ASSOCIATION FOR INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH
Data and Decisions for Higher Education

Dear Andi,

Thank you for submitting your proposal. A printable summary is below. Your confirmation number is 19960. A confirmation email will be sent to you within 24 hours.

Applicants will be notified of the status of the proposed project on February 2, 2018.

If you have questions or need assistance regarding your application please contact the AIR Grant staff at 850-391-7109 or grants@airweb.org.

SUMMARY

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Highest degree	
Discipline of highest degree	
Position description	
Staff members in IR office	
Campus type	
Years of experience in IR	
IR Roles	
Year of birth	
Race/Ethnicity	
Gender	

Grant Type

I am applying for a:

Research Grant

Financial Representative

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Affiliation

Georgia State University Research Foundation, Inc.

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Office of Sponsored Proposals and Awards

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Project Description

Project title:

Reducing Over-Reliance on the LSAT in Admissions Decisions: Examining Correlations Between the LSAT, Lawyering Skills and Pro Bono Work

Statement of the research problem and national importance (limit 750 words):

- What is the research problem this proposal intends to address?
- How does this topic relate to the research priorities areas of access, affordability, and value of legal or graduate/professional education?
- Why is this topic of national importance?
- Why is it timely to conduct this research at this time?

Research Problem/Relationship to access to the legal profession:

The LSAT, a standardized admissions test, serves as a barrier to access to legal education for non-white applicants. Focus on LSAT scores has also skewed legal education scholarship money towards those with high LSAT scores rather than those with financial need. Currently, some schools want to expand their admissions criterion to allow for submission of GRE scores rather than LSAT scores. However, that change does not eliminate the discriminatory impact of standardized tests in the admissions process.

One issue with over-reliance on standardized tests in the admissions process is that the tests may have little relationship to how lawyers use their skills in practice. Test scores also are unlikely to relate to pro bono work. This study will collect data from Georgia State University College of Law {GSUCOL], an Atlanta urban research law school, and City University of New York Law School [CUNY], an urban law school with a public service mission. It will look at correlations between LSAT scores and UGPA and lawyering skills courses – e.g. legal research and writing, clinics and simulation courses as well as correlations between LSAT scores and pro bono work during law school. Many schools' learning outcomes identify a wide range of lawyering skills, and commitment to access to justice, as important for their graduates. If, as we suspect, the data indicates the LSAT has a low correlation with how legal knowledge and skills are used in law practice, and a low correlation with pro bono work, the study could help schools justify the use of a holistic approach to admissions; an approach that could increase law schools' diversity.

National importance/Timeliness

On November 4, 2017, law school accreditors proposed eliminating a standardized test requirement in law schools' admissions processes. Adoption of this proposed change would allow schools to go "test optional". If numerous schools go "test optional", that choice may impact the influence LSAT scores have on US News and World Report rankings, and thus potentially free up some scholarship money to be diverted back into needs-based scholarships.

Many undergraduate institutions provide students the option of submitting standardized test scores or seeking admissions via a "holistic" approach that includes numerous essay questions and looks at a wide range of factors. For some undergraduate institutions, the decision to go "test optional" has increased student body diversity, although that has not been true across the board. At Georgia State University, administrators made a conscious decision to base undergraduate admissions decisions largely on high school grades rather than standardized test scores. That decision, made in conjunction with a commitment to increase diversity and support for undergraduate students, has resulted in one of the highest graduation rates for a public research university and one of the most diverse student bodies in the country. GSU's undergraduate program illustrates how placing less reliance on standardized tests has potential for great change in access to legal education.

