

A low-angle, upward-looking photograph of several modern skyscrapers with glass facades. The buildings are dark, and some windows are illuminated with warm yellow light. The sky is a pale, overcast grey. The perspective creates a sense of height and scale.

ULTRA

VIRES

RECRUIT

SPECIAL

RECRUITMENT SPECIAL

In Your Own Words

Comments and feedback on the recruitment process from our 2L survey

Ultra Vires conducted an anonymous survey of the 2L class about the Toronto Recruit. We have summarized their responses to the long-form questions, below. A more detailed breakdown is forthcoming in the January issue.

MATTHEW PRIOR (2L)

Preparation

Why did you decide not to participate in the 2019 Toronto second year recruit?

Among the students who disclosed their reasons for not participating in the recruit, the two most common reasons were having already secured a summer job, and having no interest in the process or the result.

Comments:

- “The OCIs seem like an unnecessary strain and competition at an already stressful time. I had no interest in participating in what seemed like a factory for law students.”
- “The recruit is meant for only very narrow paths. I dislike how the CDO makes it seem like the be-all and end-all.”

What advice would you give to someone participating in the process next year?

Students generally advised that next year’s students approach the process cynically, knowing that the process is weird and arbitrary, but also knowing that it can go well if you trust your instincts and take steps to reduce your stress level.

Best tips:

- “Carry cash to pay the amazing taxi cab drivers who will get you where you need to be. Know that the firms talk to each other. Ask an upper-year for their thank you email threads to have an example of how to write yours. Carry a backup-battery and charger for your phone.”
- “Write a memorable cover letter. Have innumerable questions up the back of your sleeve. Make jokes and appear relaxed rather than gushing about the firm as though you desperately need a job.”
- “Eat. Drink gatorade/coconut water to keep hydrated. Don’t have too much coffee. Don’t be afraid to ask to use the washroom. Learn the PATH. Talk to an upper-year. Have someone

to message updates to and bounce ideas off of—probably an upper year would help with that as well.”

- “Be with people for calls. It’s nice to already be drunk, and to have someone to hug.”
- “Trust your gut”

Do you have any comments on networking?

The student response to networking was ambivalent. Some students found the process very important for information-gathering, learning firm culture, or showing interest. Other students hated networking and found it useless at best. Still others could not make up their mind.

Comments:

- “Networking is neither important nor unimportant I think.”
- “Networking is valuable to show interest and it did help me land OCIs, I think. I don’t know

how much I learned though.”

- “You have to ball hard! Especially if you didn’t go to Upper Canada College, are introverted, have average grades, and are helplessly middle-class.”
- “It isn’t about the networking, it’s about learning where you want to work so you can be informed. Informed candidates are more confident and impressive. It’s not about the connections as much as what it does for you personally.”
- “Networking made literally no difference whether I got an OCI from a firm or not. In fact, most of the firms that offered me OCIs were firms I did not network with.”

Do you have any comments on the CDO’s services during the recruitment process?

Student perception of the CDO in this process is generally very positive. A common sentiment was

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continued from previous page...

regret at having underused the CDO's services. However, some students had issues with organizational decisions made by the CDO, including the timing of certain information sessions and the organization of information on the CDO's website. Others found that the CDO was either insufficiently critical of applicants' materials, or too focused on corporate law career paths.

Comments:

- "Thank you for all that you do."
- "There is a lot of quality information available. Better organization would be helpful. I discovered some excellent documents late in the game."
- "Keep in mind that they are balancing students' interests against their own in maintaining relationships with the firms. That isn't a bad thing, since a good relationship with firms make it easier to U of T students to find a job, but don't think that they are solely giving advice based on what's best for you."
- "The CDO was very helpful, but it can only help as much as one asks it to. If one does not realize that one should be consulting its staff in person, in addition to simply reading the CDO's literature, then one may be at a disadvantage in the sense that one may not know one's own blind spots."
- "I wish they would give us more specifics on firms beyond general comments for the process. I felt like I knew the general information from UTLC and the rest of the services were not super helpful."
- "They were fine but I think the fear-mongering re first choice has got to stop.* I would not credit any of my success to them though. I had help from other mentors with cover letters/resumes—the CDO was generally useless on that front."

**This comment refers to the advice that candidates should only disclose to a firm that the firm is their first choice of employer, on one occasion.*

Process

What, if anything, would you change about the recruitment process?

Students' most common frustration was the prohibition on firms signalling their intention to make an offer. Many students would prefer the New York style of recruiting process. Other than these two common threads, while students generally did not like the process, they disliked it for opposite reasons.

Comments:

- "I wish employers could speak openly about their intentions before 5:00 p.m. on Wednesday. The places that made me offers said everything [...] but it just made things complicated and stressful in the meantime."
- "I would make it more like the New York system. Our system is absolutely ridiculous. Even though I ended up with a job out of the process I also drove myself ill and I don't know if it was worth it."
- "More time is needed. I wanted to an in-firm with everyone but couldn't! And all offers should not be accepted until 9:00 a.m. the next morning."
- "I would prefer it all to take place on Monday and Tuesday and have all of Wednesday as a blackout period to make a decision."
- "In-firms moved so fast. It was insane and I

didn't know which firm to choose in the end. Not sure if it would be better to stretch it over more time though."

What did you not want your interviewers to know about you?

Many students did not want their interviewers to know the specifics of their marital status, personal life, or politics. Others did not want their interviewers to know that they were not really interested in working with the employer or intended to leave the job after a short time.

Comments:

- "I didn't actually want to work for them."
- "I don't plan on working with them for very long."
- "How much of an anxious person I am."
- "How introverted I was in real life."
- "I was exhausted and just wanted a job."
- "When asked about what I thought the biggest challenge for me would be as a young lawyer, my immediate thought was "striking a work-life balance"."

Did any firms make you feel uncomfortable?

Generally, uncomfortable firm conduct related to (1) violating or skirting LSO rules, (2) potentially or unquestionably bigoted behaviour, and (3) generally strange or abrasive behaviour. Note that, of the over 100 survey responses, only 17 students responded to this question. It is not possible to determine whether there were few uncomfortable moments, or whether students were unwilling to call out inappropriate firm conduct.

Comments:

- "Sexist comments at a reception."
- "As someone from a different country, several partners from a very old and prestigious firm would jot down secretive notes or give me weird pauses and looks whenever I mentioned any government agency or my experiences in my home country. This happened even in the context of a discussion of international trade law. It has got to be the single most peculiar experience in the entire recruit."
- "There were age-related questions, and quite a few questions about family income. In both cases, I'm in a slightly atypical situation that gives rise to those though."

Do you have any comments on receptions, lunches, or dinners?

Students generally thought that dinners were a confusing part of the process. At best, they were difficult to prepare for and to navigate, and at worst, they were the most obvious example of gauging a candidate's "fit." However, the general consensus was that such events were a necessary part of the interview process, and that declining to attend any such event hurts one's chances of receiving an offer.

Comments:

- "I think it is incredibly hard to prepare students for these events and it isn't easy to tell exactly how candidates are being evaluated at them."
- "I don't think it was necessarily the choice of activity (dinner, reception, lunch) that made a difference, but how much face time you got with the employer. For the firm I ended up at, I did not give them the supposed all-important dinner. I went to their lunch on the Tuesday, their reception on Tuesday, and [that day, they] asked [me] to come back [...]. It was the face

time that got me the offer I think, rather than the specifics of what time I was giving them."

- "Not a big fan of them at all, they favour a specific subset of students over others. They also reduce the amount of free time a student has to reflect during the three days which is crucial."
- "I think something important that isn't talked about enough is how much more difficult the process is for non-white students, particularly non-white female students. It isn't a surprise that the legal profession, at least on Bay Street, is a male-dominated industry. I think we all know that and that fact is given some attention, maybe not sufficient attention, but at least some. I don't think much attention is given at all to an even more disproportionate statistic. The lawyers working on Bay Street are predominantly white. I'm talking about a 50:1 ratio of whites to non-whites. Maybe I'm being too generous actually... it's probably worse than that. So why does this matter? I don't think firms blatantly discriminate. Maybe some lawyers do, who knows, but two very significant factors at the interview stage is the candidate's level of comfort as well as their cultural knowledge. We all know how important "fit" is to firms. One of the lawyers at a dinner I attended said himself that it's all about "connection" in terms of who gets hired."
- "Free drinks are great. Too many free drinks is not."

Do you have any closing thoughts?

Most students thought the process was bizarre and stressful, and in need of serious improvement. One theme in the responses was the importance of treating the process as a collaborative effort, and taking the time to relax, reflect, and share information with other students in an effort to overcome the informational asymmetry students face throughout the recruit. A few students found that the process helped give applicants a good idea of firm culture.

Comments:

- "I think finding a supportive group of friends is really key. Don't be afraid of talking to your classmates, and I don't think we should shy away from helping each other out as well. So much of law school revolves around law students competing against each other. The system works IF we compete. But the recruitment process, even with countervailing protections for students, is skewed against us and relies on us competing with one another. Firms have so much more power, and if students were to share information with one another, firms would have less of it. Talk to your friends, be open with them, come up with questions together, research the firms together—you and your friends will come out the other side all the better for it."
- "I would strongly encourage students to apply and interview selectively—it is much easier to turn down an employer before the in-firm week than it is to string them along after you've received a positive response (and in some cases a "soft offer" in breach of LSO rules) from your first choice."
- "It's a silly process that doesn't really do a good job of matching people with positions. I'm lucky that I ended up somewhere great, but it could easily have gone the other way (I had my two top-choice firms giving me extremely strong signals, but only one ultimately offered me a position. It just reaffirmed for me that absolutely nothing is settled until your phone rings at 5:00 p.m.). One pleasant surprise was that at some of the firms I ended up not [...] clicking with, I actually met a lot of great people who I hope to keep in touch with. So this process does help you build a network, which is nice. It also

showed me how important it was to be friendly and professional to everyone, even a firm that you are rejecting or is rejecting you."

- "I am happy [with] where I ended up, but I wish I did the articling recruit instead. I felt pretty overwhelmed and not ready to commit to a firm, or being in Toronto. More voices from people who passed up OCIs and were successful in the articling recruit would be great to hear in advance."
- "This process is ridiculous and not designed to help students make an informed career decision."
- "The process is a disaster. It is baffling to me that the process has existed in this form for so long, when obvious alternatives exist in other major legal markets in North America. It is natural and understandable for Toronto lawyers to want new students to undergo the same useless hazing that they did, but at some point, a non-interested party needs to go in and fix things. The recruit should be about matching great students to great firms, not mind games and interest-signaling."

How did interest in a legal career change?

Students had a range of reactions to this question, ranging from excitement at entering a legal career having met interesting people who do interesting work, to no change at all, to very explicit disgust at the prospect of becoming a lawyer.

Comments:

- "I got to meet a few of my law heroines, including some who have argued landmark equality cases at the Supreme Court. Even though the process was rough, I appreciated that and was inspired to join their ranks."
- "I was very impressed by the people I spoke with over the course of the week. I am excited to work with them."
- "No difference. Significantly less excited to work in Toronto though."
- "I wanted to be a business lawyer and that's what I'm going to be."
- "I did not know very much about the different practice areas in a law firm or what a lawyer's job looked like until I began networking."
- "Fuck lawyers."

Are you satisfied with the recruit process?

Generally the response to this question was based on whether the student responding received an offer at the end of the process. That said, even some of those who received an offer were annoyed or harmed by the process.

Comments:

- "I was given very strong signals by one firm that they liked me, and while they never said anything directly I was under the impression they would likely give me an offer. This influenced how I conducted other interviews and acted towards other firms, and in the end I was left without an offer."
- "Did not get a job despite excellent marks."
- "I felt grateful to have met so many excellent lawyers. I was also pleased with how supportive all of my peers were and in turn hope that I supported them as well as we struggled through it together."
- "I ended up with my first choice and got to meet some truly wonderful people from many others."
- "Got a job at the expense of ruining some relationships. Time will tell if it's worth it."

RECRUITMENT SPECIAL

On Firms and LSO Procedures

Allegations and other comments from our survey

HONGHU WANG (2L)

Ultra Vires conducted an anonymous survey of the 2L class about the Toronto Recruit. The Recruit is governed by the Law Society of Ontario 2019 Toronto Summer Student Recruitment Procedures.

Relevant Procedures

Procedure B.7. states: “Throughout the recruitment process, firms shall not put undue pressure on students to accept an offer of employment, or to reveal their intention to do so.”

Procedure C.8. states: “No communication of offers of employment shall be made prior to 5:00 p.m. on Wednesday, November 7, 2018 [...]”

Firms (allegedly) not following procedures

When asked, “Did you experience any employers not following LSO Procedures?”, 18 of 91 responses said “Yes”.

To the follow-up question, “Which employer(s) did not follow LSO Procedures, and how?” these were their responses:

Miller Thomson LLP

One respondent said that Miller Thomson asked people if Miller Thomson was their first choice. Another respondent said that “Miller Thomson put[s] lots of pressure to say first choice”.

Jessica Watkins, the Director of Talent Management at Miller Thomson LLP, said in an email to *Ultra Vires*: “Miller Thomson is, and has always been, committed to complying with the Law Society of Ontario Recruitment Procedures and Guidelines. Should there be any issues arising from the recruit, Miller Thomson will deal directly with the Law Society of Ontario and the school’s Career Development Office, which are the appropriate channels for dealing with any matter, and with whom we continue to have a strong relationship and ongoing dialogue. We are committed to the Recruitment Process and providing students with a positive experience, as we take this very seriously.”

Paul, Weiss, Rifkind, Wharton & Garrison LLP

One respondent said that Paul, Weiss communicated an offer on Tuesday, November 6 (Day 2). The LSO Procedures dictate that no offer shall be made before Wednesday, November 7 (Day 3).

In an email statement to *Ultra Vires*, a spokesperson for Paul, Weiss, Rifkind, Wharton & Garrison LLP said that the firm complied fully with LSO Procedures in its recent hiring of two students: “The firm extended offers after 5:00 pm on Wednesday (Day 3), in accordance

with the LSO Procedures.”

Stikeman Elliott LLP

One respondent in the survey said that Stikeman Elliott LLP “asked people if they were their first choice and told people they were receiving offers on Day 1 and Day 2” (November 5 and 6).

Natasha Bhimji, the Interim Director of Student Programs at Stikeman Elliott LLP, said, “We certainly were surprised with the response to the question because it is not consistent with the training and guidelines that we provide to our interviewing lawyers on LSO recruitment procedures. We expect that our lawyers understand the rules and are expected to comply with these rules. That being said, we are not actually in the room when the interviews take place and we can’t know exactly what was said. Every year we reinforce the LSO recruitment procedures with the lawyers and will continue to do so.”

General comments

- “A major Bay Street law firm and one of the “Seven Sisters” both asked how they stood in my preferences and indicated they would call me with an offer at 5 pm on Wednesday.”
- “They won’t say it out loud (first choice question, communicating offers, etc.)...but isn’t that just a matter of semantics?”
- “I knew I would get an offer before Wednesday at 5 PM”

Comments on the LSO Procedures

Ultra Vires also asked, “Do you have any comments on the LSO Recruitment Procedures?”

Many students thought the procedures were not being followed:

- “Literally, no one observes them.”
- “They’re useless — everyone breaks the rules”
- “They’re clearly very open to interpretation.”
- “The rules get broken or bent enough that they shouldn’t exist.”
- “There are so many ways to skirt the “no offers before 5” rule that it is pretty much a cruel joke.”

