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## Crossing the Divide: Why Law Schools Should Offer Summer Programs for Non-Traditional Students.

Jean Boylan

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# ARTICLE

## CROSSING THE DIVIDE: WHY LAW SCHOOLS SHOULD OFFER SUMMER PROGRAMS FOR NON-TRADITIONAL STUDENTS

JEAN BOYLAN†

I. Introduction.....	22
II. Pedagogy Supporting Summer Programs for Non-Traditional Law Students.....	24
III. Current Academic Support Programs .....	26
A. Summer Programs that Focus on Legal Skills.....	27
B. Summer Programs that Include Substantive Classes ...	28
C. Mini-Introductions to the Law School Environment ...	29
D. A Case Study: Loyola Law School's Summer Institute .....	30
1. Survey of Loyola's Summer Institute Students.....	32
2. Results of Loyola's Summer Institute Survey Student Background .....	32
a. Legal Writing .....	33
b. Note-taking and Case Briefs .....	33
c. English Exam .....	33
d. Student Speakers and Study Groups.....	34
e. Time Management Instruction.....	34
IV. Conclusion and Recommendations .....	34

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† Jean Boylan is an Associate Clinical Professor at Loyola Law School in Los Angeles, California, where she also co-directs the Academic Support Program. The author would like to thank her research assistants Danielle Du Caine and Demetria Graves, as well as Susan Barclay and the members of *The Scholar: St. Mary's Law Review on Minority Issues*, for their diligent efforts and hard work.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Francisco is not your “typical” law student. He grew up in a lower middle class family in a suburb of San Jose, California. After numerous encounters with local police, Francisco joined the military at age 19. After serving in the military for three years, Francisco completed a degree at a junior college. Thereafter, he earned a bachelor’s degree from a state university. Now at age 25, he is ready to attend law school. As a first generation college graduate, Francisco will also be the first in his family to attend law school. He does not personally know any lawyer.

Silvia is also a new law student. She was raised by her mother, a single parent. Silvia’s mother is from Argentina, English is her second language, and she works as a secretary for a non-profit organization. Silvia does not personally know any lawyer, and like Francisco, she is the first in her family to go to college.

Oscar is also an applicant to law school. His single parent mother supported the family on a migrant worker salary. Similar to Francisco and Silvia, Oscar is the first in his family to go to law school. Although Oscar has never met a lawyer, he is determined to get a law degree so he can help his community.

Francisco, Silvia, and Oscar are not your mainstream traditional law students. They have delayed attending law school for economic reasons. They do not have legal backgrounds; none of these three students personally know a lawyer, and each is the first in their family to attend law school. In contrast, most traditional law students enroll in law school immediately following their completion of an undergraduate program and are from twenty-three to twenty-seven years old.<sup>1</sup> Their families encourage, support, and even expect them to attend graduate school.<sup>2</sup> Many of these students do not have to work while attending school, and most are not the first in their family to pursue higher education.<sup>3</sup>

On the other hand, a non-traditional law student has a different cultural orientation, socio-economic background and educational path than the typical law student.<sup>4</sup> Non-traditional law students are frequently older than twenty-seven and many have career experience. Most selected their career paths out of necessity – working to support not only themselves, but in many cases also their families.<sup>5</sup> Additionally, non-tradi-

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1. Amy P. Maloney, *Flexible Academic Programs in Legal Education: Diversifying our Law Schools by Creating Opportunities for Nontraditional Students*, 67 UMKC L. REV. 165, 168 (1998).

2. *Id.* at 168-69.

3. *Id.* at 168.

4. *Id.*

5. *Id.*

tional law students are often the first members in their families to attend college and some may come from extreme poverty.<sup>6</sup> Thus, it is not uncommon for non-traditional students to have substantial family and financial obligations as well as limited financial resources.<sup>7</sup> These responsibilities in turn, often deter or inhibit many non-traditional law students from succeeding in law school.<sup>8</sup> In contrast, traditional law students do not normally face these extra burdens.

