Law School Application Workshop

Professor Nemacheck, Pre-Law Advisor

W&M Prelaw Advising Webpage:
www.wm.edu/as/government/prelawadvising
Matt Rosendahl—Advisor

- W&M Graduate
- W&M Law—2nd Year
- Fall 2016 Office Hours: Wednesdays 3:30-6:00pm
  mgrosendahl@email.wm.edu
Application Essentials

- Undergraduate Transcript
- LSAT Score
- LSAC Credential Assembly Service
- Letters of Recommendation
- Personal Statement

- Check with Law Schools
  - Number of recommendations
  - Use of CAS Evaluators Service?
When to Go?

• About half of law students enroll directly from an undergraduate program

• Applicant Profile:
  o About ½ of applicants are between 22 and 24
  o About 1 in 5 applicants are over 30
  o About 1 in 20 are 40 or older

• Advantages to waiting?
  o Four full years of grades
  o Work experience
  o Life experience
  o Test interest in the law
Starting the Application Process

• The earliest you need to start thinking about the application process is spring of your junior year if you are planning to go directly to law school after graduation.

• Applications are generally due between January and March of the year in which you apply.
  o More competitive schools tend to be earlier.
  o CHECK YOUR DEADLINES.
  o Early and rolling admissions.
  o The earlier the better.

CHECK YOUR DEADLINES.
Application

- Mid-October until January 1 is optimal application time
- Don’t sacrifice a strong application for early decision, however
- CHECK DEADLINES and get all application materials in on time
Application Materials

- Schools will have some unique questions, but most require the following:
  - Application form and personal statement
  - Application fee
  - Letters of Recommendation
  - Resume—this will be optional for some schools, but in any case do not neglect to answer application questions
  - Financial Aid Forms
LSAC Credentials Assembly Service (CAS)

• Required central application service for all law schools
• Undergraduate transcripts (official) for all undergraduate institutions attended
• Use CAS for letters of recommendation as well—most law schools will indicate they require this
Letters of Recommendation

- Generally sent directly to CAS and then off to law schools
- Many schools require (or may strongly prefer) they come through CAS
- Two letters from faculty (in general)
- Letter from employer/supervisor
- Provide recommender with resume at least
  - Personal statement might be helpful
  - Supplementary information—papers/grades in courses w/ that professor
  - Follow up on request—thank you note is a nice way to do this
Dean’s Certification

• This comes from the Dean of Student’s Office

http://www.wm.edu/offices/deanofstudents/services/enrollmentservices/deancertification/index.php

  o Click on “Dean Certification Request Form”
Personal Statement

• DO:
  o Provide admissions committee with information about you they would not otherwise have
  o Respond to direct questions if posed
  o Stress assets, qualities, and experiences that make you an excellent candidate

• DO NOT:
  o Write defensively (low grades, disappointing LSAT)
  o Provide a narration of your resume

• Depth is preferable to breadth

• BC College Examples:
“Problem Areas” in the Application Process

• There will be a space to provide additional information or explanations for potential problems (i.e. low grades, low LSAT, minor discipline problems, etc)
  o Be brief and honest
  o Provide a short explanation (i.e. I had mono during my sophomore year and managed to finish the semester but w/ lower grades)
  o Feel free to included addendum to explain the situation
Minor Trouble with the Law?

- Answer all questions honestly, directly and simply
- Not doing so can have serious repercussions, not just at application stage, but at Bar admission stage
- Provide disciplinary action addendum explaining the circumstances of the infraction, how it was resolved, and why it will not be an issue in the future
Where to Apply?

- Average W&M applicant applies to 7-8 schools
- Look at average GPA and LSAT scores for admitted students
- Official Guide to US Law Schools
- Links on Pre-Law Webpage
National Application Trends

Applications to ABA-accredited law schools have fallen over the past decade.

Source: Law School Admission Council

Made with Chartbuilder
Getting a Decision?

- Varies greatly

- Anytime between February and, for those who find themselves waitlisted, the first week of classes

- What to do about wait lists