10-1-2005

Law School Students Come from All Walks of Life

UB Law Forum

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.law.buffalo.edu/ub_law_forum

Recommended Citation

Available at: https://digitalcommons.law.buffalo.edu/ub_law_forum/vol18/iss1/19

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Alumni Publications at Digital Commons @ University at Buffalo School of Law. It has been accepted for inclusion in UB Law Forum by an authorized editor of Digital Commons @ University at Buffalo School of Law. For more information, please contact lawscholar@buffalo.edu.
Of the 247 first-year students enrolled this fall at the UB Law School, about half possess the prototypical law school student portfolio—just a year or two removed from undergrad study, a liberal arts degree, a high score on the Law School Admissions Test (LSAT)—but many come to the school from wide-ranging paths that have taken them all over the world. And, according to UB Law School Dean Nils Olsen, the diversity is by design.

“We really do emphasize diversity,” Olsen says. “Because of the extraordinary pressure to achieve high national rankings, many law schools focus their recruiting around criteria used to rank law schools—LSAT scores, past academic performance. But we have made a practice over the years of looking at the law schools…That’s something that it fosters, creates better lawyers with a broader perspective, he says.

I was surprised by the diversity, by how many people have done a variety of different things,” says Pasha, a mother of two, who hopes to pursue a career in public-interest law. “It adds to class discussion when someone can cite personal experiences—when someone who has bought and sold a house can talk about property law, or in our torts class when we were discussing selling things like blood, and someone in the class said they had used a sperm donor.”

“There’s a big mix of students,” adds Hampton, who became interested in law while stationed in Hawaii with her husband, also a naval officer, where they saw firsthand some of the land-use issues facing native Hawaiians. “You have your typical students ages 25 and 26 and then you have ex-military people and other non-traditional students…you get a lot of different perspectives and experiences.”

A Juilliard graduate Larissa S. Shahmatova…

F or former radio-ad salesman Daniel Kahn, 27, the road to law school was filled with trials and tribulations. He became interested in law after successful-ly defending himself in town courts for a few speeding tickets he picked up while traveling to and from sales meetings. Now settled in Brockport with his wife and 7-month-old son, Kahn in June completed his degree in criminal justice, has worked for the Monroe County public defender’s office and is responsible for making the 60-mile commute to the UB campus each day.

“I am interested in criminal law, but since coming to UB I’ve realized that there are many different aspects of law that appeal to me,” Kahn says.

Law school students come from all walks of life
律学校的学生从各行各业来

Law school students come from all walks of life

Of the 247 first-year students enrolled this fall at the UB Law School, about half possess the prototypical law school student portfolio—just a year or two removed from undergraduate study, a liberal arts degree, a high score on the Law School Admissions Test (LSAT)—but many come to the school from wide-ranging paths that have taken them all over the world.

And, according to UB Law School Dean Nils Olsen, the diversity is by design.

“We really do emphasize diversity,” Olsen says. “Because of the extraordinary pressure to achieve high national rankings, many law schools focus their recruiting around criteria used to rank law schools—LSAT scores, past academic performance. But we have made a practice over the years of looking at the student portfolio—just a year or two removed from undergraduate study, a liberal arts degree, a high score on the Law School Admissions Test (LSAT)—but many come to the school from wide-ranging paths that have taken them all over the world.

As a professional interpreter, the well-traveled Yu Mi Cho was lured by the British Embassy to assist Prime Minister Tony Blair and Queen Elizabeth II during diplomatic tours of Korea. It was while working as an interpreter in Seoul during a murder case involving a Korean witness, however, that Cho developed an interest in law. “The district attorneys were great, the experience gave me an inside look at the legal system,” says Cho, who after graduation may practice family law and return to Korea with her husband and 3-year-old daughter.

Melissa Fruscione, UB Law School’s director of recruiting, says the school seeks to enroll diversity “in every sense of the word”–ethnic, racial, religious, experiential and geographic. Half of the Law School’s new class came straight from undergraduate institutions, Fruscione says, but 34 percent of the class is students possess advanced degrees. The students hail from 23 U.S. states. Some law schools base their recruitment on numbers, and they have seen an eight to 10 point jump in average LSAT scores; however, they have compromised the overall quality of their class,” Fruscione says. “That’s something we hope to avoid. Numbers aren’t always the best indicators of quality.”

A saleswoman, an environmentalist and intern for talk show host Ellen DeGeneres and newsmaker Tim Russert...