Significantly, many non-traditional law students are members of minority groups, while the majority of traditional law students are of Anglo-American heritage.<sup>9</sup> The percentage of minority enrollment in all American Bar Association (ABA) approved law schools for the 2001-2002 academic year was 20.6%.<sup>10</sup> Specifically, American Indians or Alaskan Natives accounted for 4%, Asians or Pacific Islanders accounted for 32%, African Americans accounted for 36%, Mexican Americans accounted for 9%, Puerto Ricans accounted for 3%, and other Hispanics accounted for 17%.<sup>11</sup>

Although most law students enter law school with similar career objectives, many minority law students have a more difficult time trying to achieve their goals than non-minority students.<sup>12</sup> An obstacle many non-traditional minority students face is the difficulty posed by the acculturation process.<sup>13</sup> For example, a number of non-traditional law students have learned English as their second language.<sup>14</sup> These students may be less comfortable and less confident in their communication skills; the skills that are essential to succeed in law school. As a consequence, these students may feel singled out or isolated in the law school environment,<sup>15</sup> which in turn minimizes their chances of success.

6. *Id.*

7. *Id.*

8. Lorraine K. Bannai & Marie Eaton, *Fostering Diversity in the Legal Profession: A Model for Preparing Minority and Other Non-traditional Students for Law School*, 31 U.S.F.L. REV. 821, 832 (1997) (explaining how some students face difficult circumstances).

9. AM. BAR ASS'N, J.D. DEGREES 1984-2001 (TOTAL/WOMEN/MINORITIES), at <http://www.abanet.org/legaled/statistics/jd.html> (last visited Dec. 17, 2002) (offering data from 171 schools reporting in 1984 to 181 schools reporting in 2001).

10. AM. BAR ASS'N, MINORITY ENROLLMENT STATISTICS 1971-2001, at <http://www.abanet.org/legaled/statistics/ministats/jd.html> (last visited Dec. 17, 2002).

11. *Id.*

12. Jacquelyn H. Slotkin, *An Institutional Commitment to Minorities and Diversity: The Evolution of a Law School Academic Support Program*, 12 T.M. COOLEY L. REV. 559, 568 (1995); see also Derrick A. Bell, *Law School Exams and Minority-Group Students*, 7 BLACK L.J. 304, 307 (1981).

13. Slotkin, *supra* note 12, at 567.

14. *Id.*

15. *Id.*

Yet many non-traditional students similar to Francisco, Silvia, and Oscar are applying to, and attending law schools throughout the United States. Specifically, in 2001, minorities made up 21% of first year law students.<sup>16</sup> Moreover, their attendance is being encouraged. A Joint Conference on Diversity by the ABA Section of Legal Education and Admission to the Bar and the Association of American Law Schools (AALS), recently issued directives and recommendations for recruiting diverse, non-traditional students to law school.<sup>17</sup> The report directed institutions to consider establishing special early-admission pre-law programs.<sup>18</sup> Despite the general increase in non-traditional law student enrollment and encouragement from the ABA and the AALS that law schools develop special programs to help these students succeed, many law schools still do not offer such assistance.

A growing number of other schools have however implemented summer programs to introduce non-traditional students to the legal academic environment.<sup>19</sup> This article will discuss the need and pedagogy supporting such programs. Further, it will explore and discuss what types of summer programs currently exist.

Finally, this article will profile a sample summer program in urban Los Angeles and evaluate its strengths and weaknesses. This discussion will include the results of a survey of non-traditional law students who participated in the program. Conducted over five years, the survey compiled feedback on each component of the Los Angeles program. This article concludes with the assertion that pre-law programs should be offered at all law schools to assist non-traditional law students in crossing the divide separating them from success in the legal academic environment.

## II. PEDAGOGY SUPPORTING SUMMER PROGRAMS FOR NON-TRADITIONAL LAW STUDENTS

The main pedagogy in law school is competitive, hierarchical, and built on intimidation while fostering competition.<sup>20</sup> The students who figure the system out are more likely to excel on law school exams. Not coincidentally, these same students often have been told what to expect in law

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16. AM. BAR ASS'N, MINORITY ENROLLMENT STATISTICS 1971-2001, at <http://www.abanet.org/legaled/statistics/ministats/html> (last visited Jan. 27, 2003).