Many students did not think that the procedures benefitted the students:

- “I don’t see how they benefit students at all”
- “The LSO is misguided in thinking that this process makes life easier for students.”

- “This process is fucking terrible and the law firms have all the power.”
- “Throw them the fuck out and start again. Do exactly what they are doing in New York.”
- “It’s a collusion that benefits law firms at the expense of students. The regulators are NOT on our side. We try our best to navigate within the framework, but frankly the students would be much better off if the recruitment process was de-regulated.”

Some students found that firms did not follow the spirit of the procedures:

- “I found that technically the firms do follow the rules, but the spirit of the rules is not always complied with. Firms want to know your interest level and that is understandable [...] I found myself wondering afterwards if I had accidentally told a firm something that they were going to interpret as “first choice” language. Really I was just trying to tell them I am very interested but still deciding.”
- “While I didn’t experience firms overtly asking me to identify them as my first choice, I had many firms suggest that it would strengthen my application to ‘indicate interest’ and once I had made a decision I should let the firm/student recruiter know. I think by default not following up to say that the firm was my first choice was taken to mean that it was not. While I was able to navigate this, it means I was forced to decide on Tuesday whether I wanted to pursue an offer from one of the firms I interviewed with, which felt rushed.”

Many others suggested ways to improve the procedures:

- “Intent to call emails make the stress worse. Better to know promptly at 8:00 am on call day, instead of sitting on pins and needles waiting for the waves of impending PFO’s or ITC’s for two weeks.”
- “The fact that firms can’t indicate offers is detrimental to students. Since we are only supposed to “first choice” one firm, it creates an information asymmetry [...] where they know much more about us than we are even allowed to know about them.”
- “If firms can send out ITCs for call day, I’m not exactly sure why they can’t give out ITCs for offers when literally everyone knows that firms will still heavily hint about this during interviews whether consciously or subconsciously. Students may get a strong hint that they will get an offer only to then have to wait hours agonizing over whether that would materialize at 5.”
- “Employers should be allowed to present

students with the offer once they know to relieve the stress on whether to come back or misinterpret signs during the process. They do this informally anyways so why not give them the option to do it formally to give students a sense of relief if they already know which firms they are taking. It is also better for employers to receive confirmation on their numbers as well and focus on other resources if there is a need.”

- “Make it so that we rank our firms and they rank their top candidates. None of this first choice non-sense and this way it maximizes the best outcomes for everyone”

Lastly, one student had more neutral feedback:

- “First-choice signaling is incredibly awkward and feels overly strategic”

The Law Society of Ontario provided a statement to *Ultra Vires*:

While the Law Society receives very few direct complaints about breaches or circumventions of the Recruitment Procedures, the Law Society is alive to the fact that many law students may be reluctant to come forward and report breaches of the Recruitment Procedures when they are encountered. As part of its ongoing effort to ensure the spirit and letter of the procedures are understood and adhered to, the articling office conducts an annual review of these procedures, and in doing so, solicits feedback from law schools and employers, and carefully reviews anonymized comments from students going through the process, including the *Ultra Vires* recruitment reports.

When considering changes to the procedures, the Law Society seeks to ensure that students are treated fairly and that the process enables students an opportunity to consider their employment options. Should anyone participating in the recruitment process wish to make a complaint, the Law Society has protocols in place to respond. Any questions or concerns about the recruitment process can be directed to the articling office for further clarification.

To help candidates entering the licensing process navigate the resources in place to prevent and address harassment and discrimination, the Law Society has created an information sheet, which is available on our website and provided to all new licensing candidates. Such resources include the Law Society’s complaints process, the Discrimination and Harassment Counsel service, and the Member Assistance Program, which is available to all law students and their families.

RECRUITMENT SPECIAL

Mistakes Happen

Why I think of my application screw-up as the most important mistake I made

ANONYMOUS (2L)

To say that OCIs are stressful is an understatement. Any small error or misstep you make can feel cataclysmic. From misspelling a firm name in a thank-you email to having a high-heeled shoe fall off my foot while walking to the elevator, I am no stranger to OCI mistakes. But perhaps the most important mistake I made was in the application process itself.

I had logged into UTLC a few days before the official OCI schedule was set to be released since I had heard that some results had been posted early. Although I was initially happy with what I saw, I quickly noticed that one firm I was particularly interested in hadn't extended me an interview. Upon further investigation, I discovered that the reason for this was that I hadn't actually

applied to the firm. Although I had submitted a viLaw application, something had gone wrong and I hadn't managed to submit the complimentary blank PDFs that UTLC requires (the joys of our application system).

At first, I was prepared to cut my losses and focus on my other interviews. I assumed that if I reached out to the firm, they would look at my mistake and think: "We have so many qualified candidates—why bother with someone who can't even use a computer properly?" However, after talking it over with my friends, I decided that I didn't have anything to lose by asking if they would still consider my application.

Lo and behold, within a couple of days, I received a reply telling me that I should email them

my CV and transcripts for consideration. A day after that, the firm appeared on my 'Applied' tab on UTLC, as I was now number 1 on the waitlist. A few days later, I was extended an OCI offer. Fast-forward to 5pm on the Wednesday of interview week, and I received a phone call from that firm offering me a summer position (which I was very happy to accept).

Now, you might wonder—why think of my application screw-up as the most important mistake I made, given that everything worked out in the end? The reason is twofold. First, the firm's willingness to give me a second chance set the tone for the rest of my interviewing experience. I went in knowing that it was a place where the people were understanding and would let me learn from my

mistakes rather than punish me for them. Since every firm I visited was full of nice, smart, welcoming people, this extra bit of knowledge made the firm stand out for me in my decision-making. If I hadn't made that initial mistake, I may well not have ended up there.

Second, it gave me confidence going into interview week that, although I am still the kind of person who sweats the small stuff, I could perhaps sweat a little less if everything didn't go perfectly according to plan—which believe me, it didn't. So, the next time you discover a misplaced comma in a cover letter, I hope my experience can provide some comfort. Or, if not, it can at least serve as a reminder to seriously double check—no, triple check—your UTLC applications.

Myth or Fact: 2L Recruit Edition

The (completely subjective) recollections of a 2L after the Toronto Recruit

DARYNA KUTSYNA (2L)

Earlier this month, a new cohort crossed the finish line of the 2L recruit marathon. I was one of said 2Ls, having completed rites of passage ranging from spending two days with my suited-up classmates in a crowded conference room to nearly crying in the PATH when I got lost on the way from my second reception to a dinner all in the same night.

In the spirit of full disclosure, I was one of the lucky ones who managed to come out of this with an offer from my first-choice firm. Nevertheless, the 2L recruit was likely the most stressful time of my life. Much of this stress was compounded by the advice coming at me from all directions—the CDO, upper years, articling student friends, and in-the-know classmates.

Some of this advice (in my very subjective experience) turned out to be a total myth. Other scenarios actually happened—but were much less scary than I thought they might be. Without further ado...

"If you drop a fork/spill something at dinner, consider yourself out with that firm": MYTH.

Now, don't get me wrong here: I'm not saying good dinner etiquette isn't an asset. But when you've had several interviews and cocktail parties before you get to dinner, you are a) hungry and b) tired. This combination, despite your best attempts, can sometimes result in dining blunders.

In my particular case, I dropped a bite of steak straight past my mouth into my napkin at a dinner. I was not proud of this then, and I am definitely not proud of it now (not entirely sure why I'm admitting to it in a UV article). That said, I am very excited to be starting at said firm this summer.

"Doing more than a reception and a dinner in a single night is not a good idea": FACT.

During OCIs, I talked up my time management and multitasking skills so much that I actually believed myself. I packed two cocktail parties and a dinner into one night, and convinced myself that I would be at my best during all of them despite a 6:30am wake-up that morning and a day of back-to-back interviews.

Fast forward to liking the first reception so much that I stayed way past my "drop-dead" time, sprinting in my heels to attend the second for exactly 10 minutes (which did not go unnoticed by the recruiter), and getting lost in the PATH on my way to the dinner. When people told me the week is designed to force you to make choices, they were probably right.

"First Tuesday interviews mean you're out at that firm": MYTH.

It is likely true that requesting your first interview on a Tuesday is a signal to the firm, and unfortu-

nately not a positive one. The firm will be aware that your Monday is too packed to fit everyone in, and the choice has not been made in their favour.

However, a first impression in this case is not the only one that matters. If a firm is willing to schedule you on a Tuesday, they do see you as a candidate to whom they could potentially make an offer, and I am aware of several such offers being made this cycle.

"During the second interview, the firm will switch to selling you on them if they like you": FACT.

I didn't make it to a second interview at all of the firms I interviewed with. I also don't know whether the firms I didn't see follow this practice. However, based on both my experience during the second half of interview week as well as what I have heard from classmates, firms do seem to switch into "sell" mode once they are satisfied that you are a good candidate.

Of course, this doesn't mean that once a firm asks you if you have any questions, you can check out and assume a call is coming at 5pm, but it is a better sign of interest than still being grilled on your resume come Wednesday.

"Don't drink even a sip in front of lawyers – it makes you look sloppy": MYTH.

Now, this is not to say that getting drunk will

lead you to a Seven Sister job (though who knows—stranger things have happened!) However, someone told me during in-firm prep that you shouldn't drink when you're speaking to someone (seems like good advice) or when someone is speaking to you (?).

The question then arises – when do you drink, and should you ever have a sip or two or just hold your wine glass as a prop instead? I am happy to report that I not only sipped my drink during receptions, but told some of the lawyers about this advice and had it serve as a great ice-breaker.

"The recruiters all talk" – FACT (but a less scary one than I thought).

Within three business days of accepting an offer, several other firms I interviewed with reached out to congratulate me/ask to stay in touch. It is true that the information about where I have landed didn't come from me, or wasn't yet made widely public, but (at least in my case) it did not seem like recruiters were talking in order to influence where candidates will go, but rather about the post-factum results.

Granted, I also said "first choice" to exactly one firm and accepted an offer with that firm. I can imagine how, if that was not the case, it could make for some very awkward conversations during and after call day.

RECRUITMENT SPECIAL

Toronto 2L Hiring Numbers

U of T, Osgoode fall as Queen's reaches new heights

MATTHEW PRIOR (2L)

These numbers include returning summer students and students who split summers as applicable

Firm	Total	U of T	Osgoode	Queen's	Western	Ottawa	Windsor	McGill	Dalhousie	Other	Other
Aird & Berlis LLP	8		2		1	1	3			1	Leicester University (UK)
Baker & McKenzie LLP	4						1	2		1	Calgary
Bennett Jones LLP	19	3	4	5	1	4			2		
Bereskin & Parr LLP	6	2			2	1	1				
Blake, Cassels & Graydon LLP	30	11	8	2	1	2	3	1	2		
Bogoroch & Associates LLP	<i>Did not respond</i>										
Borden Ladner Gervais LLP	25	6	4	1	2	5	3	3		1	UBC
Brauti Thorning Zibarras LLP	3		1				2				
Cassels Brock & Blackwell LLP	15	3	3	1	3		3		2		
Dale & Lessmann LLP	2			1			1				
Davies Ward Phillips & Vineberg LLP	15	5		1	4			1		1	Harvard (US)
Deeth Williams Wall LLP	0										
Dentons Canada LLP	11	1	2	3	1	1	2			1	UNB
Department of Justice (Toronto)	11		3	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	University of London (UK)
Dickinson Wright LLP	3	1				1	1				
DLA Piper (Canada) LLP	8	2	4								
Fasken Martineau DuMoulin LLP	15	1	6	1	1	2	1	1		2	Alberta, UBC
Filion Wakely Thorup Angeletti LLP	5		1	1	1		1			1	Lakehead
Fogler, Rubinoff LLP	6	1	1	1		1	1			1	UNB
Gardiner Roberts LLP	4	1		2		1					
Gilbert's LLP	3	1	1					1			
Goodmans LLP	13	2	3	2	3		1		1	1	University of Leeds (UK) / Columbia (US)
Gowling WLG (Canada) LLP	14	3	5	1	2	1		1	1		
Hicks Morley Hamilton Stewart Storie LLP	7	1	1	2	1		1			1	Lakehead
Koskie Minsky LLP	5	2	1	2							
KPMG LLP Tax Law Division	4	2	2								
Legal Aid Ontario	10		4	1		1	3	1			
Lenczner Slaght Royce Smith Griffin LLP	10	3	2	2	1	1			1		
Littler LLP	1					1					
MAG – Civil Law Division, Treasury Board Secretariat, Legal Services Branch	<i>see ultravires.ca</i>										
MAG – Civil Law Division, Family Responsibility Office, Legal Services Branch	<i>see ultravires.ca</i>										
MAG – Crown Law Office, Civil	<i>see ultravires.ca</i>										
MAG – Crown Law Office, Criminal	<i>see ultravires.ca</i>										
MAG – Ministry of Labour	<i>see ultravires.ca</i>										
Mathews Dinsdale & Clark LLP	4		1		1		2				
McCarthy Tétrault LLP	29	9	4	7	3	2	1	1	1	1	Boston University (US)
McMillan LLP	12	2	3	1	2	2	1	1			
Miller Thomson LLP	13	1	3	2	4	1	2				
Norton Rose Fulbright LLP	16	3	4	3	3	1		1		1	Lakehead
Office of the Ontario Ombudsman	0										
Ogletree, Deakins, Nash, Smoak & Stewart, P.C.	2			1	1						
Osler, Hoskin & Harcourt LLP	29	9	8	2	2	3	1	3		1	King's College London (UK)
Paliare Roland Rosenberg Rothstein LLP	4	2	1	1							

RECRUITMENT SPECIAL

Firm	Total	U of T	Osgoode	Queen's	Western	Ottawa	Windsor	McGill	Dalhousie	Other	Other
Paul, Weiss, Rifkind, Wharton & Garrison LLP	2										
Polley Faith LLP	3	3									
Public Prosecution Service of Canada Ontario Regional Office	2			1			1				
Rae Christen Jeffries LLP	2		1		1						
Ridout & Maybee LLP	0										
Shearman & Sterling LLP	1	1									
Shields O'Donnell MacKillop LLP	2		1	1							
Singleton Urquhart Reynolds Vogel LLP	1						1				
Smart & Biggar	2	1			1						
Stieber Berlach LLP	<i>Did not respond</i>										
Stikeman Elliott LLP	22	5	2	7	5	1	1	1			
Thorsteinssons LLP	<i>Did not respond</i>										
Torkin Manes LLP	3		1		2						
Torys LLP	22	7	6	5	1	1	1	1			
Wilboer Dellelce LLP	5	1			1	2	1				
	433	95	93	62	52	37	41	20	11	15	
Approximate class size	1496	208	290	200	173	320	245	180	170		
% with positions secured from Toronto Summer Student Recruit	29%	46%	32%	31%	30%	12%	17%	11%	6%		
Count of participating employers	58	% employers responding			86%						

Year	Total	U of T	Osgoode	Queen's	Western	Ottawa	Windsor	McGill	Dalhousie	Other
2018	433	95	93	62	52	37	41	20	11	15
2017	428	110	99	50	49	35	32	19	14	20
2016	375	93	83	44	42	30	33	20	14	16
2015	420	106	84	48	49	32	40	25	18	18
2014	398	97	83	46	48	35	26	27	15	21
...
2008	406	85	92	49	42	34	37	23	18	26

Failing the 2L Recruit: A Success Story

Looking back, though, not getting an OCI job was one of the best things that could have happened to me

RITA DE FAZIO (3L)

Thirteen OCIs, four in-firms, zero job offers. That was the kind of horror story I had heard about again and again before the recruit. I just didn't think that it would be my story.

