

# LAW SCHOOL GUIDE

We hope this guide will be helpful in answering your basic questions about preparing for and applying to law school.

There is no prelaw program of courses at Carleton, and there probably never will be because law schools recognize that the best prelaw education is the most rigorous liberal arts education. They, therefore, generally discourage such programs. But there is plenty of help and information for prelaw students and anyone just considering a career in law.

We urge you to take full advantage of all of Carleton's resources—staff, online and print.

- You may contact any of us directly by e-mail.
- Walk-in appointments with career counselors are available weekdays between 10 and noon, with very few exceptions.
- To schedule an appointment with one of us, simply call x4293 or stop by the career center in lower Sayles (just below campus activities).

We work with students in all four years who are exploring the possibility of going to law school, or with students who are certain that law school is in their future. We will work with you on ways to test your law interests first-hand through information sessions, 30-minute consultations with alumni, C.A.M.P. mentors, networking, and other opportunities. We can also work with you on time lines, testing, personal statements, and other application processes.

You are encouraged to browse the materials in the Career Center which include the *Official Guide to U.S. Law Schools*, review online resources such as the Alumni Directory ([go.carleton.edu/alumni/directory](http://go.carleton.edu/alumni/directory)), as well as other resources on law schools and the legal profession. Also, check out the information: <http://i.q.carleton.edu/catggt/>

Our best wishes to you as you plan for and pursue your post-Carleton goals.

Your Career Center career counselors: Mike Hendel, Brad Kmoch, and Deb Olien

CARLETON COLLEGE CAREER CENTER, GO.CARLETON.EDU/CAREER, SAYLES 050, 507-222-4293

## TIMETABLE - CHECKLIST FOR THE CARLETON PRELAW STUDENT

### Freshman and Sophomore (and Junior) Years:

- Register in the Tunnel (find the link on the Career Center website) so you are on the **PreLaw interest list** (go to your "Profile" and in the "Carls Help Carls" section, click "PreLaw" in the menu); you'll automatically receive relevant information and opportunities
- Is a career in law right for you? Explore opportunities through 30 Minutes meetings, internships or externships
- Take advantage of opportunities to do informational interviews, shadowing, volunteering, or individual advising with alumni working in law or attending law school

### Junior Year - Fall Term:

- Register in the Tunnel (find the link on the Career Center website) so you are on the **PreLaw interest list** (go to your "Profile" and in the "Carls Help Carls" section, click "PreLaw" in the menu); you will receive relevant information and opportunities if you have not already done so.
- If you are interested in the Columbia 3-3 or similar programs, be sure to consult with the career center right at the start of the junior year.

### Junior Year - Spring Term:

- Register for the LSAT
- Watch for announcements about the information meeting for prelaw juniors

### Summer before Senior Year:

- Request faculty recommendations; set up file through Interfolio (link here)
- Browse in the *Official Guide to U.S. Law Schools* ([officialguide.lsac.org](http://officialguide.lsac.org))
- Prepare résumé of your academic work, work experiences, and extracurricular activities
- Send out requests for law school application materials

### Senior Year - Fall Term:

- Take the LSAT
- Meet with career counselor for Prelaw planning session. For appointments, contact the Career Center in lower Sayles or call x4293
- Attend law school fair, info sessions and tabling events
- Complete LSDAS requirements (request transcripts etc.)
- Complete and submit your applications by Nov. 1 or so. Send them via certified mail
- Submit yellow cards from LSAT materials to schools so they can request your file from LSDAS
- Participate in the C.A.M.P. mentoring program through the Career Center

### Senior Year - Later:

- Apply for financial aid
- Ask Registrar to send winter term grades (if better or like previous GPA, or if required); have other appropriate persons send in information about honors, etc.
- If you have not been notified that your application has been received, write or call admissions offices
- Keep the Career Center informed about your application decisions