The question is whether law schools will choose a "test optional" option if it becomes available. If that option is not available, the question remains: how much weight should be given to the LSAT, or other standardized tests in the admissions process? This study contributes important information to that debate.
GSU COL and CUNY will collect data for students entering law school from 2008-2015, looking at LSAT scores, UGPA, LGPA and grades in all first year and some upper level law school courses, self-reported pro bono hours, and bar passage rates. Courses will include first year legal research and writing; upper level simulation and clinic courses, and upper level courses such as: evidence, constitutional law, business associations and criminal procedure. We expect that the data will replicate other studies that show some correlation, albeit a generally weak one, between LSAT scores and LGPA, and by extension, bar passage. However, based upon a small previous study, we suspect that we will find a very weak correlation between LSAT scores and lawyering skills, simulation and clinic courses – courses where the previous study found UGPA had a stronger correlation. We also expect to find little or no correlation between LSAT scores and pro bono hours worked during law school. If the data shows low correlations between LSAT scores and what some schools value – i.e. developing lawyers competent in a wide range of lawyering skills and with a commitment to pro bono – the study data might influence whether those schools retain the LSAT or a standardized admissions test or how much weight they put on that test.

Review the literature and establish a theoretical grounding for the research (limit 1000 words):

- What has prior research found about this problem?
- What is the theoretical/conceptual grounding for this research?

People of color are under-represented in the legal profession (Nance & Madsen). One barrier to the profession is the LSAT, which disproportionately limits access to legal education for non-white applicants (Reeves and Halikias; Kidder; Haddon & Post). Additionally, the focus on recruiting students with the highest LSAT scores skews scholarship money towards those with high LSAT scores rather than those with financial need (Tamanaha).

Recently, some law schools have allowed applicants to submit GRE scores instead of LSAT scores. This does little to increase diversity. Like the LSAT, the GRE has limited predictive ability and a significant discriminatory impact (Williams & Sternberg; Miller & Stassum).

The ABA Council on Legal Education recently proposed eliminating the accreditation requirement that law schools use the LSAT or any other standardized test in their admissions process. (O'Rourke ABA Memorandum) Adoption of this proposed change would allow schools to adopt a "test optional" approach to law school admissions. Many undergraduate institutions have moved to "test optional" policies. In some, that decision increased diversity (Bates College; Jaschik, 2006; McDermott 2008) although there is some evidence to the contrary {Belasco, et al).

At Georgia State University, undergraduate admissions decisions rest largely on high school grades rather than standardized test scores. GSU made a commitment to increasing its retention and graduation rates through a policy of inclusion, rather than exclusion (Renick, 2015 Status Report). To do so, it lowered its reliance on standardized test scores in admissions decisions and accepted a large number of minority students and Pell Grant recipients who had standardized test scores and other predictors that traditionally would put them in what are considered "at risk" student populations (Renick, 2015 Status Report). Using data analytics to identify risk factors and appropriate interventions, GSU, has one of the highest retention and graduation rates of comparable urban research universities, one of the most diverse student bodies, and no achievement gap between students of color and white students (Renick, 2015 Status Report). GSU's experience illustrates that it is possible that schools could abandon or greatly reduce reliance on the LSAT in admissions decisions, develop strong interventions for bar pass rates, and greatly increase their diversity if they chose to go that route.

Despite access to education issues and the fact that the LSAT does not purport to be a measure of potential success as a lawyer (Curcio, et al. 2014), law schools rely heavily on LSAT scores in the admissions process. In part, this reliance rests upon US News and World Report rankings (Edwards; Johnson). In part, over-reliance on LSAT scores in the admissions process also hinges upon a belief that LSAT correlates to first year grades, which in turn correlate to bar pass rates. Thus, schools tend to weight LSAT scores more heavily than other factors, including UGPA, in the admissions process (Holmquist et al.). The correlation between LSAT scores and first year grades varies greatly between schools [Kidder; Wong] and, as many note, the LSAT, and first year exams, do not purport to measure the wide range of skills necessary for competent lawyering (Haddon & Post; Edwards; Lempert). The LSAT and bar exam pass rates is even a more attenuated connection (Wightman; Morris & Henderson; Thompson-Dorsey; Evensen-Pratt) although some argue otherwise (Sanders; Trujillo).

Why do first year grades have some correlation to bar pass rates? One answer is that similar tests produce similar results (Howarth; Hunt). However, should that attenuated correlation be driving admissions processes? If one looks at legal knowledge in context of how students use that knowledge, e.g. in legal research and writing projects, in clinics and other experiential learning courses, what if LSAT scores are not strong predictors? One small study, in context of verifying validity of a study on formative assessment exercises, found UGPA correlated with grades in all first year classes, including legal research and writing, while LSAT correlated with grades in some classes, but not legal writing (Curcio et al, 2008).

