



WAPLA

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PRESIDENT'S PAGE

Marilyn Hoffman
University of Utah

As I write my first "President's Page" for the WAPLA Newsletter, I am excited to begin my term of office in this position. I follow in the footsteps of many fine examples of WAPLA leadership and will strive to do my best to follow those who have preceded me. We have an energetic WAPLA Board who, under the leadership of Tim Garrison, accomplished much over the last three years as summarized in the Spring 2010 newsletter. I will look forward to working with the board and all of you during the next three years to assure that WAPLA remains a strong, vibrant organization moving forward into the future.

As we enter this new academic year, I would love to hear any suggestions, concerns, or comments you might have. The WAPLA Board traditionally meets twice a year, and the next meeting will be in Las Vegas on November 12. Among other things, we will be reviewing our WAPLA sponsored law fair events, our new web

site, and our new electronic law fair registration process. Kris Tina Carlson (BYU), WAPLA Secretary and Caravan Registrar, and Rebecca Gill, UNLV Prelaw Advisor and Site Supervisor, are owed a huge thank you for all of the time and effort they spent on working with the web designer, to get the new web site up and running. No small feat! We will also be planning for the 2011 WAPLA Regional Conference (see below).

Sara Lyness, ASU, (filling in for Verlaine Walker as WAPLA Designated Rep) and I will be attending the PLANC (Prelaw Advisors National Council) meeting in Minneapolis Oct 16-17 in conjunction with the MAPLA regional conference. We will look forward to networking with other APLA representatives and discussing regional and national activities and issues, including plans for the June 2012 PLANC national conference.

I would like to encourage all regional prelaw advisors to join WAPLA and take advantage of the benefits of belonging to an or-

ganization specifically related to this advising focus. For incredibly low annual membership dues of only \$25, you can access helpful prelaw advising information and be eligible for a travel stipend to attend regional and national conferences.

The WAPLA region covers Arizona, Colorado, Idaho, Kansas, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Mexico, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah and Wyoming. If you know an advisor in any of these states who meets with prelaw students, even just occasionally, please feel free to forward this newsletter to them and invite them to join WAPLA and attend the conference. You can access the membership application at www.wapla.org

SAVE THE DATE!
2011 WAPLA REGIONAL CONFERENCE - February 4-5 Las Vegas, Nevada.

Please plan to join your fellow prelaw advisors in sunny Las Vegas for the next regional conference. We are planning a



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Special points of interest:

- WAPLA Conference, February 4-5th in Las Vegas!
- Call for Conference Proposals
- WAPLA Law School Fair Caravan in October and November
- LSAC Updates

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PRESIDENT'S PAGE—continued

conference that will provide you with helpful prelaw advising information and valuable professional development. The annual conference is also an opportunity to network with other prelaw advisors and law school admissions representatives from a number of law schools, as well as get rejuvenated as you return to your advising responsibilities at your home institution.

The University of Las Vegas William S. Boyd School of Law has graciously offered to host our meeting and provide an opportunity to learn more about the school. We will meet Friday February 4 through Saturday February 5, adjourning early enough to allow you to spend the rest of the weekend enjoying the many fun activities in Las Vegas. Conference hotel negotiations are in progress, and we plan to select a hotel near the law school with easy access to the Strip. More details on the hotel will be forthcoming as soon as they are available. Conference registration will be available as soon as possible after the November 12th WAPLA Board meeting.

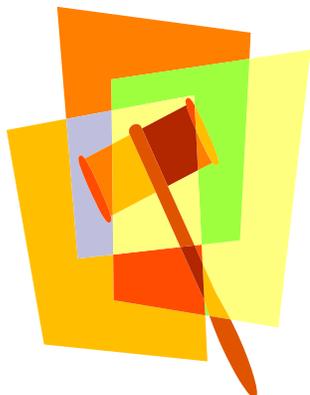
We know that advisors have limited travel budgets, especially in these challenging economic times, so we will continue to offer an advisor travel stipend to help cover the cost of attendance. For the 2010 conference in Tempe, Arizona,

a travel stipend of \$500 was provided. The stipend for 2011 should again be in this range and we will notify you of the amount directly after the November 12 Board meeting. To be eligible for the advisor travel stipend, you must be a current paid WAPLA prelaw advisor member in the WAPLA region. **YOU MUST HAVE PAID BOTH YOUR 2010 AND 2011 MEMBERSHIP DUES TO RECEIVE THE STIPEND.** Annual WAPLA dues of \$25 are due January 1st each year. To pay your dues, complete the membership registration form at <http://www.wapla.org/> by clicking on "Join" at the top of the page.