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

TIMETABLE - CHECKLIST FOR THE CARLETON PRELAW STUDENT .....	2
I. PREPARATION FOR LAW SCHOOL .....	4
Undergraduate Courses .....	4
Extracurricular Activities .....	4
Internships and Career Exploration .....	4
II. APPLICATION TO LAW SCHOOL: LSAT AND LSDAS .....	5
The LSAT .....	5
Arrangements for Taking the LSAT .....	5
Preparing for the LSAT .....	5
Taking the Test .....	6
Retaking the LSAT .....	6
LSDAS .....	6
Fee Waivers for LSAT and LSDAS .....	6
LSAC WebPage for Forms, Publications, General Information .....	6
III. APPLICATION TO LAW SCHOOL: CHOOSING LAW SCHOOLS .....	7
Official Guide to U.S. Law Schools .....	7
Types of Schools .....	7
Print and Online Resources, Alumni Reports, etc. ....	7
Law School Representatives .....	7
Joint-Degree Programs .....	7
IV. APPLICATION TO LAW SCHOOL: THE PROCESS OF APPLICATION .....	8
When to Submit Your Application .....	8
Recommendations .....	8
Personal Statements .....	9
Interviews .....	9
Financial Aid / GAPS FAS .....	9
Minority Admissions .....	9
Waiting a year .....	9
Paralegal Work .....	10
V. AN ALTERNATIVE ROUTE TO LAW SCHOOL: COLUMBIA 3-3 .....	10
VI. AFTER LAW SCHOOL: ADMISSION TO THE BAR .....	10

## PREPARATION FOR LAW SCHOOL

Law schools generally discourage a specific undergraduate prelaw major. The best prelaw education is the most rigorous, well balanced liberal arts education. This can be achieved in almost any major. Law school admissions committees typically look for diversity in majors just as they seek diversity in geographic and cultural backgrounds. Your choice of major need not be influenced by your plans for law school.

Whatever your major, however, be sure to work on the basic skills of the legal profession:

- research: devising strategies to find, compile, and categorize information
- verbal analysis: interpreting data and constructing arguments
- articulation: clear and persuasive writing and public speaking
- quantitative analysis & practical logic: the ability to work with numbers, tables/graphs, & logic.

In addition, you should acquire as much knowledge as possible about society, culture, and politics in multicultural America and the world in the past and present. Above all, it is vital that you concern yourself with questions of personal and social ethics, whether through course work or in less formal ways.

### **Undergraduate Courses:**

While there are no specifically required courses, your schedule should include at least some advanced courses that stress research, written and oral analysis, as many courses as possible requiring analytical writing, and some significant quantitative work (e.g. mathematics, natural science, and statistics-oriented social science). Since most students are not normally exposed to the kind of logic problems that occur on the LSAT and in law school courses, Philosophy 210 (Logic) may be helpful to anyone not majoring in Philosophy. Many students also find law-related courses such as The American Courts and Constitutional Law useful to gain some experience in legal reasoning.

It is unwise to take more than a few courses pass/fail. Exceptions are courses that stress more technical skills or artistic performance such as music lessons, studio art, and even basic foreign language. Too many ungraded credits leave the impression that you are hiding part of your grade record. DRP's should be used sparingly when you really need them. There is no need to worry about one or two DRP's.

### **Extracurricular Activities:**

Extracurricular activities are not a primary factor in law school admissions decisions. But better law schools, which must distinguish among many highly qualified applicants, will look for some evidence of outside interests, commitments or leadership.

### **Internships and Career Exploration:**

Unless you are already fully familiar with the legal profession, you should seriously consider an internship or briefer period of career exploration, such as the Carleton Scholars, 30 Minute visits with alumni, C.A.M.P. mentoring, or Externship programs offered by the Career Center, in a law office or service. There is no substitute for this kind of glimpse at an area of a profession with which most of us are not familiar. Most students find this experience invaluable in making an intelligent decision about whether they want to pursue a career in the law or what areas of the law they might seek out. Look for law-related internships or externships in the Tunnel.

