

UB Law Forum

Volume 29
Number 1 *Fall 2014*

Article 15

10-1-2014

Meet the Class of 2017

UB Law Forum

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

Recommended Citation

UB Law Forum (2014) "Meet the Class of 2017," *UB Law Forum*: Vol. 29 : No. 1 , Article 15.
Available at: https://digitalcommons.law.buffalo.edu/ub_law_forum/vol29/iss1/15

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.

Meet the Class of 2017!

They're talented, diverse – and eager to learn the law

Over a thousand people applied, but only 148 found their way this year into SUNY Buffalo Law School's incoming class. They are, says **Lillie Wiley-Upshaw**, the school's vice dean for admissions and student life, a solid group of students who "have shown that they're really ready for this next step."

As the Class of 2017 settles into their classrooms in O'Brian Hall, a look at the students in aggregate shows that, despite intense competition from other law schools for talented scholars with strong potential, this cohort maintains the high standards that have characterized recent Buffalo Law classes.

That's true despite a rapidly changing environment in law school admissions. Though applications to SUNY Buffalo Law were down 5.8 percent from last year, Wiley-Upshaw says, "we were probably one of only a handful of law schools nationwide that didn't experience a two-digit drop in applications."

The median LSAT score for incoming students held steady at 154, and their median grade point average was 3.44. More than one-third are age 25 or older, 7 percent already hold advanced degrees, and the class's ethnic diversity registers at 19 percent. Women slightly outnumber men, at 53 percent to 47 percent.

"It's important we admit students who can do well in law school and pass the bar," Wiley-Upshaw says. "Every year I have a chance to work with students who are excited about the law, who have a personal passion and conviction for wanting to do this work, and who take this next step in their

lives very seriously.

"I'm excited about their potential and that they'll become part of our Law School family. I see people who will have an impact in their careers and on our school. We are creating a generation of lawyers that will make us proud and do good things."

Conversations with a handful of these first-year students reveal a variety of hopes for their future in the profession, but a uniform excitement about the law school experience.

Sarah Hicks, a Binghamton native who did her undergraduate work at Lemoyne College in Syracuse, came to Buffalo to pursue her interest in family law. Her college advisers, she said, helped inform her decision for SUNY Buffalo Law. "My advisers had a lot to say about certain law schools and not so much to say about others," she says. "You learn to trust them after four years."

Her classmate **Michelle McCabe**, a Western New Yorker from the small town of Cassadaga who went to St. Bonaventure University, also wants to study family law. "There are so many situations where kids are not being put into proper homes," she says. "I want to be able to affect that for the better."

Settling into the law school grind, she says, has bought some surprises.



For one, "I didn't know there was so much writing," McCabe says. "I thought I would be mostly reading and thinking."

Mohammed Zaki Sharas, a native of Toronto, comes to SUNY Buffalo Law from the University of Toronto, where he studied strategic management as a business major. He is hoping to work in international business, and says he is looking to round out his finance background with legal training.

"Even if I end up working in Canada, a lot of the companies are U.S.-based," he says. "I could still go on to get a degree in Canada as well, but having a background in U.S. law makes it easier to do this work."

He notes also that Buffalo is about midway between his hometown and New York City, "the top city for lawyers in the world." He may pursue a placement in the Law School's New York

For more photos, visit www.law.buffalo.edu/forum/extra



City Program in Finance and Law.

His law school experience so far, he says, has been “fantastic. I was pleasantly surprised at the level of professionalism among the students. I didn’t expect everybody to be so engaged from the get-go.”

Buffalo native **Jasmine Peterson**, who studied criminal justice and psychology at Canisius College, says she figures her interest in family law makes her job prospects bright: “There’s always room for family lawyers,” she says.

She especially appreciates the welcoming atmosphere at SUNY Buffalo Law, which she says has made the back-to-school transition easier after a few years away from academia. “The school has a great community vibe,” Peterson says. “It’s not really a competitive place—we’re all in it together. It’s like a family.”

One highlight of orientation week was a 3.5-mile run/walk in Buffalo’s Delaware Park, free to law students.