I will look forward to seeing you in Las Vegas in February!

CALL FOR PAPERS AND PRESENTATIONS FOR THE 2011 CONFERENCE

This conference is for you in your role as prelaw advisor, and is an opportunity to share best practices, innovations, and information needed to be effective and current in your prelaw advising work. We invite any ideas you have for conference sessions or guest speakers. If you would like to present at the conference or have any ideas for conference sessions, please let me know by November 10. Also, please feel free to contact me at any time if you have questions about the conference or other concerns. I can be reached at: mhoffman@uc.utah.edu or 801-581-3842.



"We know that advisors have limited travel budgets, especially in these challenging economic times, so we will continue to offer an advisor travel stipend to help cover the cost of your attendance."



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WAPLA LAW SCHOOL FAIR CARAVAN—OCTOBER 18-25

Amy Urbanek
University of Utah

Every Autumn WAPLA organizes a series of Law School Fairs in our region. The October Caravan starts in Colorado, continues through Utah and Arizona, and wraps up at Nevada. In November, there are fairs in Portland, OR and Boise, ID. The fairs are held at larger universities, but that doesn't mean students from other schools are not welcome. We encourage anyone in the area to attend. Whether you advise at a four year or a two year school, your students can benefit from attending a WAPLA Law School Fair where they can speak with representatives from law schools from across the country for free! They do not have to be ready to start the admissions process to benefit. Encourage students to attend early in their undergraduate education so they can gain valuable information that will help them become competitive applicants.

If you are an hour or two away from a law fair, consider borrowing a campus van and driving interested students to the event. If that is not possible, perhaps you can organize carpooling. Your students may feel more comfortable on an unfamiliar campus if they come in a group. It is even better if you, as their advisor, attend with them. Ask the prelaw advisor at the host school about any special events that go along with the fair. For

instance, the University of Utah hosts an Admissions Panel right after the fair featuring some of the Admissions Deans and Admissions Directors attending the fair. Other schools host events all week. Ask if these events are open to students from other schools.

Before your students attend a law fair, provide some information on how to gather information. The prelaw advisor from the host school will likely have a list of registered schools available. Information on the kinds of questions to ask is also helpful. At most fairs, the tables are generally staffed by either a law school admissions representative, usually an Admissions Dean or a Recruiter, or a local student or alumnus of the law school. The type of information each can provide may be different. An admissions representative can usually give detailed descriptions of the law school and its various programs. Alumni and current students may not be able to give the same level of detailed information, but what they can provide, that the admissions representatives can't, is an insider view of the school—what it is really like to attend that school, the general "personality" of the school, perceived strengths and weaknesses, etc. Both types of representatives are valuable sources of information.

Below are some of the tips I give my students at the University of Utah law fair. Feel

free to adapt this information to your needs.

It can seem overwhelming at first to see all those tables, but relax - the representatives are anxious to speak with you. They are there to promote their schools and to answer your questions. The following are a few tips for a successful Law School Fair visit.

Don't be nervous! You are not here to be interviewed by the schools. There are no "dumb" questions. As long as you are polite and interested, you will come across just fine. These law fair representatives are attending five fairs in five days so they are unlikely to remember you. On the other hand, do mind your manners. They will remember you if you are rude, and that won't work in your favor. You do not need to dress up, but do look respectable

Take advantage of this opportunity to explore! Don't just visit the tables of schools you have already decided upon. Wander through the ballroom. If you see a representative who is not talking to anyone, stop and ask about the school even if you have never heard of it. You might find a hidden "gem" that you would not have known about otherwise.

If you have no idea what to ask, good introductory questions include things like:
• Tell me about your law school



“Whether you advise at a four year or a two year school, your students can benefit from attending a WAPLA Law school fair, where they can speak with representatives from law schools all across the country for free!”



