THE LEGAL EMPLOYMENT MARKET: DETERMINANTS OF ELITE FIRM PLACEMENT AND HOW LAW SCHOOLS STACK UP

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ABSTRACT: Data collected from 1,295 employers on 15,293 law firm associates who graduated from law school between 2001 and 2003 were used to develop a "total quality score" for every ABA-accredited law school, both nationally and for nine geographic regions. Quantitative methods were then used to identify factors to help explain the variation in a law school's national career placement success at elite law firms. The findings revealed that while a law school's academic reputation is the single biggest predictor of placement, several other factors were also highly significant. Differences in grading system, class rank disclosure policies, and the number of first year courses required were responsible for significant variation. Numbers grading systems, such as those used at the University of Chicago, and honors/pass/fail grading systems, such as those used at Yale, both have a strong negative impact on placement when all else is held equal. This is likely because both systems impair the middle of the class's job prospects relative to traditional letter grade systems. Law schools that do not disclose class rank to students or employers place better than schools that do disclose rank, when all else is held constant. It is unclear whether this is due to employer preferences or due to disparate psychological effects on students that impact their career placement strategies. Law schools that require a greater number of first year classes, however, can make up for deficiencies in these other areas.

Every year, more than 50,000 individuals make one of the biggest investment decisions of their lives—deciding whether and which law school to attend.[1] Some individuals consider subjective factors, such as a school's location, existence of strong clinical programs, or diversity. Individuals differ in how much utility they receive from such factors. While some applicants may place a very high premium on diversity, many others may not care at all. The overwhelming majority of applicants, however, will place a very high value on career placement and cost of attendance. A legal education is not cheap. Debt of $80,000 or more is typical, often in addition to undergraduate debt.[2] Naturally, one would expect prospective law students to weigh the monetary costs of attendance—tuition, fees, opportunity cost—against the benefits of expected future earnings and increased job prestige. Unfortunately, many students cannot objectively weigh the costs and benefits of attending specific law schools. While students can learn about law-school costs with relative ease, shockingly little career placement information has been gathered and standardized.

Why have law schools provided so little career placement information when students place such a high premium on it? Some theorists speculate that anti-competitive forces, such as the American Bar Association (ABA) and the American Association of Law Schools (AALS), have tried to standardize legal education and have intentionally minimized or downplayed the differences between institutions.[3] Others argue that law schools would genuinely like to provide this information, but career survey response rates are so low that it would be irresponsible to release anything other than median private and public sector salaries.[4]

In any case, an information vacuum exists, and prospective students have been forced to turn to unofficial sources, such as commercial rankings. Law school deans have almost universally condemned such rankings.[5] Commercial rankings such as those in *U.S. News & World Report* are a poor proxy for employment placement information.[6] Every employment-related measure *U.S. News* provides suffers from

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1. The Law School Admissions Council reports that about 55,900 applicants were admitted to ABA-accredited law schools in 2004. Of those, about 45,400 chose to matriculate at a law school. THE LAW SCHOOL ADMISSIONS COUNCIL, LSAC VOLUME SUMMARY (2005), http://www.lsac.org/LSAC.asp?url=lsac/LSAC-volume-summary.htm.

2. THE LAW SCHOOL ADMISSIONS COUNCIL, FINANCIAL AID FOR LAW SCHOOL , Repayment: An Overview (2005), at http://www.lsac.org/LSAC.asp?url=/lsac/financial-aid-repayment.asp.

3. Paul L. Caron & Rafael Gely. *What Law Schools Can Learn from Billy Beane and the Oakland Athletics*, 82 TEX. L. REV. 1483, 1507–08 (2004) (reviewing MICHAEL LEWIS, MONEYBALL: THE ART OF WINNING AN UNFAIR GAME (2003)).

4. Interview with Diane Downs, Assoc. Dean of Career Planning and Placement, University of Pa. Law School, in Phila., Pa. (Feb. 10, 2005).

5. In a recent letter sent to all law school applicants, many deans described commercial rankings as "inherently flawed" and encouraged applicants to "minimize the influence of rankings on [their] own judgment." The deans concluded by encouraging applicants to gather their own information about law schools. THE LAW SCHOOL ADMISSIONS COUNCIL, DEANS SPEAK OUT (2005), http://www.lsac.org/pdfs/2005-2006/RANKING-2005-newer.pdf .

