ACCESSLEX INSTITUTE®

Empowering the Next Generation of Lawyers®

LEXSCHOLARS BY ACCESSLEX® PROGRAM EVALUATION

Year 1 (2020-21)
Pilot Cycle

AccessLex.org

TABLE OF CONTENTS

FOREWORD

The legal profession is one of the least diverse professions in the United States. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, only 13.5% of lawyers identify as people of color.[1] But the latest U.S Census data show an increasingly diversifying nation. People of color now comprise more than 40% of the population.[2] The lack of representativeness among the nation's lawyers highlight the critical need for systemic and impactful efforts to increase the number of lawyers from underrepresented demographic groups.

The importance of legal education diversity is rooted in the very structure of our society. The U.S. is often described as a "nation of laws." This characterization captures the central role that our legal system plays in influencing how we interact with our government and each other. Public buy-in is essential to the preservation of our society. Lawyers, through their work, help foster the "public's understanding of and confidence in the rule of law and the justice system."[3] This is why diversity matters, throughout society and particularly in the legal profession.

LexScholars by AccessLex® is an effort to enhance legal profession diversity. LexScholars follows a long line of "diversity pipeline" programs; but LexScholars is not a typical pipeline initiative. Its most distinctive characteristic is its purpose. LexScholars is designed to help foster systemic change by enhancing our understanding of the best ways to design and structure pipeline programs. Therefore, LexScholars is leverages an experimental design aimed at learning more about effective methods for increasing law school diversity. We use the experiences, outcomes, and perceptions of LexScholars participants to continuously assess the program, with the eventual hope of developing a set of pipeline program best practices. More than 1,200 aspiring law students will contribute to this five-year effort through their LexScholars participation.

Systemic change takes time. But the diversity imperative requires us to act now. So, LexScholars is designed to have near-term impacts as well. The program targets aspiring law students who possess potential for law school success but may be unlikely to gain admission due to unfavorable standardized test scores and lack of knowledge about the law school admission process. These are people in need of robust infusions of support. For participants who gain admission, it is likely that LexScholars helped facilitate that outcome.

This is near-term, tangible impact on real people and each instance gets us a bit closer to a legal profession that reflects our society.

This report provides a detailed review of the participants, methods, and outcomes from the 2020-21 LexScholars cohort, the pilot cycle of the program. The data highlights real challenges, real successes, and real insights about how LexScholars and pipeline programs generally can be made more impactful. This cycle was the first step of what will be a five-year journey that we hope will benefit aspiring law students, legal education and most importantly, our society.

Aaron N. Taylor
Executive Director
AccessLex Center for Legal Education Excellence®

REPORT SUMMARY

LexScholars is a five-year (2020-2024) research study designed to explore and develop sustainable pipeline program models for increasing law school diversity. LexScholars targets prospective law students from underrepresented racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic backgrounds who possess potential for law school success but may be unlikely to gain admission due to unfavorable standardized test scores and undergraduate grades.

An integral component of the LexScholars research design is differential treatment among different participant groups. The purpose of this design is to allow the evaluation team to test the impact of discrete program interventions. Below are the resource intervention and population allocations for the two analyzed participant groups and the control group:

- LSAT Prep and Admission Counseling Group (ACG): 52 participants
    - Admission counseling
    - Kaplan online LSAT course
    - One-half randomly selected to earn a behavioral incentive (ACG/LPG-Incentive)
    - Access to informational resources and a community of other participants
    - Chance of winning drawing for quarterly cash prize

- LSAT Prep Group (LPG): 162 participants
    - Kaplan online LSAT course
    - One-half randomly selected to earn a behavioral incentive (ACG/LPG-Incentive)
    - Access to informational resources and a community of other participants
    - Chance of winning drawing for quarterly cash prize

- Control Group: 45 participants
    - No program resources
    - Guaranteed $50 gift card incentive for each submitted monthly survey
    - Chance of winning drawing for quarterly cash prize

Program interventions seemed to prompt the ACG and ACG/LPG-Incentive participants to submit admission applications and take the LSAT earlier in the admission cycle. The latter trend potentially had the unfavorable effect of prompting these participants to take the LSAT before they were sufficiently prepared. Lower score performance on the LSAT potentially lowered the number of admission offers received by ACG and ACG/LPG-Incentive participants. But earlier engagement with the admission process appears to have had a favorable effect on their chances of receiving scholarships and, for ACG participants, the size of those awards.

Hours spent in the LSAT course live sessions; the number of completed admission counseling tasks; and the timing of application submission were all associated with admission and scholarship outcomes in ways that appear compelling. In addition, prior attempts at gaining law school admission were associated with higher levels of LexScholars engagement and more favorable admission process outcomes during the program. Participants who had taken the LSAT and submitted law school applications in admission cycles prior to LexScholars were noticeably more likely to submit applications earlier in the admission cycle and receive scholarships offers during the program.

Overall, the data presented in this report highlight a successful 2020-21 LexScholars cycle, marked by achievement of program goals. Our findings aligned with our hypotheses in encouraging ways and diverged in others that require further attention.

LEXSCHOLARS OVERVIEW

LexScholars is a five-year (2020-2024) research study designed to explore and develop sustainable pipeline program models for increasing law school diversity. Put simply, LexScholars is a research study that takes the form of a pipeline program. LexScholars targets prospective law students from underrepresented racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic backgrounds who possess potential for law school success but may be unlikely to gain admission due to unfavorable standardized test scores and undergraduate grades. By the end of the study period, more than 1,200 aspiring lawyers will be given access to resources and guidance to pursue their law school goals.

LexScholars is rooted in three guiding principles:

- Much of what determines law school success falls beyond the predictive power of standardized tests.

- Targeted and comprehensive support can increase chances of gaining admission among people otherwise unlikely to do so.

- Rigorous program evaluation is essential to maximizing the effectiveness of pipeline programs.

Program evaluation is a systematic effort to measure the impact of programmatic components through intentional program design, robust data collection and rigorous data analysis. Ideally, program evaluation is a continuous, iterative, and integrated process that is premised on program improvement. Through our efforts, we are seeking to measure the impacts of LexScholars interventions in ways that will foster continuous improvement and more insight into effective pipeline program design.

This report provides the results of our evaluation of the 2020-21 LexScholars cycle. It is important to note that because we are writing about the first cycle and have no past year data with which to make comparisons, this report is more descriptive than evaluative. We nonetheless use the parlance of evaluation to signal both the philosophy of our approach and the ultimate intentions of our data collection and analyses.

We present the results of our evaluation using the *Context, Input, Process, and Product (CIPP)* evaluation model. The *CIPP* model "is configured especially to enable and guide comprehensive, systematic examination of social and educational projects that occur in the dynamic, septic conditions of the real world."[4] Below are explanations of the evaluation frames included in the model:

- *Context*: evaluation of the problems fostering the need for the program and the opportunities for the program to address those problems; akin to a needs assessment

- *Input*: evaluation of how resources are used to address the identified needs

- *Process*: evaluation of the program execution plan and processes

- *Product*: evaluation of the impacts, outcomes, and overall efficacy of the program

Nesting our evaluation in the *CIPP* model allows us to engage in a comprehensive assessment of our administration of LexScholars and use that information to inform future iterations of the study and our understanding of pipeline programs generally.

CIPP MODEL: CONTEXT

The legal profession is one of the least diverse professions in the U.S. In 2020, people of color comprised 13.5% of lawyers[5], compared to 40.1% of the overall population.[6] The most significant cause of this trend is racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic disparities in who is allowed to study law. With few exceptions, one must earn a law degree from an ABA-approved law school to be eligible for admission to a state bar. Therefore, the demographic composition of law schools has vast influence on the composition of the legal profession. Law student enrollments have grown increasingly diverse in recent decades; but people of color remain significantly underrepresented.