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WAPLA LAW SCHOOL FAIR—continued



“What are some of the most outstanding things about your school?”

“Why might I choose your school over another?”

You will find that more questions occur to you as you listen to the answers.

It is perfectly acceptable to ask what a school is looking for in an applicant. This is a particularly good question if you are a Freshman or Sophomore and not yet ready to apply. Ask this same question of representatives at a number of different schools. You will find many areas of agreement, but you may also find some areas where schools differ a bit, and you might learn some good “insider tips.”

If you are speaking with an alumnus or student from a law school rather than an admissions professional, ask them to give you “the scoop” on what it is really like to attend that school. What did they like? What didn’t they like? Do they have any tips on what to do to be successful there? While alumni may not be able to provide the same level of detail on the law schools programs, faculty, etc., the more informal information they can provide can be invaluable.

As you ask these questions, make sure you keep track of each school’s answers. You don’t want to get home to find you have a wealth of good information but no idea where it all came from. Keep these tips in mind and you should have a fun and productive day!

WAPLA 2010 Law School Caravan Schedule

University of Colorado, Monday, October 18th

University of Utah, Tuesday, October 19th

Brigham Young University, Wednesday, October 20th

University of Arizona, Thursday, October 21st

Arizona State University, Friday, October 22nd

University of Nevada-Las Vegas, Monday, October 25th

Portland State University, Monday, November 15

Boise State University, Thursday, November 18

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THREE BOOKS REVIEWED

Reviewed by

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Reviews were prepared for the Annual WAPLA Conference 5-6 February 2010

Arizona State University College of Law, Tempe, AZ

The more things change, the more they stay the same.

Or, another way to look at it, generally speaking generalizations generally aren't good for much. Except in this case, one of mine continues to ring true. I have opined elsewhere that books about law school generally fall into one of two categories: either the directory format, which gives supposedly objective information about the application process and the individual schools, or the so-called "insider" book with personal insights and secrets. The texts in question here prove that assertion. The Princeton Review's *The Best 172 Law Schools* (483 pages, \$22.99, New York: The Princeton Review, 2010) neatly falls into the first end of that continuum. Martha Kimes's *Ivy Briefs: True Tales of a Neurotic Law Student* (276 pages, \$14, New York: Atria Books, 2007) bookmarks the other end of that continuum. Susan Estrich's *How to Get into Law School* (301 pages, \$14, New York: Riverhead Books, 2004), falls somewhere in between the

earlier pair. All are available in paperback.

Ivy Briefs is a most entertaining read. Kimes is humorous, insightful and articulate. Her work, however, is less guidebook than it is memoir. She spends slightly more than one page about the LSAT. And slightly more than that on the discursive conversations that formed her desire to even go to law school. And nowhere to be found is any mention of a pre-law adviser.

From her discussions about Ivy League academic envy, to her recounting of law review exploits, to her re-telling of the foibles regarding graduation tickets, Kimes's book is a hoot. As fun as the book is to read, it may become dated quickly, although it might remain a cute recounting of legal education at the end of the Twentieth Century. With her entertaining and breezy writing style, Kimes has produced a book that could easily end up required reading in a literature of law school seminar. This is a subjective tour-de-force, meaning that, as entertaining as it is, the book may not be helpful to many.

By contrast, The Princeton Review's compilation has lots of "objective" information. I use the term "objective" advisedly. They have two pages on the law schools they profile and in those profiles are the results of surveys for which they claim "Every law school

with a descriptive profile has its students resurveyed and its profile rewritten at least every other year." Unfortunately, not much is disclosed about their survey methods.

The meat of this collection is the 344 pages that make up the descriptive profiles of ABA-approved law schools. Presuming The Princeton Review survey information (which they say comes from comments by 18,000 students) is accurate, it does supply some interesting nuggets. For example, here's an observation from the College of Law at my undergraduate and graduate alma mater, Michigan State University (NOT where I went to law school, by the way):

"About half of all newly-minted MSU law graduates find jobs in Michigan. The other half end up fleeing the state. . . . It's not a big-name school that will impress employers. . . . Oddly enough, the farther away from Michigan you go, the better the school sounds just because of the name recognition through NCAA sports. Thanks to the glory of the Spartans, MSU law grads are able to land jobs all over the country."