6. To be fair, *U.S. News* avoided a direct claim that its ordinal rankings serve as a proxy for employment prospects—the editors instead state that its rankings serve to give prospective students "an independent assessment of the academic quality of programs." The editors of *U.S. News* state, however, that individuals should use *U.S. News* data to compare institutions on several key characteristics, including "how diplomas from various schools will affect [applicants'] earning power" and "how

significant validity problems,[7] including the failure to account for regional variation in compensation[8] and low survey response rates.[9] Since many elite private sector employers make hiring decisions prior to the third year of law school, bar passage rates likely tell more about a student's ability to keep a job offer than a law school's ability to get a student a job offer.[10] Even the percentage of students employed at graduation is open to manipulation and tells little about actual career placement.[11]

Several individuals have responded to *U.S. News*'s deficiencies by creating their own noncommercial employment rankings,[12] but these too suffer from serious defects.[13] Perhaps the most well known rankings scheme was devised by Professor

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successful the schools are at preparing graduates for the bar exam." *Mine the Data,* U.S. NEWS & WORLD REP., Aug. 2005, *at* http://www.usnews.com/usnews/edu/grad/rankings/about/05rank.b_brief. php; *see also* U.S. NEWS & WORLD REP., Aug. 2005, *Why Does U.S. News Rank Graduate Schools?* (2005), *at* http://www.usnews.com/usnews/edu/grad/rankings/about/ faq_ meth.php; Robert J. Morse & Samuel Flanigan, *The Ranking Methodology*, U.S. NEWS & WORLD REP., Apr. 11, 2005, at 66.

7. For a thorough explanation of the problems with the *U.S. News* methodology, see generally STEPHEN P. KLEIN & LAURA HAMILTON, ASSOC. OF AM. LAW ACHS., THE VALIDITY OF THE U.S. NEWS AND WORLD REPORT RANKING OF ABA LAW SCHOOLS (1998), http://www.aals.org/validity.html.

8. Median private sector salary is a poor measure of earning power, for it does not take into account regional variation in associate compensation or differing levels of job prestige. Standard market salaries for first-year law firm associates vary considerably from region to region, often because of the cost of living differences. By looking at median salary alone, schools like Virginia and Emory, which send many graduates to secondary and tertiary markets, appear to place worse relative to schools like Fordham and Cardozo, which send more graduates to high paying areas.

9. More than half the schools boasting $125,000 medians have response rates of 85 percent and below—Stanford (67%), Michigan (77%), Cornell (75%), Northwestern (83%), Berkeley (72%), UCLA (82%), USC (70%), GWU (77%), Boston University (73%), Fordham (85%), and Cardozo (66%). Adverse selection problems are often present in salary surveys: nonrespondents typically have significantly lower salaries than respondents. Nonrespondents might not respond because they feel embarrassed about their lower salaries, or they might not place a high value on salary and therefore do not feel the need to fill out the survey. Nonrespondents might also realize that reporting their low salaries could make their school look bad and thus choose not to disclose. Because of adverse selection, it is likely that those schools with sub-85 percent response rates may have private sector medians that are lower than $125,000, thus calling into question the precision of the median private sector salary data reported to *U.S. News*.

10. Law schools have been known to manipulate even bar exam passage data. *See* Klein & Hamilton, *supra* note 8.

11. *U.S. News* does not verify employment data or distinguish between legal and nonlegal jobs. In the past, some schools have hired unemployed graduates as research assistants to boost this figure. *See* Alex Wellan, *The $8.78 Million Maneuver*, N.Y. TIMES, July 31, 2005, at 18, *at* http:// alexwellen. typepad.com/ barman/files/wellen_nyt_articles.pdf ("Northwestern University has also hired graduates for short internships. 'I don't think it's unethical if you're giving some value to your students,' says David Van Zandt, its law dean.")

12. *See, e.g.,* John E. Wehrli, Top 30 Law Schools at the Top 100 Law Firms, Adjusted for School Size, http://web.archive.org/web/19980520150138/http://wehrli.ilrg.com/amlawnormt30.html (last visited Aug. 23, 2005); Michael Sullivan, Law School Job Placement, http://www.calvin.edu/admin/ csr/students/sullivan/law/index.htm (last visited Aug. 23, 2005).

