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UB Law Forum

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Law School Report:

Applications surge as marketing efforts pay off

Students are applying in record numbers to the University at Buffalo Law School, thanks to a personalized team approach for marketing a first-rate quality education. Applications to UB Law were up 40 percent this year — from 844 in 1999 to 1,178 in 2000 — the second-highest increase of the 182 American Bar Association-accredited law schools, according to figures available to the Law School Admissions Council (LSAC).

According to Edward Haggerty, a spokesperson for the LSAC, UB Law enjoyed the highest increase in applications of all the established ABA law schools, topped only by the newly accredited Florida Coastal Law School, in Jacksonville, Fla.

"It's a remarkable increase in applications, well ahead of the national average," said Haggerty.

Nationally, the total number of applicants is up 3.4 percent. Nine law schools had an application increase of 30 percent or more; 117 schools had an increase; 61 had a decline; and the remainder had no change.

Though applications to UB Law have greatly increased, the size of the first-year class this fall is 237, just 5 more than last year's 232. As a result, UB Law has become more selective.

The median grade point average of the incoming class has moved up, from 3.18 last year to 3.31 this year. So has the median LSAT score, from 153 to 154.

"We're spreading the word that UB is the place to be for a quality, personalized, diverse and affordable legal education," says Jack Cox, associate dean and director of admissions and financial aid.

Cox and Assistant Director of Admissions, Lillie V. Wiley will be taking their "show" on the road for the second year for three months this fall, traveling coast to coast, to career fairs and recruiting events.

When weighing the pluses and minuses of potential graduate and professional schools, "It's a 'buyer's' market," says Wiley. Potential applicants can afford to be choosy, and choosy they are. "Family ties or obligations, by chance or choice, often limit where students apply," Wiley notes. But

UB holds a "full house" of drawing cards.

UB Law's culture and curriculum is rich with opportunities for dual degrees and interdisciplinary study that can be individually tailored to fit the applicants' interests and career goals. Interdisciplinary programs enable students to obtain both the J.D. degree and a Ph.D., M.B.A. or M.S.W. A new M.P.H. degree currently is being planned as well.

"Law graduates who have combination degrees are in demand and can often write their own ticket with law firms, corporations and governments who need lawyers with backgrounds in engineering, medicine, insurance, government in a constantly changing global economy," Wiley points out.

Unlike most other law schools, UB Law offers complex clinical work in transactional, litigation and policy contexts; and an innovative mix of theory and practice in diverse course offerings. A flexible program enables UB Law students to select from 10 established curricular concentrations, including affordable housing and community development, civil litigation, criminal law, environmental law, family law, finance transactions, health law, international law, law and social justice, or state and local government law.

Alternatively, many students design their own sequence of courses, drawing on UB's curricular strengths in information technology, intellectual property, labor and employment law, and constitutional law.

Other pluses offered at UB are high-quality faculty members, many of whom have Ph.D.'s in addition to J.D. degrees; a nationally respected law review; a diverse student population; and a wide array of student organizations that focus on special interests.

Courses that "bridge" the class lectures and their application will be further enhanced in the coming years by the expected presence of some sitting court sessions in the new state-of-the-art courtroom under construction in the Law School's O'Brian Hall.

"It's not difficult to sell potential students on UB Law School when you know you have a terrific, exciting, dynamic and affordable educational 'product,'" Wiley says.