17. *Action & Accountability: Diversity Imperatives for a New Century*, 2000, Joint Conference, A.B.A. SEC. OF LEGAL EDUC. AND ADMISSIONS TO THE BAR, A.A.L.S., AND L.S.A.C. 1.

18. *Id.*

19. Vernellia R. Randall, *Increasing Retention and Improving Performance: Practical Advice on Using Cooperative Learning in Law Schools*, 16 T.M. COOLEY L. REV. 201, 202 (1999).

20. *Id.*

school by parents or friends who have gone before them. The non-traditional student on the other hand, is not typically exposed to the law school learning process until they attend their first class. This student's first introduction to the Socratic method, legal analysis, and the legal system is therefore at the beginning of the semester.

Unfortunately, law professors typically teach all types of students interchangeably.<sup>21</sup> Some students come from backgrounds that prepared them for the law school Socratic method, while others are lost in the process.

Accordingly, more and more law schools are realizing the need for summer pre-law programs.<sup>22</sup> Law school curricula have not changed in the last thirty years at most law schools.<sup>23</sup> However, during this same time period, society has come to see that non-traditional students should be given more opportunities to enroll in law school.<sup>24</sup> For example, the ABA reports that in the 2001 – 2002 academic year, 49% of law students were women while 21% of law students were minorities.<sup>25</sup> This is a significant change from thirty years ago, when, according to the ABA only 9% of enrolled law students were women and 5.9% of students were minorities.<sup>26</sup>

Despite having made some progress, law school curricula have not undergone significant change. Accordingly, students still take the traditional first year classes: contracts, torts, property, criminal law, civil procedure, and legal writing.<sup>27</sup> Most of these classes are taught using the Socratic method or case method of instruction.<sup>28</sup>

Unfortunately, the traditional law school method works to the detriment of non-traditional students. Students unfamiliar with the hierarchy of the Socratic method and the law school grading system experience a disproportionate level of stress.<sup>29</sup> In contrast, those students who identify

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21. See generally Cheryl M Herdin, *Women in Legal Education: A Feminist Analysis of Law School*, 63 REV. JUR. U.P.R. 551 (1994).

22. Author's Survey, July 2002, unpublished (on file with author) [hereinafter Survey].

23. *Id.*

24. *Id.*

25. AM. BAR ASS'N, J.D. DEGREES 1984-2001 (TOTAL/WOMEN/MINORITIES), at <http://www.abanet.org/legaled/statistics/ministats.html> (last visited Dec. 17, 2002) (showing approximately 181-184 schools reporting).

26. *Id.*

27. Chris K. Iijima, *Separating Support from Betrayal: Examining the Intersections of Racialized Legal Pedagogy, Academic Support, and Subordination*, 33 IND. L. REV. 737, 743 (2000).

28. *Id.*

29. Lani Guinier et al., *Becoming Gentlemen: Women's Experiences at One Ivy League School*, 143 U. PA. L. REV. 1, 89 n.243 (1994) (pertaining to gender and its impact on the law school experience).

most with the faculty and the institution have less trouble in their first year.<sup>30</sup> As many non-traditional students have no background in the legal field and have never met a lawyer, they generally are not culturally prepared for a law school classroom.<sup>31</sup>

Therefore, unless the curricula and law school environment changes, non-traditional students will have to be “educated” in order to fit into the law school community. These students, for example, should be exposed to the Socratic method before the beginning of the first year program. Otherwise, they may start their law school career at a disadvantage compared to students who have lawyers in their immediate family, or other experiences with the legal system or its methods and teachings. The majority of these students have an advantage in that they have been exposed to the Socratic method of thinking simply by having conversations with their family members or other legal contacts over the years. For that matter, even traditional law students who have no “legal” family connection may be better equipped to learn the Socratic method quicker than non-traditional students. Research confirms that a student’s widely divergent cultural, socio-economic, and educational experiences have a significant impact on learning.<sup>32</sup>

Unfortunately, a cursory survey of law schools indicates that many do not offer a summer program to help ease the transition for non-traditional students entering legal study. Even though these schools are admitting non-traditional students knowing they may be at a distinct disadvantage, the schools are not providing the support necessary to give these students a fair chance at success in law school.