13. Two recent rankings lists employing poor methodology are the *National Law Journal*'s "most mentioned" and "most hired" lists. In addition to not adjusting for regional or sectoral preferences, NLJ's lists did not even adjust for differing class sizes. *See* Angela Cheng, *Georgetown, Virginia Among Most Mentioned*, NAT'L L.J., Nov. 15, 2004, *at* http://www.law.georgetown.edu/news/releases/ documents/nlj_000.pdf. While Wehrli adjusted for class size and quality, he did not take regional differences into account.

Brian Leiter.[14] Although Leiter attempted to account for specific factors such as regional differences, firm quality, and class size, his study fails to distinguish between recent hires and individuals hired a long time ago, fails to adjust for differing student sectoral preferences and for differing student regional preferences, does not properly adjust for LL.M. graduates, draws its data from an incomplete and inconsistent information source, makes questionable choices regarding which employers to include,[15] uses an arbitrary methodology biased towards large schools,[16] and starts with a preconceived notion of which law schools are "national."[17]

Without access to standardized employment placement data, law school applicants are forced either to make decisions based on subjective criteria such as "fit" or to use invalid or unreliable ordinal rankings such as the *U.S. News* list. To remedy the situation, this article studies the labor market for first year associates at elite law firms. The article develops a set of standardized regional and national employment placement rankings that take sectoral and regional preferences into account, and identifies several key variables that are strong predictors of national employment placement. Although other authors have asked how particular law schools place their graduates relative to other law schools, no other studies have investigated the more fundamental question of which characteristics make particular law schools more successful at placing their graduates.[18]

I. DATA COLLECTION

A. The Elite Firms in the Data Set

The American legal market has become so large that no one paper can examine every sector.[19] This study limits itself to the elite-firm market.[20] Although the elite

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14. Brian Leiter, The Most National Law School Based on Job Placement in Elite Law Firms, http://www.utexas.edu/law/faculty/bleiter/rankings/03_most_national.html (last visited Aug. 23, 2005).

15. *See id*. Exclusively using the 2003 edition of *Vault*'s guide to determine which employers are elite may be misleading. Even if one assumes that regional *Vault* rank perfectly correlates with regional firm prestige, one must remember that Leiter's study includes individuals who were hired over a period lasting several decades. *Id.* While these 45 employers might be the most elite in their region in 2003, they might not have been the most elite in their region in 1983 or 1963.

16. *See id*. Leiter states that "[w]ithout a doubt, two of the measures used in calculating the overall rank are sensitive to the number of graduates" and concedes that this favors large schools such as Georgetown. *Id*. It is unclear why Leiter chose to include these two measures in his ranking formula knowing the bias it introduces.

17. *See id*. Leiter states that he "studied the usual suspects for the top law schools," "two schools on the cusp of this elite group," and four "very reputable, but presumably less national schools" only "[a]s a check on the reliability of the results." *Id*. No prior research supports such claims.

18. Ordinal rankings have a short shelf life. Even if a researcher managed to eliminate all potential sources of error, the ranking scheme would rapidly become dated, and prospective students and other stakeholders would no longer find them useful.

19. For general information regarding the American legal market, see ABA, NAT'L LAWYER POPULATION BY STATE (2004), *at* http://www.abanet.org/marketresearch/2004nbroflawyersbystate.pdf

law firms examined here represent only five to ten percent of the entire legal employment market,[21] they generally hire many recent law graduates[22] and pay the highest starting salaries. Many prospective and current law students aspire to such jobs and are interested in maximizing their chances at being hired by such firms. The data necessary to examine elite-firm placement are also easily accessible.

There is, however, no consensus on what constitutes an elite law firm. This study adopts the following definition: "An elite law firm is both prestigious and profitable." These two factors represent the external and internal opportunities available to a typical associate. Prestige represents an associate's external opportunities. While some associates may strive for partnership, the tournament nature of the partnership track dictates that most associates will leave their initial law firm prior to their partnership review. Many associates join an elite firm without having any intention of ever making partner.[23] Such individuals may gain many tangible benefits from working at a more prestigious firm—most importantly, greater lateral opportunities.[24] Thus, by maximizing firm prestige, an individual may maximize the chance of obtaining a more desirable second job.