Also watch for special national internships such as the Criminal Law Internships of the Public Defender Service of the District of Columbia at <http://www.pdsdc.org/InternshipsAndClerkships/Internships.aspx> and the Legal Intern Program of the national law firm of Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom at <http://skadden.com/recruiting/recruitingContent.cfm?p=10&c=42>.

## II. APPLICATION TO LAW SCHOOL: LSAT AND LSDAS

### **The LSAT:**

Practically all law schools require that you take the Law School Admissions Test. The test is given four times a year (mid-June, early October or late September, early December, February). Visit [www.LSAC.org](http://www.LSAC.org) for information on how to register for the test. The LSAT consists of five 35-minute sections plus a 30-minute Writing Sample. Among the five sections, there will be at least one each testing the following skills: reading comprehension (based on texts from various disciplines), analytical reasoning (logical puzzles and games), and at least two parts testing logical reasoning (analysis of arguments). One of the five sections is used only for purposes of test development and is not included in your score. The Writing Sample is not scored, but is sometimes used by law schools to judge your writing in a controlled situation. The test is scored through statistical equating, yielding scores from 120 to 180.

### **Arrangements for Taking the LSAT:**

LSAT/LSDAS registration packets, application forms and instructions are available at the Career Center in Sayles-Hill 50. New packets appropriate for the next test year, June through February, usually arrive at the Career Center late May or early June. If you are not on campus or near a college career center or law school, you can download applications from the web (<http://www.lsac.org/>) or write to Law School Admissions Services, Box 2000, Newton, PA 18940. You may also register by using Law Services' automated telephone service at (215) 968-1001. Their email is: [LSACinfo@LSAC.org](mailto:LSACinfo@LSAC.org).

Locally, all four tests are given at the University of Minnesota and William Mitchell in St. Paul.

Most students take the test in August or October of the year they are applying to law school, so that their admissions files will be complete by November. The December test is still early enough for most law school admissions. The most important consideration in choosing a test date is, however, whether it will permit you sufficient time to prepare. You must not walk into the test without a clear sense of the kinds of questions asked on the test.

You do not need to apply to law school immediately after you take the test. Your score will be good for five years. It is recommended that, if possible, you take the LSAT when you are "test savvy", such as a time soon after you've graduated.

### **Preparing for the LSAT:**

Generally you can assume that your LSAT will not be wildly different from your SAT percentile score. It is important to prepare for the LSAT because of the continuing importance of the score. Many law schools regard the LSAT score as the best indicator of your performance in law school. Since speed is essential in the LSAT, you should be familiar enough with the kinds of questions asked in the test so that you can read the general instructions and even some of the individual questions rapidly. At a minimum you should work through many sample questions and a couple of sample tests before your test date. In contrast to the SAT, the LSAT should never be taken just for practice. Any score will become part of your record for five years and will be averaged with subsequent scores by most law schools.

Most students find it perfectly sufficient to review the sample questions and practice test supplied in the LSAT/LSDAS Registration Packet, supplemented with The Official LSAT PrepKit, published by the Law School Admissions Services. The kit includes an introductory booklet with instructions and general test information, the most recent practice test available with answer key, and three interactive workbooks that will lead you through practice exercises for all the categories of questions. The Official LSAT PrepTest, which is included in the PrepKit, becomes available in a new edition approximately six weeks after each of the major test administrations -- in June, October (some years the very end of September), December and February. It costs a bit more than commercial preparation books (about the price of an average hard-bound textbook); the commercial prep books may, however, not be as up-to-date. You can order it directly from "Law Services, Box 2400, Newtown, PA 18940-0977"—most efficiently by using their order form included in the LSAT/LSDAS application packet or at <http://www.lsac.org/>.

It is important that you do this kind of preparation thoroughly. You ought to draw up a time plan that will allow you to finish the whole review. If you have questions about particular sections, faculty in the appropriate departments (mainly English, Philosophy, Political Science) can help.