Most studies look at LSAT score or LSAT and UGPA combined to predict law school performance (Anthony; Moss & Scott). None look at LSAT score and UGPA as they relate to law school

performance in courses that most resemble how lawyers use their skills and knowledge in practice. Nor have studies looked at LSAT scores in connection with pro bono work. As more schools identify a wide range of lawyering skills their graduates should possess, and many identify providing pro bon services as a learning outcome (Hamilton & Organ) a test that fails to predict either of those should be of little value in the admissions process. This is especially true if UGPA and other factors better predict academic success as one study found (Marks & Moss).

If the ABA accreditation standards permit schools to forego a standardized admissions test, law schools may choose to accept only a small percentage of students based upon LSAT scores to ensure the highest possible LSAT composite score for US News purposes. Or, US News may re-consider the weight given to LSAT scores. Going "test optional" might result in an increase in access to legal education for under-represented groups and a shift in the emphasis on LSAT scores for rankings purposes.

If schools are interested in admitting students equipped to develop the wide range of competencies successful new lawyers need (Shultz/Zedeck; Gerkman & Cornett) and want to admit students likely to engage in pro bono work, schools may find that holistic admissions processes and greater reliance on undergraduate UGPA, rather than the LSAT better serves their missions. This is true even if there is an attenuated relationship between LSAT scores and bar pass rates, because schools can improve bar pass via a wide range of interventions (Jellum & Reeves; Alphran etal; AccessLex 2016 Grant to Univ of Cinn). If this study indicates that LSAT scores correlate poorly with what many schools value, that information could provide another impetus for schools to de-emphasize the LSAT or any standardized test, or to adopt a "test optional" admissions process, if accreditation standards permit.

Describe the research method that will be used (limit 1000 words):

- What are the research questions to be addressed?
- What is the proposed research methodology?
- What is the statistical model to be used?

Research Questions

1. Do LSAT score or UGPA correlate with performance, as measured by course grades, in lawyering skills, experiential and clinic courses of GSUCOL and CUNY law students?
2. Does LSAT score correlate with voluntary pro bono work completed by GSUCOL and CUNY students while enrolled in law school?

What is the Proposed Research Methodology/Statistical Model

This proposed study is a retrospective study, which is analytical and will use existing institutional data sets that are currently available. The data of approximately 1,400 students from GSU and approximately 1,000 students from CUNY who matriculated from Fall 2008-Fall 2015 will be used for analysis.

The data will consist of 5 sets:
1) students' institutional data (matriculation term, graduation term, first-year law GPA, course grades in all first year courses, including legal research and writing; course grades in selected upper level doctrinal courses and simulation and clinical course work);
2) student enrollment-related data (transfer status, LSAT score, undergraduate GPA, and undergraduate major);
3) bar exam data collected from the relevant state offices of bar admissions;
4) self-reported pro bono hours;
5) demographics (date of birth, gender, ethnicity/race, international student status, residency status, dual program (where applicable), funded/scholarship/assistantship status, and full-time/part-time student status).

For both GSU COL and CUNY law students, grade related data, LSAT score, UGPA, and hours of probono work will be measured continuously. Matriculation term, graduation term, term of courses taken will be measured categorically. The students' demographics will be examined as covariates in order to better understand descriptive statistics for the students, as well as to explore the differences of the students' academic performance (measured as first-year law school GPA, LSAT score, and undergraduate GPA) in lawyering skills courses and other courses to determine if LSAT score or UGPA are better predictors of performance in courses that require students to use knowledge and skills in context of how that occurs in practice. Correlations between LSAT scores and pro bono hours will also be examined.

For internal purposes, the GSU COL data also will be examined to identify when, and what kind, of interventions may be appropriate to improve student learning and bar passage. Additionally, while not part of the proposed study, GSU COL will also collect indirect data via surveys, from recent graduates. The surveys will explore how individual factors outside of transcript metrics that may contribute to student success, such as bar exam study methods, financial stressors, family responsibilities, peer mentoring experience, workload, and service/internship/previous law office-related experience. This data also may be used to target appropriate interventions for GSU COL students. The information from this internal study may inform the value of LSAT scores more generally in context of student success. However, because of the low predicted number of survey responses, the survey will not provide the same robust data as the longitudinal data described above, and thus is not part of the proposed study for this grant.