The Best 172 Law Schools has enough compilations to please, I suspect, even Gerald Wilson of *The Book of Lists* fame. The Princeton Review folks have indexes by cost, by geographic location and, of course, simply by name. Plus, there are list-

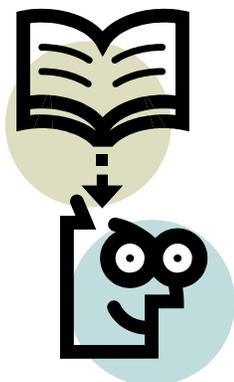


"With her entertaining and breezy writing style, Kimes has produced a book that could easily end up required reading in a literature of law school seminar."



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THREE BOOKS REVIEWED—continued



“The Best 172 Law Schools has enough compilations to please, I suspect, even Gerald Wilson of *The Book of Lists* fame.”



ings of the ten toughest schools to get into, the ten with the most competitive students, the ten with the best professors, the ten with the best career prospects, the ten with the best classroom experience, the ten with the most liberal students, the ten with the most conservative students, the ten with the best environment for minority students, the ten with the most diverse faculty, the ten most chosen by older students and the ten with the best quality of life. And there are listings for Canadian law schools, California Bar Association-approved law schools and, of course, American Bar Association approved law schools.

The book also has 13 pages of what it calls “School Says” information. These are basically advertisements. “The Princeton Review,” the book states, “charges each school a small fee to be listed, and the editorial responsibility is solely that of the university.” The book also advertises “surprise, surprise, surprise” as Gomer Pyle might have said other Princeton Review products, including *Cracking the LSAT* and *LSAT Workout*.

Additionally, the folks at The Princeton Review provide information about writing a personal statement, letters of recommendation, financial matters, the LSAT, choosing a law school, career matters and the like. Again, as in Kimes’ text, the mention of pre-law advisers is conspicuous in its ab-

sence. In the absence of an experienced and informed pre-law adviser, the book can be quite useful, especially considering its breadth and depth of information about individual law schools.

When I proposed various books for this review to former WAPLA President Tim Garrison, he indicated to me “you gotta go with Estrich for her voice.” The one with the voice is Susan Estrich, law professor (Harvard and the University of Southern California), political operative (campaign manager for Michael Dukakis’ 1988 presidential quest), pundit (a Fox news analyst, she has also written for NewsMax and *USA Today*) and noted feminist (she is also the author of *Real Rape, Sex & Power* and *The Case for Hillary Clinton*). Her work, *How to Get into Law School*, is an easily accessible, highly readable piece.

Estrich splits her text into two books. The first part, “Getting In,” deals with the standard issues of pre-law preparation, student mindset, the LSAT, the personal statement, letters of recommendation, personal interviews, selecting the right law school and financial matters.

The second part, “What You Need to Learn,” includes insight-laden discussions: “To Brief or Not to Brief,” “Surviving the Socratic Method,” “How to Get the Most from Your Legal Educa-

tion,” “Unhappy Lawyers and How to Avoid Becoming One” and “Work that Matters; Professionalism; Defining It For Yourself.”

I found “What You Need to Learn” a good primer that has much value for students about to embark on their own personal paper chase. Although “Getting In” doesn’t have the comprehensive in-depth, law school by law school overview that a text like the produced by The Princeton Review, Estrich does a good job of surveying the terrain and does it with panache.

Unlike the other two books featured in this review, Estrich’s does indeed mention prelaw advisers. But not in the best of light, for example: “CAN A PRELAW ADVISER REALLY HELP?” “Some prelaw advisers give very bad advice. You need to take the measure of the prelaw adviser, find out if/how much the person is worth having as an advocate, and then approach/schmooze as necessary. Some of them maintain contact with lots of admissions deans and do more than push the paper around. Some don’t. I’ve talked to lots of students about how much help they got from prelaw advisers. A very mixed bag. Most got none.

“Be polite but ignore prelaw advisers who tell you that you don’t need to study for the LSAT, that other students do

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THREE BOOKS REVIEWED—continued

just fine without taking the test prep, that you shouldn't spend your money or apply for a loan if you need one.