In 2020, people of color comprised 34.2% of law students.[7] Enrollment disparities are most pronounced among Black and Latino/a students who comprise 30.8% of the nation's population but only 15.4% of law students.[8] These trends reflect admit rate trends. Black applicants are least likely to receive an offer of admission to any law school; just 45.2% did so during the 2020-2021 cycle. The admit rate for Latino/a applicants was higher, 57.4%, but still noticeably lower than the overall of admit rate of 69.6%.[9] While socioeconomic backgrounds of law students are not systematically tracked, the limited evidence we do have suggests that applicants from lower socioeconomic backgrounds are less likely to gain admission and are also underrepresented among law students.[10]

If applicants do not gain admission to law school, it is highly unlikely that they will ever become lawyers. This fact captures the primary problem that pipeline programs seek to remedy. The causes of the lower admit rates among applicants from underrepresented groups are numerous and interwoven. The resources offered through LexScholars seek to address three of them:

1. Lower LSAT scores among test takers from underrepresented groups

   Similar to other standardized admission tests, the LSAT is typified by pronounced racial, ethnic, and likely socioeconomic disparities in average scores. Past data have shown disparities of as much as 11 points when the average score among Black test takers (142) is compared to the average among Asian test-takers and White test-takers (153).[11] The average among Latinos was 146, a seven-point disparity. It is often theorized that unequal access to high-quality LSAT prep contributes to these gaps. To explore potential interventions for addressing lower LSAT scores, all LexScholars participants received access to a full-length Kaplan online LSAT course.

In addition, LexScholars is targeted at aspiring law students with a history of low standardized test score performance. This targeting stems from a desire to efficiently increase admit rates among underrepresented people by providing resources to those who are otherwise unlikely to gain admission.

2. Deficient information about the admission process

Access to information is important to an effective law school application strategy. There are aspects of the process that may not be intuitive to uninformed applicants. An example is the way application deadlines function at most schools. In most contexts, completing a task just before the deadline is a harmless action. Incentives for early completion are usually personal to the individual. But given that most law schools review applications on a "rolling" basis (continuously as applications are deemed eligible for review), earlier applicants tend to have the best odds of gaining admission.

Later applicants are disadvantaged by ever-increasing scarcity in available seats in the class. Therefore, waiting until just before the deadline to apply, an acceptable practice in most other contexts, is particularly harmful in the law admission context. Data show that applicants from underrepresented racial and ethnic groups apply later in the admission process,[12] likely lowering their chances of admission. Some of these delayed submissions result from lack of insight about the process. This is one example of how deficient information can impact one's chances of admission; there are others, including those related to deciding where to apply; what content to include in personal statements; and from whom to request recommendation letters.

To explore potential interventions for addressing information deficiencies, a subgroup of LexScholars participants was given access to comprehensive admission counseling services premised on guiding them through the process, helping them maximize their odds of admission.

3. Challenges paying admission process expenses

Applying to law school can be an expensive endeavor. Mandatory expenses, including LSAT registration and application fees, can present financial burdens for many applicants. Financial hardship often has direct impacts on application strategies, delaying the completion of important tasks, such as taking the LSAT and submitting applications. Hardship can also prevent an aspiring law student from applying altogether.

To explore potential interventions for addressing financial hardships, a subgroup of LexScholars participants was given access to comprehensive admission counseling services. Counselors provided participants with information regarding

need-based fee waivers and helped participants devise admission process strategies with their financial circumstances in mind. Some participants were also offered, via random selection, financial incentives to complete various process tasks by November 30, 2020. The premise of these incentives was the potential of motivating participants to engage the admission process early in the cycle while lessening some of the expense of applying. Lastly, LexScholars is targeted at aspiring law students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds. This targeting is rooted in a desire to increase program impact and efficiency by providing resources to people most likely to need it.

A consideration of Context in the *CIPP* framework requires a consideration of goals. LexScholars is a research study that takes the form of a pipeline program. Its primary purpose is to contribute new knowledge about the impacts of pipeline programs on the enrollment of underrepresented law students. Therefore, our consideration of LexScholars goals applies to the study, not the interventions being studied. This is a subtle, but important distinction that we illustrate throughout this report.

We viewed the first LexScholars cycle as mostly exploratory. While much has been written about pipeline programs in other contexts, there is a dearth of empirically sound insights on law school pipeline programs.[13] Thus, with only a limited template to build on, our primary aim was to launch the study upon a foundation that would foster its sustainability over the five-year period of performance. The exploratory nature of this first cycle was further hardened by the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. We were forced to make significant program alterations, including abandoning a 4-week residential component, less than three months before it was scheduled to commence. Therefore, our goals center on the launch and administration of the study.

2020-21 Study Cycle Goals:

- To launch and administer the study as a pilot cycle, adjusting as needs arise

- To use study cycle to improve data collection tools and methods for future cycles

- To establish engagement and outcomes baselines to use for future cycle evaluations

- To yield insight about effective pipeline program practices

Conventional conceptions of program outcome goals are probably best captured by our study hypotheses. They are not goals in the strict sense; but they do capture effects and outcomes we expected to yield in the first cycle. LexScholars uses a differential treatment framework whereby program resources differ among participant groups and subgroups. The LSAT Prep and Admission Counseling Group (ACG) received access to all program resources. In addition, a randomly selected group of participants were offered a financial incentive to complete certain admission process tasks by November 30. We centered our hypotheses on the experiences of these groups as an upper-end baseline.

2020-21 Study Hypotheses:

- ACG participants will demonstrate the highest levels of program engagement, admission process engagement, admission process outcomes and scholarship outcomes compared to other participant groups.

- Participants offered the behavioral incentive will demonstrate higher levels of program engagement, admission process engagement, admission process outcomes and scholarship outcomes compared to non-incentive participants.

- The control group will demonstrate the lowest levels of program engagement and outcomes compared to other participant groups.

Overall, the data presented in this report highlight a successful 2020-21 LexScholars cycle, marked by achievement of program goals. Our findings aligned with our hypotheses in encouraging ways and diverged in others that require further attention. The 2021-22 cycle is well underway with the application for the 2022-23 cycle opening soon. The five-year LexScholars study period will come and go quickly. But we are confident that at the end of it, we will contribute much new knowledge to what we collectively know about effective pipeline program practices.

CIPP MODEL: INPUT

Program evaluations require the consideration of alignment between program structure and program goals. In this section, we provide overviews of the LexScholars structure and funding, highlighting how they align with study goals and hypotheses.

A. Differential Treatment

An integral component of the LexScholars research design is differential treatment among different participant groups. The purpose of this design is to allow the evaluation team to test the impact of discrete program interventions. LexScholars consisted of the following three interventions:

- **LSAT PREPARATION**
  Each LexScholars participant was given access to a Kaplan online LSAT course beginning in mid-August 2020 and ending in late February 2021. The course consisted of 32 hours of live online instruction, three full-length proctored practice exams, and access to a range of supplemental resources, including more than 2,500 practice questions with detailed explanations, more than 75 previously administered exams, personalized practice performance reports, and an archive of more than 100 LSAT video workshops.

- **ADMISSION COUNSELING**
  A subgroup of LexScholars participants was given access to comprehensive admission counseling. Services consisted of general and personalized education about the law school admission process; assistance developing admission process action plans; and assistance conceptualizing and drafting personal statements, resumes, diversity statements, and application addenda. In total, there were 19 discrete admission process tasks that arose from the admission counseling intervention. Counselors also provided encouragement and served as sources of accountability to participants. Access to this resource began in mid-July 2020 and continued, as needed, through August 2021. Counselors encouraged early engagement with the admission process; therefore, most assistance was provided to participants early in the program cycle.

- **FINANCIAL INCENTIVES**
  There were two types of financial incentives:

  - Behavioral: designed to test whether financial incentives prompted participants to engage in admission process behaviors that are associated with increased odds of gaining admission

    - A subgroup of about one-half of participants was randomly selected to receive a $300 Amazon gift card for completing the following tasks by November 30, 2020:

      - » Taking the LSAT (score could still be pending)

      - » Submitting all required documents (e.g., academic transcripts, letters of recommendation) to LSAC Credential Assembly Service

      - » Submitting at least five law school applications

  - Response: designed to incentivize participants to submit timely responses to the monthly program surveys and to test the impact of this strategy

    - Participants who submitted at least two surveys in a stipulated three-month period[14] were entered into drawings to win one of twenty-five $50 Amazon gift cards awarded at the end of each period.

    - Participants who submitted surveys in each month of the stipulated three-month period were entered into drawings to win one $500 cash award at the end of each period.

    - We empaneled a control group of participants who received no program resources but were offered $50 Amazon gift cards for each monthly program survey they submitted. They were also entered into drawings to win one $500 cash award at the end of each stipulated three-month period.

- **OTHER RESOURCES**
  All LexScholars participants (not including the control group) were granted access to an opt-in LinkedIn group where relevant information and resources were posted for review. They were also invited to observe financial education webinars offered by AccessLex and informational webinars offered by law schools. Lastly, participants were able to connect and generate a sense of community with each other through the LinkedIn group and other self-directed means.