By the beginning of 2L, I knew that I wanted to practice union-side labour law. Despite the fact that there was only one union-side firm interviewing in the recruit, I felt the social and financial pressure to participate. When in-firms came around, I knew deep down that I wasn't particularly interested in any of the firms I was interviewing with. However, I had connected well with some of the people at the firms and decided that I could stomach doing work I hated as long as I liked the people I worked with.

On Offer Day, my stomach dropped as the time on my phone went from 5:00 to 5:01. I knew I wasn't going to get a call. Even though I hadn't been all that invested in the firms to begin with, not getting a job seemed like confirmation that I wasn't cut out to be

a lawyer. Everyone would know I was a failure. I was ashamed. That Friday, I met for coffee with one of the partners at a firm I had interviewed with to find out what went wrong. "If it's any consolation, everyone who met you loved you," he said. Somehow, that made me feel worse.

However, that same partner also suggested that I needed to show more of a "demonstrated interest." I took his words to heart. I networked and talked my way into volunteer spots at both Downtown Legal Services' Employment Division and Advocates for Injured Workers (AIW) in the second term. I ended up spending my summer at AIW and getting great hands-on experience that made me a better candidate during the

articling recruit. Throughout the summer, I asked the lawyers I worked with to connect me with others in the field and cold-emailed people doing work that interested me. It was amazing how many people were willing to provide help if I just put myself out there and asked for it.

I scheduled 10 interviews during the articling recruit, of which, I attended 8. I ended up with four job offers, including one from the firm that was my top choice throughout the process.

This time around, I didn't have to feign interest. I only applied to places that did work that I was passionate about, and that came across during my interviews.

Despite all the challenges, I don't regret going

through the 2L recruit. It taught me how to "play the game" and lit a fire under me that got me to where I am today. I now have that union-side labour law job that I had been dreaming of and I'll be working with a team of amazing, intelligent people.

For those who walked away from this recruit jobless, just know that there's more than one path to success. In the grand scheme of things, your 2L summer is not as significant as it may feel right now. There will be tons of opportunities next semester, in the articling recruit and beyond – opportunities that you may find more interesting. Don't make the mistake of letting this experience impact your self-worth and self-perception. The OCI process can be arbitrary and unfair; some of the brightest, most capable people I know walked out of the recruit without a job. Looking back, though, not getting an OCI job was one of the best things that could have happened to me. I hope it is for you too.

For those who walked away from this recruit jobless, just know that there's more than one path to success.

RECRUITMENT SPECIAL

“Failing” the 2L Recruit

Reflection on the law school recruit journey

SUJUNG LEE (3L)

On Call Day last October, two weeks after my 2L OCI's, my phone didn't ring. Out of all of my OCIs, I didn't receive a single in-firm. I was devastated. Fast-forward eight months to the articling recruit, and my phone would not stop ringing. Not only did I receive over ten interview offers, but I also came out with six job offers, one of which happened to be my dream position.

On the Class of 2020 Facebook Group, a 3L recounted a very similar story. In the comments, a dozen more upper years echo the same. Clearly, what I went through was not a miracle; several of my classmates experienced the same tumult. So what changed for us between 2L and 3L?

As it turns out, nothing really.

After what I saw as my abysmal failure in the 2L recruit, I sunk into a state of disbelief. For the most part, I felt my OCIs had gone well. Was I overly zealous about public interest work? Was my focus on diversity off-putting? Was I too Asian? I spiraled into thoughts that had no purpose, and questions that yielded no answers. This was the breaking point of my already declining mental health since 1L. Law school had found yet another way to tell me I wasn't good enough, that I didn't belong, and that I would be a failure saddled with a mountain of debt for the rest of my life.

In breaking, I found liberation. The trauma of 2L cascaded me down an introspective journey.

I turned to counselling for the first time in my life. Here, I had the space to explore the roots of my diminished self-worth, and the absurdity of my futile efforts in school. I let myself be angry at the world—I had worked so hard to get into law school, and even harder to survive in it. Yet, it seemed that no amount of work could counter the arbitrary forces that could just as easily favour my other, equally talented colleagues—so much turned on circumstance, timing, and luck. Validation of my anger allowed me to accept my situation as it was: suspended somewhere in this duality of merit and chance.

Instead, I focused on what I *could* control: seeking out what I actually enjoyed doing, and what got me excited about law. During my 1L summer, I worked at Downtown Legal Services and loved every moment of it. Upon reflection, I realized I had so enjoyed my first summer at DLS because I was attracted to law

that directly revolves around people, and all the human drama that entails. I leaned into courses that naturally interested me, like Wrongful Convictions. I concentrated my academic energy on the issues towards which I felt strongly, like systemic issues impacting the criminal justice system. I became a little braver about reaching out to lawyers I found personally interesting to chat about their career paths, with no expectation of a job at the end of these talks—supervisors at DLS, partners at prominent firms, and articling students who were once in my shoes. I took to heart the advice of those who were most passionate about their work.

All of these seemingly little acts allowed me to pursue only those paths I knew I would genuinely enjoy. I ultimately ended up spending one of the best summers of my life in the criminal division at DLS, and the rest, as they say, is history.

What I didn't realize during the 2L recruit was that it was so much easier to sell myself when I knew what I wanted to do. Moreover, despite what the CDO suggests, the 2L recruit represents only a sliver of the entire legal market. In contrast, the articling recruit offered a much wider selection across many different sectors: litigation boutiques, criminal defence firms, public interest positions, and more. Being more attuned to my genuine interests, I was more particular about where I applied (instead of sending the same letter to ten indistinguishable Bay Street firms). When I was more intentional about my applications, employers could more easily see why I wanted to be there. And when they saw that, I was actually able to “be myself” and connect with my interviewers more authentically.

However, I don't want to downplay the very real concerns that underpin students' decisions to participate in the 2L OCIs. I understand too well the pressure created by job insecurity and the crushing worry of not being able to pay off our enormous law school debt. This pressure weighs heavier for those who face higher barriers getting into law school—particularly racialized, immigrant students from lower socio-economic backgrounds. I felt that I had both more to lose, *and* more to prove. The failure to secure a big Bay Street position, with its promise of financial security and social prestige,

can make lack of success in the OCIs all the more disappointing. Unfortunately, my story is not one that offers a solution, only a perspective. I had to make my peace with the possibility of a lower salary than my Big Law colleagues, and a potential path of job insecurity. I simply accept that these are not things that I necessarily have control over; all I can do is chase what I can control.

In sum, I didn't change anything in order to become “more successful” in the articling recruit—I didn't improve my resume, networking skills, or study habits. I just had to take some time to regain my own voice.

As I've written elsewhere in *UV*, it's easy to lose sight of ourselves in this school. Even as I'm 3LOLing, the conversations I overhear remind me how difficult it was to be in this building last year. All I hear are 2Ls talking about who's going for cocktails where, and who's working at which firm in the summer—all at the expense of the silence of the other 50% of students who either did not secure any jobs through OCIs, or chose not to participate at all for a myriad of reasons. The normalization of this dialogue almost masks the fact that the OCIs are a weird little game—except that everyone is provided with an uneven number of pieces, or none at all. As such, I remind everyone to be mindful about conversations on campus about OCIs. If you're one of the lucky “successful” ones, be proud while also acknowledging your fortune in the arbitrary nature of this process. Most importantly, be supportive of each other.

To those that do feel alienated by these conversations—both the 2Ls recovering from the recruit and the many 3Ls who are still in search of an articling position—I want to reaffirm that you did everything right. You worked hard to get to where you are, and you should feel proud of yourself for being here. There will *always* be opportunities that come your way. In these opportunities, there are people who will see and appreciate you.

Congratulations on making it here today, despite all the tribulations and internal struggles of a profession that is inherently set up to disappoint even the best and brightest! This in itself is *your* victory, and one that will propel you forward to the next better phase of your life.

I didn't change anything in order to become “more successful” in the articling recruit... I just had to take some time to regain my own voice.

RECRUITMENT SPECIAL

My Mental Health and the Recruit

Oh... the places you'll go... the shit that you'll do: an in-firm memoir

NARGIS FAZLI (2L)

Reading Week was a joyous time for me in 1L. For the first time in months, I could sleep past 6:00 a.m. I could eat breakfast, lunch, and dinner. I could actually do the readings I may-or-may-not have neglected. But in 2L, Reading Week seemed more like a nightmare because of In-Firms (cue ominous music).

Prior to Reading Week, there was buzz all around U of T Law. I could tell you which person would be in-firming where—even if I'd never so much as had a conversation with them. It was creepy. I was creepy. But I was nervous and being nervous makes you do crazy things—like learn everyone's schedule for the week, have lawstudents.ca open 24/7, and memorize three years of *Ultra Vires*' recruitment statistics. I was determined to get a job, and I knew exactly where I wanted to go: Goodmans LLP.

So, when Call Day came, I (being the overly nervous, neurotic freak that I am), scheduled nine in-firms, five receptions, two dinners, one lunch and a partridge in a pear tree.¹ But, most importantly, on Monday morning at 8:00 a.m., I scheduled my first in-firm with Goodmans.

On Monday, November 5, at 4:45 a.m., I was awake. I was ready. Well, almost—I still had to put on my suit, my heels, a pound of makeup, and my trusty CDO-issued name tag—but otherwise, I was *totally* ready. I left my house at 6:30, commuted down to 333 Bay, and bolted up to Goodmans (it was 7:15 when I got there, but the sense of urgency was real!). Some random dude from Fasken wished me good luck in the elevators. But rather than ease me, his words made me more nervous—DID I LOOK LIKE ANERVOUS STUDENT THAT NEEDED LUCK??? I TOTALLY WAS, BUT I WAS TRYING REALLY HARD TO GIVE OFF MORE OF A HARVEY SPECTER 2 COOL 4 SKOOL LOOK. Ah well. I arrived at Goodmans.

At 8:01, I met my host. Within two minutes, I blurted out the magic words: FIRST CHOICE. I went on to repeat those words two more times over the course of an hour and a half. If there was skill involved in in-firms, I definitely lacked it. On top of already having played my ace, I also used finger guns, made mad jokes, and used an alarming amount of self-deprecating humor—but (to my surprise) people liked me, and I was invited back for Tuesday. Hooray. I just had to get through the rest of the Monday interviews and the evening reception to secure that coin.

Fast forward to 5:30 p.m. I was running from my last interview back to Goodmans. I had to make a great impression at this reception. In my head, I envisioned myself floating ethereally across the room, making connections, friendships, and majestic first impressions. But, alas, this was not my reality. Instead, I entered a small, hot room with about 150 people. They were mostly students, all already engaged in conversation, all looking fly as f***. So I did what any rational student would do: I hunted for a lonely lawyer to latch onto. Once I

found them, I stuck by them and hung onto their every word. In fairness, they were mad interesting (but srsly, I should not have been such a keener, like holy). When the lawyer wanted to eat, I ate. When they wanted to drink, I drank. I was basically mirroring them.² And then—it happened.

All my life, I've suffered from panic attacks. For those who don't know, a panic attack (for me at least), feels like death.³ My mind genuinely convinces me that I'm dying, and my body reacts by doing all those things you wouldn't want to do at a reception: sweating, crying, shaking and, my favorite, going temporarily blind. Yes, you read that right, when I have a panic attack, I completely lose my vision for about twenty minutes. So there I was, standing in a circle of lawyers when it hit. And I had absolutely no control. But I was fortunate.

The lawyers around me instantly recognized that something was wrong, and they took me by the arm into a separate area. They got me water, food, and fresh air. They were nothing short of incredible. And I was, of course, mortified. I blew it. I couldn't even handle being in a crowded room,

how could I be a lawyer at this amazing firm? My Goodmans dreams were over. So, I left the reception, head hanging, and heart hurting.

I went home to my parents and I cried. A lot. I was embarrassed. Embarrassed that my mental health wasn't as strong as I had thought. Embarrassed that I showed vulnerability in front of my favorite firm. And embarrassed that I said first choice to a firm that would undoubtedly reject me. My parents, not knowing anything about the law or law firms or the intensity of this whole process, laughed with me.³ Their laughter calmed me enough that I could sleep. So, I did, not looking forward to my next day at Goodmans.

When I awoke, I had emails and voicemails from lawyers at Goodmans who had heard what happened. And guess what? They were checking in on me, making sure I was alright. I was slightly mortified but also very appreciative. And when I went into Goodmans later that day, lawyers were saying they heard a lot about me—all positive things! My host let me know that my mental health issues were okay there. I would be accepted as I was

and had nothing to be embarrassed about. And for the first time, I felt like that was true. I could be me, here, at Goodmans.

I'll spare you the anxiety. On Wednesday at 5:00 p.m., Goodmans called me. I accepted their offer. I had found my fit, and found my people. But this story isn't just a plug for Goodmans—it's bigger than that. Yes, Goodmans was great. But, more importantly, the legal field is changing. You no longer have to contort yourself to fit into a tiny little box. To the 26% of students at the faculty who suffer from mental health issues, I want you to know that it's okay. You may be in the minority, but you are not alone. You are enough, exactly the way you are. The reason you're in law school is that you deserve to be here, and I hope that when you go job hunting, you find a firm that recognizes your worth. If you ever need an ear, reach out to upper years like myself, Yukimi, or anyone you feel comfortable with. We want to help! We want you to find your Goodmans.

¹Joke's on me cause I only ended up doing five in-firms, two receptions, two dinners and a lunch. Ha, ha, ha who was I kidding with the NINE IN-FIRMS!?!?

²I acknowledge that this is incredibly creepy but pls understand how scared I was.

³Not even exaggerating.

⁴TBH, it was probably at me, but whatever.

When I have a panic attack, I completely lose my vision... So there I was, standing in a circle of lawyers when it hit. And I had absolutely no control...



RECRUITMENT SPECIAL PART II

Class of 2020 Survey Results

SUJUNG LEE (3L), MATTHEW PRIOR (2L), SUHASINI RAO (2L), RORY SMITH (2L), AND HONGHU WANG (2L)

Every year, Ultra Vires surveys 2Ls on a variety of demographic and recruitment data. This survey presents the Class of 2020 data. Thank you to everyone who completed the survey.

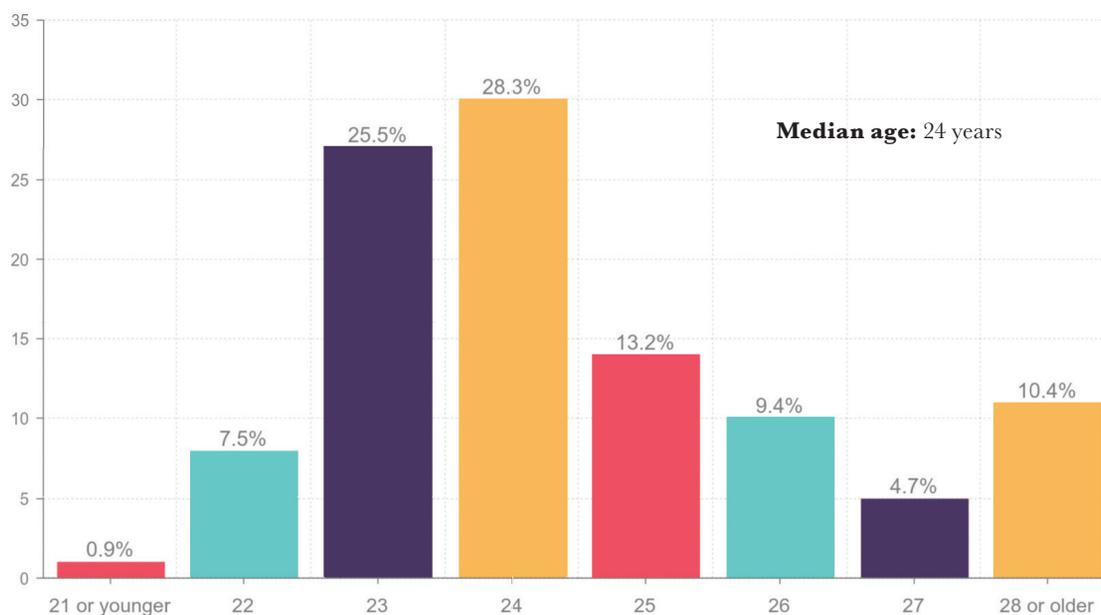
The below is self-reported survey data, so the usual caveats apply (see “Grades and Such”). This year, we had 117 individual responses from a class size of about 200, for an ~58.5% response rate.