### III. CURRENT ACADEMIC SUPPORT PROGRAMS

In the last decade, many law schools have initiated academic support programs. At first, law schools began providing academic assistance only to those students who had difficulty with the law school curriculum.<sup>33</sup>

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30. *Id.*

31. *Id.*; see also Alice K. Dueker, *Diversity and Learning: Imagining a Pedagogy of Difference*, 19 N.Y.U. REV. L. & SOC. CHANGE 101, 105 (1991-92) (arguing that non-traditional students experience alienation in law school not as a result of their inability, but because the legal pedagogy does not find their backgrounds or experiences relevant).

32. See Guinier, *supra* note 29. See generally Pamela Edwards, *The Culture of Success: Improving the Academic Success Opportunities For Multicultural Students in Law School*, 33 IND. L. REV. 737 (1997) (discussing a report by the Law School Admissions Council that indicates without vigorous study efforts, multi-cultural students will not perform better academically).

33. Richard Cabrera & Stephanie Zeman, *Law School Academic Support Programs – A Survey of Available Academic Support Programs for the New Century*, 26 WM. MITCHELL L. REV. 205, 206 (2000) (discussing the evolution and importance of Academic Support Programs).

Many schools also began offering summer programs to non-traditional and “high risk” students in conjunction with academic support programs.<sup>34</sup> The programs are offered in addition to tutoring, study and exam skills workshops, counseling, and special classes. Typically, they are offered in the summer, prior to the first year of law school. Some programs are required and some are optional. The following is a brief summary of the types of summer programs currently offered by a sampling of law schools.

#### A. *Summer Programs That Focus on Legal Skills*

Loyola Law School of Los Angeles has a summer program called Summer Institute. The program is designed to aid a limited number of entering students prior to matriculation. The Institute meets in July, and provides students with an intensive introduction to legal reasoning skills with a primary focus on briefing cases, legal writing, and preparing for and participating in class. An academic support instructor and members of the full-time faculty instruct the students enrolled in the program. The program is three weeks long and students are charged only for course materials. Loyola’s admissions committee determines whether students are required to enroll in the summer program.

The UCLA School of Law Summer Program lasts eight days and is offered at no cost to incoming first-year students who are accepted.<sup>35</sup> The program is voluntary and students who are interested in the program must apply during the admission process.<sup>36</sup> Students enrolled in the program attend two of the regularly scheduled classes, which are designed to introduce entering students to the law school experience.<sup>37</sup> The program provides students with an introduction to legal reasoning and legal writing, and covers topics such as case briefing, legal analysis, and the case method of instruction.<sup>38</sup>

California Western School of Law (Cal Western) offers the Summer Enrichment Program.<sup>39</sup> It is available to students who fall within a specified range of criteria established by the law school’s student services of-

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34. *Id.*

35. UNIV. OF CAL. AT LOS ANGELES, THE UCLA SCHOOL OF LAW SUMMER PROGRAM, available at <http://www.law.ucla.edu/students/academicprograms/> (last visited Feb. 5, 2003).

36. *Id.*

37. *Id.*

38. *Id.*

39. CAL. W. SCH. OF LAW, SUMMER ENRICHMENT PROGRAM, available at [http://www.cwsl.edu/main/default.asp?nav=academic\\_programs.asp&body=academic\\_programs/enrichment\\_programs.asp](http://www.cwsl.edu/main/default.asp?nav=academic_programs.asp&body=academic_programs/enrichment_programs.asp) (last visited Feb. 10, 2003).