Just as prestige represents external opportunities, profitability represents internal opportunities. A significant number of associates hope to become partners one day. For these individuals, profitability represents the carrot at the end of the stick. By choosing a law firm based on its profitability, individuals maximize potential future earnings. Profitability serves, however, as an indicator of quality even to those who do not wish to become partner. Profitability may correlate with other factors employees find desirable. A very profitable firm may, for instance, provide its associates with greater job security.

1. Vault *Rank: A Proxy for Prestige*

"Prestige," like "elite law firm," is rather hard to define. This study defines a

firm's prestige as "how the firm is perceived by its peers relative to other firms." By aggregating individuals' perceptions, one can obtain a good idea of how a firm is perceived relative to its peers. Thus, *Vault* arrived at a list of the most prestigious law firms by combining various sources of information. First, *Vault* compiled "a list

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(quantifying the supply of practicing American lawyers, which currently stands at more than one million); BizStats, Size of U.S. Markets by Industry, http://www.bizstats.com/ marketsizes.htm (estimating the dollar value of the demand for legal services, which was about $170 billion in 2001) (last visited Aug. 23, 2005).

21. *See* Wehrli, *supra* note 13. Wehrli estimated that 4.7% of attorneys working in the United States were employed by the nation's top 100 firms.

22. My research found 15,293 graduates of the classes of 2001, 2002, and 2003 are currently working at these firms.

23. *See generally* Kevin A. Kordana, *Law Firms and Associate Careers: Tournament Theory Versus the Production-Imperative Model*, 104 YALE L.J. 1907, 1918–19 (1995). Kordana argues that associates choose to work at these firms primarily to "improve their lawyering skills and increase their general human capital."

24. *Id.* at 1919–20.

of the most renowned law firms . . . by reviewing . . . previous surveys, consulting . . . previous lists, poring over legal newspapers, talking to lawyers in the field and checking out other published rankings."[25] *Vault* selected 150 law firms based on its initial research and distributed an online survey to those law firms.[26] A total of 14,052 attorneys responded from around the nation and the world, scoring each of the 150 law firms on a scale from one to ten.[27] *Vault* collected the surveys and ranked in order those firms that comprise the *Vault* Top 100.[28] While *Vault*'s rankings are certainly not without flaws and biases, they represent the best proxy available for law firm prestige, and current law students are known to consult the annual *Vault* rankings during the employment process. The data set therefore includes every law firm ranked in the *Vault* Top 100 as well as the *Vault* "Best of the Rest."

2. *The* American Lawyer *Profits-Per-Partner Rankings*

While prestige is an important factor, it is not the only one. One of the best indicators of any business's success is profitability. Although prestige and profitability often go hand in hand, some firms, while greatly respected by their peers, are not commercially successful. Others generate millions in yearly profits, but do not command the same respect as many less profitable firms.

No one resource lists, unfortunately, every law firm in the country and its profits per equity partner (PPP). *The American Lawyer*, however, comes close in its annual ranking of American Lawyer Top 200 law firms based on PPP.[29] Almost all *Vault* firms appear on the *American Lawyer*'s list, as well as several firms not ranked by *Vault*. Given the importance of PPP, all these firms are included in the data set.[30]

Another possible measure of profitability is revenue per lawyer (RPL). When judging a firm's financial viability one might want to examine RPL in conjunction with, or instead of, PPP. RPL is not, however, as strong a measure of an associate's potential internal opportunities. Although PPP is open to some manipulation,[31] it is a better measure of the benefits that come with being an equity partner than RPL.

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25. *Rankings Methodology*, VAULT (2005), *at* http://www.vault.com/nr/lawrankings.jsp?law2005=7&ch_id=242.

26. *Id.*

27. *Id.*

28. *Id.*

29. *See The Am Law 200*, AM. LAWYER, Aug. 1, 2005.

30. Some prestigious and profitable "boutique" law firms might have been omitted from the data set because they are ranked by neither *Vault* nor the *American Lawyer*. I chose to draw the line at *Vault's* 150 most prestigious firms and the *American Lawyer's* top 200 firms in PPP. I do not believe the omission of such boutique firms had a significant impact on my findings because they are few in number and there is no reason to believe that schools differ significantly in the percentage of the graduating class that wishes to work at a boutique instead of a *Vault* or *American Lawyer* firm.