There was a total of three discrete LexScholars participant groups and a control group. Below are the resource intervention and population allocations for each group:

- **LSAT PREP AND ADMISSION COUNSELING GROUP (ACG): 52 PARTICIPANTS**
  - Admission counseling
  - Kaplan online LSAT course
  - One-half randomly selected to earn a behavioral incentive
  - Access to informational resources and a community of other participants
  - Chance of winning drawing for quarterly cash prize

- **LSAT PREP GROUP (LPG): 162 PARTICIPANTS**
  - Kaplan online LSAT course
  - One-half randomly selected to earn a behavioral incentive
  - Access to informational resources and a community of other participants
  - Chance of winning drawing for quarterly cash prize

- **ANALYTICAL THINKING AND WRITING SKILLS GROUP: 36 PARTICIPANTS**
  - Formal observation of this group was abandoned after the COVID-19 pandemic forced the cancellation of a planned residential program component. Therefore, data pertaining to this group is not included in this report.
  - Participants were given access to a Kaplan online LSAT course as a consolation.

- **CONTROL GROUP: 45 PARTICIPANTS**
  - No program resources
  - Guaranteed $50 gift card incentive for each submitted monthly survey
  - Chance of winning drawing for quarterly cash prize

B. Participant Eligibility and Selection

During the 2020 cycle, LexScholars enrolled 214 participants, who were given access to resource interventions, and 45 members of the control group. Each LexScholars participant who was granted access to program resources: 1) was a member of an underrepresented racial, ethnic or socioeconomic group, 2) stated an intention to seek Fall 2021 law school admission and 3) was unlikely to gain admission due to low standardized test score performance.

Below were the eligibility criteria:

- Be a member of a racial, ethnic, and/or socioeconomic group that is underrepresented among law students

- Possess a bachelor's degree or will receive a bachelor's degree by August 2021

- Plan to seek law school admission for the Fall 2021 entering class

- Have an LSAT score no higher than 25th percentile

    o Applicants who had not taken the LSAT could qualify with a score no higher than 50th percentile on the following tests: SAT, ACT, GRE or GMAT

- Have not previously enrolled in a J.D. program at an ABA-approved law school

Racial and ethnic underrepresentation was determined by comparing the proportion of law students at all ABA-approved law schools who identified as members of specific groups, compared to the overall U.S. population. A group was deemed underrepresented when its proportion of law students was lower than its proportion of the U.S. population. People who identified as American Indian or Alaska Native; Black/African American; Latino/Hispanic; and Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander are considered underrepresented among law students. We defined socioeconomic underrepresentation as either being a first-generation bachelor's degree graduate or a recipient of a Pell Grant while an undergraduate.

To be considered for participation, applicants were required to submit an online application form; an academic transcript from their bachelor's degree-granting institution; a copy of standardized test score reports reflecting their highest scores; and two recommender assessments.

Participation slots were offered on a "first come, first selected" basis. The first 52 selected applicants were assigned the ACG intervention; the next 162 were assigned the LPG intervention. After all slots were assigned, a waitlist was maintained, with applicants selected to fill forfeited slots in the order in which they were placed on the waitlist.

An invitation to participate as a member of the control group was sent to applicants who were not assigned to an intervention slot either because they were deemed eligible after all slots were assigned or because they failed to submit all required materials to be considered for participation. Forty-five of these applicants accepted our offer to serve as members of the control group. These participants did not receive access to program resources but were offered a financial incentive to complete monthly program surveys.

C. Data Collection

Comprehensive data collection is core to the design and evaluation of LexScholars. This data focuses on the experiences and outcomes of study participants. The bulk of the data is quantitative, though we collected qualitative data as well. Below is each data source:

1. **MONTHLY PARTICIPANT SURVEYS:**

    On the first business day of each month, from October 2020 through September 2021, LexScholars participants (including control group) were sent a survey asking them to provide information about their admission process experiences, behaviors, and outcomes for the preceding month. Participants were prompted to share things like whether they took the LSAT or received a score; submitted admission applications; received admission decisions; or made a final decision regarding the law school they would attend. The same survey was sent each month and was designed to take 5-20 minutes to complete, based on the number of updates.

2. **KAPLAN ONLINE LSAT COURSE DATA:**

    Each month, Kaplan forwarded data on participant behavior and interactions within its course management platform. Data provided insight on things like the frequency with which participants attended scheduled live courses and the extent of interaction with other available resources within the platform. This data pertained only to ACG and LPG participants, as control group participants did not receive access to this resource through the study.

3. **ADMISSION COUNSELING DATA:**

    Roughly every six weeks, the admission counseling service provided data regarding interactions its counselors had with members of the subgroup of participants who received access to this resource. The data denoted things like the number and nature of participant interactions and whether participants completed tasks (e.g., personal statement drafts) by stipulated dates or at all.

4. **QUALITATIVE ASSESSMENT:**

    In July 2021, after most admission process activity had waned, we sent a 12-item questionnaire to a sample of 35 ACG and 94 LPG participants, asking them to share narrative insights about their LexScholars experience. The sample consisted of the top and bottom 20% of participants of each group, based on their level of program engagement.[15] The sample was then stratified to ensure roughly equal representation of participants across the subgroups that were offered and not offered behavioral incentives. The questionnaire yielded participant perceptions on topics such as how the program influenced their admission process behaviors. Participants were also asked to share perceptions regarding the quality of the program and the resources they received.

D. Program Funding

LexScholars requires significant investments of human and financial resources. The project is centered in the AccessLex Center for Legal Education Excellence® and leverages departmental resources across the organization. The total direct cost during the 2020-21 cycle was $326,470,[16] itemized below:

- LSAT prep courses: $112,500 (34% of budget)

- Admission counseling services: $97,600 (30%)

- Curriculum design: $86,420 (26%)

- Incentives: $29,950 (9%)

    o ACG and LPG: $5,950

    o Control: $24,000

The total amounted to $1,209.88 for each of the 250 program participants[17] and $533.33 for each of the 45 members of the control group. Two things should be highlighted about the curriculum design expense: 1) the curriculum pertained to the residential portion of the program that was canceled because of COVID; and 2) unlike the other listed expenses, curriculum design was akin to a startup expense and would not have been incurred annually. Therefore, if we were to remove the curriculum design expense from the calculation, the cost of LexScholars was $864.92 per program participant. Whichever figure is used, the costs of the study are reasonable in light of the resources being offered.

CIPP MODEL: PROCESS

This section builds on the previous one and analyzes the extent to which the study was implemented as designed. This analysis is particularly significant, given the manners in which both the pilot nature of this cycle and the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic prompted us to make program alterations.

A. Participant Eligibility and Selection

There were three predominant characteristics we sought in LexScholars participants:

1) Self-identification as a member of an underrepresented racial, ethnic or socioeconomic group

2) Low performance on standardized admission tests

3) Intention to seek Fall 2021 admission to law school

The eligibility criteria listed on pages 11-12 reflect this targeting. The goal was to design criteria that would ensure that every participant with access to program resources fit the three characteristics. This goal was achieved, as illustrated by the following profile data:

- All participants (100%) identified as members of an underrepresented racial, ethnic or socioeconomic group

- Ninety-four percent (94%) of participants identified as members of an underrepresented racial or ethnic group.
    - Racial/Ethnic Composition
        - Asian/Asian American: 2.3
        - **Black/African American: 64.5**
        - **Hispanic/Latino: 28.5**
        - White: 1.9
        - **Additional Groups: 1.4**
        - Prefer not to respond: 1.4

- Ninety percent (90%) of participants were members of at least one of the two underrepresented socioeconomic groups we identified
  - Socioeconomic Composition
    - Pell Grant recipient: 69.6%
    - First-generation BA/BS grad: 71.5%

- Eighty four percent (84%) of participants were members of an underrepresented racial or ethnic *and* an underrepresented socioeconomic group.

- Fifty-six percent (56%) of participants provided LSAT scores in their LexScholars application. The median score among these participants was 140, roughly a 13th percentile score. The remaining participants submitted scores on other tests (e.g., ACT, SAT) that were at or below the 50th percentile.

- All participants (100%) expressed a desire to seek Fall 2021 admission both in their LexScholars application and by signing the Participation Agreement.

