IL*” or “don’t watch *Legally Blonde*,” the answer is much more difficult because it naturally implies law school applicants aren’t well spoken, nice people. The decision to go to

law school is one that is both highly subjective (you do so because you personally want to make a change or just be a lawyer) and highly objective (you possess certain skills that make you particularly adept to be trained as a lawyer). The one thing people thinking about law school usually forget is that law, like many professional professions, is based on selling you. Clients pay for your passion, skill, training, personality, ability and time.

That being said now is the time to begin thinking about the brand that you will be selling. I completely understand (and have lived) the life of a soon-to-be law student. While I believe it is important to conduct your affairs carefully, I am not talking about the embarrassing things that might end up on Facebook (although you should start considering those things, as well). I am thinking about more pedestrian things, such as email etiquette, as well as written and other interpersonal communication. As you begin applying to law school, it is imperative that you use proper English, with fully punctuated and constructed sentences. Not only will it pay off in the present, as schools normally consider all writing in their admis-

sions decisions, but in your future job searches and career.

The current economy has placed a premium on well-developed personal skills. Those that present themselves in the most professional manner are those that will continue to be more successful in their job hunt, law school leadership roles, and classes. There is no doubt you will enter the legal workforce in a very different economic atmosphere than what we are seeing now. There is also no doubt that at some point in your legal career, we will face more economic downturns. Attorneys with well developed personal relationship skills will always be in greater demand than those who are less adept at networking, simple professional communications, and interpersonal interaction. Clients, like legal employers, are willing to pay more for (or continue paying for) attorneys they trust to competently handle their affairs.

Starting now, especially if you are not as advanced in some of these things, will give you plenty of time to learn to get them right. Every year, there are horror stories from law schools, summer clerkship programs and the practice about students or attorneys who fail to remember the written word communicates much more than the spoken word. Plus, it lives on forever and with electronic communications, can be easily sent around the world before the writer has the chance to get his office cleaned out.

I know you are thinking this seems so old school. It is old school. You have to think about your audience. When you become the admissions director or hiring authority, then you can ignore these things, if you so choose (I bet you won’t). Until then, you have to pay attention to them. The long term payoff is a professional persona that employers and clients alike are willing to pay for.

MAPLA Caravan Review *Mac Francis, MAPLA Caravan Coordinator, Indiana University—Bloomington*

The 2009 MAPLA Caravan took place during the week of October 19, the week following the Chicago Forum. The Caravan stopped at the Universities of Wisconsin, Indiana, Illinois, and Iowa. Given the current state of the economy, with law school endowments down substantially, and many institutions imposing drastic cuts in travel funding, we were bracing for a possibly significant decrease in attendance at the MAPLA Caravan this year. However, it turned out that 120 law schools registered for at least one stop on the Caravan this year, which was only one below last year’s record total. We were extremely pleased with this result.

In fact, in 2007 115 law schools registered for the Caravan, so 2009 actually saw an increase of five schools over the same sites two years ago. Here are the law school registrations by individual site: Wisconsin 109; Indiana 111; Illinois 103; Iowa 92. It has been normal that attendance at the Caravan drops slightly as the week progresses, and this pattern continued for 2009.

Student attendance was generally excellent as well, although Iowa experienced pouring rain during the entire event, which depressed their turnout. Indiana had 773 attending, Illinois had approximately 450, Wisconsin 350, and Iowa about 140. All sites were also visited by students from approximately 15 other undergraduate institutions located in their respective regions.

Overall, the law schools that registered this year tended to visit slightly more Caravan sites than in 2007. Eighty-six law schools registered to visit all four Caravan stops, 18 visited three, nine visited two, and nine others visited just one. All together there were 415 “stops” or site visits by individual law schools throughout the week. This was eight more than in 2007.

Thus overall we are absolutely thrilled with the results of this year’s MAPLA Caravan. It takes so very many people, working long hours and incredibly hard over many months to put such an event together. So many things have to fall into place to make these events a success. It is impossible to thank everyone who deserves our gratitude, but let me single out a few people, with sincere apologies for those left out: Consuelo Lopez-Springfield and Susan Nelson of Wisconsin, Janine Bullerdick of Indiana, Dimitria Johnson of Illinois, and John Little of Iowa. Without you and your staffs the MAPLA Caravan could not take place. We look forward to another successful program next year!