What is the statistical model to be used?

Using longitudinal student data, for both GSU COL and CUNY law students this study will look at connections between LSAT score and UGPA and performance in courses that use legal knowledge and skills as they are used in law practice as well as connections between LSAT scores and self-reported pro bono hours. Records of course grades, self-reported pro bono hours performed while in law school, as well as demographics (e.g., LSAT score, undergraduate GPA, and first-year GPA, bar passage information) will be analyzed. The analysis of the quantitative data will be performed using SPSS. Statistical procedures will include descriptives (counts, frequencies, means, and standard deviations), t-tests, analysis of variance, and regression. Particularly, logistic regression model will be run in addition to goodness of fit. These results will help identify correlations, if any, between LSAT scores and performance in lawyering skills classes, whether, UGPA is a better predictor of performance in those courses, and whether there is any correlation between LSAT scores and students' pro bono work.

As part of an internal study, GSU COL alumni responses to a survey will be linked to their other demographic data and then anonymized. The qualitative data collected in this part will be analyzed using Atlas.ti, a sophisticated CAQDAP (computer-assisted qualitative data analytical program), allowing for the linking of codes to text to develop hypertext that permits one to perform complex model and network building. Coding will be performed at the word, phrase, sentence, and paragraph levels. Using open thematic coding techniques, qualitative data will be coded and quantified into main themes and analyzed using SPSS. For the qualitative surveys, analytical strategies will be performed using SPSS and STATA. Descriptive statistics, such as including means and frequencies will be computed to understand the basic information of the data. Analysis of variance will be used to examine cross-group differences in terms of their LSAT scores, course work, grade-related data in terms of assessing whether the LSAT is an accurate predictor of success, and in particular a predictor of success in courses that directly relate to how lawyers use legal knowledge and skills. Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) will be conducted to confirm potential individual factors related student success. Factor loading of each observed variables of individual factors will be calculated. A full regression model will be produced to determine how the students' success can be predicted by non-LSAT factors. By exploring these factors, the survey information will help provide some insight into the continued use of the LSAT as a measure of future success in law school and on the bar exam, potentially adding another source of information to the study's underlying questions. Because of the small "n" the data will not be generalizable. While we may be able to report on it as part of this research project, because of the small sample size, it is not part of the requested grant funding.

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Project Description - Appendix

There are no files attached.

Datasets

List the datasets that will be used and explain why they best serve this research (limit 500 words)

1) students' institutional data (matriculation term, graduation term, first-year law GPA, experiential and clinical course work;
2) student enrollment-related data (transfer status, LSAT score, undergraduate GPA, and undergraduate major);
3) bar exam data collected from the relevant state offices of bar admissions;
4) self-reported pro bono hours;
5) demographics (date of birth, gender, ethnicity/race, international student status, residency status, dual program (where applicable), funded/scholarship/assistantship status, and full-time/part-time student status).

This data will be collected for GSU COL and CUNY students entering law school between 2008-2015. This data set allows us to correlate LSAT scores, UGPAs and other factors with student success in classes related to how lawyers use legal knowledge and lawyering skills and also to correlate the data to bar pass and demographic data. The data also allows us to correlate pro bono hours with LSAT scores.

Statement of use of restricted datasets (limit 250 words):

Applicants should provide a statement indicating whether the proposed research will require use of restricted datasets. If restricted datasets will be used, the plan for acquiring the appropriate license should be described.

If restricted datasets will not be used, leave this text box blank and click *Save and Continue*.

Although most of the data is confidential and restricted, the research team will rely only upon de-identified data to protect confidential student information.

Timeline and Deliverables

Timeline:

Provide a timeline of key project activities.