B. Participant Group Assignment

An integral component of the LexScholars research design is differential treatment among participant groups. The purpose of this methodology is to test the impact of discrete program interventions. Participation slots were offered on a "first come, first selected" basis, with the groups filled in the following order:

1) LSAT Prep and Admission Counseling Group (ACG): 52 participants
   o Access to all interventions

2) LSAT Prep Group (LPG): 162 participants
   o Access to most interventions

3) Observation Group (Control): 45 participants
   o Access to no interventions

The goal of this ordered method of assignment was to yield participant groups that were similar demographically and academically. Ideally, they would be statistically identical. We wanted to minimize selection bias that could have been introduced by a more subjective and selective method. The ordered method, however, was a departure from our initial study design, which called for random assignment to participant groups.[18]

The ordered method was not without the potential of bias. Volunteer bias could have been introduced, whereby earlier applicants, those most likely to be assigned the ACG intervention, would differ in significant ways from later applicants, those most likely to be assigned the LPG intervention.

We also compared differences between the two participant groups and the control group. The selection process for the control group rendered it more squarely a convenience sample compared to the participant groups. We were unable to calculate a comparison on LSAT score percentile due to the small number of control group members who submitted LSAT scores. Below are comparisons of demographic and academic characteristics for both of the LexScholars participant groups and the control group. Asterisks denote differences that are statistically significant.[19]

Table 1

LexScholars 2020-2021 Participant and Observation Group Demographics (N = 259)

	LP GROUP	AC GROUP	ALL LEXSCHOLARS	CONTROL GROUP
Race and Ethnicity Underrepresented	94.4%	100%	95.8%*	84.4%*
Economically Disadvantaged Yes	70.4%	67.3%	69.7%	69.6%
First-Gen College Graduate Yes	70.3%	75%	71.1%	71.5%
n	162	52	214	45

*These differences were statistically significant.

Table 2

Average UGPA and LSAT Score Percentile of LexScholars Participants and Control Group.

	UGPA			LSAT SCORE PERCENTILE		
	M	SD	n	M	SD	n
LP Group	3.22*	.39	162	14.3	8.3	87
AC Group	3.00*	.45	52	13	7.7	32
Control Group	3.36*	.42	45	--	--	--

*These differences were statistically significant.

Our significance tests strongly suggest that our comparison groups were statistically identical on most characteristics, despite some of the observed differences. There are two notable exceptions, however: 1) the differences in average UGPA, both between the ACG and LPG participants and between those participants and the control group (Table 2); and 2) the proportion of participants from underrepresented racial and ethnic groups between ACG/LPG participants and the control group (Table 1). Overall, LexScholars applicants who submitted all required materials early enough to secure the admission counseling services tended to have a lower UGPA than later applicants and were more likely to be members of underrepresented racial or ethnic groups.

C. Application of Interventions

Study interventions were made available to participants based on our judgments of when they would be most useful to participants in the admission process. Below are assessments of the application of interventions:

- **LSAT PREPARATION**
  - Each LexScholars participant was given access to a Kaplan online LSAT course. Participants received access to the course in late August 2020. Live courses lasted the first 8 weeks. Access to the course resources ended in late February 2021.

  - Course rollout progressed well overall. Early on, some participants had issues accessing the complete range of course resources. Some shipments of course materials were delayed due to mailing address or other delivery issues. Almost all these issues were resolved prior to the start of the live courses.

- **ADMISSION COUNSELING**
  - A subgroup of LexScholars participants was given access to comprehensive admission counseling services. Access to this resource began in July 2020 and continued through August 2021.

  - There were no significant issues making this resource available to participants.

- **FINANCIAL INCENTIVES**
  - There were two types of financial incentives:

    - Behavioral: designed to test whether financial incentives prompted participants to engage in admission process behaviors that are associated with increased odds of gaining admission

    - Response: designed to incentivize participants to submit timely responses to the monthly program surveys.

    - Incentive payouts were made at the following four points during the study cycle:

    - Drawing #1: December 2020 (covered October-November-December)

    - Drawing #2: March 2021 (covered January-February-March)

    - Drawing #3: June 2021 (covered April-May-June)

    - Drawing #4: September 2021 (covered July-August-September)

- Amazon gift cards were emailed to recipients, a mechanism that increased the efficiency of the payout process. The $500 cash awards were paid via check, sent to recipients' mailing address. For the most part, payouts went smoothly. In rare instances, gift card emails returned to us as undeliverable. We were able to get updated addresses from participants. Receipt of the $500 cash awards required recipients to first submit W9 tax forms. Three recipients opted against receiving the awards, due to concerns about disclosing their personal information to us via the W9.

- **OTHER RESOURCES**
  All LexScholars participants were granted access to an opt-in LinkedIn group page where relevant information and resources were posted for review. Participants were also able to connect with each other, contributing to a sense of community among them. Application of this resource and related data collection was less formal than other components of the study, thereby making it difficult to consider this component an intervention in the strict sense.

D. Data Collection

Comprehensive data collection is core to the design and evaluation of LexScholars. This data focuses on the experiences and outcomes of study participants. The bulk of the data is quantitative, though we collected qualitative data as well. Below are assessments of our data collection efforts:

1. **MONTHLY PARTICIPANT SURVEYS:**

As stipulated by the study design, monthly surveys were distributed via email to program participants on the first business day of each month, from October 2020 until September 2021. As a condition of their participation, ACG and LPG participants formally agreed to complete each monthly survey. Participants were given a "regular" deadline of one week after the distribution date. After this date, we communicated an "extended" deadline of the 14th of the month. Despite the deadlines, surveys were accepted for the duration of the month.

The deadlines were communicated to spur a sense of urgency among the participants. We wanted participants to provide their updates while their memories were freshest. We employed a system of reminders that included phone calls and, later in the program cycle, text messages to participants who had not submitted their survey by the regular deadline. Ninety-five percent (95%) of all surveys received were submitted by the 14th of their given months, suggesting that the messaging regarding the deadlines and the system of reminders prompted participants to complete surveys within the first two weeks of the month. This trend also showed that if a participant had not responded by the 14th, the odds of a later submission were low.

Our study goals, particularly those pertaining to establishing outcomes baselines and yielding insight about effective pipeline program practices, required a robust response to monthly surveys. We did not set specific response rate targets; we encouraged each participant to respond each month. Below are average monthly response rates for the participant groups and the control group:

- Combined ACG/LPG: 72%

    - ACG: 67%

    - LPG: 73%

- Control: 83%

We surmise that the guaranteed $50 gift card offered to the control group was more effective as a motivating factor than both the formal promise to respond made by ACG and LPG participants and their speculative chances of winning

gift cards and cash. Another contributing factor could be that control group participants tended to have fewer updates to report; therefore, making the process less time-consuming. The six percentage-point difference between the LPG and ACG response rates could be explained by task exhaustion, given other demands placed on ACG participants by the admission counselors, including submission of monthly individual progress reports.

Overall, the rates are very useful in establishing a baseline to judge future response rates. The goal for the 2021-22 cycle will be to exceed each of the response rates listed above.

2. **KAPLAN LSAT COURSE DATA**

Each month, Kaplan forwarded data on participant behavior and interactions within its course management platform. Over the course of the study period, we worked with the Kaplan to ensure the data they provided was both relevant and ready to be analyzed with minimal formatting and cleaning. The data provide very useful insights into participant behavior and engagement with the LSAT course.

3. **ADMISSION COUNSELING DATA**

Roughly every six weeks, the admission counseling service provided data regarding task completion and interactions its counselors had with members of the subgroup of participants who received access to this resource. The data provide very useful insights into participant behavior and engagement with this resource.

4. **QUALITATIVE QUESTIONNAIRE**

In July 2021, after most admission process and LexScholars program activity had waned, we emailed a 12-item questionnaire to a sample of 35 ACG and 94 LPG participants, asking them to share narrative insights about their LexScholars experience. The questionnaire served as a means of gaining descriptive insights about the impact of the interventions and about the design of the program. In all, 58 participants responded to the questionnaire.

E. Program Adjustments

Piloting a program is inherently a process of trial and error. Actual experience can challenge the wisdom of plans formed without the benefit of precedent. Our experience followed this wisdom, in that we made various adjustments in response to circumstances "on the ground."

1. **ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS**

   The original LexScholars framework applied a 25th percentile score cap across the various types of standardized tests we accepted from applicants. This cap was set mainly with the LSAT in mind. SAT and ACT scores were the most common scores submitted by LexScholars applicants who had not taken the LSAT. But most applicants submitted SAT or ACT scores that exceeded the 25th percentile cap, rendering them ineligible.

   A possible explanation for this trend was shared separately by two undergraduate administrators. They asserted that it was uncommon for students with SAT or ACT scores at or below the 25th percentile to enroll in bachelor's degree-granting institutions, even non-selective ones. In essence, they were saying that the pool of potential LexScholars participants among people who had not already taken the LSAT was very small.