For some students commercial preparation courses have been valuable. They are quite expensive, but they seem to be worthwhile in two kinds of situations. (1) If you are afraid that you will not discipline

yourself to maintain a regular schedule of preparation, then the regimen of regular class meetings and assignments will help. (2) If you have a bit of a test-phobia or are just very fearful of this test, the group setting and routine of a review course might offer you the necessary assurance and comfort.

Information about Test Prep courses through Kaplan and PowerScore is available through the Career Center website at: <http://apps.carleton.edu/campus/career/students/grad/law/>

### **Strategies for Taking the Test:**

Since no points are deducted for wrong answers, you should answer all questions even if you have no time left to consider or even read them. Devise a strategy for guessing on such questions before you take the test. Experimental sections sometimes throw students off. Since you do not know which of the five sections will not count, you must work through all of them as well as you can. But do not allow yourself to be shaken by a particularly nasty section, which might be quite different from anything you have seen before. Once you are finished with the section, tell yourself that it is likely that this was an experimental section which will not count.

### **Retaking the LSAT:**

It is not wise to retake the LSAT unless you believe you have evidence (SAT, practice LSAT's) that you could do substantially better on the second try. Law schools most commonly average all your scores, or they take a few points off your last, higher score. If the new score is substantially better than the first, some schools might disregard the first score, especially if you can present some evidence why the first score was out of line. On the other hand, if you know that illness or other special problems kept you from doing your best on the test, it is best to cancel your score at once.

### **LSDAS:**

Most law schools require applicants to register with the Law School Data Assembly Service (LSDAS). LSDAS will supply you with standardized transcript requests to be submitted to the registrars of all colleges and universities where you have taken any courses. LSDAS then summarizes and standardizes your grades, with cumulative averages for each academic year. Grades are counted the same way as at Carleton, except that clearly interpretable ungraded designations such as NC are counted like their grade equivalent (e.g. NC=F). P's are not calculated in, but simply listed as ungraded credits. While a few ungraded credits are considered normal by the admissions officers, too many P's leave a poor impression because they appear to hide too much of the grade record. LSDAS sends the grade summary, together with copies of transcripts and LSAT scores, to the law schools designated by you.

You register for LSDAS on the same form as registration for LSAT (available at the Career Center or online), but you should register for LSDAS only in the year when you apply to law school. It is valid only for that year and will have to be renewed if you apply at a later time.

### **Fee Waivers for LSAT and LSDAS:**

If you can show serious financial need, your registration fees for both LSAT and LSDAS (Law School Data Assembly Service) may be waived. Fee waiver applications forms are available from the Career Center. The completed form must be submitted to the LSDAS, along with the registration form and copies of the most recent federal tax or Law School Admissions Council (LSAC) nonfiler forms, eight to nine weeks before the test date. For fee waivers for the application fees at law schools, you need to directly contact the law school admissions officer of the particular school. Be sure to start this process early.

**LSAC WebPage for Forms, Publications, General Information:** <http://www.lsac.org/>

### III. APPLICATION TO LAW SCHOOL: CHOOSING LAW SCHOOLS

#### **Official Guide to U.S. Law Schools:**

The first source to consult on law schools is the *Official Guide to U.S. Law Schools*, official guide of the Law School Admission Council and the Association of American Law Schools. The *Official Guide* contains two-page descriptions of all law schools approved by the American Bar Association, the only law schools you should consider. Unapproved law schools usually prevent you from taking the bar examination later or at least restrict you severely. The only exceptions might be law schools approved only by the California bar. Those will permit you to take the bar examination in California.

The *Official Guide to U.S. Law Schools* lists admissions profiles and contact information for the admissions offices. A copy of the *Official Guide* ([officialguide.lsac.org](http://officialguide.lsac.org)) is available for reference at the Career Center and in the Gould Library.

