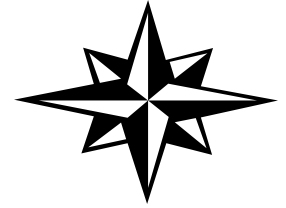


# SOUTHERN ASSOCIATION OF PRE-LAW ADVISERS



## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

SAPLA continues to be dedicated to the engagement of Pre-Law advisers, and the development of our relationships with law school admissions representatives and representatives from law-related organizations. Our conference in Miami, Florida, hosted by St. Thomas University School of Law, drew over one hundred attendees and was a great success because of the strength of these relationships, involved pre-law advisers, and all the local coordination of events by Fareza Khan from St. Thomas University.

This year we are committed to again providing a dynamic conference for all attendees and to supplying those who cannot attend with information about the event. We are fortunate to have sponsorship from two of our public universities, North Carolina Central University of Law in Durham, an Historically Black University, and the Univer-

sity of North Carolina School of Law in Chapel Hill. Although our first day is being hosted at the Sheraton Imperial Hotel, plans were also developed to coordinate the sessions to ensure attendees could visit both host campuses. We have also put enormous effort into offering our services to the students in the area by publicizing the Law School Fair to all the local colleges and universities.

Thanks to all the efforts of our officers and other members of the organization, our membership continues to bring in new Pre-Law advisers from across the southeast and to reinvigorate the veterans. The new advisers add to the vibrant nature of our interactions and each of us benefits from the time we are allowed to spend with one another at both our conference and those supported by PLANC – the National Conference. As we look ahead you

are each encouraged to mark your calendar for the Pre-Law Advisers National Conference, which will be held October 15-18, 2008 in Las Vegas, Nevada.

Thanks to all those who helped put this event together and especially to our officers, Tyra Mason, Wendy Vonnegut, Bekki Davis, Gerald Wilson, Nyota Tucker, Peter Wubberhorst and our new webmaster, Matt Rust.

### Best Wishes

Mary A. Tetro, President,  
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## SAPLA

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## YOUR CRIMINAL HISTORY: WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT LAW SCHOOLS, WHAT LAW SCHOOLS SHOULD KNOW ABOUT YOU



It is a familiar scenario. You were on your way to Atlanta for a big step show when you were pulled over for speeding, and you were charged a \$250 fine. You thought the worst was over after explaining to your parents why their insurance rates were going up. But now, you have to report it on your law school application because it asks for information regarding any criminal offense, “including traffic violations over \$200.”

Your first thought is not to report the ticket. “In the end,” you reason, “the schools I’m applying to will not check my record.” You may be right, but eventually what you try to hide may catch up with you. Law schools evaluate an applicant’s character and fitness, and so do state bar associations. Law schools may not always investigate whether you have misrepresented yourself on your applications, but the bar association evaluating you for admission and licensing will. When you apply for membership to your state bar association, the association will perform a comprehensive review of all dealings you have had with the law. If they find a criminal infraction that you have failed to mention to them or your law school, the privilege to practice law may be denied to you.

**Why are schools concerned with your criminal history?** Law schools are not going to take the chance that a new recruit is going to give their law school a bad name, regardless of the applicant’s

LSAT score or undergraduate GPA. Law schools do not want to jeopardize their reputation or that of the legal profession.

Law schools also attempt to determine whether problems are stress-related. Will you suffer a lapse of judgment when the pressure is on? Law is a high-pressure profession, and law schools want to recruit people who can handle stress without turning to illegal methods, including alcohol and drug use, financial malfeasance, or needless endangerment of the public. A criminal incident will not necessarily keep you out of the legal profession as long as you disclose the matter properly. Here are a few key points to keep in mind:

**Disclose all criminal matters.** Most criminal offenses are minor in nature and thus will not affect your admission potential. The first matter admissions officers consider when reviewing a criminal incident is the nature of the offense: Was it major or minor? Grand theft auto is definitely more significant than running a red light.