   We were able to find indirect evidence of their assertions in the research literature,[20] which seemed to align with the application trends we were observing. Therefore, while we maintained the 25th percentile LSAT cap, we raised the cap to 50th percentile for all other tests. We made this change about halfway through the application process, which means that there were likely newly eligible potential applicants who were not aware of the raised cap and therefore did not submit a LexScholars application. We reactivated the applications of newly eligible applicants who had previously been deemed ineligible.

2. **PARTICIPANT SELECTION AND GROUP ASSIGNMENT METHODS**

   A process of random assignment to participation groups was originally contemplated in the LexScholars framework. Eligible applicants who submitted all required documents by March 15 would be entered into a selection pool. Applicants in the pool would then be randomly selected to participate as either ACG or LPG members. The primary purpose and benefit of this approach was to minimize selection bias. This process, however, carried two main downsides:

   - It was not easily grasped externally. We received numerous emails and calls from applicants, advisors, and others expressing confusion or requesting more information about the process.

   - There was no incentive for earlier submission of applications or other required documents, which likely encouraged applicant procrastination and delay. Early

application volume was very slow, creating the possibility of us receiving an unmanageable crush of materials on the deadline.

The downsides were exacerbated by the angst and uncertainty created by the COVID-19 pandemic. In the end, we opted for a more streamlined "first-come, first-selected" process, with no formal deadline. In response to this change (and others, including raising the test score cap), the pace of application submissions noticeably increased.

3. **CANCELING OF RESIDENTIAL COMPONENT**

One of the most significant program changes made necessary by the pandemic was the cancellation of a 4-week residential component, less than three months before it was scheduled to commence. The residential component would have been administered to two subgroups of LexScholars participants — ACG participants and an additional group of 35 participants who were interested in Fall 2022 admission, instead of Fall 2021.

For the ACG participants the residential component would have focused on intense in-person LSAT prep, personal statement writing, and admission counseling. For the group of participants who were two years away from their desired law school start date, the component would have focused on building legal reasoning and writing skills. Given the nature of the interventions and the timing of the cancelation, we were unable to replicate the residential component. We exposed ACG participants to the interventions listed earlier. The remaining group was essentially disbanded, but we provided each member access to the online LSAT prep course as a consolation.

From a planning and implementation standpoint, the residential component was labor-intensive and relatively expensive; therefore, its cancellation, while forced on us, had the benefit of reducing program costs. We are unable to estimate the impact of the cancellation on program outcomes. But in future cycles, if in-person gatherings are once again safe with minimal safeguarding, we will consider implementing the residential component.

4. **FORMING OF THE CONTROL GROUP**

The original LexScholars framework did not contemplate a control group. But after it was clear we would receive more applications than were needed to fill participation slots, we decided to form a control group. Our selection method yielded a control group that was largely identical to the participation groups. The control group did have a higher average UGPA than ACG and LPG participants, with the difference being statistically significant. Therefore, the experiences and outcomes of this group are not always directly comparable to the other groups. But the data is nonetheless illustrative and useful for confirming the viability of a control group in our framework.

CIPP MODEL: PRODUCT

In this section, we discuss possible program effects on LexScholars participants. We undertake this discussion in the context of the study goals we listed earlier:

- To launch and administer the study as a pilot cycle, adjusting as needs arise

- To use study cycle to improve data collection tools and methods for future cycles

- To establish engagement and outcomes baselines to use for future cycle evaluations

- To yield insight about effective pipeline program practices

Our ability to investigate possible program effects demonstrates goal attainment because it flows from a successful launch and administration of the program, including rigorous data collection. Potential program effects, as evidenced by certain differential trends among participant groups, also reflect goal attainment in that they suggest a program consisting of logical, measurable interventions.

This section explores the possible effects of the following three interventions:

- LSAT preparation: designed to improve participant LSAT performance

- Admission counseling: designed to help participants navigate the admission process effectively

- Behavioral financial incentives: designed to test whether financial incentives prompted participants to engage in admission process behaviors that are associated with increased odds of gaining admission

Adjacent are the participant groups we studied:

- LSAT Prep and Admission Counseling Group (ACG): 52 participants

    o Access to all interventions

    o One half randomly selected to receive behavioral incentive

- LSAT Prep Group (LPG): 162 participants

    o Access to most interventions

    o One half randomly selected to receive behavioral incentive

- Observation Group (Control): 45 participants
  - Access to no interventions

We also studied the following subgroups:

- ACG/LPG-Incentive: 103 participants[21]
  - Randomly selected to be offered behavioral incentive
- ACG/LPG-Non-incentive: 111 participants[22]
  - Not selected to receive behavioral incentive

In estimating program effects, our analyses rely on the following group comparisons:

- ACG v. LPG v. Control
- ACG/LPG-Incentive v. ACG/LPG-Non-incentive

The participant group comparisons should be interpreted with some caution given the statistically significant group differences in average UGPA.[23] The comparisons will be framed mostly from the perspective of the two main intervention groups: ACG and ACG/LPG-Incentive.

Lastly, the data we present in this section are descriptive. The comparisons illustrate group differences in experiences and outcomes; but we are not yet able to say with certainty that program interventions fostered those differences. As we analyze and aggregate data over multiple LexScholars cycles, our ability to make such inferences will increase. In the meantime, the language we use to frame findings, including our ample use of qualifiers, reflect our current limitations.

A. Admission Process Behaviors

Engaging the admission process is the first step to gaining admission to law school. Two aspects of the admission process are most relevant to LexScholars interventions: LSAT-taking and law school application submission.

- **LSAT-TAKING**

  - Among all groups, ACG participants were most likely to take the LSAT at least one time during the LexScholars program cycle.
    - ACG: 44.2% (23/52)
    - LPG: 40.7% (69/162)
    - Control: 26.6% (12/45)

  - ACG/LPG-Incentive participants were more likely than non-incentive participants to take the LSAT at least one time during the LexScholars program cycle.
    - Incentive: 47% (48/103)
    - Non-incentive: 40% (44/111)

  - Among all groups, ACG participants were most likely to take the LSAT before February 1 (among those who took the test).
    - ACG: 95.6% (22/23)
    - LPG: 76.8% (53/69)
    - Control: 83.3% (10/12)

  - ACG/LPG-Incentive participants were less likely than non-incentive participants to take the LSAT before February 1 (among those who took the test).
    - Incentive: 77.1% (37/48)
    - Non-incentive: 86.3% (38/44)

  - ACG/LPG-Incentive participants were more likely than non-incentive participants to take the LSAT before December 1 (among those who took the test).
    - Incentive: 68.8% (31/48)
    - Non-incentive: 59.1% (26/44)

The analyses strongly suggest a program effect on participants' LSAT-taking behavior. ACG participants were most likely among all groups to take the LSAT at least one time and to do so before February 1. LPG participants were more likely than control group participants to take the LSAT at least one time, but less likely to take it before February 1. Participants offered the behavioral incentive were more likely to take the LSAT at least one time and more likely to take it before December 1. The latter trend was likely in direct response to the incentive's November 30 eligibility deadline.

- **LAW SCHOOL APPLICATION SUBMISSION**

  - Among all groups, ACG participants were most likely to submit at least one application for admission to law school.
    - ACG: 42.3% (22/52)
    - LPG: 32.1% (52/162)
    - Control: 20% (9/45)

  - ACG/LPG-Incentive participants were less likely than non-incentive participants to submit at least one application for admission to law school.
    - Incentive: 34% (35/103)
    - Non-incentive: 35.1% (39/111)

  - Among all groups, ACG participants submitted the highest average number of applications for admission to law school (among those who submitted at least one application).
    - ACG: 6.4 (142 applications)
    - LPG: 5.6 (291)
    - Control: 5.8 (52)
    - ACG/LPG-Incentive participants submitted slightly more applications for admission, on average, than non-incentive participants (among those who submitted at least one application).
    - Incentive: 6 (209 applications)
    - Non-incentive: 5.7 (224)

  - ACG and control group participants were more likely than LPG participants to submit applications before February 1 (among those who submitted applications).
    - ACG: 74.6% (106/142)
    - LPG: 40.5% (118/291)
    - Control: 75% (39/52)

  - ACG/LPG-Incentive participants were more likely than non-incentive participants to submit applications before February 1 (among those who submitted applications).
    - Incentive: 55.9% (117/209)
    - Non-incentive: 47.8% (107/224)

- ACG/LPG-Incentive participants were more likely than non-incentive participants to submit applications before December 1 (among those who submitted applications).
  - Incentive: 37.3% (78/209)
  - Non-incentive: 24.5% (55/224)

- ACG participants submitted a plurality of group applications in an earlier month than other groups. The ACG plurality was also the largest proportion.
  - ACG: November (48% of all group applications)
  - LPG: February (30%)
  - Control: January (31%)

- ACG/LPG-Incentive participants submitted a plurality of applications earlier than non-incentive participants. The ACG/LPG-Incentive plurality was also larger.
  - Incentive: November (34% of all group applications)
  - Non-incentive: February (25%)

The analyses strongly suggest a program effect on participants' application submission behavior. ACG participants were most likely among all groups to submit at least one admission application and to submit applications earlier in the cycle. ACG participants also submitted the highest average number of applications. ACG/LPG-Incentive participants were less likely than non-incentive participants to submit at least one admission application but more likely to submit applications earlier in the cycle. The latter trend was likely in direct response to the incentive's November 30 eligibility deadline.

