Law School, Here I Come…But Where Am I Going?

Choosing which schools to apply to for law school is a serious decision that requires intentional thought and good decision-making skills. The first step in this all-important process is to determine what it is that YOU want out of your legal education in four key areas: Personal/Lifestyle Preferences, Academic Interests, Professional Goals, and Financial Needs. Within each of these areas are many factors to consider. As you examine yourself in each of these arenas, check the boxes for those that you feel will be important in determining where you apply to law school.

### Personal/Lifestyle Preferences
- Diversity of faculty and student body
- First-year class size
- Geographic area of the school
- Geographic area in which you want to live and work
- Part-time enrollment option
- Religious affiliation of the school
- Student groups/organizations
- Student services/support (disability, LGBT, etc.)

### Academic Interests
- Breadth of curriculum
- Faculty accessibility
- Faculty expertise
- Faculty research opportunities
- Innovative technology
- Joint degree programs
- Journals
- Law library resources
- Law school environment
- Quality of teaching
- School resources
- Skills instruction
- Study abroad programs

### Professional Goals
- Area of specialization within law
- Breadth and support of alumni network
- Career planning services
- Clinical programs
- Externship options
- Reputation of the school

### Financial Needs
- Cost (tuition, books, fees)
- Cost of living in area of school
- Financial aid available (merit-based aid vs. need-based aid)
- Loan repayment assistance program (LRAP)

### Other

Now that you’ve chosen the factors that you feel will be most important to your law school experience, go back and prioritize them in an order that makes sense for you. What will be the top most important factor that you consider when evaluating a law school? What will matter to you the most? Doing this exercise will help you determine whether or not a given school is right for you, and should be added to your list. Remember…the question to ask is not “what is the best law school?” but rather “what is the best law school for me?”