Law School Q&A: University of Florida Levin College of Law

Michelle Adorno, Assistant Dean for Admissions



The University of Florida Levin College of Law is a high quality, comprehensive law school, with leading programs in graduate taxation, environmental and land use law, and family law. The Graduate Taxation Program, which offers the LL.M. in Taxation, LL.M. in International Taxation and S.J.D. in Taxation, is widely and consistently regarded as one of the nation's top programs. The Environmental Law Program offers the nation's first LL.M. in the closely-related fields of environmental and land use law. www.law.ufl.edu

Q: If you could describe your law school in a few words or a sentence what would you say? Please give us the reasoning behind that choice.

The University of Florida Levin College of Law offers the best educational value in the country, combining low tuition with an outstanding academic experience. Our graduates become very special members of the "Gator Nation," the University of Florida's large, loyal and powerful alumni network. We are Florida's most prestigious law school, with a 100-year legacy of leadership and public service.

Q: What does the University of Florida Levin College of Law look for in choosing candidates for your incoming 1L class?

The College of Law seeks students who collectively offer a wide range of backgrounds, experiences, interests and perspectives. We believe that being a part of a broadly diverse student body in law school best prepares our graduates to provide outstanding service in many different public and private capacities. Through our admissions process, we seek to admit and enroll students who will excel academically, attain the highest standards of professional excellence and integrity, and bring vision, creativity and commitment to the legal profession. Work experience, leadership, community service, overcoming prior disadvantages, or commitment to serve those for whom legal services have been unavailable or difficult to obtain may show that an applicant is in a unique position to add diversity to the law school community or to make significant contributions to the practice of law.

Q: Are there any unique academic, clinical, or co-curricular activities that help make the University of Florida College of Law education stand out?

The clinical programs at UF Law provide students with extensive opportunities to represent actual clients under the close supervision of faculty or attorneys. Such practical "hands on" experience enhances the understanding of the law learned in classrooms. Participation in a clinical program may allow students to earn credits or to earn Florida Supreme Court certification as certified legal interns. Our clinical programs include the Virgil Hawkins Civil Clinics (Full-Representation Clinic, Gator TeamChild Juvenile Law Clinic, County Court Small Claims Mediation Clinic, Family Law Pro Se/Unbundling Advice Clinic), the Child Welfare Clinic, the Criminal Law Clinics (Public Defender and State Attorney) and the Conservation Clinic.

Centers and institutes at UF Law incorporate teaching, research and scholarship in a variety of areas. Students are able to participate in research, conferences, and speaker series. Some centers and institutes also provide students with opportunities to engage in externships. Our centers and institutes include the Center on Children and Families, the Center for Governmental Responsibility, the Center for Information Research (CIR), the Center for International Financial Crimes Studies, the Center for the Study of Race and Race Relations, the Camp Center for Estate Planning, the Legal Technology Institute, the Holland & Knight Institute, the Institute for Human Rights, Peace and Development and the Institute for Dispute Resolution.

Finally, through our certificate programs, UF Law students have the chance to pursue a coherent course of study that will make them more sophisticated in a particular area and more competitive in the market for new lawyers. Certificate programs are available in Environmental & Land Use Law, Estates & Trusts, Family Law, Intellectual Property Law and International & Comparative Law.

Q: How successful are your students at attaining competitive clerkships at both the state and federal level? What resources does UF make available to its students to assist in the clerkship process?

UF Law leads in Florida in the total number of judicial clerkships attained upon graduation as well as for the number of Article III judicial clerkships. We offer a number of career programs each year focused on the judicial clerkship process, ranging from bringing in a panel of judges to discuss the differences between state court cases and federal magistrate, district court and appellate court case loads, to a program with a panels of judicial law clerks who share their perspectives, to nuts and bolts application process programs. Our Center for Career Development serves as a central repository for letters of recommendations, counsels students about the judicial clerkship path and helps student and alumni applicants prepare their clerkship applications.

Q: Do you have any advice that you would like Pre-Law Advisors to share with our students?