Other important factors are the number of offenses on an applicant’s record and the time of their occurrence. A charge of speeding in excess of 20 miles per hour and an unrelated charge of possession of alcohol will cause more alarm than a single charge, especially if the offenses have been committed within a short period of time. When law schools notice multiple offenses on an applicant’s record, they may believe that the candidate either has unresolved psychological problems or has no respect for the law. An apparent lack of respect for the field you are proposing to enter will be a detriment to your application.

Additionally, criminal offenses are like wine: the older they are, the better. An incident that happened five years ago carries much less weight than one that happened five months ago.

In the event that you have a criminal record, most law school admissions ask for two things. First, they want your explanation of the events that occurred. Second, they want the official court documents pertaining to the matter. When you begin the disclosure process, *always* be open and honest – you would be surprised how official court documents record what you said about the situation at the time. The applicant should always be the one to explain any discrepancies between court documents and his or her account of an event.

**Be enlightened.** What did you learn, if anything, from the situation? The degree to which you have accepted responsibility for your mistakes will help admissions officers determine your level of maturity.

**Be contrite.** Let admissions officers know that you regret what you have done and that you will not commit further criminal offenses.

Finally, remember that you are attempting to enter a profession of rules. Lawyers live by them, work by them, and serve by them. If you appear to have trouble following them, you may need to question whether this is the right field for you.

*Written and submitted by  
Lewis Hutchison*

## REPORTING STUDY ABROAD GRADES TO LAW SCHOOL ADMISSIONS COUNCIL

All foreign transcripts sent to LSAC are processed through the JD Credential Assembly Service (JD CAS), an extension of the LSDAS for applicants who have completed the equivalent of more than one academic year of undergraduate study overseas. Law schools may choose whether or not to participate in JD CAS. A link to the list of participating law schools is available in your LSAC online account.

Foreign transcripts will be sent to the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO), where they will be authenticated and analyzed. A foreign credential evaluation and its associated documents will then be incorporated into the regular LSDAS report for those law schools that require their applicants to use the JD CAS. Upon submission of a matriculation decision by a law school, LSAC will forward the "original" foreign transcript to that law school. Note there is no additional fee for the JD CAS; it is included in the standard LSDAS fee.

Foreign transcripts are NOT required if:

- You are only applying to schools that do not require the JD CAS. If this is the case, do not list your foreign insti-



tutions when you register for the LSDAS, or have your foreign transcripts sent to LSAC.

- You are applying to one or more JD CAS - requiring law schools, AND you were directly enrolled at a foreign institution(s), AND the total amount of work you completed at all foreign institutions combined is the equivalent of **one academic year or less** of undergraduate study in the US, its territories, or Canada. **Do not list** the foreign institution(s) during LSDAS registration, and **do not have the transcript(s) sent to LSAC.**
- You are applying to one or more JD CAS - requiring law schools, AND you participated in your US or Canadian home institution's study-abroad, consortium, or exchange program, AND the work is clearly indicated as such on your US or Canadian home institution's transcript. Do not list the foreign institution(s) during LSDAS registration. The work you completed there will be picked up from your US or Canadian home institution's transcript. List your home institution, print out the corresponding Transcript Request Form (found in MYDOCS/FORMS section of your LSAC online account) and mail it to your home

institution so that they may send your transcript to LSAC.

Foreign transcripts are **REQUIRED** if:

- You are applying to one or more JD CAS - requiring law schools, AND you were directly enrolled at a foreign institution(s), AND the total amount of work you completed at all foreign institutions combined is the equivalent of **more than one academic year** of undergraduate study in the US, its territories, or Canada. **Register for the LSDAS online and list all of the institutions you attended, including all foreign institutions.** Print out each corresponding Transcript Request Form (found in MYDOCS/FORMS section of your LSAC online account) and mail them to your institutions so that they may send your transcript to LSAC.