B. Admission Process Outcomes

Three admission process outcomes are most relevant to LexScholars interventions: LSAT score performance, admission offers received, and scholarship offers received.

- **LSAT SCORE PERFORMANCE**

  - ACG participants had a lower median LSAT score percentile than the other groups (among scores obtained during the program).
    - ACG: 22
    - LPG: 25
    - Control: 25

  - ACG/LPG-Incentive participants had a lower median LSAT score percentile than non-incentive participants (among scores obtained during the program).
    - Incentive: 19.5
    - Non-incentive: 31

  - Median change in LSAT score was the same across all participant groups (among participants who applied to LexScholars with an LSAT score and received a new score during the program).
    - ACG: +3
    - LPG: +3
    - Control: +3

  - ACG/LPG-Incentive participants had a lower median LSAT score change than non-incentive participants (among participants who applied to LexScholars with an LSAT score and received a new score during the program).
    - Incentive: +1
    - Non-incentive: +5.5

  - ACG participants had a lower average score change than LPG participants and a slightly higher average change than the control group (among participants applied to LexScholars with an LSAT score).
    - ACG: +2.4
    - LPG: +4.1
    - Control: +2.2

  - ACG/LPG-Incentive participants had a lower average LSAT score change than non-incentive participants.
    - Incentive: +2.4
    - Non-incentive: +5.1

The analyses suggest an unintended and unfortunate program effect on the ACG and ACG/LPG-Incentive participants. As part of their interventions, both groups were encouraged to take the LSAT earlier in the admission cycle. The data discussed earlier show that ACG and ACG/LPG-Incentive participants were indeed more likely to take the LSAT earlier. The outcomes data, however, suggest that these participants may have taken the LSAT earlier than optimal. This theory seems bolstered by LPG participants tending to take the LSAT later than the other groups but having the highest average score change. It is possible the additional time resulted in better preparation. Overall, participants who took the LSAT after November 30 increased their score by a median of five points, compared to three points among those who took the test November 30 or earlier. Similar trends are observed among the non-incentive participants. In response to these trends, we changed the behavioral incentive structure for the 2021-22 LexScholars cycle, offering participants two opportunities to qualify for a gift card. This change is explained further on page 30.

- **ADMISSION OFFERS**
  - ACG participants had a higher rate of receiving at least one admission offer than the control group but a lower rate than LPG participants.
    - ACG: 13.5% (7/52)
    - LPG: 14.2% (23/162)
    - Control: 11% (5/45)
  - ACG/LPG-Incentive participants were less likely than non-incentive participants to receive at least one admission offer.
    - Incentive: 11.6% (12/103)
    - Non-incentive: 16.2% (18/111)
  - ACG participants had the lowest average number of offers received (among participants who received at least one admission offer).
    - ACG: 1.6 (11 offers)
    - LPG: 2.1 (48)
    - Control: 2.8 (14)
  - ACG/LPG-Incentive participants had a slightly higher average number of offers received than non-incentive participants (among participants who received at least one admission offer).
    - Incentive: 2.1 (25)
    - Non-incentive: 1.9 (34)

These findings are possibly impacted by previously discussed differences in program LSAT score outcomes and the statistically significant group differences in average UGPAs. ACG participants had the lowest average UGPA and the lowest median LSAT percentile. This group's admit rate fell between the two other groups; its average number of offers was lowest among the groups. The fact that fewer ACG/LPG-Incentive participants received admission offers compared to non-incentive participants possibly reflects the latter group's much higher average LSAT score percentile.

- **SCHOLARSHIP OFFERS**
    - ACG participants had a higher rate of receiving at least one scholarship offer than LPG participants but a lower rate than control group (among participants who received at least one admission offer).
        - ACG: 71.4% (5/7)
        - LPG: 65.2% (15/23)
        - Control: 80% (4/5)
    - ACG/LPG-Incentive participants had a higher rate of receiving at least one scholarship offer than non-incentive participants (among participants who received at least one admission offer).
        - Incentive: 83.3% (10/12)
        - Non-incentive: 55.5% (10/18)
    - ACG participants had a higher average number of scholarship offers than the control group, but a lower average than LPG participants (among participants who received at least one admission offer).
        - ACG: 1.8 (9 offers)
        - LPG: 1.87 (28)
        - Control: 1.75 (7)
    - ACG/LPG-Incentive participants had a higher average number of offers received than non-incentive participants (among participants who received at least one admission offer).
        - Incentive: 2.1 (21 offers)
        - Non-incentive: 1.6 (16)
    - Among scholarship awards reported as a percentage of tuition, ACG participants reported the highest median value scholarships
        - ACG: 90% of tuition
        - LPG: 51%
        - Control: no data

- Among scholarship awards reported as a dollar amount range, ACG and LPG participants reported the highest median range.
  - ACG: $20,000-$29,999
  - LPG: $20,000-$29,999
  - Control: $10,000 - $19,999
- Among scholarship awards reported as a dollar amount range, ACG/LPG-Incentive and non-incentive participants reported the same median range.
  - Incentive: $20,000-$29,999
  - Non-incentive: $20,000-$29,999

The analyses suggest mixed program effects on scholarship awarding rates. ACG participants had a higher rate of receiving at least one scholarship offer than LPG participants but a lower rate than the control group. The average number of offers was similar across the groups with the ACG average wedged between the other groups. ACG participants reported the most generous median scholarship awards, far exceeding the other groups for awards reported as percentages of tuition covered. Program effects seemed to be clearer for the incentive groups. ACG/LPG-Incentive participants reported a much higher rate of receiving a scholarship and a higher average number of awards than non-incentive participants.

In summary, program interventions seemed to prompt the ACG and ACG/LPG-Incentive participants to submit admission applications and take the LSAT earlier in the admission cycle. The latter trend potentially had the unfavorable effect of prompting these participants to take the LSAT before they were sufficiently prepared. Lower score performance on the LSAT potentially lowered the number of admission offers received by ACG and ACG/LPG-Incentive participants. Statistically significant differences in average UGPA could also have negatively impacted ACG participants. But earlier engagement with the admission process appears to have had a favorable effect on the chances of ACG and ACG/LPG-Incentive participants receiving scholarships and, for ACG participants, the size of those awards. It appears that a central objective of LexScholars program enhancements should be to ascertain ways to encourage and support LSAT preparation that allows participants to take the test prior to February 1 and do their best.

C. Engagement and Outcomes Analyses

Building on the previous analyses, we conducted trend and correlational analyses that examined relationships between and among the following phenomena: 1) engagement with aspects of the LexScholars program; 2) engagement with the law school admission process; 3) change in LSAT score; 4) receipt of an admission offer; and 5) receipt of a scholarship offer. Due to the small size of our samples, the correlational analyses did not yield many noteworthy findings.

- Relationships between program engagement and process engagement

  - Participants who spent more hours attending the LSAT live course sessions were more likely to take the LSAT at least once during the program cycle.

    - The trend line rose steadily, from 13% of participants who spent no time in the courses taking the LSAT to 61% of participants who spent more than 25 hours in the courses.

    - ACG participants attended more hours on average (19.9) than LPG participants (18.2).

  - For ACG participants, the number of completed admission counseling tasks was positively associated with:

    - Taking the LSAT earlier in the admission cycle (0.58 correlation)

    - Submitting at least one admission application (0.57)

    - Submitting their first admission application before December 1 (0.58)

- Relationships between program engagement and outcomes

  - Participants who spent more than 19 hours attending the LSAT live course sessions increased their scores by an average of 3.7 points, compared to an average of 1.1 points among participants who attended fewer hours.