#### **Types of Schools:**

Law schools vary in setting, philosophy, quality, and selectivity. The most important distinction is between "regional" schools, which tend to emphasize state law and the more technical craft of the law, and the more competitive "national" schools, which focus more on general theory and philosophies of law. While national law schools provide the distinct advantage of prestige, which permits placement all over the country, regional schools offer opportunities for valuable local contacts and prepare students more specifically for practice in the state and the state bar examination.

It is important that you apply to a number of schools with a range of competitiveness. Once you have your LSAT score, you should be able to select a list of schools ranging from a "safe" school to one or two "long-shots." State schools generally give some preference to state residents. Reciprocity for in-state tuition between some states (e.g. Minnesota and Wisconsin) does not apply to any advantages given to state residents in the admissions process.

Obviously, you will consider other factors such as school setting, size, faculty/student ratio, quality of course offerings in special areas of law, physical facilities, housing, availability of evening programs, student-edited journals, law clinics, etc. Law students generally do not specialize in particular areas of the law, such as tax, labor, environmental, family, or international. But you may want your law school to have strong course offerings and possibly a journal available in areas of special interest to you.

#### **Externships, 30 Minute Visits, Print and Online Resources, Alumni Reports, etc.:**

The Career Center has a collection of print materials (which you can check out) about getting into law school, LSAT prep, being a paralegal, and some materials from law schools. These materials are located on the north end of the Career Center (to your right as you walk in). To research specific law schools and to search for joint degree programs, visit [www.petersons.com](http://www.petersons.com). You can also learn about being a paralegal from alums ([go.carleton.edu/alumni/directory](http://go.carleton.edu/alumni/directory)) and by reading websites such as the "Paralegal" section in Spotlight on Careers ([www.spotlightoncareers.org](http://www.spotlightoncareers.org)). You can obtain contact information from alums in law school and alums practicing in various areas of law by taking advantage of 30 Minute visits with attorneys in the Career Center, using the Alumni Database, found on the Career Center website or at [go.carleton.edu/alumni/directory](http://go.carleton.edu/alumni/directory). Using these resources as you prepare to apply to law school or seek summer or winter break opportunities such as Externships can be invaluable.

#### **Law School Representatives:**

Representatives from law schools visit Carleton and the Twin Cities periodically, often in the fall. Be sure to attend a grad school fair or a recruiter information session and talk to a few of these representatives, even if you are not necessarily interested in the particular law school, but perhaps in the kind of school involved. These recruiters generally have a wealth of good knowledge to share, and it is smart to get practice at such interviews.

#### **Joint-Degree Programs:**

Many law schools offer programs leading simultaneously to a JD degree and a degree in another

field. The most common combination is a JD/MBA program. Even if a joint degree program is not officially listed in the catalog, many schools will be willing to consider a special joint program. Typically, students take one year each in the two degree programs first and then use the electives in each field to satisfy the requirements in the other in a shortened time. Since programs don't generally overlap until after the first year, one can apply to a joint program either right from the start or after the beginning of one of the programs.

#### IV. APPLICATION TO LAW SCHOOL: THE PROCESS OF APPLICATION

To obtain application materials, send postcards to all the law schools you want to consider, or visit their websites to download applications, late in the summer or early in the fall. If you are interested in financial aid information, be sure to note this in your communication. Addresses are listed in the Official Guide to U.S. Law Schools (see above). If you are waiting for the fall LSAT score, you might want to have some of the applications materials ready so you have them to complete at the start of winter break.

Be sure your application is neat, easy-to-read, and error-free.

#### **When to Submit Your Application:**

The earliest law school deadlines are January 15; many are early or mid-February. More schools are offering an Early Decision/Action option for applications, though the number is still relatively small. Be sure to check if this option is available, as deadlines can be as early as November 1<sup>st</sup>, and may require you to have taken the LSAT by the previous June.