I would like to convey to applicants that with so many options in law schools in the United States, that they should try to take advantage of the many excellent resources that are available to law school applicants nowadays. Web sites and publications such as the *ABA-LSAC Official Guide to ABA-Approved Law Schools*, pre-law advisors, law school information sessions and open houses, for example, all provide wonderful opportunities for applicants to learn about law schools to which they may not otherwise have considered applying.

2009 Board Meeting Summaries *Steve Shafer, MAPLA Secretary*

The MAPLA Board of Directors met on two occasions in 2009 prior to the October Conference meeting in Chicago. In keeping with the decision of the MAPLA Board to provide information on its meetings in [MAPLA Briefs](#), the following summaries have been abridged from the formally approved minutes.

At the MAPLA Board Meeting in Chicago January 30 and 31, 2009, Yvette Simpson, the new Membership Chair, and Don Racheter were welcomed to the Board. The Treasurer's Report showed that MAPLA's financial status was sound, with an adjusted current balance of \$166,024 prior to the payment of several additional checks. After having served as the organization's Treasurer for several terms, Lane Sunderland indicated he would be stepping down from his position. Don Racheter agreed to serve as interim Treasurer until the Fall elections at the Chicago meeting. To fill Don's temporary vacancy on the Board, the Board also agreed to invite Steve Nelson back to serve as interim editor of [MAPLA Profiles](#) until the elections at the conference. The Board approved the request from the Pre Law Advisor's National Committee for \$2400 in seed money from each APLA for the 2012 National Conference.

After a report on the MAPLA website, the Board decided to consider a transfer of our website to a more reliable, professional server; the Board also proposed the addition of an archive of previous *MAPLA Briefs* to the MAPLA website. With membership presently standing at 56 Pre Law Advisors, improved methods to update membership solicitation are being contemplated, possibly employing a PayPal option; additionally, an electronic registration form for the October conference is being prepared, and electronic membership solicitation methods will be utilized in the future. A MAPLA list serve also is in preparation. Janet Hein also forwarded a detailed report on 2009 applicants and applications by region; her report observed that in the Midwest the number of applicants is down 2.1%, and coincidentally, the number of applications was up 2.1%.

A lengthy discussion began about the question of what methods should be used to solicit data for [PROFILES](#); this evolved into a general consideration of whether or not [PROFILES](#) should be continued, especially given the improvement in the Law Services website. The Board agreed to continue the discussion at its next meeting after investigating further methods of data collection and how to determine whether the historic publication still serves a useful purpose for our membership and for other pre law advisors. The Board also opened a discussion of a possible additional membership classification for retired or emeritus advisors. A potential recurring feature of *MAPLA Briefs* is a column on the topic of "How I Became a Pre Law Advisor." With the strong offer of help from the University of Saint Thomas Law School, the Board considered having the Conference in 2010 take place in Minneapolis around the time of the Career and Law School Fair at the University of Minnesota; accordingly a planning meeting was scheduled for late Spring in the Twin Cities. In planning the program for the upcoming October 2009 conference, the Board considered a variety of potential topics for sessions, and it affirmed an earlier decision to keep registration fees low for the meeting.

The Board met again May 26-27 in Minneapolis at the University of St. Thomas Law School. Steve Nelson was welcomed back to the Board. Interim Treasurer Don Racheter reported that MAPLA's current balance showed an increase of roughly \$17,000 over the preceding year. The Board approved a switch to a more convenient Merrill Lynch location in Iowa to permit Don more convenient access for payment of the organization's bills in a more timely fashion. The Caravan this year will take place from October 19th through the 22nd at Wisconsin, Indiana, Illinois, and Iowa respectively. For 2010, the Minneapolis Conference will take place from Thursday, October 14th through Saturday, October 16th, with the Caravan taking place prior to the October 30th Chicago Forum, from October 25th to the 28th. Tentative locations include Indiana, St. Louis, Illinois, and Wisconsin, but other sites have made inquiries. Because of cost reimbursement problems at some sites, a reimbursement limit might need to be a requirement in the future. Geographical considerations also are to be factors in the choice of future Caravan locations.