Pre-Award activities: Finalize IRB application and submit for approval

Spring 2018 (March 2018): Conduct preliminary data analyses in the hope that very preliminary findings would be available to include in comments addressed to the ABA Council on Legal Education in response to its call for public comment and notice on the proposal to eliminate a standardized test requirement for law school admissions. The deadline for those public comments is April 2, 2018. If that timeline is not viable, we would like to have preliminary data available in order to present oral testimony in mid-April.

Summer 2018: Conduct full data analyses and prepare preliminary findings; finalize literature review; share preliminary findings with other scholars in the area to get feedback on findings, methodology and preliminary conclusions; prepare initial report for AccessLex

Fall 2018: Conduct additional data analyses based upon feedback from other scholars, if necessary; refine findings in order to present them at the October Fall SALT Teaching Conference as well as the November AccessLex Conference. Develop proposal for national AALS conference session on law school admissions criterion; investigate blogs and magazines read by law school admissions staff in order to develop publishable pieces for those outlets.

Fall/Winter 2018-2019: Prepare manuscript for submission to law reviews in the winter 2019 submission cycle; prepare final grant report; submit summaries of research to blogs that reach law faculty, such as The Best Practice blog and Law School Café; draft summaries of the research for blogs and magazines read by law school admissions staff.

Spring/Summer 2019: Develop and submit proposals for Associate Dean and Dean's Conference panels on law school admissions

Deliverables:

List deliverables such as research reports, books, and presentations that will be developed from this research initiative.

We anticipate the following deliverables:
1. Internal research reports for GSU & CUNY
2. Law review article on research findings
3. Presentation of preliminary findings at Society of American Law Teachers Fall 2018 Teaching Conference
4. Presentation at AccessLex Fall 2018 Conference
5. Publication of research summary on blogs that reach law faculty and law school administration, such as Best Practices & the Law School Café
6. Publication of information produced on blogs, social media and other publications read by law school admissions staff
7. Final manuscript and report to AccessLex
8. We also will submit proposals to develop panels on law school admissions criterion for the AALS Deans Conference; AALS Associate Deans Conference and the national AALS Conference

Disseminate results:

Describe how you will disseminate the results of this research.
(Note: Costs of travel to meetings should be calculated on the budget page.)

We hope to reach as many law faculty and admissions staff as possible. Thus, in addition to traditional forms of publication, such as law review articles, and a research report to AccessLex, we will disseminate the results through conferences, blogs and social media. For example, we will present at the Society of American Law Teachers' Fall 2018 Conference; present at the AccessLex conference; develop proposals for presentations at various AALS conferences; draft blog pieces for blogs read by law faculty and law school admissions staff. We also will use social media to publicize the findings, and look for other opportunities to engage the legal academy in conversations about admissions processes and criterion, e.g. the associate deans listserv.

IRB Statement

Statement of Institutional Review Board approval or exemption (limit 250 words):

As part of the proposal, a statement outlining a plan for Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval is required. The statement should outline the applicant's timeline and plan for submitting the proposal to an IRB or explain why IRB approval is not necessary. Final IRB action is not necessary prior to submitting the application.

We have begun the IRB process and expect to complete it in January, 2018 so that if we are awarded the grant, we will be ready to start data collection as soon as we are alerted to the award. Because the data already exists at the time of collection, we believe that this may be an IRB exempt study. Alternatively, we believe the IRB process will not be as onerous as a process in which we are doing human subject research and requiring consents, etc. and should go fairly smoothly and quickly. The PIs have been CITI qualified and have submitted other proposals for IRB approval so are familiar with the IRB process.

Biographical Sketch(es)

Biographical sketch (limit 750 words):

Jessica Cino is the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs and associate professor at Georgia State University College of Law. As the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, she oversees admissions, academic programming, curricular development, and student success. Professor Cino also leads the College of Law data analytics projects, including one related to the bar pass rate. She has a B.S., summa cum laude, from the University of Central Florida and a J.D., magna cum laude, from the University of Miami School of Law.