31. For instance, some firms may inflate their PPP by making heavy use of nonequity partners. *Cf.* William D. Henderson, *Effect of Single-Tier Versus Two-Tier Partnership Tracks at Am Law 200 Law Firms: Theory and Evidence*, 83 N.C. L. REV. (forthcoming Sept. 2005) (PPP are significantly higher in single-tier firms and also are perceived as more prestigious than two-tier law firms).

B. Offices Studied

Unlike previous research, the analysis here is not limited to the main office or headquarters of each firm. Every domestic office of every *Vault* and *American Lawyer* PPP firm was studied, for a total of 1,295 offices.[32] Table 1 provides a geographical breakdown of the offices examined:

Table 1. Location of Offices

AK	7	GA	27	MI	20	NJ	39	SC	6
AL	1	IA	3	MN	6	NM	2	TN	6
AZ	12	ID	3	MO	11	NV	6	TX	110
CA	262	IL	58	MS	1	NY	139	UT	9
CO	27	IN	11	MT	3	OH	33	VA	39
CT	22	KS	4	NC	29	OK	1	WA	14
DC	142	LA	4	ND	1	OR	9	WI	12
DE	17	MA	35	NE	2	PA	56	WV	1
FL	82	MD	39	NH	2	RI	3	WY	2

C. Gathering the Data

Data were collected from December 2004 to January 2005. This period ensures that most of the Class of 2003's law clerks would have finished their clerkships and, if they were planning to enter private practice, would have joined a law firm as an associate. I visited the Web site of every law firm on either the *Vault* Top 100, the *Vault* Best of the Rest, or the *American Lawyer* PPP Top 200 list, in approximate rank order.[33] All 2001, 2002, and 2003 graduates who earned a J.D. or J.D.-equivalent law degree in a foreign country were excluded, even if they had earned an American LL.M.[34]

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32. International offices were excluded.

33. At each law firm Web site, I examined the section containing attorney profiles or biographies, with the goal of determining the number of 2001, 2002, and 2003 law school graduates at each firm and which law school conferred the J.D. Previous researchers used the online Martindale-Hubbell directory rather than individual firm Web sites. Martindale-Hubbell's online directory is, however, an incomplete and inconsistent source of information. Several law firms only submit biographical information to Martindale-Hubbell about their partners and counsel and do not provide the names of their associates, let alone where they went to law school. To illustrate just how much damage excluding a firm's associates can have, two of the three elite New York firms Leiter and Sullivan examined have not included their associates in the online Martindale-Hubbell directory—Cravath, Swaine & Moore and Sullivan & Cromwell. *See* Leiter, *supra* note 15; Michael Sullivan, Methodology, http://www.calvin.edu /admin/csr/students/sullivan/law/method.htm (last visited Aug. 23, 2005). According to the data set Sullivan released, Martindale-Hubbell's search engine found 19 Columbia Law School graduates working at Cravath. Michael Sullivan, Data, http://www.calvin.edu/admin/scr/students/law/data.htm (last visited Aug. 23, 2005). According to Cravath's search engine, there are 87 Columbia Law graduates working there—including 69 associates not in Martindale-Hubbell!

34. Most of these individuals were part of joint-degree programs where one earns a foreign law degree, usually from Britain or France, along with an American J.D. A number of American law schools offer such programs. A handful of graduates earned both an American J.D. and a foreign law degree.

A small number of law firms did not include graduation years in their attorney profiles, and an even smaller number did not include associate biographies on their Web sites. For these firms, the Martindale-Hubbell directory of law firms was consulted.[35] For the very small number of firms that did not list graduation dates or bar admissions dates on their Web sites or on Martindale, I prorated the firm's associates.[36]

II. ASSUMPTIONS AND METHODOLOGY

A. Assumptions

Law schools have released little information about job placement and the elite-firm employment process. Much of the information that has been released is neither standardized nor complete, and it is necessary to make several assumptions.