Membership Chair Yvette Simpson noted that Conference Registration materials were sent to 600 Pre Law Advisors in 12 states and to all ABA endorsed law schools. An interactive form has been posted on the MAPLA website. A Pay Pal account has been created, although there were some initial minor technical difficulties. Updated reminders will be sent at intervals through the summer. After the conference the registration form will be considered to be the MAPLA membership form. The MAPLA list serve is operational. The Board also decided that retired Pre Law Advisors and Board members be offered the option of a lifetime membership for five dollars.

Janet Hein sent an updated summary on 2009 admissions showing a 1.1% increase in the Great Lakes area applicants and a 3.5% increase in applicants in the Midwest region. Great Lakes applications are up 3.8%, and Midwest applications are up 1.4% from last year. Overall private school applications are up 6.9%, and public school applications are up 4.3%. The Board noted that the question of whether to find another server depended on whether there still would need to be a collection process for a possible continuation of [Profiles](#). With more advisors making use of the on-line data from Law Services, the question remains whether our publication is either useful or necessary. But before abolishing [Profiles](#), the Board decided to poll the membership to solicit feedback via e-mail. If the publication is continued, the plan would be to continue with the data collection utilized with the present server. If the publication is to be discontinued, a new server is to be sought.

The Board then began turning its attention to planning for the 2010 Conference, which will mark the 35th anniversary of MAPLA. Meeting with the Board was Kari Haaland of the University of St. Thomas Law School who had been working with Gwyn Wallander and with representatives of the other law schools in the Twin Cities to plan for the event. Kari and her staff provided a tour of the facilities and discussed plans and ideas for the conference. Visits to all four law schools will be features of the meeting, and sessions will be held at several schools. The Board then discussed what positions would be up for election at the Fall 2009 meeting, and Board members "brainstormed" about what might be MAPLA's signature project if [Profiles](#) is discontinued. That issue will be discussed at the next Board meeting, but the decision was made to open up the question at the business meeting in October.

2010 MAPLA Conference Call for Proposals

The 2010 MAPLA Conference is scheduled for October 14-16, 2010, at University of St. Thomas School of Law in Minneapolis Minnesota. Conference attendees will have the opportunity to spend time at the University of St. Thomas School of Law and surrounding Twin Cities' law schools. We will continue to do the opening workshops for new Pre-Law advisors and for veteran Pre-Law advisors, as well as the Mock Admissions panel. This year, however, we are excited to be putting out a call for proposals for the other conference sessions.

We are looking for panels and speakers that will focus on issues of relevance and interest to our members. These could include, but are not limited to sessions dealing with:

- Marketing Pre-Law programs
- Summer Programs for applicants
- Advising applicants with lower LSAT scores
- Technology and Pre-Law advising
- On-campus LSAT prep
- Financing law school
- Writing Personal Statements, Addenda, Résumés and Follow up Letters
- Building a Pre-Law program and Outreach Pipeline
- Alternative approaches to legal education
- Disclosure issues on law school applications
- Legal internship opportunities for Pre-Law Students
- Advising students with disabilities

Again, these are just categories to get you thinking, if you have proposals outside of these areas, please do not hesitate to submit them. Both Pre-Law advisors and law school admission representatives are invited to submit proposals for the conference.



How to submit your proposals

If you have an idea for a workshop or other conference event, please submit a proposal to Program Chair Ruth Ann Watry at rwatry@nmu.edu and include the following information by May 1, 2010:

- Your name
- School
- Title
- E-mail address and phone number
- Title of session
- Description of session
- Tentative list of participants/panelists if you have one.

We look forward to seeing you in Minneapolis in October!

Got a Story to Tell?

MAPLA Briefs is always looking for story ideas to include in each edition. The Briefs come out four times each year and we look for a diverse group of topics to educate pre-law advisors about all aspects of advising, law school, and the legal profession. Please contact Adekemi Faleti-Dosunmu at afaleti@uic.edu or RJ Holmes at rholmes@cornellcollege.edu with your suggestions!



Adekemi Faleti-Dosunmu



RJ Holmes



See you in Minneapolis!

University of St. Thomas School of Law
Minneapolis, Minnesota

Thursday, October 14
to Saturday, October 16, 2009

2010 MAPLA Conference

Celebrating 35 Years of Advising Excellence

MAPLA Briefs

c/o RJ Holmes

Cornell College Pre-Law Program

600 First St SW, Box 2316

Mount Vernon, IA 52314