  - For ACG participants, the number of completed admission counseling tasks was positively associated with:

    - Receiving at least one admission offer (0.32 correlation)

    - Receiving at least one scholarship offer (0.25 correlation)

  - Each of the seven ACG participants who received an admission offer and the five who also received a scholarship offer completed at least 15 of the 19 admission counseling tasks. No participant who completed fewer tasks received either type of offer.

- Relationships between process engagement and outcomes
  - Participants who submitted admission applications earlier in the admission cycle were more likely to receive at least one admission offer and at least one scholarship offer.
    - Forty-three percent (43%) of participants who applied before December 1 received at least one admission offer, compared to 36% of later applicants.
    - Thirty-six percent (36%) of participants who applied before December 1 received at least one scholarship offer, compared to 19% of later applicants.

In summary, hours spent in the LSAT course live sessions; the number of completed admission counseling tasks; and the timing of application submission were all associated with admission and scholarship outcomes in ways that appear compelling. We will track closely whether these trends persist in future LexScholars cycles. If so, they may provide tangible and practical insight into effective pipeline program methods.

D. Prior Applicant Behavior and Program Engagement and Outcomes

Similar to above, we conducted trend analyses that examined relationships between the extent of ACG and LPG participants' previous admission process behavior and their LexScholars engagement and outcomes. We divided participants into three groups:

a) No prior behavior (NPB): 94 participants who had neither taken the LSAT nor applied to law school prior to LexScholars

b) Some prior behavior (SPB): 44 participants who had taken the LSAT, but had not applied to law school prior to LexScholars

c) All prior behavior (APB): 76 participants who had taken the LSAT and had submitted at least one law school application prior to LexScholars

- Participants who had engaged in prior applicant behavior:

    o had higher average and median hours spent in the online LSAT course.

        ▪ NPB: 15 (average); 17 (median)

        ▪ SPB: 23.7; 27.8

        ▪ APB: 20.2; 23.4

    o completed a higher number of admission counseling tasks.

        ▪ NPB: 12 (average); 14 (median)

        ▪ SPB: 14; 16

        ▪ APB: 14; 18

    o were more likely to take the LSAT at least once during LexScholars.

        ▪ NPB: 37.2%

        ▪ SPB: 47.7%

        ▪ APB: 43.4%

    o were more likely to take the LSAT before February 1 (among participants who took the LSAT at least once).

        ▪ NPB: 82.8%

        ▪ SPB: 85.7%

        ▪ APB: 84.8%

    o were more likely to submit at least one admission application during LexScholars.

        ▪ NPB: 25.5%

- SPB: 43.2%

- APB: 40.8%

- were more likely to submit admission applications before February 1 (among participants who submitted at least one application).

  - NPB: 26.3%

  - SPB: 41%

  - APB: 78.2%

- submitted a higher average number of admission applications (among participants who submitted at least one application).

  - NPB: 5.7

  - SPB: 6.2

  - APB: 5.8

- were more likely to receive at least one admission offer, overall and among participants who submitted at least one application.

  - NPB: 9.6% (overall); 37.5% (among participants who applied)

  - SPB: 18.2%; 42.1%

  - APB: 17.1%; 41.9%

- had a higher rate of admission offers that included a scholarship offer.

  - NPB: 43.8% of admission offers

  - SPB: 55.5%

  - APB: 77.4%

- were more likely to receive at least one scholarship offer (among participants who received at least one admission offer).

  - NPB: 20.8%

  - SPB: 21.1%

  - APB: 35.5%

In summary, prior admission process behavior was associated with higher levels of LexScholars engagement and more favorable admission process outcomes. APB participants were noticeably more likely to submit applications earlier in the admission cycle and receive scholarships offers. This trend aligns with others discussed earlier showing associations between application submission timing and scholarship awarding.

E. Attrition

Participant attrition was an expected part of the program. In fact, tracking attrition patterns is useful to program evaluation. This data can be used to gain a clearer sense of the types of characteristics, qualities and behaviors that are associated with, or even predictive of, high levels of engagement and favorable outcomes. Attrition data can also inform adjustments to the program design.

For purposes of our evaluation efforts, we defined attrition as an LPG participant who attended fewer than eight hours of the LSAT course live sessions and an ACG participant who either attended fewer than eight LSAT course hours or completed four or fewer of the 19 admission counseling tasks. Below is the trend data.

- Attrition rate was lower among ACG participants than LPG.

    o ACG: 26.9%

    o LPG: 30.9%

- Attrition rate was lower among ACG/LPG-Incentive participants compared to non-incentive.

    o Incentive: 24.3%

    o Non-incentive: 32.4%

- Attrition rate was lower among participants who had engaged in prior applicant behavior.

    o NPB: 37.9%

    o SPB: 16.3%

    o APB: 23.7%

In summary, the data suggest program impacts on attrition rates, with ACG and ACG/LPG-Incentive participants having lower attrition rates. Prior applicant behavior was also associated with lower attrition, suggesting that this characteristic was once again associated with higher engagement.

F. Participant Perceptions of Program

In this section, we focus on participant feelings regarding the quality of the program. The questionnaire asked participants to share thoughts regarding the interventions that they found most and least beneficial. Thirty-five participants responded to the "most beneficial" prompt. Twenty-three (23) of them identified the LSAT prep course as being most beneficial. The admission counseling was the next most frequently cited beneficial component. These were the two primary interventions; therefore, it was unsurprising, though nonetheless encouraging, that participants commonly cited both as beneficial.

Eighteen participants responded to the "least beneficial" prompt. Notably, over half of these participants either stated they had nothing to share regarding the prompt or conversely stated that the program components were indeed beneficial. Participants who responded squarely to the prompt commonly cited challenges navigating the LSAT prep course. Specific critiques included desire for more one-on-one and customized instruction. Some participants cited difficulty balancing the various aspects of the application process in what they perceived as a compressed timeframe. Suggestions included earlier access to program resources. Some participants also desired more interaction with LexScholars staff and other participants.

The feedback received from the qualitative assessments is valuable in that it is the only source of firsthand narrative insights from participants. Most of the feedback aligns with other data. For example, the recommendation of earlier access to program resources aligned with feedback from the admission counselors and with program engagement trend data. Overall, the feedback suggests a sound program design that could nonetheless be improved by various adjustments.

G. Programmatic Insights and Next Steps

LexScholars is a research study designed to explore and develop sustainable pipeline program models for increasing law school diversity. Participant experiences during this first cycle provided insights that we will explore further in future program cycles. Below are a few observations that have implications on future iterations of the study.

1. **ORDERED PARTICIPANT SELECTION**

   For LexScholars, ordered participant selection has two purposes: 1) to allow for more valid participant group engagement and outcome comparisons by reducing selection bias; and 2) to test the efficacy of using detailed eligibility requirements to allow for a more passive and efficient selection process. Re the latter, pipeline programs often select participants through some form of subjective review of application materials. These methods can be labor-intensive and, therefore, costly. Through LexScholars, we want to test whether detailed eligibility requirements can alleviate the need for a labor-intensive application review process. An efficient selection process would lower the costs of administering pipeline programs and potentially minimize the types of bias that are unavoidable when using subjective review methods.

   As explained on page 18, our original plan was to select participants using a random drawing among all eligible applicants. Early experiences in the application process and the onset of COVID-19 prompted us to transition to a "first-come, first selected" method. Like the random selection framework, this method emphasizes efficiency. For the second LexScholars cohort, we implemented and publicly communicated this method from the beginning. We were also able to maintain the same eligibility requirements throughout the selection process, unlike during the first cycle.Using the ordered method, we will continue to study the interplay between eligibility requirements; participant selection; program and process engagement; and admission process outcomes. Hallmarks of effectiveness will include participant engagement and outcomes that increase in response to eligibility and programmatic changes, while keeping the ordered method intact.

2. **PRIOR APPLICANT BEHAVIOR**

   As described starting on page 26, prior applicant behavior was associated with higher levels of LexScholars engagement and more favorable admission process outcomes. And while we are not yet able to conclude that prior applicant behavior predicts higher engagement and more favorable outcomes, the descriptive evidence seems compelling enough to warrant a response. Starting in the 2022 application cycle, we will adjust the ordered selection process to preference applicants who have already taken the LSAT prior to applying to LexScholars. Applicants who apply with test scores other than the LSAT will not be considered for selection until roughly ten weeks after the application process begins. This method will increase the chances that applicants

with prior law school admission process behavior are selected for LexScholars. The expectation is that overall engagement will increase, and outcomes will become more favorable as a result.