Because most law schools begin reviewing files and admitting students in November, you gain a significant advantage if your application is in about Nov. 1. Remember that your application is not complete until all parts have been received: application form, fee, references, and LSAT/LSDAS reports. It is your responsibility to insure that all items reach the school. For safety, send your materials by certified mail. Always make copies.

Law schools generally notify you when your application is complete. If you have not heard after a reasonable amount of time, check with the law school.

#### **Recommendations:**

Most law schools require two, sometimes three letters of recommendation/reference. You should tell your recommenders when you expect to have your application in and when you would like their recommendation to be completed.

At least one of your references should be from a faculty member in your major. Others may come from other faculty or persons who know your work in other contexts, which are relevant to the study or practice of law. In the case of outside references in particular, be sure to ask only those persons who really know your work; do not ask people simply because they are famous. Admissions officers are not impressed by fame, but by specificity and completeness of recommendations.

Since completeness and specificity of evidence are essential for a good recommendation, be sure to ask one of your recommenders (the one who knows your work most intimately - perhaps your advisor) to write about all aspects of your academic and extracurricular work. Specifically, ask her/him to explain your transcript as fully as possible - particularly difficult courses at Carleton, patterns of strengths and weaknesses, reasons for particular problems. This means that you need to supply that person with a copy of your transcript, your own evaluation of your strengths, weaknesses, reasons for lapses, and a résumé summarizing your relevant experiences. Check to see if the department has a questionnaire that will help you do this.

Some law schools require a dean's recommendation. Contact the Dean of Students Office and be sure to tell the staff member by what date you would like the recommendation to be mailed.

Generally you should not submit more than three recommendations to any one law school. Overloading your file is of no advantage. If a law school does not require references, send them anyway. In borderline cases, such schools do look for recommendations. Do not send any references only if the law school specifically requests that you not send any references before they ask for them.

**Personal Statements:**

Many schools ask for a personal essay. This is the toughest part of the application. None of us find it easy to write about ourselves without either boasting or understating our capabilities. Obviously, you want to be as honest as possible without overemphasizing your weaknesses. It usually helps to focus your essay on a specific issue or event and build your arguments on that. Be sure that you present a clearly organized argument, write clearly with elegance, but not flowery verbiage. The admissions committees use your essay to judge your ability to express yourself clearly and persuasively. They are also looking for evidence that you have given thoughtful consideration to and can explain your choice to attend law school.

It is best to ask someone to read your essay and give you honest criticism. This can be a member of the faculty, staff in the Career Center, or other trusted mentor.

**Candor and Truthfulness:**

It is essential that you be absolutely truthful and candid on your law school application, including revealing such matters as disciplinary actions and criminal convictions, if asked. Even a criminal conviction need not disqualify you from attending law school or becoming a lawyer, but lawyers are held to high standards of honesty and lying on an application may hurt your chances of being admitted to the bar.

**Interviews:**

Interviews are generally not encouraged by law schools. However, you may find it useful to visit schools you are considering, sit in on some classes, and drop by the admissions office for a talk. If you call ahead, be sure to mention that you are from Carleton; it often helps. If you are asked for an interview, you may contact the Career Center (x4293) to schedule a practice interview and to receive coaching about the interview/application process.

**Financial Aid / GAPS FAS:**

Scholarship grants are not common in law schools. More commonly, schools will support their students in applying for Guaranteed Student Loans or other loan aid. Increasingly law schools have been offering special merit scholarships, usually named after a prominent donor, in order to attract top students. Some of the most prestigious of these are the Root-Tilden at New York University, the Patrick Wilson at Vanderbilt, Morehead Fellowships at North Carolina, but there are others, which will be listed in the catalogs. For students from Minnesota or those planning to go to a Minnesota law school, there is the Blackmun Scholarship. Be sure to inquire if you believe you might qualify for merit scholarships.

There are a number of assistance programs for minority students both in individual law schools and through LSAC/LSAS ([www.lsac.org](http://www.lsac.org)). Note especially the program of the Council on Legal Education Opportunity ([www.cleoscholars.com](http://www.cleoscholars.com)).

