

BACKGROUND

Many of the factors that contribute to both law school outcomes and U.S. News rankings (e.g., undergraduate GPAs (UGPA), LSAT scores, admission rates) do not reflect the impact law schools have on student outcomes, such as bar passage and employment.

We propose a method for measuring institutional quality that is based on a school's ability to improve its graduates' likelihood of first-time bar passage while controlling for those students' preadmission characteristics: a value-added approach.

RESEARCH AIMS

1. Build a model of bar passage differential using multiple predictors and multiple years of data.
2. Determine extent to which schools affect their students' chances of passing the bar

DATA AND METHOD



Predictors: Law school selectivity, % of students who are underrepresented people of color, % of students who are part-time, number of 1L students who attrited for non-transfer reasons.

Outcome: Bar passage differential – the difference between a law school's expected and actual bar exam performance.

Value-Added Approach



1. Isolate – Predict bar passage for each school in each year.



2. Identify – Whether predictions over- or underperform the school's actual bar performance.



3. Rank – Rank law schools within years and overall based on their added value.

RESULTS

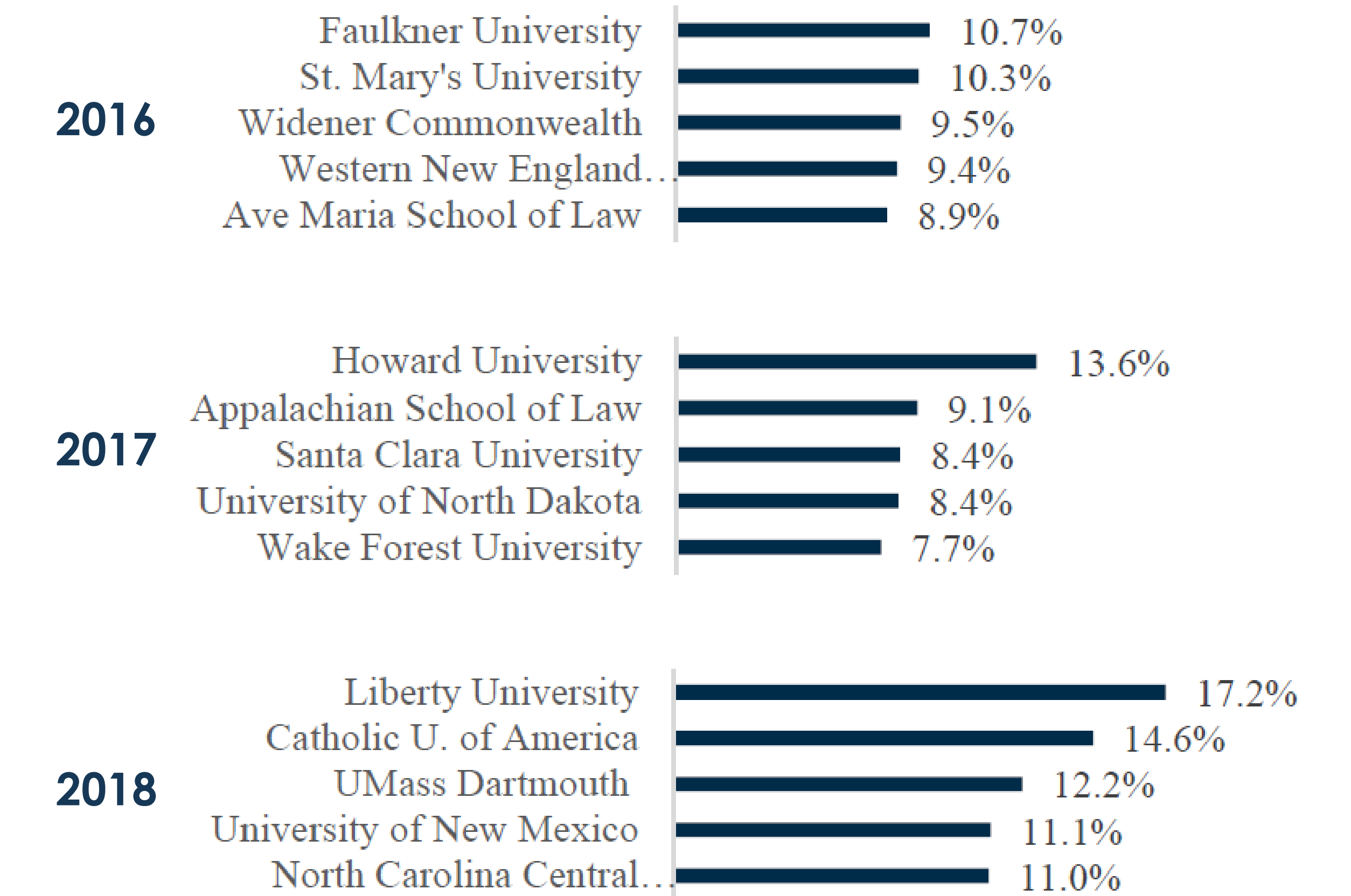
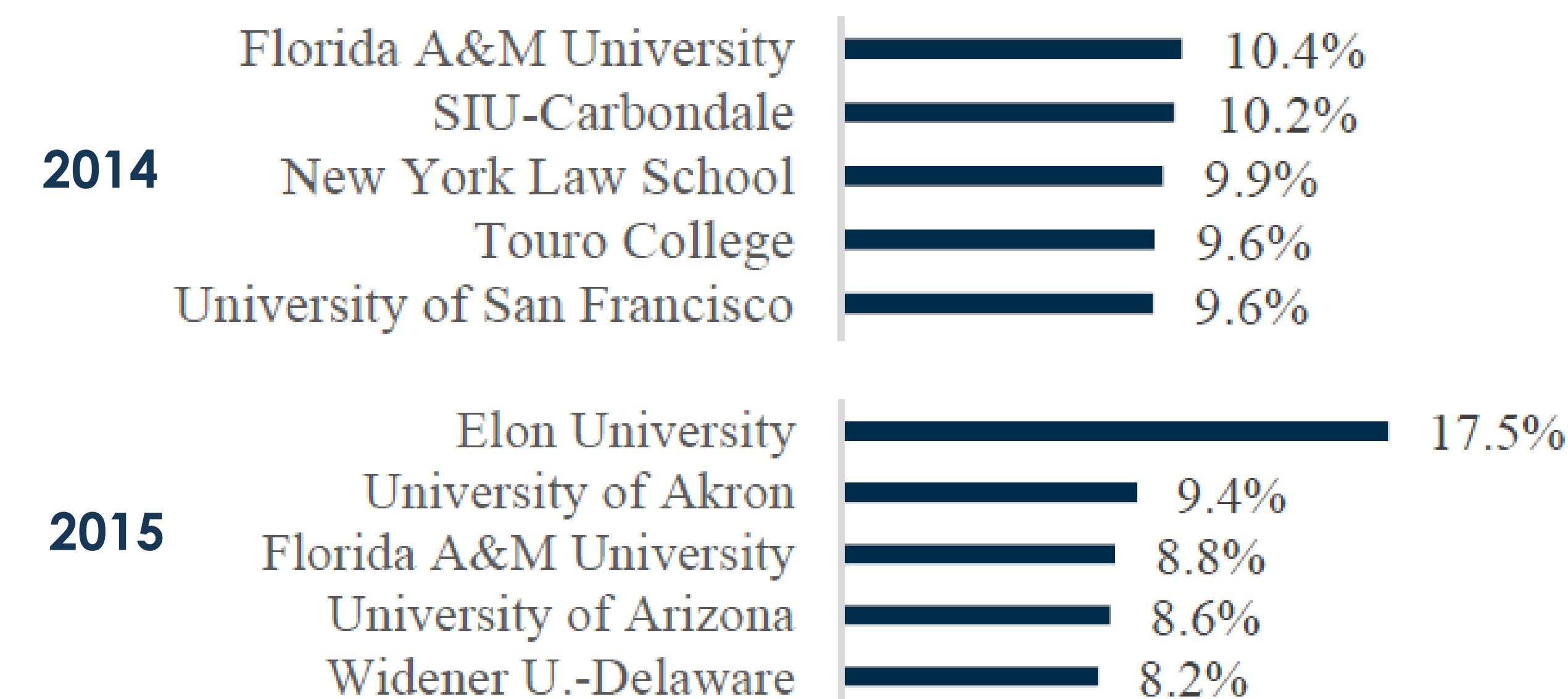
Using a value-added approach, the average T14 law schools would look much different than the most recent U.S. News rankings:

Value-Added Rank	School	U.S. News Rank
1	Nova Southeastern U.	171
2	Widener Commonwealth	159
3	Willamette University	155
4	Florida International U.	60
5	Roger Williams University	171
6	Texas Southern University	Unranked
7	University of Illinois	159
8	U. Of South Dakota	122
9	Northern Illinois University	162
10	Washington and Lee U.	40
11	Campbell University	125
11	University of Toledo	141
13	Ohio Northern University	146
14	District of Columbia	Unranked

Additionally, the T14 would be more likely to change each year under a value-added ranking scheme.

Top 5 Value-Added Law Schools by Year

Percentage-point Increase in Pass Differential



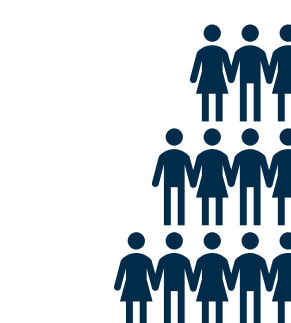
IMPLICATIONS



Many non-T14 schools are performing as well as or better than their bar passage rates or U.S. News rankings would suggest.



What are commonly considered the "best" law schools do not have the greatest value added.



Measuring law school quality more holistically may advance efforts to increase equity in law school admissions and diversify the legal profession.



This approach provides a holistic assessment of law school quality that is divorced from factors such as prestige and selective—and at times, exclusionary—admissions practices.



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