face.<sup>40</sup> The program is not mandatory; any incoming student may choose to enroll in the six-week program.<sup>41</sup> Unlike many pre-first year programs at other law schools, Cal Western's program offers three units of credit upon completion.<sup>42</sup> Students who participate hear sample lectures and receive instruction on case briefing, note taking, and exam taking.<sup>43</sup> In addition to the six-week program, Cal Western offers a two-week intensive program limited to one third of the incoming students just before fall orientation.<sup>44</sup>

The law school at the University of San Francisco offers a non-credit academic support summer program for select students.<sup>45</sup> The program is not optional, and is considered part of the school's Special Admissions Program (SAP).<sup>46</sup> SAP gives non-traditional students of diverse cultural, social, or economic backgrounds the chance to study law, an opportunity that might not otherwise be available to them.<sup>47</sup> The Academic Support Program lasts three weeks, and introduces the SAP students to skills like case briefing, note-taking, and legal writing.<sup>48</sup>

The University of Missouri-Kansas City, School of Law (UMKC), offers a pre-orientation Academic Enrichment Program to entering students "who are most likely to benefit from assistance in the transition to law study."<sup>49</sup> UMKC's program is unique in that it incorporates follow-up sessions during the entire first year of legal study.<sup>50</sup> Additionally, all UMKC law students may access Academic Enrichment instructional material on-line or at the reserve desk of the school's library.<sup>51</sup>

### B. *Summer Programs That Include Substantive Classes*

A second category of summer programs offers substantive courses in the summer prior to the beginning of the first year of law school. These programs are designed to help students get ahead by easing the fall class load. The University of San Diego has such a program. It is optional and

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40. *Id.*

41. *Id.*

42. *Id.*

43. *Id.*

44. *Id.*

45. UNIV. OF SAN FRANCISCO, ACADEMIC SUPPORT PROGRAM, *available at* [http://www.usfca.edu/law/html/special\\_admissions.html](http://www.usfca.edu/law/html/special_admissions.html) (last visited Feb. 10, 2003).

46. *Id.*

47. *Id.*

48. *Id.*

49. UNIV. OF MISSOURI-KANSAS SCH. OF LAW, ACADEMIC SUPPORT AND SUCCESS, *available at* <http://www.umkc.edu/umkc/catalog/html/law/0520.html> (last visited Apr. 03, 2003).

50. *Id.*

51. *Id.*

offered to all incoming students.<sup>52</sup> The program combines advice on adjusting to law school with the actual study of law. Students who participate may even achieve a bit of a head start; completing a class early may allow them to lighten their fall course load.<sup>53</sup> The program consists of “a substantive law course with an introduction to the legal system.”<sup>54</sup> The Legal Analysis course is designed to introduce students to the legal system, to case and statutory analysis, and to help develop the student’s analytical skills. The students receive credit toward their Juris Doctor if they pass each course.<sup>55</sup> An advantage for students is that they may take a reduced course load the next semester.<sup>56</sup>

Cal Western Law School’s summer program is referred to as the “Summer Enrichment Program.”<sup>57</sup> This program focuses on getting the law student acquainted with law school in general; many topics are covered including: “exercises in taking law school exams, client interviewing, negotiation, and instruction on briefing, case analysis, and the use of precedent.”<sup>58</sup>

Southwestern Law School offers a legal preparation workshop during the summer term that is titled “Introduction to Legal Writing.”<sup>59</sup> The class is optional and open to all students, but at a cost.<sup>60</sup> The course is two weeks long and gives students instruction in writing memoranda, with extensive faculty evaluation.<sup>61</sup>

### C. *Mini-Introductions to the Law School Environment*

Pepperdine Law School does not have an official summer program.<sup>62</sup> Instead, Pepperdine has an “Academic Support Program” that the law

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52. UNIV. OF SAN DIEGO SCHOOL OF LAW, ACADEMICS, *available at* <http://www.sandiego.edu/usdlaw/academic.shtml> (last visited Apr. 6, 2003).