For privacy reasons, every effort was made to keep datasets from being identifiable. Given the breadth and depth of the questions asked (and answers reported), there was a large risk that in-

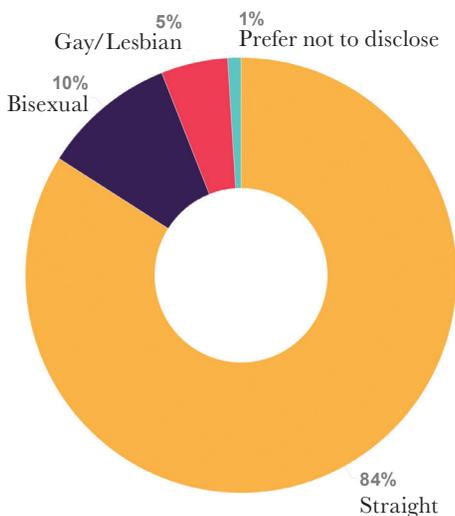
dividual students could be identified through a combination of demographic factors, which could then link them to their remaining responses. As such, before any analysis was done, responses were separated into the distinct categories being examined so as to prevent cross-referencing. For example, when looking at age, a separate spreadsheet was created that contained only age data, with all other responses having been deleted. Similar measures were taken with all the analysis that was performed to minimize the risk of students’ responses being linked to their identities.

DEMOGRAPHICS

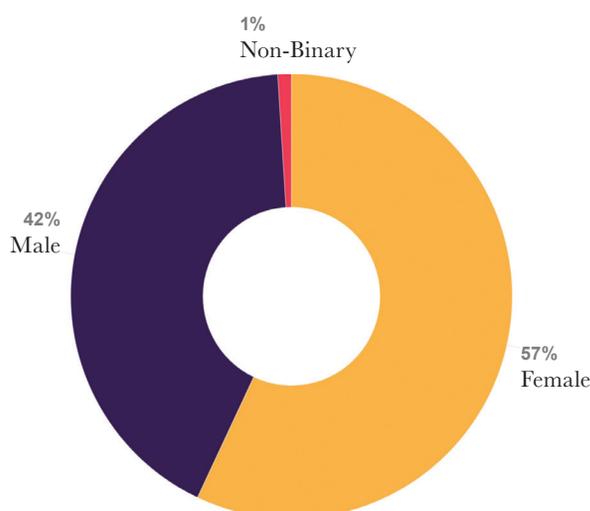
Age



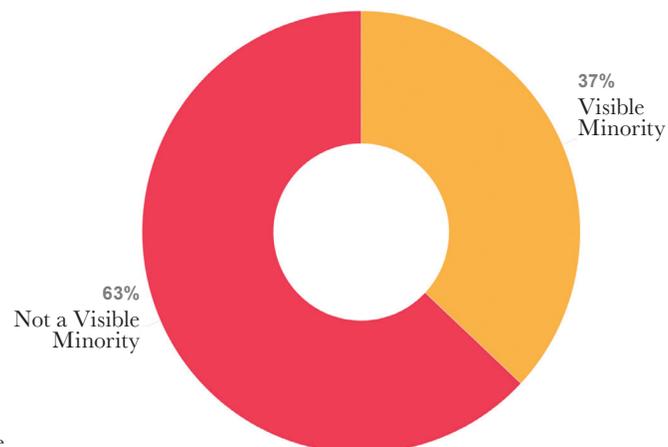
Sexual Orientation



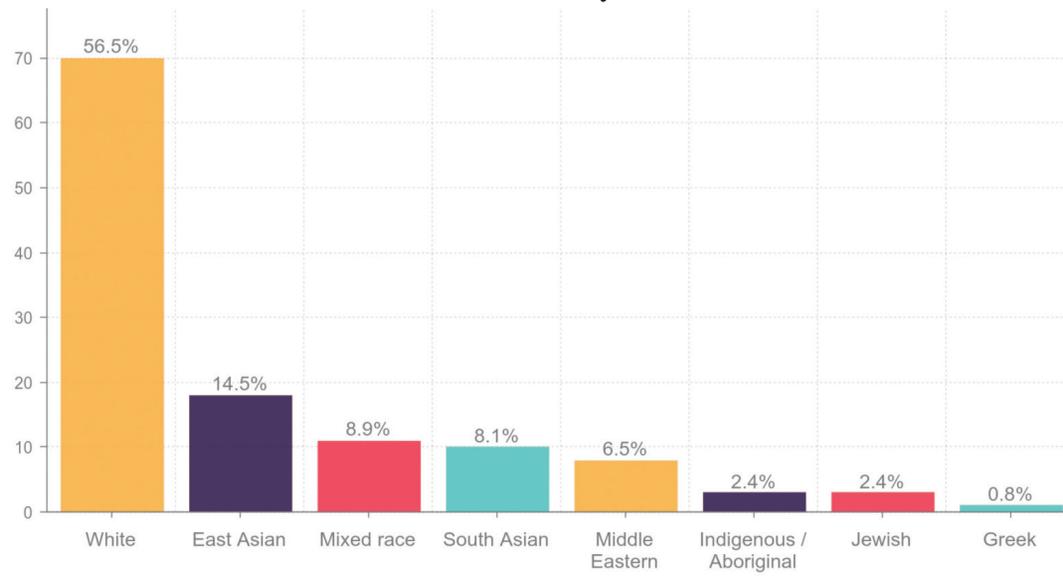
Gender Identity



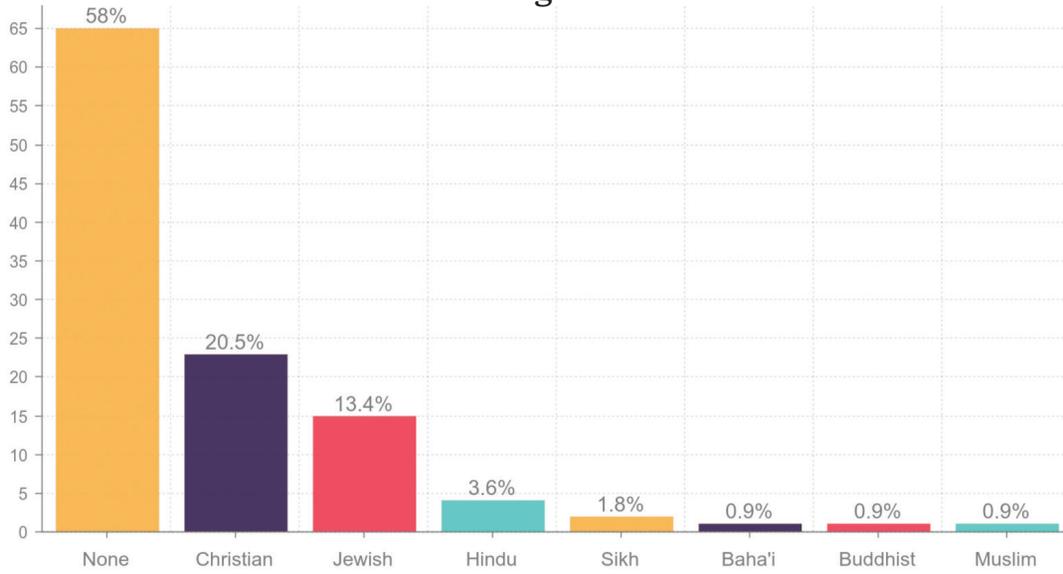
Visible Minority



Ethnicity

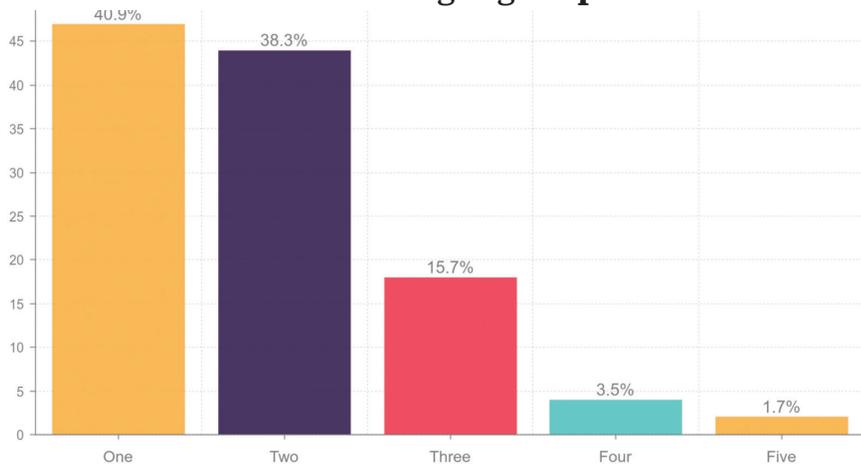


Religion

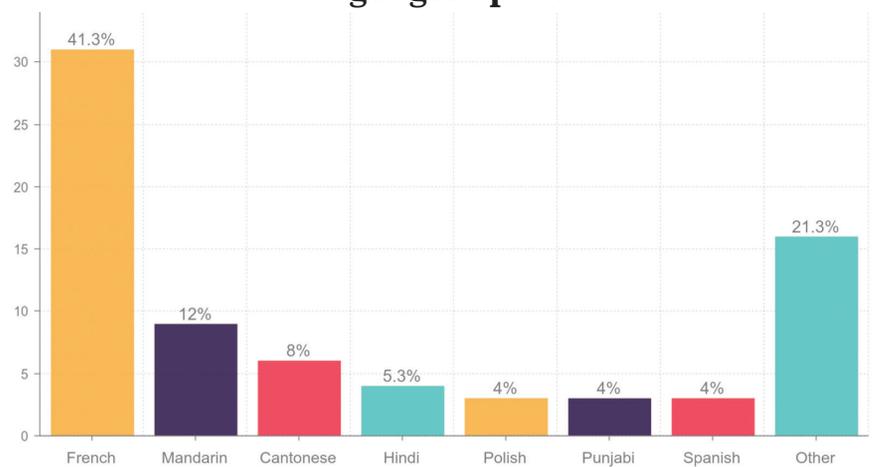


Note:
64% of respondents indicated that religion was not at all important, while the rest were evenly split between somewhat important to very important.