Biographical sketch (limit 750 words):

Hong Jiang is a research associate and will begin a new role as senior research associate (effective December 1, 2017) in the field of Office of Institutional Research at Georgia State University. As a research associate, Jiang serves as an internal consultant in the university on research designs, survey construction, and sophisticated analytical techniques. She is dedicated to working on a variety of quantitative and qualitative information for the university programs, assessment activities, and policy initiatives. She has coordinated and contributed to numerous projects that have benefited the university. In her new role, Jiang will serve as the chief methodologist for Institutional Research, supervise the survey research team in the development, implementation, and analysis of surveys, as well as conduct research on behalf of the university to help ensure institutional effectiveness. She has a Ph.D. in Educational Psychology with a minor in Research Methodology from the University of Alabama.

Biographical sketch (limit 750 words):

Professor Andrea Curcio earned her J.D. from the University of North Carolina in 1988. She has been a professor at GSU College of Law since 1994. Over the past twenty years, much of her scholarship has focused on issues related to access to the legal profession and law student assessment issues. Professor Curcio has co-authored numerous empirical study pieces. Some of those pieces focused on studies about the value of formative assessments in law school. Other pieces looked at developing a valid and reliable instrument to help assess law students' knowledge of, and attitudes about, cultural competence issues lawyers confront. That data set involved data from both GSU COL and the University of Minnesota School of Law.

Professor Curcio's experience collaborating with statisticians to develop relevant data sets and analyze the data in light of research questions and problems, her experience grappling with the difficult issues presented by standardized tests such as the LSAT, and her knowledge of the scholarship of student learning, make her particularly well-suited to be one of the PIs in the proposed study.

Budget

- CurcioBudget

Funding History

Funding history (limit 250 words):

A statement of prior, current, and pending funding for the proposed research from all sources is required. The statement should also include a history of all prior funding from AIR to any of the PIs for any activity. Funding from other sources will not disqualify the application but may be considered in the funding decision.

There is no prior, current or pending funding for the proposed research.

Dissertation Advisor Letter of Support

There are no files attached.

How Did You Hear About This Grant Opportunity?

Check all that apply:

- Other (please list below)

From the following website: http://philanthropynewsdigest.org/rfps/rfp8225-accesslex-accepting-applications-for-legal-education-research-projects?utm_medium=email&utm_source=pnd&utm_campaign=efw20171108.

Research Grant
Proposal Budget Form

Personnel - Salary

Principal Investigator $ _____

Second Principal Investigator $ _____

Third Principal Investigator $ _____

Graduate Research Assistant $ _____

Travel

2018 AccessLex Institute Legal Education Research Symposium: Principal Investigator $ _____

2018 AccessLex Institute Legal Education Research Symposium: Second Principal Investigator $ _____

2018 AccessLex Institute Legal Education Research Symposium: Third Principal Investigator $ _____

2018 AccessLex Institute Legal Education Research Symposium: Graduate Research Assistant* $ _____

Other research related travel: $ _____
(*Note*: Other planned travel should be listed in the "Timelines and Deliverables" section)

Other research expenses

Please provide a breakdown of expenses below and add the total value in the box to the right. Allowable expenses include: materials, such as software, books, supplies, etc.; consultant services, such as transcription, analysis, external researchers, etc.; and costs for publishing articles in journals. The purchase of computer hardware, overhead or indirect costs, and living expenses are not allowable. If you have questions about specific expenditures, please contact AIR. $ _____

TOTAL REQUESTED – Maximum Allowable is $50,000 $ _____

Note: The AccessLex Institute believes graduate student professional development and mentoring opportunities are important aspects of the Research Grant Program. Therefore, Research Grant recipients are strongly encouraged to designate funds for graduate student travel for the AccessLex Institute Legal Education Research Symposium Presentation.

Addendum to Grant Request – GSU COL and CUNY LAW SCHOOL Proposal

Thank you for your follow up letter. My apologies that the proposal was not as clear as we had hoped. Below, I attempt to answer your questions.