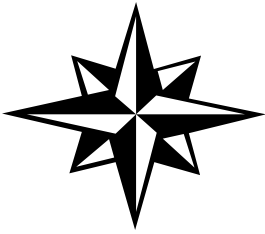
The foreign work might or might not appear on your US or Canadian transcript(s) as transfer work. All transfer work requires an original transcript from the school where the work was completed. Transfer work will not be picked up from another school's transcript, regardless of whether that school accepted credit and listed grades.

Source: Document prepared by Laura Pugliese, Director of Law School Credential Services (LSAC)

## LSAC HIGHLIGHTS

- Prelaw Advisors Website - LSAC has moved quickly to create a secure website for use by prelaw advisors and expects it to be ready to launch in the spring. The goal is to provide a place for advisors to communicate with one another, to get information about LSAC services, to be able to search directories, to receive Action Reports, and to post information of interest.
- Forum Changes - LSAC will no longer advertise forums in newspapers or radio, but will use online ads to promote forums. The forum materials have been given a new look and changes have been made.
- "What to Expect" Document - LSAC has written a document for both law schools and candidates to outline what each may expect of the other during the admissions process. This is available on lsac.org.
- Fee Waivers - In recognition of the fact that it is often difficult for a candidate to complete the admission process in 12 months, benefits of the LSAT/LSDAS fee waiver will be available for two years from the date the waiver is granted.
- LSAT - Comparative reading was added to the reading comprehension section of the LSAT beginning in June 2007. Examples of the new passages are available online at lsac.org.
- Multiple Deposits - Beginning on June 15, personal identifiers of those holding deposits at more than one law school will be made available to each school where a deposit is held. Previously, schools know only the aggregate number of deposits held in common with other schools.
- Social Security Numbers - LSAC is masking part of the social security number or eliminating it from some documents in favor of the LSAC account number.
- Website - The LSAC home page will get a new look and feel this fall, offering an easier-to-navigate experience for candidates.
- Online Services - A rewrite of the candidate online services is in development. This will be oriented toward an intuitive, task related experience for candidates.

Source: Ann Brandt, Law Services July 2007



**SAPLA**

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Tallahassee, FL 32303

Mailing Address Line 1

Mailing Address Line 2

Mailing Address Line 3

Mailing Address Line 4

Mailing Address Line 5

We're on the Web!

[www.ncsu.edu/prelaw/sapla](http://www.ncsu.edu/prelaw/sapla)

## SAPLA KUDOS 2007

We all work so hard at what we do but these are some of the things the group and individuals have accomplished over the past year:

- Coordinated and held a very successful conference in Miami with St. Thomas School of Law with the evaluations telling us the same
- Provided advisor training workshops for Newcomers and Veterans at the conference
- Coordinated the fall conference with North Carolina Central and University of North Carolina in September. This is the first time we have had an HBCU as one of our sponsors.
- Worked with LSAC on the advisory committee to assess the web and other functions of their services
- Volunteered as advisers for the Law Forums in Washington, D.C and in Atlanta for the past two or three years
- Voted to extend the terms of our officers to two years to allow for profes-

sional growth and support of the organization

- Our former President Nyota Tucker has been promoted to serving in the Office of the President at Albany State University
- Current 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President, Wendy Vonnegut, Methodist University spent part of her summer at Vermont Law took class in Environmental Litigation course.
- Gerald Wilson serves on the Planning Board for the National Conference
- Book of Lists provided by Gerald Wilson and Ed Stern annually to all APLA's
- Handbook for Advisers created annually for SAPLA members
- Members of SAPLA (NC and Virginia) worked with CLEO last spring to bring students to the Pre Law Day at American University School of Law in March

- Members presented at NAPLA and other conferences within the APLA's

- Coordinated a Consortium within North Carolina of the local HBCU's to involve more Pre-Law advisers and students from the local schools in NC State campus events

- Inter-Institutional Law School Fair held annually at NC State is supported by SAPLA advisers working together to support the event and inviting all universities/colleges in the region/state to attend. Workshops are also held very similar to an LSAC forum.

New website created and opened in the fall 2007

This is the most current list of our Kudos and I am sure we have more...

Submitted  
Mary A. Tetro  
17 August 2007