53. *Id.*

54. *Id.*

55. *Id.*

56. *Id.*

57. CAL. W. SCH. OF LAW, SUMMER ENRICHMENT PROGRAM, *available at* [http://www.cwsl.edu/main/default.asp?nav=academic\\_programs.asp&body=academic\\_programs/enrichment\\_programs.asp](http://www.cwsl.edu/main/default.asp?nav=academic_programs.asp&body=academic_programs/enrichment_programs.asp) (last visited Feb. 10, 2003).

58. *Id.*

59. SOUTHWESTERN UNIV. SCH. OF LAW, SUMMER LEGAL WRITING PROGRAM, INTRODUCTION TO LEGAL WRITING, *available at* <http://www.swlaw.edu/programs/legalwriting.html> (last visited Apr. 6, 2003).

60. *Id.*

61. *Id.*

62. PEPPERDINE UNIV. SCH. OF LAW, SCHOOL OF LAW INFORMATION, ACADEMIC SUPPORT PROGRAM, *available at* [http://law.pepperdine.edu/current/academics/catalog/school\\_law\\_info.jsp](http://law.pepperdine.edu/current/academics/catalog/school_law_info.jsp) (last visited Apr. 11, 2003).

school offers during orientation for first year law students.<sup>63</sup> The program is optional but strongly recommended for all entering first-year students. This summer session is offered to the entire entering class at no additional cost.<sup>64</sup> The program introduces students to the Socratic method, and the school's professors instruct students on case briefing, note taking, and exam taking techniques.<sup>65</sup>

St. Mary's University School of Law, in San Antonio, Texas, boasts its own summer skills enrichment program.<sup>66</sup> The program is designed for students whose abilities, diverse backgrounds, life experiences, determination, and potential are not necessarily reflected in their Law School Admission Test (LSAT) scores or undergraduate grade point averages.<sup>67</sup> Approximately twenty students are selected to participate in the four-week program.<sup>68</sup> The curriculum consists of two courses: logic combined with writing and an analytical skills course.<sup>69</sup> Students are evaluated on the basis of attendance, participation, homework assignments, and examinations.<sup>70</sup> The program is mandatory for these students and upon successful completion, they are considered for admission to the first-year class.<sup>71</sup>

Many schools do not have a summer program that is directly affiliated with the law school. However, some schools do have "Academic Counselors" or academic support programs.<sup>72</sup> These programs do not assist the students prior to the first year of law school, but typically, they help students once they experience difficulty in law school.<sup>73</sup> Interestingly, the schools that do offer programs have very different curricula.

#### D. *A Case Study: Loyola Law School's Summer Institute*

Like many other law schools, Loyola Law School of Los Angeles offers an academic support program, in the summer to "a limited number of

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63. *Id.*

64. *Id.*

65. *Id.*

66. ST. MARY'S UNIV. SCH. OF LAW, SUMMER SKILLS-ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM, available at <http://www.stmarytx.edu/law/index.php?group=admissions&page=summerSkills.php> (last visited Feb.19, 2003).

67. *Id.*

68. *Id.*

69. *Id.*

70. *Id.*

71. *Id.*

72. STETSON UNIV. COLL. OF LAW, ACADEMIC INFORMATION, ACADEMIC SUCCESS PROGRAM, available at <http://www.law.stetson.edu/studentlife/hanadbook/2000/academic.htm> (last visited Feb. 9, 2003).

73. *Id.*

entering students prior to matriculation.”<sup>74</sup> Loyola’s program is three weeks long and students are charged only for course materials. The program is designed to give students an introduction to law school and to help students learn the skills necessary for success in the law school curricula.

The program entitled “Summer Institute,” provides students with an intensive introduction to legal reasoning skills by focusing on case briefing, and class preparation.<sup>75</sup> Academic support instructors who are members of Loyola’s full-time faculty teach the Institute program.<sup>76</sup> The program includes: sample class lectures, instruction on case and statutory analysis, briefing, note taking, and legal writing. Time management techniques and study groups are also incorporated into the program, as well as an English exam designed to assist students in identifying and targeting aspects of their writing skills that need improvement.

