

## Academic Success and Bar Passage Rates for Higher LSAT Students

December 2016

Improper use of the LSAT in evaluating legal education programs abounds, despite the Law School Admissions Council's clear admonitions about the proper and improper uses of LSAT scores and the acceptance of the LSAC policies by the Council of the Section on Legal Education and Admissions to the Bar. When WMU-Cooley conducted the regression analysis that led to its outcome-based admissions formula, we discovered that we, too, had placed more weight on the LSAT score than appropriate and had undervalued undergraduate grade point averages.

Unfortunately, the problem of LSAT misuse too often is compounded by bias against schools that admit students with lower LSAT scores, which in turn leads to the misperception that a school's educational program is deficient or inferior because its admissions include lower-scoring students.

The best refutation for that combination of bias and misperception is fact. So pardon us improperly using the LSAT to challenge this view. The chart below lists in the first column the academic success rates of our higher-scoring students by LSAT score categories. The data is for the seven-year period from January 2009 through September 2015. The last three columns show the bar passage rates for graduates with LSATs in these categories for that same period.

<u>LSAT Score</u>	<u>Success Rate</u>	<u>1<sup>st</sup> Pass Rate</u>	<u>Ultimate Pass Rate</u>	<u>Persistence Pass Rate</u>
170+	100%	83%	100%	100%
165-169	92%	91%	94%	94%
160-164	93%	93%	99%	99%
155-159	94%	83%	92%	95%
Combined	93%	86%	94%	96%

*Note: Although the same seven-year period is used for both academic success and bar passage rates, these are not all the same students. The academic success rates include some students who are still enrolled, and the bar passage rates include some students who started before 2009.*

The academic success rates demonstrate that we have academic rigor, because there is some academic attrition among even higher-scoring students. The bar passage rates for the group compares reasonably well with the passing rates of schools with more restrictive admissions practices and are all substantially above the national average first-time passing rate, which slipped to 70% in 2015. In our opinion, the data demonstrates that it is poor judgment to assess the quality of an academic program negatively by focusing on the admission of students who have lower LSAT scores.