Adjust expectations accordingly. No need to ever offend anyone. The last thing you ever want is someone saying you're a jerk. But don't expect the prelaw adviser to get you into law school. [emphasis in the original]

Elsewhere, Estrich advises a **Personal Note** from your prelaw adviser to the dean of admissions telling her that "this one is really special and that X school is really your first choice." That all sounds a bit too Machiavellian in its machinations. But then, as a politico

and an advocate, Estrich is trying to make the best case possible for the applicant. In my experience, the students who "got none" in terms of help from prelaw advisers got exactly what they asked for (please pardon the ending of a sentence with a preposition). Most of the law students I know who complain about lack of help from prelaw advisers never availed themselves of those advisers' assistance.

A good prelaw adviser—one who is experienced, knowledgeable and engaged in advising work—is a valuable human resource for a college or university. Some institutions have wised up and invested in the position. Some of those insti-

tutions have also rewarded faculty and/or staff who do exemplary advising work. If administrators want to keep their institution off of Estrich's fecal scroll, they would be wise to pay attention to the task. No book can serve as a suitable replacement for a truly great prelaw adviser. In the absence of such an individual, a good book can be a help, but it cannot be a substitute.

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"I found "What You Need to Learn" a good primer that has much value for students about to embark on their own personal paper chase."

LSAC UPDATES

Anne Brandt Law School Admissions Council

Following are the highlights of LSAC activity for the current year:

Evaluation Service

In an effort to provide more detailed information about applicants, LSAC launched the evaluation service, a parallel to the letter of recommendation service, as another format for persons supporting applicants in the admission process. Evaluations are done online and include six catego-

ries of skills and attributes important to law schools. Applicants must review the requirements of each school to which they will apply and solicit the appropriate number of letters and evaluations to submit in support of their applications. Applicants must assign both letters and evaluations to individual schools in order for them to be sent. Law schools may require, recommend, or accept evaluations, just as they do with recommendation letters.

Forums

In an effort to better serve law school applicants and in response to preferences expressed by law schools, LSAC has eliminated spring forums and created a new forum schedule. Because there are a limited number of weekends available each fall, three forums will be held in the summer of 2011: Washington, Bay Area, and Chicago. The remaining forums will be held in September through November. A Canadian forum has been added to the 2010 forum



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LSAC UPDATES—continued



“LSAC has created a new format for electronic law school applications which will be launched next April.”

schedule and will be held October 22 in Toronto.

FlexApp

LSAC has created a new format for electronic law school applications which will be launched next April. After surveying all law school applications, LSAC has identified the information collected most commonly, and expanded the amount of information that flows into each application after the candidate has completed this common information on the first application. This process should simplify the process for applicants. Each law

school may include as many individual elements as it requires in the e-app and may require any addenda necessary to its admission process. These might include a residency form, scholarship application, or any other specific information a law school needs.

Official Guide Data Search

Law school grids in the *ABA-LSAC Official Guide to Law Schools* are now based on the highest LSAT score of applicants to law school. This is also true for the data search in the *Official Guide* section of lsac.org.

National Recruitment Calendar Subcommittee

LSAC will convene a meeting of the National Recruitment Calendar Subcommittee each December in an effort to coordinate recruiting events 20 months in advance. In December the group will meet to discuss recruiting for the fall of 2012. One representative from each APLA and one law school from each APLA region serve on the Subcommittee. Each APLA is invited to discuss its plans for recruiting events in a national context in order to make the calendar more coherent for law schools and for law school applicants.

TIPS FROM AN ADMISSIONS DEAN—TAMARA’S TOP TEN

Tamara Martinez-Anderson Concordia University School of Law

After a decade as an Assistant Dean for Admissions, Tamara Martinez-Anderson has reviewed thousands of law school applications and conducted more than an interview or two. Now part of the team developing the new Concordia University School of Law in Boise, Idaho, she has some tips to help prospective students put together the best law school application possible.



1. Send a message

When you write your personal statement, leave the admissions committee with a message that will help them remember you. Write something that defines who you are. Tell them why you want to study law or share an experience that shaped you. There is no one story that will get you into law school. Remember this is personal.

2. Share your values

Law schools seek students who exhibit the ethical and moral foundation that make good lawyers and great leaders: honest,

service-oriented, and committed. Law is a noble profession. Let examples of your values shine through in your personal statement. Encourage your recommenders to tell us about your character. Use your resume to document leadership and service experiences.