1. *Regional and Sectoral Preferences*

To adjust for region, I assumed that students chose their initial job based on its geographic location and sector. That is, as regards to location, students who want to work in the Middle Atlantic region will actually work in the Middle Atlantic region after graduation. Some markets, of course, are tougher to break into than others, and individuals may have to make trade-offs. For example, an individual who seeks work in Boston might have an easier time getting an elite firm job in

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The American J.D. was recorded, but not the foreign law degree. Similarly, for the small number of J.D. graduates who had an American J.D. and an American LL.M., the J.D. but not the LL.M. was recorded. Virtually all 2001, 2002, and 2003 J.D. graduates had only a J.D., and a significant portion of J.D.-LL.M. graduates earned their LL.M. from the same institution as their J.D. Many of the individuals who had a J.D. and an LL.M. earned the LL.M. part time while working for their firm. Counting J.D.-conferring institutions, but not LL.M.-conferring institutions, should not therefore have had any meaningful impact on the findings.

35. These firms included their associates in the directory, so the Cravath and Sullivan problem did not occur for any firm in this study. *See supra* note 33. The Martindale-Hubbell search engine was not used because it does not distinguish between associates and nonassociates and includes LL.M. graduates along with J.D. graduates. A search engine can also overlook permutations of a law school's name. Some associates, for instance, might list their law school in Martindale as "UC Berkeley," but others may list it as "U.C. Berkeley," "UCB," "the University of California at Berkeley," "the University of California @ Berkeley," "Boalt Hall," "Boalt School of Law," or countless other variations that a simple search would miss. As with law firm Web site biographies, I examined the Martindale-Hubbell individual directory listing of every associate listed as being a part of the relevant firm and obtained graduation year and J.D.-conferring institution from those individual listings. When graduation year was not listed, the bar admissions year was used as a proxy. (I took into account that different states schedule their swearing-in ceremonies on different dates. An individual who graduated law school in 2002 and passed the New York bar exam in summer 2002, for instance, would not be formally admitted to the bar until early 2003. Nevertheless, using bar admissions as a proxy for graduation year has some error involved—for example, some clerks do not take the bar exam until their clerkship finishes. However, the number of associates researched on Martindale whose bar admissions year was used as a proxy for graduation year is insignificant compared to the total size of the data set.

36. The only firms prorated were Cravath, Shearman, Cahill, and LeBoef. Prorating involved taking the total number of associates from each school represented at the firm and dividing it by five. Although partner track is usually seven years, I used five because recently hired junior associates will almost always outnumber senior associates due to attrition. Only 19 of the 1,295 offices examined were prorated.

New York. If the choice is between making $50,000 in Boston and $125,000 plus bonus in New York, this individual may choose to work in New York. Some individuals may have also very weak geographical preferences, and may conduct a job search that spans two, three, or perhaps even four regions. Although the assumption that the typical law student who wants to work in the Middle Atlantic will work in the Middle Atlantic after graduation is an oversimplification, it is a necessary one and should be roughly correct, at least on average.

Similarly, as regards to sector, I assume that an individual works at a public interest organization because he wants to, and not because he could not get a job at a law firm. In reality, grades might impact whether an individual works at a law firm or in a lower paying occupation. Kornhauser and Revesz concluded that up until a certain threshold, students at NYU and Michigan with low grades were significantly more likely to work in public interest rather than in elite law firms.[37] Once this GPA threshold was surpassed, however, GPA no longer had any predictive power on job choice. Presumably, individuals with GPAs below the threshold were forced into selecting public interest jobs because they were unable to work at an elite law firm, whereas individuals with GPAs above the threshold were able to choose between working for elite law firms and working for prestigious public interest organizations. This GPA threshold may vary substantially among schools of differing reputation. For example, I do not doubt that the GPA threshold at the Thomas M. Cooley Law School, where 55% of 2002 graduates were unemployed at graduation, is higher than the GPA threshold at the University of Michigan Law School, where only 7.3% of 2002 graduates were unemployed at graduation.[38] Although my measure of the depth of placement at schools such as Cooley might be inflated in my rankings because a larger portion of the student body chose to work in public interest out of economic necessity rather than by true choice, it seems doubtful that higher ranked schools suffer from this bias. While some students at the very bottom of the class might choose public interest employment out of economic necessity even though they would prefer to work for a law firm, there is no reason to believe that a higher percentage of Columbia or Duke students are forced into public interest jobs than NYU or Michigan students.