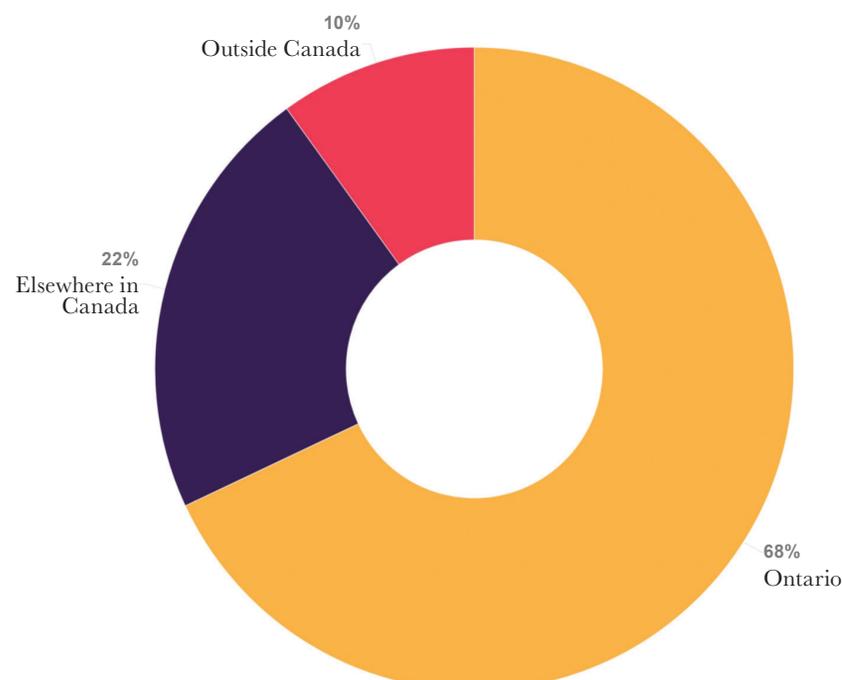
Number of Languages Spoken



Languages Spoken

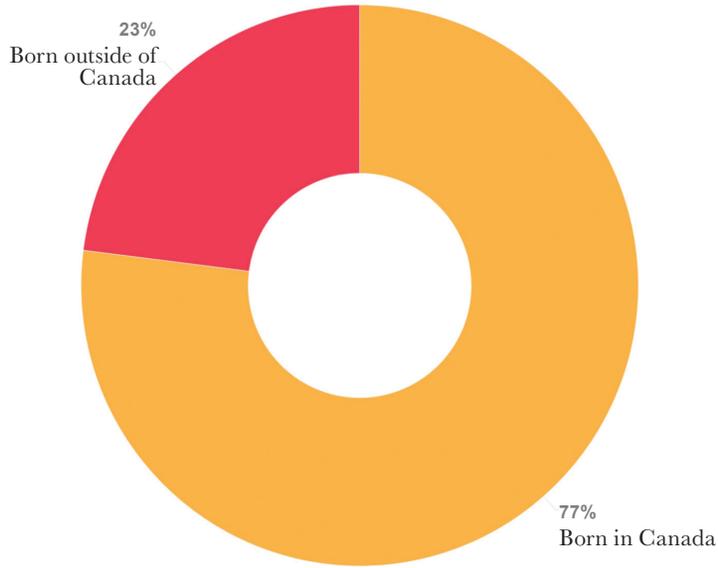


High School Location

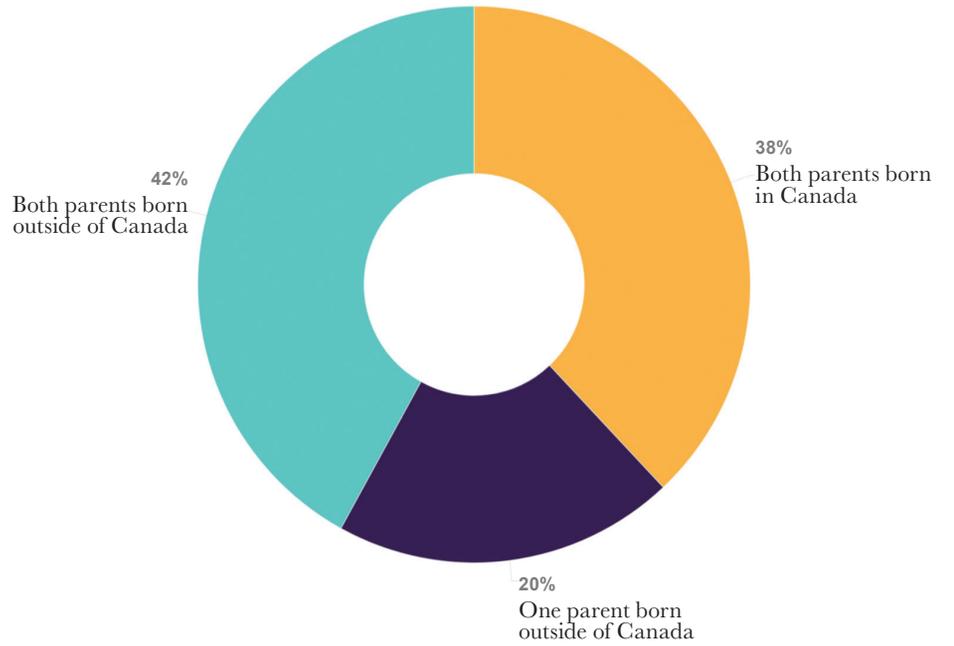


FAMILY HISTORY

Country of Birth

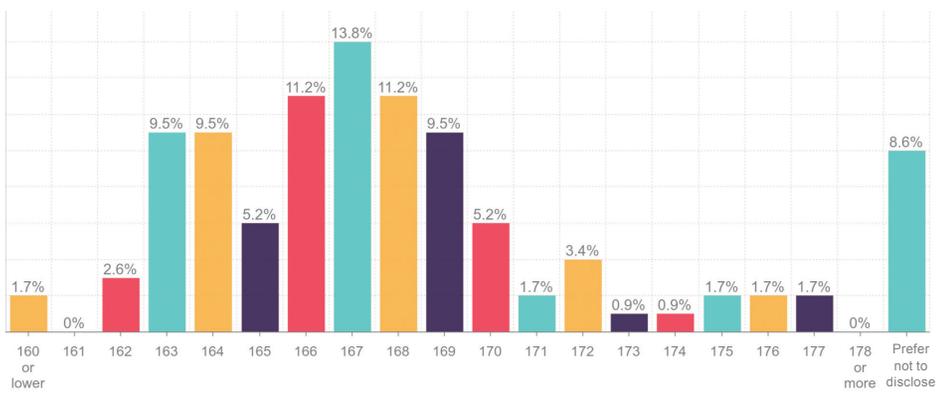


Parents Country of Birth

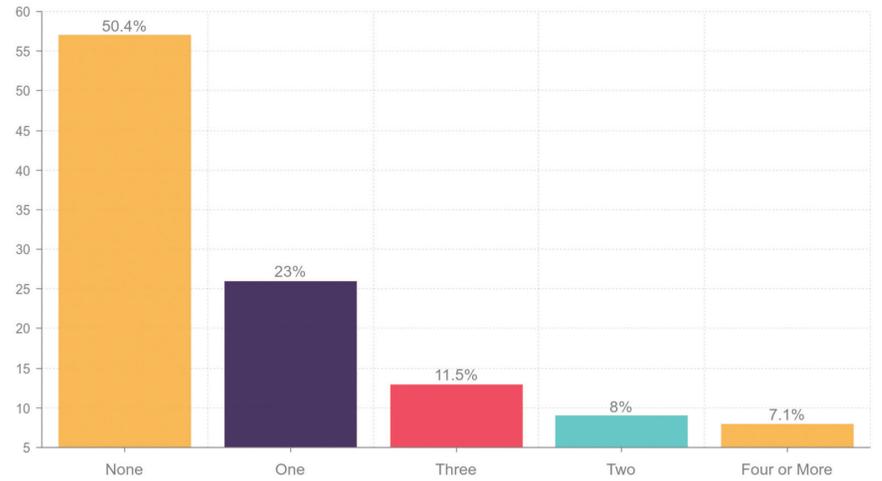


ACADEMIC AND WORK HISTORY

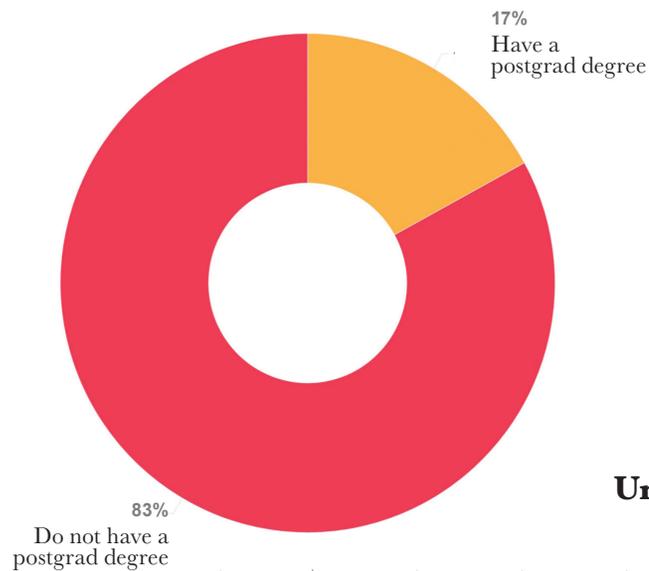
LSAT Score



Years Worked Before Law School

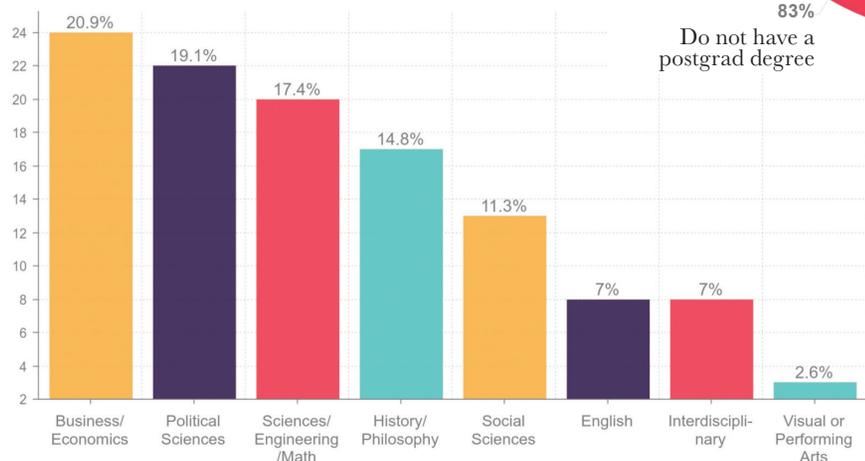


Postgraduate Degree

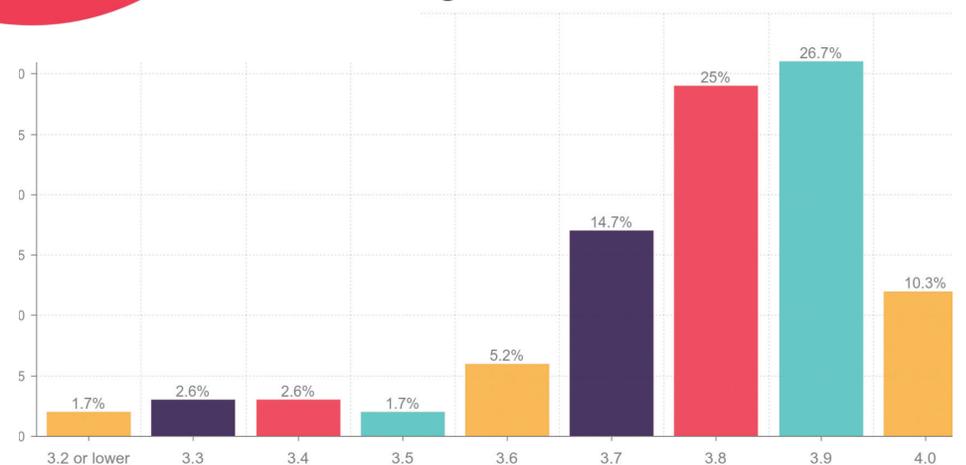


Median GPA: 3.8
Measured on the OLSAS scale (cumulative).
Rounded to the nearest tenth.

Undergraduate Program

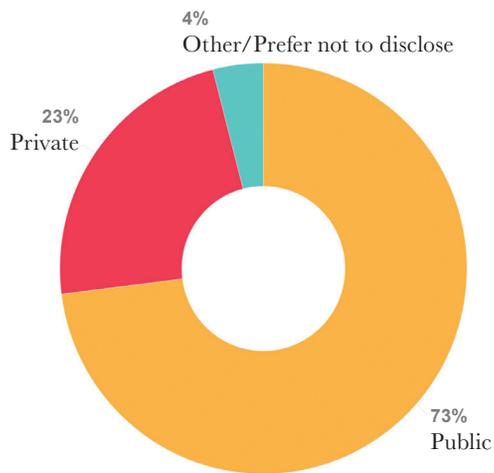


Undergraduate GPA

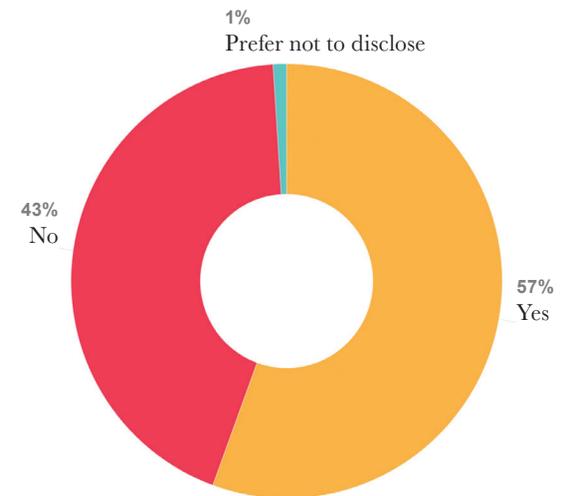


FINANCIAL HISTORY

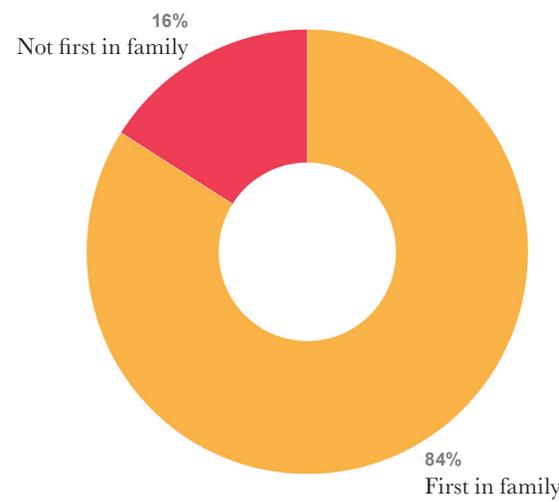
Public or Private High School



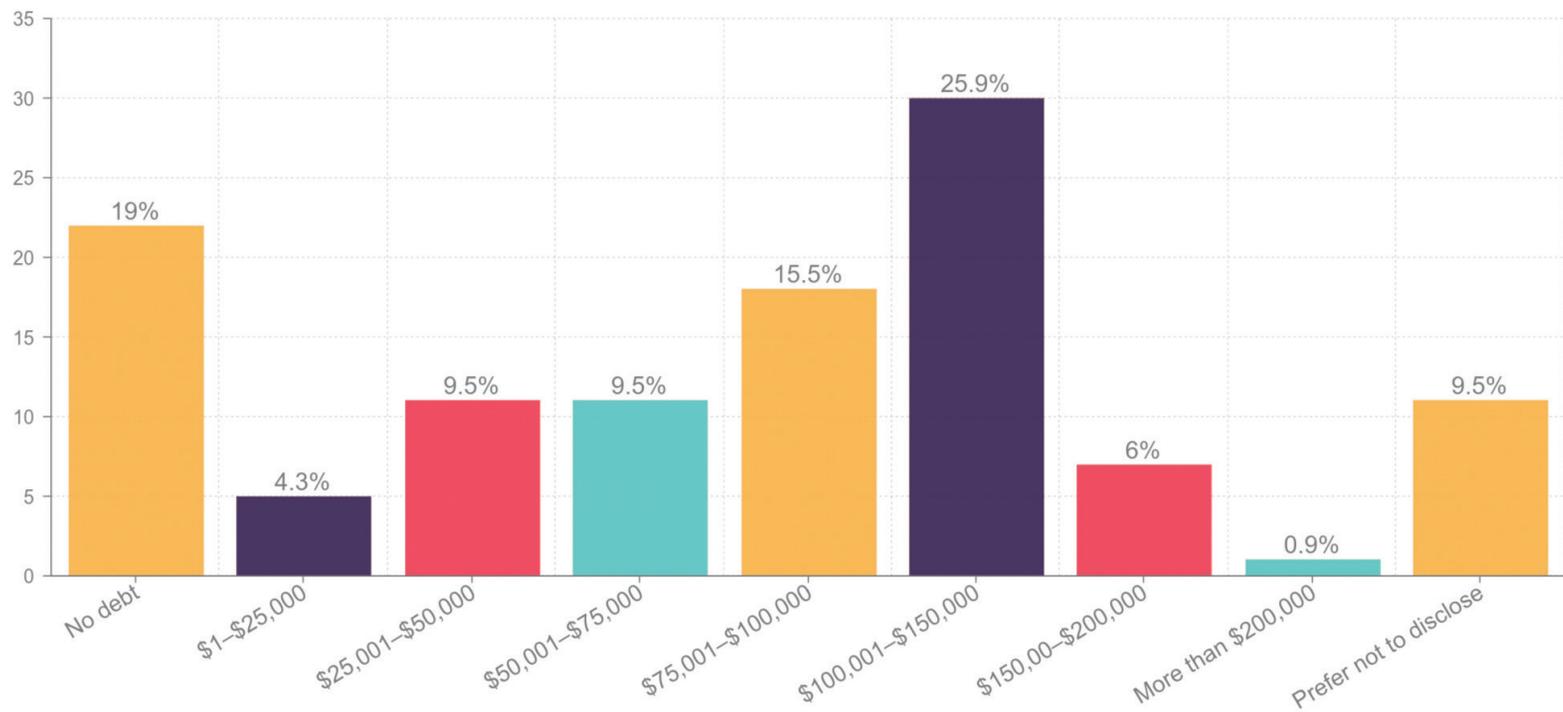
Did your expected debt load influence the employers you applied to?