3. **RECOMMENDER ASSESSMENTS**

To be eligible for selection, LexScholars applicants are required to have two people submit recommender assessments on their behalf. The assessments ask recommenders to rate applicants on ten qualities and characteristics that research has associated with effective lawyering skills.[24] Recommenders are also asked to support high ratings with narratives describing specific examples of the applicant exhibiting the associated skills. The purpose of the recommender assessments is to explore the efficacy of a standardized form to capture relevant third-party opinions of applicants. Development of such a form could help efficiently yield more engaged participants, which would increase program impact.

LexScholars recommender assessments are purely exploratory at this stage. The ratings and narratives do not play roles in the participant selection process. As long as two assessments are submitted for an applicant, the applicant has met the requirement. As we collect more data from the recommender assessments, we will investigate relationships between ratings and program engagement. These analyses will inform future decisions about the feasibility of such assessments as a substantive part of the LexScholars participant selection process, with potential implications for pipeline programs generally.

4. **BEHAVIORAL INCENTIVES**

The behavioral incentives are designed to test whether financial incentives prompted participants to engage in admission process behaviors that are associated with increased odds of gaining admission. Participant LSAT performance data suggest that the incentives prompted participants to take the LSAT before they were adequately prepared. We are still intrigued by the idea of using incentives to spur engagement. In response to the first cycle data, we added an additional incentive period. Participants who do not qualify for the $300 Amazon gift card for completing the mandatory tasks by November 30 can qualify for a $100 Amazon gift card if they complete the tasks by January 31. The purpose of adding this additional incentive is to spur earlier process engagement while potentially lessening the urgency to take the LSAT without proper preparation.

5. **RESPONSE INCENTIVES**

The response incentives are designed to incentivize participants to submit timely responses to the monthly program surveys and to test the impact of this strategy. Participant monthly survey response rates suggest that response incentives fostered higher response rates. The control group, the only group to receive a gift card guarantee

of $50 for each monthly survey response, had a higher response rate than the other participation groups. But as we surmised earlier, the fact that control group participants tended to have fewer updates to report, making the process less time-consuming, could have also contributed to their more reliable response behavior.

To further test the impact of the response incentives, we randomly selected one-half of 2021-22 ACG and LPG participants to receive a gift card guarantee of $20 for each monthly survey response. We will closely monitor any differences in response rates between the groups based on response incentive guarantee.

6. **ADMISSION COUNSELING AND LSAT PREP**

The law school admission process consists of numerous time-sensitive tasks. Managing these tasks can be overwhelming, especially for participants with significant educational, professional and familial responsibilities and those facing financial constraints. The admission counseling component of LexScholars is designed to test whether offering such support could aid participants in navigating the admission process in ways that result in more admission and scholarship offers. The data suggest that the admission counseling fostered earlier engagement with the admission process. To potentially strengthen this impact, the admission counseling services began about one month earlier for the 2021 cohort than the 2020 cohort. For similar reasons, the LSAT course live sessions began about one month earlier, for all participants. Lastly, we increased the number of participants who received access to admission counseling services to 75, from 52 in 2020.

Overall, the data presented in this report highlight a successful 2020-21 LexScholars cycle, marked by achievement of program goals. Our findings aligned with our hypotheses in encouraging ways and diverged in others that require further attention. The 2021-22 cycle is well underway with the application for the 2022-23 cycle opening soon. The five-year LexScholars study period will come and go quickly. But we are confident that at the end of it, we will contribute much new knowledge to what we collectively know about effective pipeline program practices.

Endnotes

1   U.S. Bureau of Lab. Stat., Labor Force Statistics from the Current Population Survey (2020), https://www.bls.gov/cps/cpsaat11.htm.

2   U.S. Census Bureau, ACS Demographic and Housing Estimates (2020), https://data.census.gov/cedsci/table?t=Age%20and%20Sex&tid=ACSDP1Y2019.DP05&hidePreview=false.

3   Model Rules of Pro. Conduct Preamble ¶ 6 (Am. Bar Ass'n 2021), https://www.americanbar.org/groups/professional_responsibility/publications/model_rules_of_professional_conduct/model_rules_of_professional_conduct_preamble_scope/.

4   Guili Zhang et al., *Using the Context, Input, Process, and Product Evaluation Model (CIPP) as a Comprehensive Framework to Guide the Planning, Implementation, and Assessment of Service-learning Programs*, 15 J. Higher Educ. Outreach & Engagement 57, 61 (2011), https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ957107.pdf.

5   U.S. Bureau of Lab. Stat., supra note 1.

6   U.S. Census Bureau, supra note 2.

7   Law Sch. Admission Council, Diversity in the US Population & the Pipeline to Legal Careers (2021), https://report.lsac.org/View.aspx?Report=DiversityPopulationandPipeline.

8   *Id.*

9   Law Sch. Admission Council, Admission Trends: ABA Applicants, Admitted Applicants, & Applications (2021), https://report.lsac.org/View.aspx?Report=AdmissionTrendsApplicantsAdmitApps.

10 See Aaron N. Taylor, *Robin Hood, In Reverse: How Law School Scholarships Compound Inequality*, 47 J.L. & Educ. 41, 61–62 (2018).

11 Susan P. Dalessandro Et Al., Law Sch. Admission Council, LSAT Technical Report Series: LSAT Performance with Regional, Gender, and Racial/Ethnic Breakdowns: 2005–2006 Through 2011–2012 Testing Years 20 (2012), http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.258.4820&rep=rep1&type=pdf.

12 See Aaron N. Taylor, *The Marginalization of Black Aspiring Lawyers*, 13 FIU L. Rev. 489, 498 (2019).

13 The most comprehensive study of a law school pipeline program was released by the Law School Admission Council. Elizabeth Bodamer, The Need for Intentionality: Insights from Research and the LSAC Prelaw Undergraduate Scholars (PLUS) Program (2020), https://www.lsac.org/data-research/research/need-intentionality-insights-research-and-lsac-prelaw-undergraduate-scholars.

14 Below are the three-month periods for the Response incentives:

        Drawing #1: October-November-December

        Drawing #2: January-February-March

        Drawing #3: April-May-June

        Drawing #4: July-August-September

15 The composite engagement index was calculated for each participant by summing engagement item scores across three measures for LPG and four measures for the ACG. This total score was then used to rank each person within their respective group among their peers. Engagement items were LSAT prep course attendance (in hours); LSAT prep course assignment completion rate; Whether the participant applied to law school – by January 1st, 2021 or after; and number of admissions counseling assignments completed on time.

16 This total does not include costs associated with AccessLex staff and other internal organizational resources.

17 Actual per participant cost varies, given the differential treatment framework.

18 We discuss this change further on page 18.

19 Baseline comparisons between treatment and participant groups were tested using two proportion Z-test (differences in sample proportions) and Welch's t-test (differences in sample means).

20 *See* Coll. Bd., 2015 COLLEGE-BOUND SENIORS: TOTAL GROUP PROFILE REPORT 2, 13 (2015), https://secure-media.collegeboard.org/digitalServices/pdf/sat/total-group-2015.pdf.

21 This group was originally comprised of 106 participants. Program withdrawals altered the number of participants included in our analyses.

22 This group was originally comprised of 106 participants. Program withdrawals and waitlist replacements altered the number of participants included in our analyses.

23 Average UGPAs among groups: ACG – 3.00; LPG – 3.22; control – 3.36.

24 Recommenders are asked to rate applicants on the following ten traits: Analysis and Reasoning; Problem Solving; Speaking; Writing; Community Involvement and Service; Integrity & Honesty; Stress Management; Passion & Engagement; Diligence; Able to See the World Through the Eyes of Others. *See* Marjorie M. Shultz & Sheldon Zedeck, *Identification, Development, and Validation of Predictors for Successful Lawyering* (CELS 4th Annual Conference on Empirical Legal Studies, 2009), https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1442118.

AccessLex

INSTITUTE®

EMPOWERING THE NEXT GENERATION OF LAWYERS®

AccessLex Institute®, in partnership with its nearly 200 nonprofit and state-affiliated ABA-approved member law schools, has been committed to improving access to legal education and to maximizing the affordability and value of a law degree since 1983. The AccessLex Center for Legal Education Excellence® advocates for policies that make legal education work better for students and society alike, and conducts research on the most critical issues facing legal education today. The AccessLex Center for Education and Financial Capability® offers on-campus and online financial education programming and resources to help students confidently manage their finances on their way to achieving personal and professional success. AccessLex Institute is a nonprofit organization headquartered in West Chester, PA.

AccessLex.org