A. Clarifying the study's purpose

The LSAT helps schools predict students' success in first year courses, which, in turn, helps predict bar exam passage. To the extent correlations exist, it is not surprising that students who perform well on multiple choice questions and in timed-test situations would do so whether on the LSAT, law school exams that follow that assessment model, or the bar exam which also follows that testing model. This proposal seeks to deconstruct the LSAT as a predictor of first year grades. It will look at correlations between LSAT scores and traditional doctrinal courses that tend to use the same test format as the LSAT and bar exam – i.e. multiple choice and short essay questions in a timed test situation - and correlations between LSAT scores and "lawyering skills" courses. We delineate "lawyering skills" courses as those performance-based courses that assess students in ways that more closely resemble law practice – i.e. courses that give students significant time to work through legal problems, require students to draft documents practicing lawyers draft, allow for multiple draft submissions, and often involve oral advocacy. We want to see how LSAT score correlates to course grades when the course assessment format more closely replicates the work lawyers do in practice. To the extent law schools see their ultimate goal as preparing lawyers for practice, we believe information about the LSAT score correlation with students' performance in courses that replicate how lawyers use legal rules and legal analysis in practice could help inform how heavily law schools weight the LSAT in their admissions decisions. We also believe that the correlations may be ultimately useful as the academy discusses changes in bar exam formats. For example, do correlations between LSAT scores, first year grades and bar performance change when we look at those correlations in context of courses that assess lawyering skills in ways that more accurately represent how lawyers use those skills in law practice?

We also want to look at LSAT score and its predictive value when it comes to pro bono work – do students with high LSAT scores tend to do more pro bono work? If yes, and a school values pro bono, that might be a reason to value LSAT scores more highly. If no, and a school values pro bono, that might be a reason to rely less heavily on those scores in admissions decisions. We would look at these LSAT correlations for both GSU and CUNY law students. We also will correlate student self-reported pro bono work hours by gender and race/ethnicity.

Finally, GSU COL already is looking at factors that may create red flags for bar exam passage in order to determine appropriate interventions. The grant money will allow us to expand that study to investigate the questions identified above. However, if AccessLex would like us to do so, we can also report on GSU's findings on factors affecting its students' bar pass rates. In that context, GSU is developing a questionnaire for GSU COL recent alumni that will look at how they studied for the bar exam and other factors that may affect bar pass rates. The results from those questions, directed only to GSU COL alumni, can be incorporated into the AccessLex grant report. We have not finalized the survey yet. However, the following pages set forth a very rough draft of the kind of survey questions we anticipate asking.

8. I have ___ children under the age of twelve
   a. 0
   b. 1-2
   c. 3-4
   d. More than 4

9. During law school, I had primary child care responsibilities for __ hours/week
   a. 0-5
   b. 6-15
   c. 16-25
   d. 26-40
   e. Over 40

10. While studying for the bar exam, I had primary child care responsibilities for __ hours/week
    a. 0-5
    b. 6-15
    c. 16-25
    d. 26-40
    e. Over 40

What factors do you believe affected your ability to study for the bar exam?

What factors do you believe affected whether or not you passed the bar exam?

C. *Statistical Formulas*

GSU's Office of Institutional Research [OIR] will conduct the statistical analyses. GSU COL is investigating potential risk factors for bar exam passage. The GSU OIR already performed an initial draft study looking at correlations between LSAT score, undergraduate GPA, law school GPA, gender, ethnicity, residency and full and part-time status for GSU COL students from 2011-2015. We have attached the "Models" section of that draft report to illustrate the statistical acumen of those who will be engaging in the statistical analyses should this grant be funded.

We apologize for the fact that, given the tight turnaround time and all the other projects the GSU Office of Institutional Research is working on, and the preliminary stages of this project, we do not have time to consult with them to get more exact formulas.

January 10, 2018

Association for Institution Research
1983 Centre Pointe Blvd., #101
Tallahassee, FL 32308

To Whom It May Concern:

CUNY School of Law has agreed to participate in a study of correlation between law students' grades in first year courses, and lawyering skills courses, LSAT scores and bar exam passage. We will provide anonymized data, consistent with CUNY policy and regulations, to Georgia State University College of Law, should AccessLex decide to fund the grant proposal submitted by Professor Andrea Curcio and Dean Jessica Cino.

If you have questions, or require additional information, please don't hesitate to call at 718-340-4201, or write me at bilek@law.cuny.edu

Thank you for your consideration of the grant proposal.