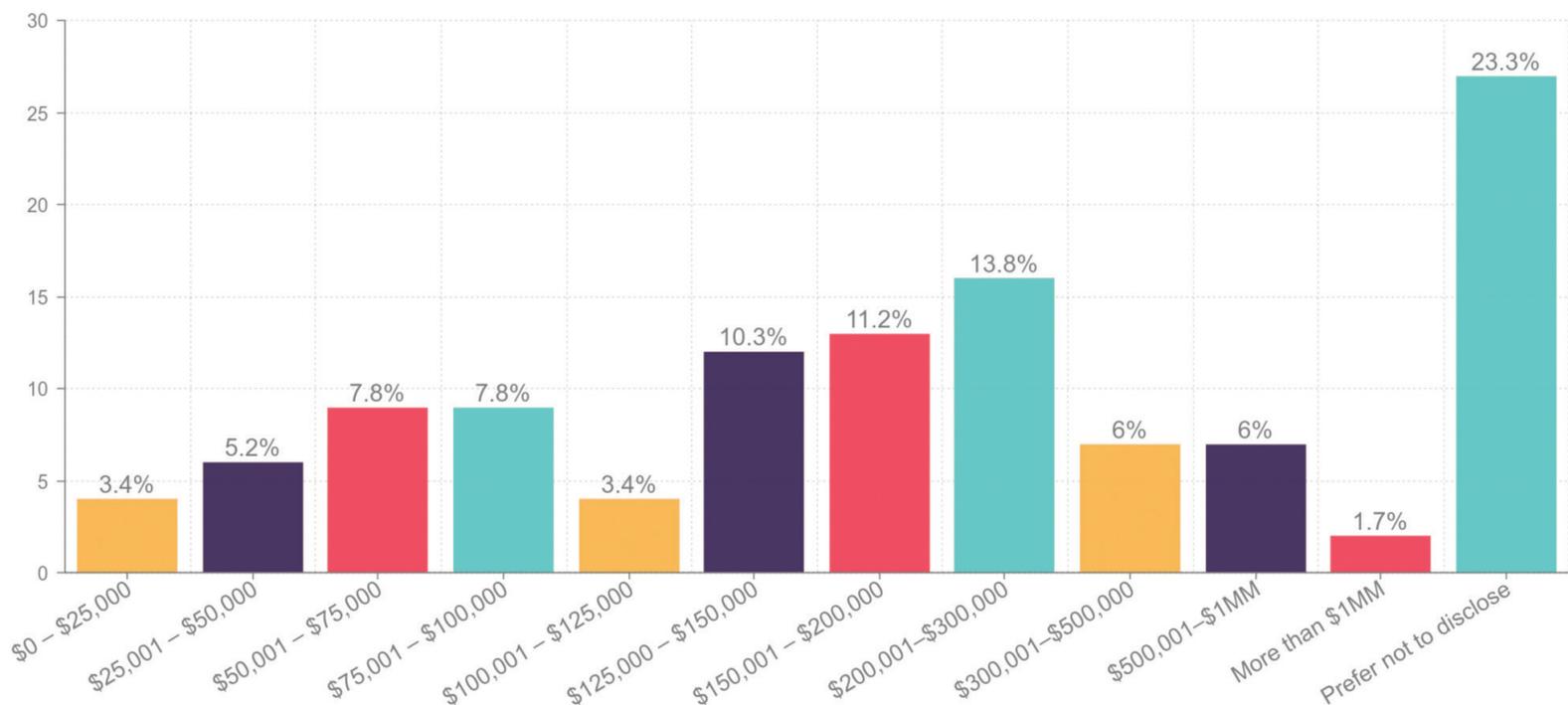
First in Family to Attend Law School



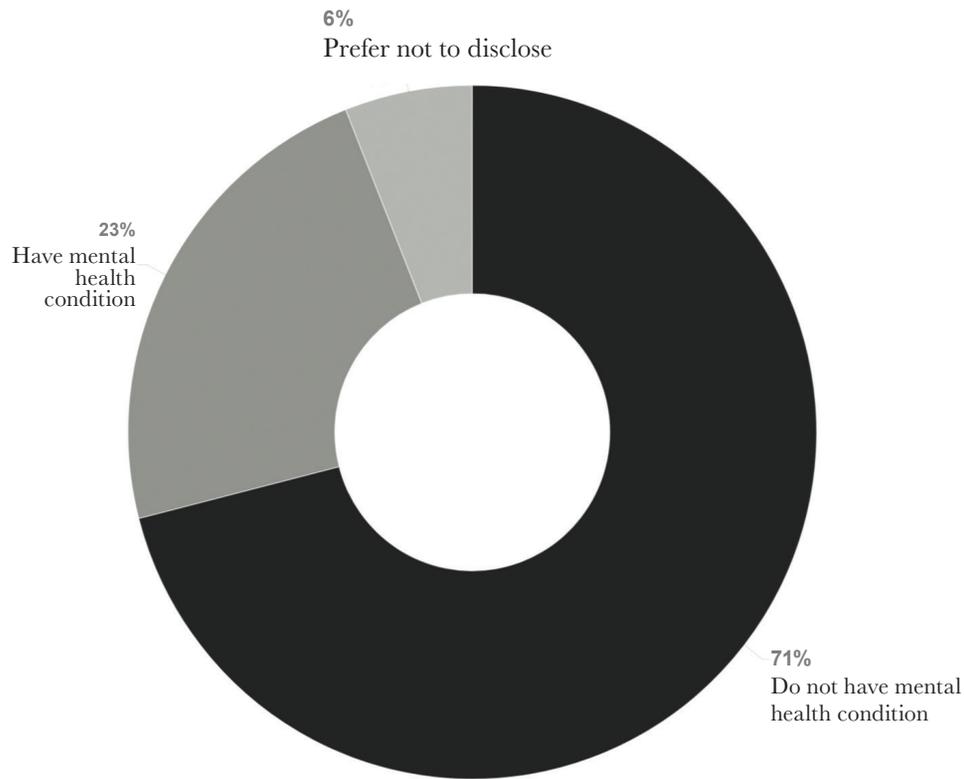
Total Expected Debt Upon Graduation



Parental Household Income



MENTAL HEALTH

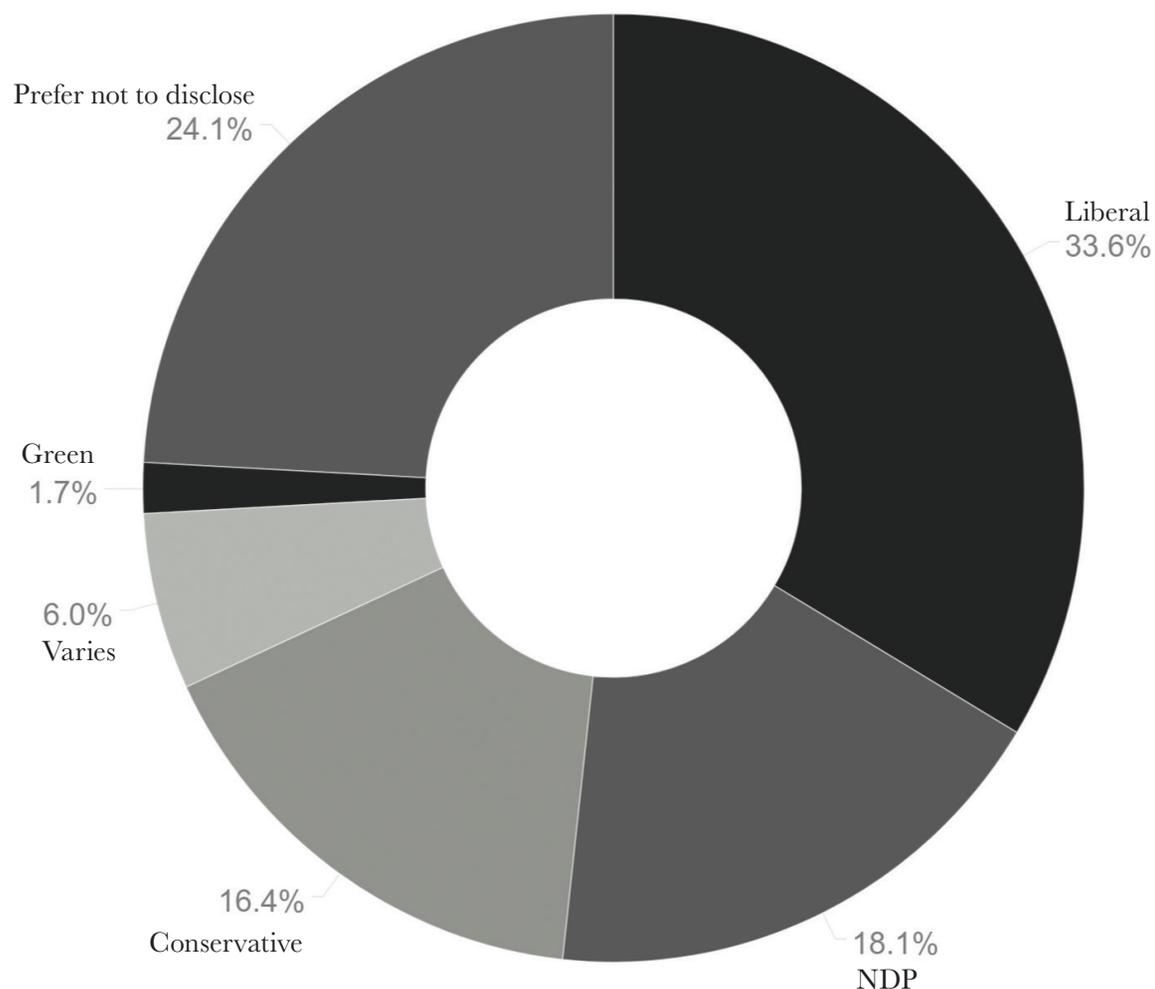


Of those who self-reported mental health conditions, 70% indicated that the frequency of their experience with the condition increased somewhat or significantly while at law school. 74% indicated that the severity of their experience with the condition increased somewhat or significantly while at law school. Personal and academic factors were the leading contributors to the change in frequency or severity, while extracurriculars and financial factors were also cited as contributors.

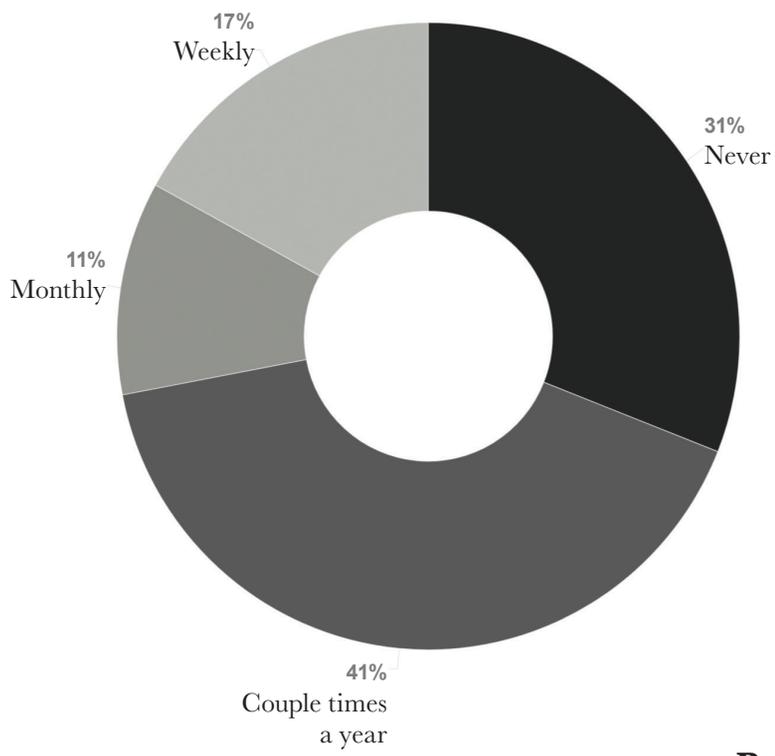
Separately, 78% of those who self-reported mental health conditions indicated that they accessed mental health resources either through the law school or the university.