2. *Firm Quality Maximization*

Lastly, I assume that students will seek to maximize firm quality. That is, students would rather work at the most prestigious and most profitable firm possible in their region of choice. This assumption is plausible, at least on average, for the more prestigious and more profitable a firm is, the greater the external and internal opportunities available to its employees. Some individuals will, however, turn down offers from higher ranked firms for a variety of reasons. For example, graduates interested in tax law may choose a lower ranked firm because its tax practice group is highly prestigious and better regarded than the tax groups at higher ranked firms.

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37. Lewis A. Kornhauser & Richard L. Revesz, *Legal Education and Entry into the Legal Profession: The Role of Race, Gender, and Educational Debt*, 70 N.Y.U. L. REV. 829, 913 (1995).

38. *Schools of Law: The Top 100 Schools*, U.S. NEWS & WORLD REP., Apr. 11, 2005, at 72.

Others might choose lower ranked firms if the lower ranked firms require fewer billable hours or offer a better chance at becoming partner. Unfortunately, since no law school releases offer acceptance information to the general public, it is impossible to determine whether this practice is widespread.

Neveretheless, even if some individuals engage in this practice, there is no reason to believe that the average Penn student is significantly more likely than the average Texas or Duke student to turn down a higher ranked firm for a lower ranked firm. As long as there is little or no differentiation from school to school, my assumption is reasonable. As Korobkin observed, students in the aggregate "tend to wish to work for the most prestigious legal employers, or at least to keep open the option of doing so."[39]

B. Adjustments to Total Class Size

1. *J.D. Students*

As noted in Part I, LL.M. career placement is not the focus of this research.

Counting LL.M. students as part of a school's total class size, as some researchers have done,[40] results in negative bias towards schools with LL.M. programs geared towards international students. Many graduates of such programs do not intend to practice in the United States, but instead return to their home countries to work after graduation. Moreover, including LL.M. graduates introduces an element that makes the resulting rankings less useful for prospective J.D. students who do not intend to pursue an LL.M.

2. *Period Studied*

To determine which law schools are doing a good job placing their students at elite firms, one must examine contemporary hiring trends.[41] For this reason, only associates who graduated in 2001, 2002, and 2003 were examined. I, therefore, began by limiting each school's total class size (n) to the classes of 2001–2003, having obtained these class sizes from the American Bar Association's *Official Guide to Law Schools*.[42]

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39. Russell Korobkin, *In Praise of Law School Rankings: Solutions to Coordination and Collective Action Problems*, 77 TEX. L. REV. 403, 409 (1998).

40. *See* Leiter, *supra* note 15.

41. *See id*. Leiter's analysis includes all attorneys hired at these firms, whether they were nonpartnership-track counsel who graduated in the early 1990s, senior partners who graduated in the 1960s, or first-year associates who graduated in 2002. *Id*. Leiter concedes that the study "reflect[s] not only who Ropes & Gray was hiring in 1995, but some of whom they were hiring in 1970." *Id*. Leiter also acknowledges that this bias had a significant impact on his rankings. Schools like Michigan and Duke, which Leiter claims were more prominent in the past, may have been artificially inflated in his rankings, while schools like NYU, which may not have been as well regarded in the past but have risen to greater prominence in recent years, may be ranked low relative to their contemporary placement. *Id*.

42. ABA-LSAC OFFICIAL GUIDE TO ABA-APPROVED LAW SCHOOLS (Wendy Margolis et al. eds., 2002); ABA-LSAC OFFICIAL GUIDE TO ABA-APPROVED LAW SCHOOLS (Wendy Margolis et al. eds., 2003); ABA-LSAC OFFICIAL GUIDE TO ABA-APPROVED LAW SCHOOLS (Wendy Margolis et al. eds., 2004).