At the outset of the program, students are assigned to groups so that they may experience and adapt to the study group dynamic. Instruction begins with intensive instruction on case and statutory analysis because students are required to brief cases and statutes for evaluation by the program’s instructors, and to teach them how to prepare for law school lectures. The sample class lectures are designed both to expose the students to the law school arena, and to teach students how to take effective class notes; students attend lectures given by law school professors that require them to prepare for class and participate in discussions during the lecture.

After each lecture, the students turn in their class notes and case briefs, which are evaluated by an instructor and later returned to the students with comments. Near the end of Summer Institute, students compose a legal memorandum, an assignment designed to give students a head start in legal writing. The papers are reviewed to assess student progress in the development of essential skills, and are returned to students at the beginning of their first semester with evaluative comments. If necessary, students are referred to a Legal Writing instructor for assistance with the development or enhancement of their legal writing skills.

A unique component of Loyola’s summer program is called “Community Night.” Students enrolled in the summer program bring a family member, a friend, or a significant other to Community Night so that they can share the law school experience. The guests participate in a mock law school lecture, without the summer program students, to get a taste of the

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74. LOYOLA LAW SCH. LOS ANGELES, ACADEMIC SUPPORT, *available at* <http://www.lls.edu/academics/acadspt.html> (last visited Feb. 10, 2003).

75. *Id.*

76. *Id.*

case method of instruction. Community night is designed to introduce the guests to the law school experience so that the guests may better understand and empathize with what the students will be going through during law school. The summer program at Loyola is the initial phase in an ongoing academic support program that is available throughout the full academic year.

### 1. Survey of Loyola's Summer Institute Students

In March 2002, Loyola Law School sent a survey to previous Summer Institute students to obtain student feedback on the program. Students were asked if they were the first in their family to attend college or law school. They were also asked if they would have attended the Summer Institute if the program were not required. Then students were asked to rate each component of the program, on a scale of one to five whether they considered the following components of the Summer Institute program helpful to their success at Loyola: study group experience, sample lectures with Loyola professors, feedback and evaluation of lecture notes, case brief instruction and evaluation, time management techniques, writing examination and evaluation, and Loyola's Community Night. The students were also asked to provide any comments, suggestions, or concerns regarding the program.

### 2. Results of Loyola's Summer Institute Survey: Student Background

Almost all of the survey respondents were the first in their family to attend law school.<sup>77</sup> The magnitude of this number implies that these students may not have benefited from an environment that encouraged higher education when compared to the background of traditional students. This documented disparity gives traditional students a competitive advantage during the first year of law school. One respondent stated, "[T]hose of us who lacked [attorney parents] are significantly disadvantaged;" The student explained, "[O]ur parents can't really help us succeed on exams because they did not go through the law school process."<sup>78</sup>

Loyola attempts to bridge this gap through the Community Night component and the indications are that it is working. Sixty-four percent of the respondents found Community Night to be either "helpful" or "very helpful" to their success.<sup>79</sup> The student comments indicate that students perceive this program as beneficial because it educates their family members and significant others about the rigors of law school.

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77. Survey, *supra* note 22.

78. *Id.*

79. *Id.*

a. Legal Writing

The legal writing memorandum and the corresponding feedback from instructors were well received by the students, as 64% found it very helpful to their law school success.<sup>80</sup> One student commented, “I felt the writing assignment [memo] was very important. The feedback I received was vital to increasing my self-confidence. It also helped me write on to law review.”<sup>81</sup> All responding graduates ranked this writing component as the most helpful to their success in law school.<sup>82</sup> In addition, 94% of evening students ranked the legal memorandum requirement as either a helpful or very helpful component of the Summer Institute program.<sup>83</sup>

b. Note-taking and Case Briefs

The Summer Institute program at Loyola also provides significant instruction on note-taking and case briefing. Of those surveyed, 58% found the note-taking practice lecture “very helpful” and 29% found it “helpful.”<sup>84</sup> A higher percentage of graduates than current students, at 81%, ranked note-taking and case briefing as “very helpful.”<sup>85</sup>