POLITICAL AND SOCIAL LIFE

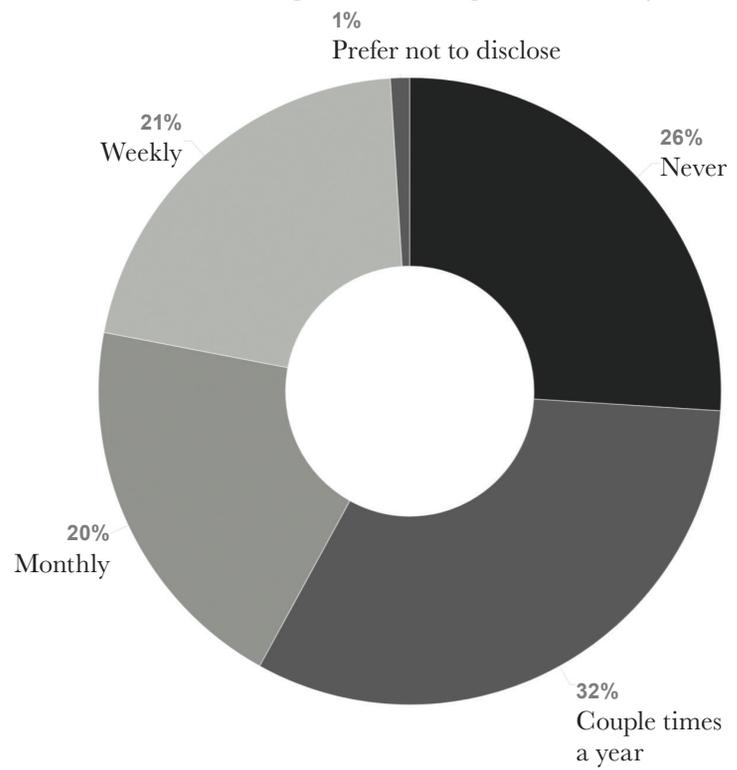
Support for Federal Political Party



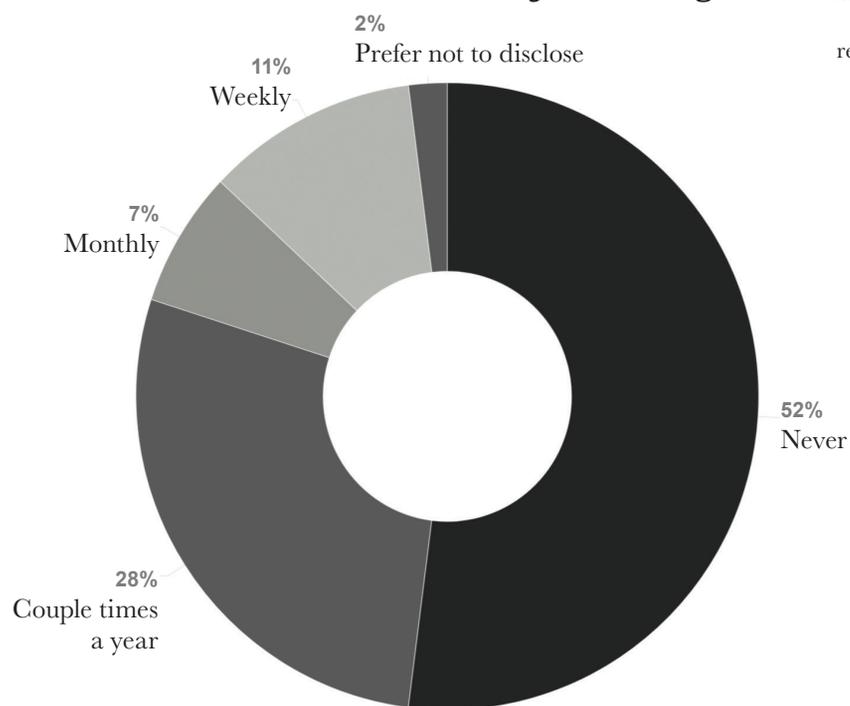
Call to the Bar (Pub Night) Attendance



Binge Drinking Frequency

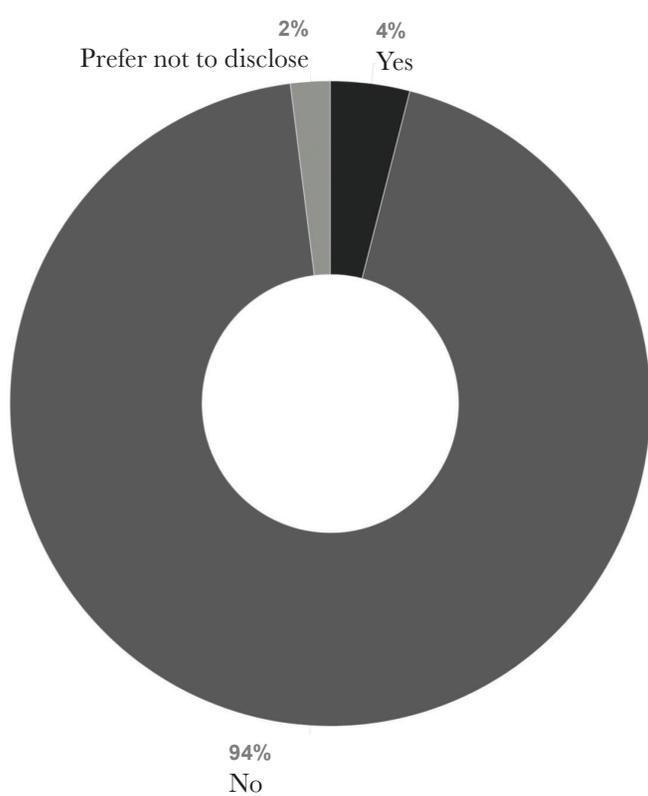


Recreational Marijuana Usage

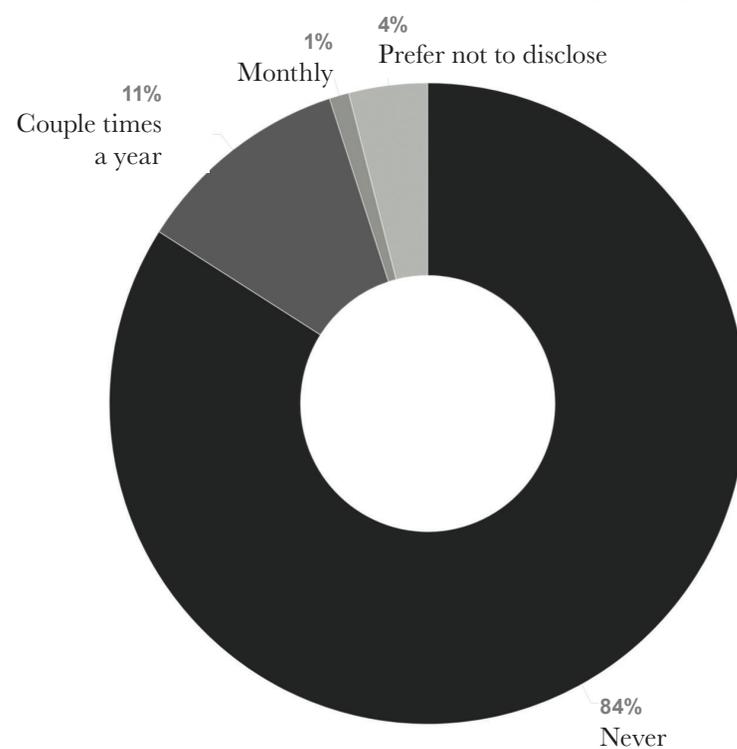


Researchers define binge drinking as having many drinks on one occasion: five or more drinks for a male, or four or more drinks for a female. A drink is defined as: 12 oz/341 mL regular strength beer (5% alcohol), 5 oz/142 mL wine (12% alcohol), or 1.5 oz / 43 mL liquor (40% alcohol).
Source: CAMH.

Study Drug Usage



Other Recreational Drug Usage



Factors Associated with 1L Grades and Recruit Success

Nothing predicts anything

RORY SMITH (2L)

Using the data provided from 86 – 113 students (exact numbers varied depending on the exact combination of factors used), a variety of statistical models were used to try and identify factors that are associated with a high 1L GPA and recruit success.¹

It is important to note that none of these relationships are necessarily causal.² In addition, many of the factors have small sample sizes, so drawing conclusions about the data is suspect at best. Generally, any analysis that involved a sample of fewer than ten students was excluded to try and mitigate this effect.³

Factors Associated with 1L GPA

Only three factors ended up having a significant association with 1L GPA. A higher

LSAT score is associated with a higher GPA (every 1-point increase in LSAT anticipates an average increase of 0.24 GPA), while older students fare worse than their younger classmates (every additional year anticipates an average decrease of 0.38 GPA). Having completed a postgraduate degree⁴ before attending law school also anticipated an average GPA decrease of 1.8.

Despite these factors being significant, the overall correlation was quite weak ($R^2 = 0.13$). So while the mean 1L GPA increases with higher LSAT and decreases with higher age and having completed a postgraduate degree, these factors poorly explain the variation within the data and are cannot be used for accurate predictions of an individual's GPA.

Significant Factors

Positively Correlated
LSAT (p = 0.0048)
Negatively Correlated
Age (p = 0.017)
Postgraduate Degree (p = 0.0071)

Insignificant Factors

And in a rather exhausting⁵ set of analysis, the following factors were found to have no significant association with 1L GPA:

- Gender (p = 0.11)
- First to Attend Law (p = 0.31)
- Household Income (p = 0.43)
- Public or Private High School (p = 0.55)
- Undergrad GPA (p = 0.61)
- Studying Independently/In Groups (p = 0.72)
- Intro/Extroversion (p = 0.79)
- Country of Birth (p = 0.95)
- Sexual Orientation (p = 0.12)
- Political Party Support (p = 0.33)
- Race (p = 0.51)
- Pub Night Attendance (p = 0.56)
- Number of Languages Spoken (p = 0.69)
- Undergrad Program of Study (p = 0.76)
- Binge Drinking (p = 0.87)
- Mental Health Condition (p = 0.99)

Factors Associated with Recruit Outcome

The effect of 1L grades are the subject of their own article, so the following conclusions do not apply to 1L GPA. Looking for other factors associated with recruit outcomes, a similar analysis to the above was performed. In a pretty surprising turn (and somewhat spoiled by the title of this article), not a single factor was found to be associated with recruit outcome with only one, limited exception.

This was true for both overall success (i.e., employed or not) as well as at every stage of the recruitment process. This is in contrast to prior years, which found that factors such as having a commerce undergrad, high extroversion, or supporting the Conservative party were all strongly correlated with recruit success.

The only factor with any significant association was having a JD/MBA (which matched previous years' data). However, having a JD/MBA was only significant at the In-Firm Conversion stage (p = 0.00079), although it was not significantly associated with overall employment, nor with success at any other stage of the process.

¹ The exact technique used depended on the type of data. Backward stepwise regression was used for pairs of potentially correlated values (such as age and GPA), t-tests and ANOVA were used for comparison of means (such as race and GPA), and chi-squared tests were used for binary-type data (such as race and recruit success)

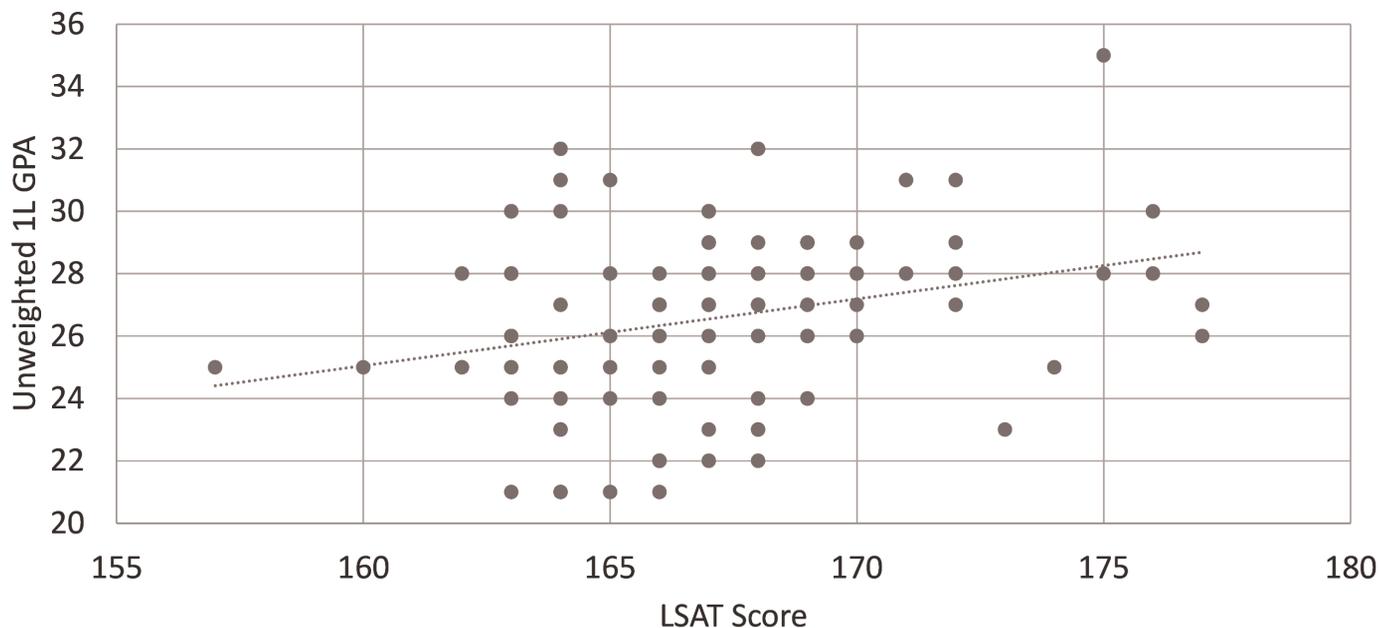
² We also played pretty fast and loose with independence and normalcy checks as well.

³ Sorry, performing arts majors.

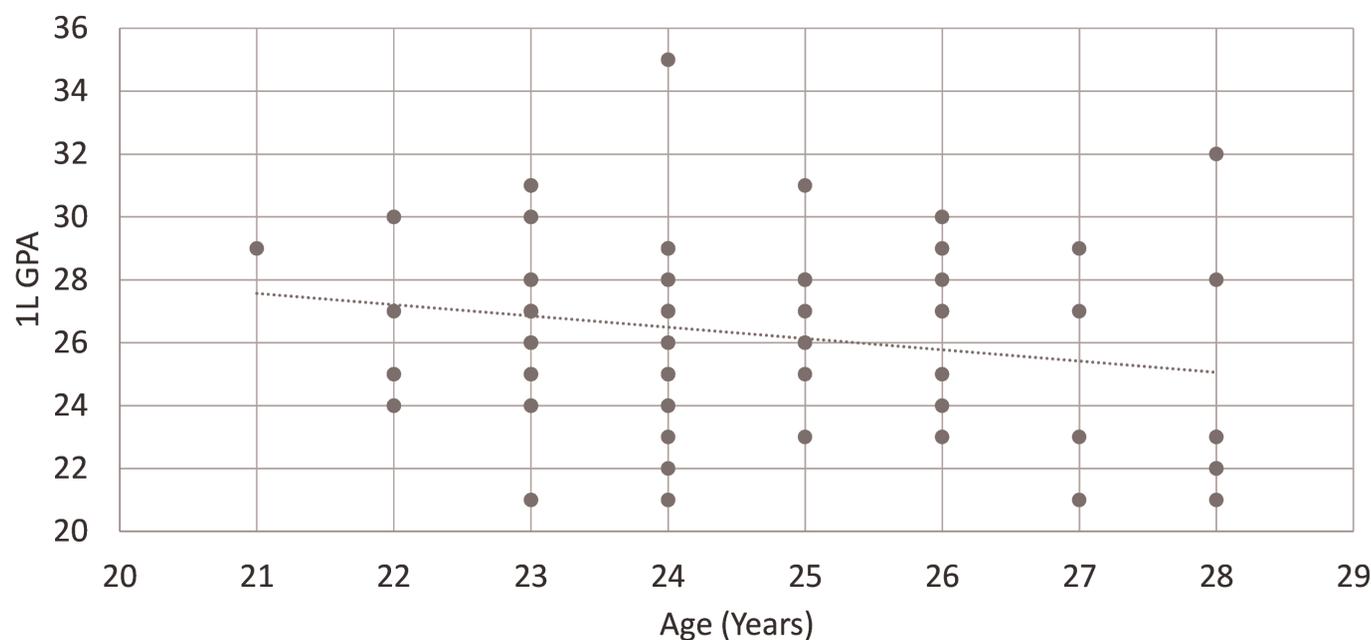
⁴ Unfortunately, the very smart people who created the survey forgot to clarify what postgraduate degree meant, as it seems some people interpreted as to mean a Master's Degree or higher, while others thought it meant only a PhD. The First-Year Class Profile assembled by the Faculty indicates that 19% of the Class of 2020 have a graduate-level education.

⁵ If not exhaustive.

1L GPA vs LSAT



1L GPA vs Age



Stuff About Grades

RORY SMITH (2L)

As students, we all have a nebulous sense that grades matter. Most importantly, you want to know how you stack up against your classmates and what sort of recruitment success can you expect based on your GPA. And so, with as much statistical rigour as I can remember from undergrad,¹ and subject to more caveats than we would like, here are the findings for the class of 2020.

Grade Distribution Class of 2020

109 students reported their 1L grades. Of these, 92 participated in the Toronto 2L recruit and, of these, 86 also reported their number of application, OCIs, in-firms, and offers. Therefore, approximately 55% of the 2020 class reported their grades. This represents a significant decrease from previous years, following the general trend of declining response rate.²

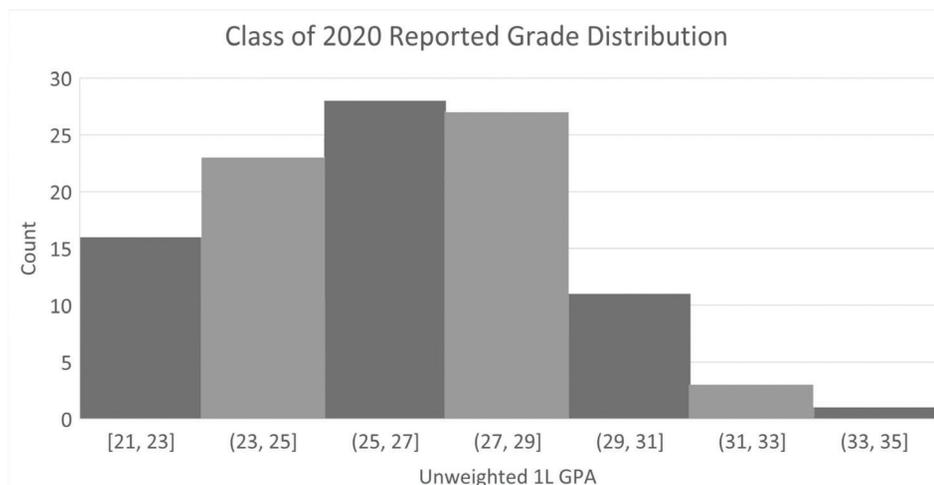
However, do not take the reported distribution as the actual grade breakdown for the class of 2020's 1L year. For one, because the survey targets all 2020 graduates (i.e., those eligible for the 2019 Summer Recruit), the data include JD students who began 1L in 2017 as well as combined degree students who began 1L in 2016. Furthermore, self-selection bias in who responds to the survey will further distort the data from the true grade distribution.³ As such, the information presented may not accurately reflect the actual distribution of grades for the 2017 1L class.

There is still value in presenting the data collected; however, the limitations mentioned above should be kept in mind. This piece will later address the effects of self-selection bias and non-disclosure.