3. Details matter

Paying attention to details is critical in the legal profession. And missing deadlines, failing to read directions, or leaving out facts or details reflects poorly on you as an applicant to law school. Be attentive and

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TAMARA'S TOP TEN—continued

careful. Your application process will be much easier. And often more successful!

4. Talk to Admissions Staff

Are you having trouble writing your personal statement? Not sure how to write an addendum about a problematic test score or grade? Confused about what to include when addressing a “character” question? Call the admissions staff at the schools you are applying to. They are there to walk you through the process. There are no dumb questions.

5. Know the facts

Law school is tough, no getting around it. It requires you to sacrifice, manage your time, and make the acquisition of a legal education a priority. Don't come to law school with any illusions. Talk to current law students — especially first-year law students. Find out how their lives have changed during law school. Learn what you can do now — financially, emotionally, personally — to prepare yourself and those you care about for this challenging, rewarding, and life-changing experience.

6. See for yourself

Visiting law schools you are interested in can make all the difference. Every law school

has a personality that emerges because of the students who choose to attend it. You can get a feel for the personality of a school through their website, emails, and phone conversations, but visiting a school lets you truly see what they are all about.

7. Coach your Recommenders

They should highlight those skills that relate to law school (academic, analytical, critical thinking, research, writing). And tell us what kind of student you will be (punctual, disciplined, participatory, enthusiastic, hard-working). The more detailed the examples, the more helpful a reference will be.

8. It's about skills

Hard work, motivation, and confidence help make a successful law student. But foremost, it depends on your academic skills. That's why law schools require you to take the LSAT. To manage law school, you need to be able to identify issues, analyze information, reach solutions, comprehend highly technical readings, and write clearly and persuasively. That's what the LSAT measures. If you struggle with standardized tests, make sure everything else in your application file addresses how you have

developed and refined these skills.

9. Know your options

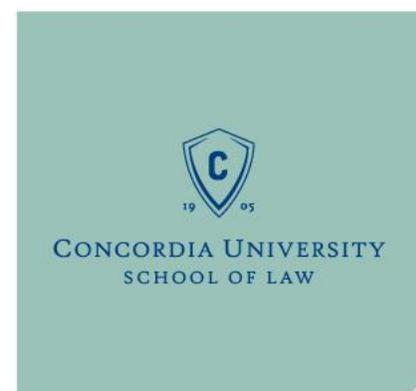
You're going to get lots of advice about where to apply to law school. Then, about which school to attend. Consider your options; do your homework; ask others for their opinions. What's best for one person isn't always the right thing for another. There's a law school out there for you.

10. Take advantage

Law schools want you to succeed. To do that, take advantage of the opportunities in front of you. Attend open houses. Participate in online chats. Read blogs. Explore websites. Visit campuses. Talk to legal professionals. Contact student ambassadors. A stronger application, an enhanced understanding of how to prepare for law school, and the ability to make an informed decision about your pursuit of a legal education will result.



“Talk to current law students — especially first-year law students. Find out how their lives have changed during law school.”



WAPLA—WESTERN ASSOCIATION OF PRELAW ADVISORS

ENJOY THE BENEFITS OF MEMBERSHIP IN WAPLA

The Purpose of the Western Association of Prelaw Advisors is:

- To enhance the skills of prelaw advisors;
- To advocate the interests of undergraduate students and institutions in the counseling and admissions processes leading to law related careers;
- To promote communication between prelaw advisors, individual law school admissions officers, the Law School Admissions Council, the Educational Testing Service, and other law related organizations.

These purposes will be accomplished through periodic meetings, training of new prelaw advisors, and through other means as the association may devise.

For \$25 per year, a WAPLA member receives:

- The WAPLA newsletter
- A subscription to PLANC Points, the publication of the Prelaw Advisors National Council
- Eligibility for travel stipends for yearly regional prelaw conferences
- Eligibility for travel stipends for quadrennial national prelaw conferences
- Eligibility for awards for innovative advising programs
- A network of support among prelaw advisors in the region



**Check our updated
website!
<http://www.WAPLA.org>**