LSAC also administers the Law Access Loan program. Information is available through Law Services, Box 2500, Newtown, PA 18940-0900 or through <http://www.lsac.org/>.

**Minority Admissions:**

Most law schools, including all the more prestigious "national" and regional schools, actively seek strong minority students. Especially in the case of the most underrepresented minorities, schools will want to admit an applicant, if they believe that she/he can succeed at the school. Solid academic performance at Carleton is strong evidence that you will do solid work at most law schools. For further information, review the LSAS brochure Minority Students and Law School online or at the Office of Intercultural Life.

**Waiting a Year/Deferral:**

Some schools grant deferred admission if you can present good reasons for deferment after acceptance, but many schools accept applications only during the year before intended enrollment. Generally it is best to apply later if you are planning to take some time off. Not only will you be a more mature applicant, but your GPA is likely to be higher if it includes your whole senior year. You can still take the LSAT, if you like, since the score will be good for five years.

If you hope to take some time off to do travelling or just some totally different, "off the beaten path" thing, the transition time between college graduation and the start of law school is ideal. You will probably find it awkward to take a break during law school; and once you receive your JD, you should enter the profession at least for a while. Any longer transition experience after law school would likely raise questions

in the minds of prospective employers. Taking some time off between college and law school, on the other hand, never hurts and might even help slightly.

### **Paralegal Work:**

Opportunities for paralegal work have grown in recent years. While law firms generally prefer to hire students after a year of law school, there are a few positions for fresh BAs, and opportunities for alternative careers as legal assistants, court administrators, and legal secretaries. Be sure to check with the Career Center job postings at <http://apps.carleton.edu/campus/career/students/jobs/find/dbs/>. Sometimes announcements of openings come from the Career Center and are posted in the Tunnel as well.

A number of institutions offer programs in paralegal training. Such programs are often unnecessary, however, since many firms prefer to train their own paralegals and there is no recognized accreditation for the programs. Additional strategies include: reviewing the "First Impressions" surveys of those who've done paralegal work (available in the Career Center), researching paralegal work in the alumni database ([go.carleton.edu/alumni/directory](http://go.carleton.edu/alumni/directory)), the Spotlight on Careers website (<http://www.spotlightoncareers.org>) and designing your own paralegal experience using networking strategies.

## **V. AN ALTERNATIVE ROUTE TO LAW SCHOOL: COLUMBIA 3-3**

If you believe that you would profit from a shortened 6-year combined program of college and law school, culminating in a BA and JD degree, you might want to consider the Columbia 3-3 program ("AILE"). This program requires you to fulfill all basic Carleton requirements (writing requirement, foreign language, distribution, physical education) and your major (including comprehensives), but you need no more total credits than are required by the end of your junior year. You may fulfill course requirements for your major during your second and third years of law school through Columbia University's graduate school. You will need to negotiate with your department how you can meet these requirements and how you will complete your comprehensives. Obviously, you have to be admitted by Columbia University Law School through their AILE Program.

If you are interested in this option, be sure to contact the Prelaw Advisor at the start of your junior year. You will need to take the LSAT the following December or February. Columbia's admission decision for this program is very late in the spring - some time in May. Carleton is one of some 25 selective liberal arts colleges from which two to three students can be admitted by Columbia in any one year. A few other law schools are willing to set up similar programs on an individual basis. For more information, see the Career Center.

## **VI. AFTER LAW SCHOOL: ADMISSION TO THE BAR**

In order to practice law you will be need to be licensed by one of the states. The procedure varies from state to state (and the federal judicial system). Usually it entails passing a state bar examination and a moral character assessment.

You need to think about your later admission to the bar at this point for two reasons.

1. Your moral character assessment will obviously be based on your conduct during your college and law school years. You may well need someone from your undergraduate school to write a character reference for you.
2. Some states require you to make a "declaration of intention to study law" either right before or immediately after enrolling in law school.