As in years past, all analysis considered student's unweighted GPA.⁴ Unweighted GPA was used under the assumption that employers do not factor in credit weightings when reviewing transcripts and simply "eyeball it." Unweighted GPA was also used for ease of comparison with reporting from previous years. Conveniently, this has the effect that every 1-point increase in GPA corresponds with an additional "H" on the transcript.⁵

For the class of 2020, the median student has a GPA of 27, which corresponds to a transcript with 6 Hs. Due to credit weightings, it is difficult to translate the cutoff for distinction to a pure number of Hs. Some students with unweighted GPAs of 30 did not receive distinction, while others with unweighted GPAs of 29 did. Regardless, the cutoff for distinction was approximately 8-9 Hs.⁶

Class of 2020 1L Reported GPA Statistics	
Mean	26.6
25th Percentile	25
Median	27
75th Percentile	28
Distinction	29



Effect of Self-Selection Bias

As mentioned above, there is a significant risk that the sample of students who reported their 1L grades is not representative of the student body as a whole. To estimate the direction and magnitude of any self-selection bias, we estimated the expected number of each grade given out for a student body of 109 students and compared this to the grades reported.

Assuming that the grading follows the curve published by the law school⁷ and assuming a class size of 200, the expected number of each grade across the seven 1L classes can be computed.⁸ These assumptions are somewhat tenuous as small group professors have the discretion to deviate from the strict curve owing to the small class size, and even in larger classes, professors have some discretion; however, the resulting change in the grade distribution is unknown and as such, cannot be accurately modeled. Regardless, this effect is likely to be small but would result in the true number of Hs or HHs being higher than anticipated by the model below.

	Reported	Expected	Difference
HH	163	210	47
H	290	420	130
P	310	770	460

Not surprisingly, there is a clear bias towards nondisclosure of lower grades. It is unknown if this is because students with lower grades did not participate in the recruit and therefore declined to answer the survey or for any other number of reasons one would not wish to report their grades. On average, the 91 students who did not disclose their 1L grades had a transcript with 0.5 HHs, 1.4 Hs, and 5.1 Ps, for an overall GPA of 23.5.⁹ It is unknown exactly how the unreported grades are distributed amongst students, so quartile effects cannot be computed. However, adding these hypothetical students back into the distribution changes the overall mean from 26.6 to 25.2, which is likely a more accurate estimate of the true average. Hopefully, this provides some measure of comfort to students alarmed by an average artificially inflated by underreporting.

Grades and Recruit Success

It is anticipated that higher grades lead to greater success in the recruit. This has been the general trend in years prior; however, the data for this year paints a much murkier picture. The following data are only from the 86 students who reported both grades and recruit success, for a response rate of 43%.

The analysis considered the three different stages of the recruit separately: submitting applications for OCIs (application conversion rate), being selected for in-firm interviews (OCI conversion rate), and receiving an offer after an in-firm (infirm conversion rate). In addition, it also considered whether a student ended up employed or not (i.e., they received at least one offer; no students turned down all offers). Performing regression analysis between GPA and the three different conversion rates, the importance of GPA at each stage can be assessed. Overall employment status was assessed by comparing the mean GPA of employed and un-employed students respectively.

Surprisingly, GPA did not have a significant impact on whether a student ended up employed or not. Specifically, the GPA of students who received offers was not significantly higher than the GPA of students who did not receive offers.¹⁰ However, there was at least one significant finding when considering

the recruit stages separately.

Unsurprisingly, grades have the most effect when converting applications into OCIs; indeed, this is the only stage at which grades are significant at $\alpha = 0.05$. Grades have no significant impact at either the OCI or In-firm stage, although they are particularly unimportant for converting OCIs. This confirms the view that OCIs are primarily assessing candidates based on non-academic factors.

Luckily for anyone sweating their grades, over half of the people in the bottom quarter of the class ended up employed, although this is likely where a large majority of the self-selection bias comes into play. Alternatively, one could consider the expected number of applications necessary to secure employment from the reported conversion rates. For each quartile, these are:

Hopefully, the recruit will seem a lot less daunting with this knowledge in hand (for those of you who would rather do a hundred recruits than have to read another page full of charts and numbers, thank you just for making it this far). Grades may determine your self-worth (bad habits die hard) but they are not the end-all and be-all when it comes to the summer recruit. Best of luck, Class of 2021!¹²

¹ I expect angry letters from those of you with a statistics background.

² 69% for the class of 2019 and 75% for the class of 2018.

³ As a matter of integrity, it is assumed that no students deliberately misreported their grades.

⁴ As given in the Academic Handbook: 5 for HH, 4 for H, 3 for P, 1 for LP, 0 for F.

⁵ These Hs can be in any combination, for example, 3 HHs and 4 Ps result in the same GPA as 2 HHs 2 Hs and 3 Ps, for a total of 6 "H"s.

⁶ We asked respondents to indicate if they received distinction.

⁷ 15% HH, 30% H, 55% P. With no accurate way to predict the number of LPs and Fs, it was assumed that none were given out.

⁸ Expected = %ofTotal*Number of Students*Number of Classes. Ex. (15%*(200)*(7)) = 210

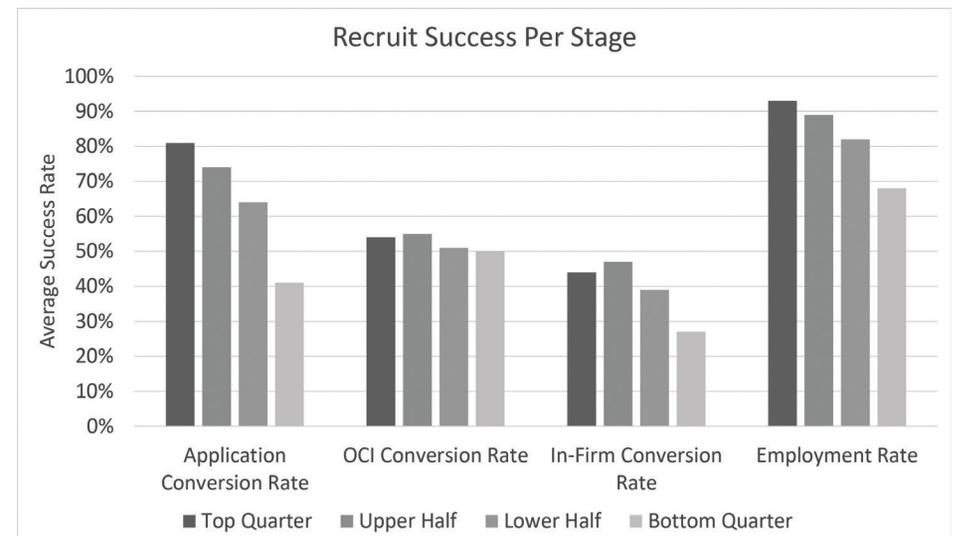
⁹ Numbers may not align perfectly due to rounding.

¹⁰ Although it was close, $p = 0.074$ in the 2-sample t-test.

¹¹ UV takes no responsibility for students who take these numbers as gospel and fail to secure employment.

¹² And may the recruiters have mercy on your souls.

Class Rank	Application Conversion Rate ($p = 1.1 \times 10^{-7}$)	OCI Conversion Rate ($p = 0.73$)	In-firm Conversion Rate ($p = 0.088$)	Employment Rate ($p = 0.074$)
Top Quarter (29+)	81%	54%	44%	93%
Upper Half (27-28)	74%	55%	47%	89%
Lower Half (25-26)	64%	51%	39%	82%
Bottom Quarter (21-24)	41%	50%	27%	68%



Class Rank	Expected Number of Applications Necessary per Offer ¹¹
Top Quarter (29+)	5.1
Upper Half (27-28)	5.2
Lower Half (25-26)	7.8
Bottom Quarter (21-24)	18

A Couple More Observations on 1L Grades

There's something fishy with LRW & LPPE

RORY SMITH (2L)

With the slightly more serious elements of the analysis over with, here are two of the more interesting observations that were found when playing with the data.

The Most Difficult Class

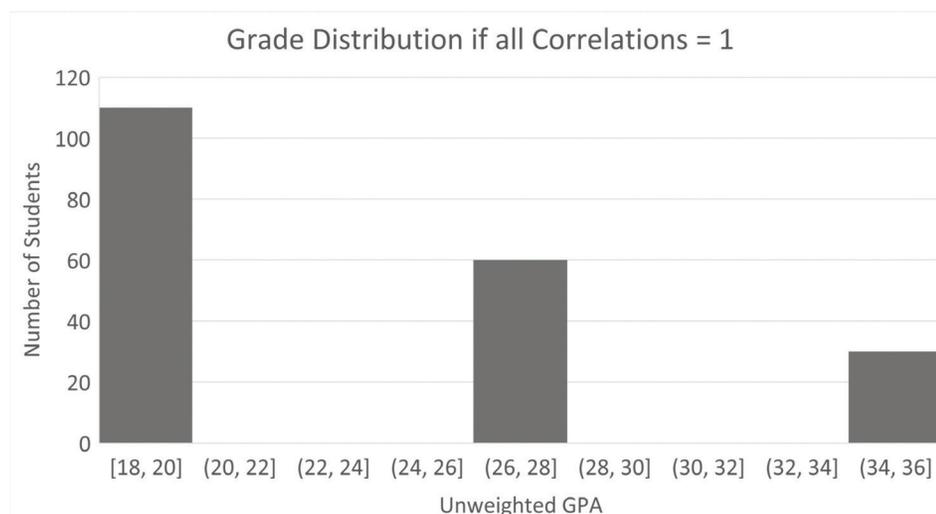
There is probably not going to be a definitive answer to which class is the most difficult¹ and this article is not going to provide a whole lot of clarity. The grading of all classes on a curve makes it difficult for direct comparisons of class average. Barring some professorial discretion, the average of each class should be identical. However, as a related question, a question was raised as to what classes the top students found the most challenging, or, at least, did worse in on average when compared to their other classes. For the students in the top 10% of the survey sample, as measured by unweighted GPA,² the grades breakdown by class is as follows:³

Class	Avg. Grade Among Top-Performing Students
Property	4.76
Criminal	4.65
Constitutional	4.59
Contracts	4.35
Torts	4.18
LRW	4.18
LPPE	4.06

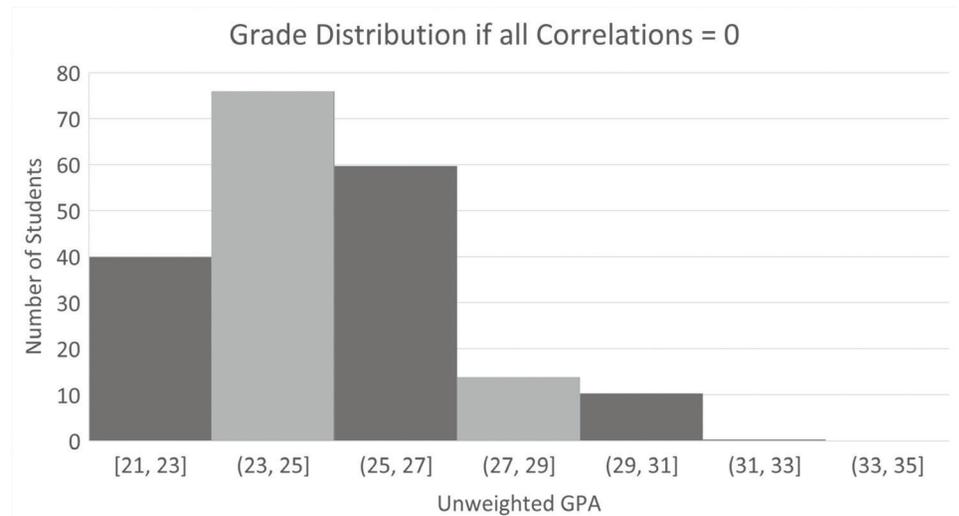
Leaving aside LRW and LPPE (we'll be talking about those later), high-performing students tended to struggle the most in Torts. In contrast, they saw great success in Property; of the students in this sample, all but 3 achieved an HH in Property. This isn't the same as saying that the classes as a whole were more or less difficult, but, among every five top-performing students, they averaged barely more than an H apiece in LPPE, but averaged 4 HHs and 1 H in Property.

Correlations Between Classes

Another question worth answering is how well does one's grade in any one class predict their grade in any other class. To do this, the correlation in the grade distribution between each pair of classes was calculated. For reference, if every pair of classes had a correlation of 1 (i.e. every student received the same grade in every class⁴), the GPA distribution would resemble the following:



Instead, if every pair of classes had a correlation of 0 (i.e., a student's grades in one class had no relationship with their grades in any other class) the class distribution would look like this:⁵



The grade distribution reported by the 2020 class can be found in the "Stuff About Grades" article. The full matrix of class-pair correlations is below

	Contracts	Criminal	LRW	LPPE	Property	Torts
Constitutional	0.19	0.27	0.15	0.16	0.32	0.24
Contracts		0.26	-0.056	-0.076	0.28	0.063
Criminal			-0.040	0.12	0.22	0.24
LRW				0.21	0.068	0.033
LPPE					-0.050	0.069
Property						0.15

From this, a few things jump out:

1. The correlations are much closer to 0 than to 1, with an overall average of 0.13, although this improves to 0.16 if we remove LRW and LPPE. Regardless, all of the correlations are quite weak and even the strongest correlation, 0.32, is only indicative (and barely at that) of a moderate positive relationship. This suggests that, potentially, success in each class depends on a different ability that is only weakly transferable between classes. Or, if there is a general "law school ability" the classes do a poor job of translating it into a grade. Importantly, this does not suggest that the grading within a class is random, only that the grade in one class only very weakly predicts your grade in another class.⁶
2. LRW and LPPE have negative associations with several other classes. For example, doing well in LRW is correlated with doing poorly in Contracts and Criminal (although the size of this effect is essentially zero). Even when not negative, LRW and LPPE have correlations with other classes that are very small or essentially zero. Their only decently-strong correlation is with each other, and even that would be deemed weak according to the general guidelines. Intuitively, it feels like the skills of "doing research" and "writing" should be common to all law classes (and law generally). However, the data suggest that either LRW is accurately measuring student's writing skills, but having strong writing skills are in no way predictive of success in other classes (bolstered by the fact that students in the top 10% by unweighted GPA did second-poorest in LRW on average) or LRW is not accurately measuring student's writing skills, but strong writing skills are still transferable between classes. There is just something not quite right with these two courses.⁷
3. There isn't a significant difference in the correlations between public law classes and private law classes. Criminal and Constitutional have the third strongest individual correlation, but Constitutional has a stronger relationship with Property. And while Property and Contracts have decently strong correlations (at least relative to the strength of their correlations to other classes), neither have a strong correlation with Torts. The similarities between classes clearly transcend the public/private distinction.

While there are probably more interesting tidbits hidden in the data, this endeavor has already eaten up far too much of Reading Week (and those term papers aren't writing themselves). Sadly, any other hidden gems will probably have to remain hidden.⁸

¹ For the record, I felt that Torts was the most difficult, although LPPE was the most difficult to stay awake in..

² This corresponds to an unweighted GPA of 30 or greater. Distinction standing wasn't used for this analysis as the credit weighting would bias the sample against LPPE and LRW as lower weighted classes.

³ The mean difference between classes was significant at $p < 0.01$.

⁴ Given the set proportions that the curve assigns grades in, there is no way to have a correlation of 1 without every student receiving the same grade in every class.

⁵ Based on a class of 200. Average of 100 simulated grade distributions.

⁶ However, if there is a unifying set of skills that lead to success in several classes (as seems intuitively the case) the low correlations found lend credence to the idea that 1L grading, if not law school grading generally, is much more random than we would like.

⁷ In more ways than just the correlations.

⁸ Editor's Note: If anyone would like to delve further into the data, please contact us.