Overall, as a result of case briefing instruction, many students felt more prepared for the first day of class. One student reported that because of the acquired ability to brief cases, it was easier to predict what the professors expected.<sup>86</sup> Many students commented that case briefing instruction took the “intimidation” out of beginning law school.<sup>87</sup>

c. English Exam

Loyola Summer Institute students take a multiple choice English grammar exam; student feedback on the effectiveness of the exam is mixed. Fifty-one percent of all survey takers found the test to be “helpful” or “very helpful” to their performance during law school.<sup>88</sup> Conversely, 49% of respondents were either neutral regarding the exams’ benefit, others felt it was only somewhat helpful, and some thought it not helpful at all.<sup>89</sup> Fifty-eight percent of daytime students rated the exam positively, whereas 75% of evening students were either neutral to the exam or

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80. *Id.*

81. *Id.*

82. *Id.*

83. *Id.*

84. *Id.*

85. *Id.*

86. *Id.*

87. *Id.*

88. *Id.*

89. *Id.*

found it to be of marginal benefit.<sup>90</sup> The close overall rating and the wide disparity between daytime and evening students appears to reflect the lack of access to remedial English grammar instruction. Although the English exam identifies areas that students are deficient in, Loyola University does not provide the tools to help the students address their particular needs. While Loyola does provide a writing consultant to meet with individual students, appointments are limited to four sessions per student.

#### d. Student Speakers and Study Groups

Student speakers were well received by the students. Sixty-one percent of survey respondents found the speakers “very helpful” or “helpful.”<sup>91</sup> Graduates found them the most helpful.<sup>92</sup> Interestingly, 31% of the evening student respondents were “neutral” towards the student speakers.<sup>93</sup>

With reference to student groups, many students found this component to be only “helpful,” but not “very helpful.” Only 46% found it “helpful” and many surveyed were “neutral” or found it “not helpful.”<sup>94</sup>

#### e. Time Management Instruction

The time management lecture was not ranked favorably by the attending daytime and evening students. Forty percent of daytime students found this time management instruction “helpful,” 15% were “neutral” and only 6% found it “somewhat helpful.”<sup>95</sup> Of the evening students, 38% were “neutral” on this component with 44% finding the technique “helpful.”<sup>96</sup> Former students differed from current students in ranking this component, with 75% finding the time management instruction “very helpful.”<sup>97</sup>

### IV. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Many schools do not offer any summer program for non-traditional students. In 1998, 25,266 minority students enrolled in Juris Doctor programs in law schools throughout the United States.<sup>98</sup> According to the

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90. *Id.*

91. *Id.*

92. *Id.*

93. *Id.*

94. *Id.*

95. *Id.*

96. *Id.*

97. *Id.*

98. AM. BAR ASS'N., J.D. DEGREES 1984-2001 (TOTAL/WOMEN/MINORITIES), at <http://www.abanet.org/legaled/statistics/jd.html> (last visited Jan. 26, 2002).

American Bar Association, only 7,443 minority students completed a three-year law school program and were awarded a Juris Doctor degree.<sup>99</sup> This is simply unacceptable. Considering the high price of law school tuition, institutions should provide the needed assistance to entering non-traditional students. As reflected in the review of law schools, almost all non-traditional students are the first in their family to attend law school. Many are the first in their family to ever attend college.

Significantly, 76% of the students acknowledged that the Summer Institute program helped them succeed in law school. However, 38% admitted that they would not have attended if it were not mandated.<sup>100</sup>

The benefit of a summer program for non-traditional students is clear. More schools should offer and consider requiring pre-entry summer programs for non-traditional students. If law schools continue to recruit and admit non-traditional students, they have an ethical obligation to help those students succeed. The programs should include an introduction to legal writing and case briefing, feedback on the skills practiced, family involvement, and student speakers. The respondents to the Loyola Summer Institute ranked all of these components as helpful, with legal writing and case briefing specified as the most helpful. The students universally responded that the summer program took away the “intimidation factor” and made them feel they could compete in a foreign environment. This is crucial to the success of non-traditional students.

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99. *Id.*

100. Survey, *supra* note 22.