Sincerely,
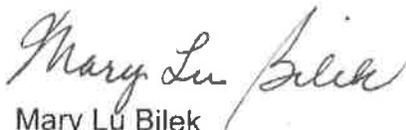
Mary Lu Bilek
Dean and Professor of Law

Mary Lu Bilek
Dean and Professor of Law
2 Court Square, Long Island City, NY 11101-4356
Tel: (718) 340-4201 / Fax: (718) 340-4482 / Email: bilek@law.cuny.edu

Models:

A logistic regression model was run to determine factors that may predict whether or not a law student passes the State Bar Exam. Results indicated that undergraduate GPA, gender, and residency (in-state/out-of-state) were not significantly related to whether or not a student will pass the State Bar Exam. Results did indicate that graduate GPA, LSAT score and enrollment status (part-time or full-time student) were significantly related to whether a student would pass the State Bar Exam (Model 1). When using the admission index score and undergraduate GPA, results indicated that admission index, gender, residency (in-state/out-of-state) were not significantly associated with whether or not one passed the State Bar Exam. Only graduate GPA and enrollment status are significantly predictors of passage rates associated with the State Bar Exam (Model 2).

Goodness-of-fit (GOF) tests were conducted in order to determine whether Model 1 and Model 2 were correctly specified. It should be noted that if the p-value for the GOF is low ($p < .05$), the model needs to be rejected; otherwise, the model is acceptable ($p > .05$). Results found that GOF indicated a good model fit, $\chi^2 = 11.74$, $p=.16$ for Model 1 and $\chi^2 = 23.55$, $p=.003$ for Model 2, indicating Model 1 are consistent with expected State Bar Exam passage rates. At this point, Model 1 can be used to predict whether or not pass State Bar Exam. These two models are constructed below:

Model 1:

Passing Bar Exam = 27.57 - 2.94*Graduate GPA -.15 * LSAT score + 2.03 * (part-time or full-time)

$$\Rightarrow \quad Possibility = \frac{1}{1+e^{-27.57+2.94*Graduate\ GPA+.14\ LSAT\ score-2.03*(part-time\ or\ full-time)}}$$

Note. Part-time = 1, Full-time = 2, with an overall predictive percentage is 97.1%.

Model 2:

Passing Bar Exam = 5.92 – 3.16*Graduate GPA + 2.33 * (part-time or full time)

$$\Rightarrow \quad Possibility = \frac{1}{1+e^{-5.92+3.16*Graduate\ GPA-2.33*(part-time\ or\ full-time)}}$$

Note. Part-time = 1, Full-time = 2, with an overall predictive percentage is 97.1%.

Considering Model 1, the goodness-of-fit (GOF) between observed variables of passing the State Bar Exam (observed value) and expected values associated with passing the exam was performed to understand how predictive results fit actually observed results using the current data set. Results indicated that GOF was chi-square = 94.05, $p<.05$, indicating observed values can be well predicted by expected values. However, one should be cautious when using Model 1 alone to predict whether a student will pass the State Bar Exam with enrollment status, because of the low numbers of part-time students compared to full-time students in the cohorts. Another index (-2LL) measures how well we can predict the pass/fail rate based on the graduate GPA, LSAT score, and enrollment status. A Larger -2LL value for Model 1 suggests that the model may not have the necessary predictive power to confidently predict pass/fail probabilities (-2LL = 197.89). Smaller -2LL values indicate more predictive power with a perfect model having a value of 0. In other words, although we have good fit models produced with current data, we still need to be cautious when using graduate GPA, LSAT scores, and enrollment status to predict pass/fail probability rates associated with the State Bar Exam.

While demographics were used in the predictive models, only enrollment status was associated with whether one passes or fails the State Bar Exam. Additional demographics, as well as attempts taken, were not included because

of an unbalanced design model. No predictive models for bottom 25% cohort were tested due to low number of cases available.

Future study may need to explore associations of additional variables such as numbers of bar exam-related courses taken, times of bar exam-related practice test taken, and undergraduate major with whether or not a student passes the State Bar Exam.

Please note that the data set excluded three students with no enrolled term, three students with GPAs measured differently than all of students (e.g., measured with 0-100 points), and 36 duplicated cases.