C. Private-Sector Domestic Cohort

The percentage of students who choose to go into law firms is not constant among law schools. According to the 2005 edition of *U.S. News*'s law school rankings guide, 80% of Columbia Law School's graduating class of 2002 was employed at a law firm. In contrast, only 72% of NYU's graduating class of 2002 was employed at a law firm. Since NYU graduates are entering private practice at lower rates than Columbia graduates, one can expect that using total class size, all else equal, would inflate Columbia's ranking relative to NYU's. Other researchers have acknowledged this problem in their studies. Wehrli notes that Harvard ranked higher than Yale in his study even though its class is three times larger because "a higher % of Yale grades [sic] enter government service and politics than Harvard [graduates]."[43] To account for student sectoral preferences, I used the sectoral data available in *U.S. News* to remove from each school's n the students who went into academia, public interest, business, and other nonfirm endeavors.[44]

Judicial clerks posed a dilemma. While clerkships are listed as a separate sector in *U.S. News*, they typically last only a year or two. Because a significant number of clerks enter private practice soon thereafter, one cannot simply factor out clerks from n. It seems more accurate to include a fraction of these clerks determined by assuming that the post-clerkship sectoral preferences of judicial clerks mirror the sectoral preferences of nonclerks. That is, if 75 percent of School X's nonclerks go into private practice after graduation, we can project that 75 percent of School X's clerks will go into private practice once their clerkships end.[45]

D. Regional Cohorts

Student geographical preferences vary from school to school. For example, according to the 2005 edition of the *U.S. News* law school rankings guide, 78 percent of Columbia's 2002 graduating class settled in the Middle Atlantic (NY, PA, NJ) region, while only six percent settled in the Pacific (AK, CA, HI, OR, WA) region. In contrast, nine percent of Berkeley's 2002 graduating class settled in the Middle Atlantic region, while 75 percent settled in the Pacific region. Failing to adjust for these preferences can produce distortions.[46]

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43. *See* Wehrli, *supra* note 13. When making per capita adjustments, Leiter also divided the total number of attorneys by graduating class size. Leiter, *supra* note 15.

44. *See Directory*, U.S. NEWS & WORLD REP., Summer 2005, at 178–96.

45. It is difficult to test this assumption because data on post-clerkship employment preferences are virtually nonexistent. A Yale Law School study found that 61 percent of clerks entered private practice after clerking. YALE LAW SCHOOL, 5 YEAR CAREER DEVELOPMENT SURVEY: CLASS OF 1998 (2005), *at* http://www.law.yale.edu/outside/pdf/Career_Development/cdo-summary_of_98dataonly.pdf. To the extent that a slightly larger proportion of clerks will enter private practice than projected, the error is likely to be distributed evenly among law schools.

46. *See* Leiter, *supra* note 15. Of the 45 firms Leiter studied, only seven are located in the Middle Atlantic region, while twelve are located in the Pacific region. *Id.* The problem is even more apparent than it seems. Within these regions certain states dominated—77 percent of Columbia graduates stayed in New York, and 69 percent of Berkeley graduates stayed in California. By including only three New York firms along with seven California firms, Leiter artificially raised the rankings of schools like Berkeley, UCLA, and Stanford, while artificially lowering the rankings of schools that place a large proportion of graduates in the Northeast such as Columbia, NYU, Penn, and Cornell. *See id.*

Consequently, I adjusted n by creating nine different n values—one for each regional cohort defined in *U.S. News*, the only standardized source for regional preferences:

Region 1: New England—CT, MA, ME, NH, RI, VT
Region 2: Mid Atlantic—NJ, NY, PA
Region 3: Midwest—IL, IN, MI, OH, WI
Region 4: West North Central—IA, KS, MN, MO, NE, ND, SD
Region 5: South Atlantic—DC, DE, FL, GA, MD, NC, SC, VA, WV
Region 6: East South Central—AL, KY, MS, TN
Region 7: West South Central—AR, LA, OK, TX
Region 8: Rocky Mountains—AZ, CO, ID, MT, NV, NM, UT, WY
Region 9: Pacific—AK, CA, HI, OR, WA

Although there is some error involved in using this regional breakdown, no better standardized alternative exists.[47]

E. Measuring Placement Success

When measuring a school's placement success in a given region, one must

consider both depth and quality of placement. Depth of placement, more commonly referred to as per capita placement (PCP), represents how successful a school is in placing its students at elite firms. A high PCP generally indicates that elite firms are willing to dig deep into the school's class when making hiring decisions. Quality of placement, which one can quantify by developing a composite of mean Vault/PPP rank, represents the type of firm where a typical graduate will work. A high PCP combined with a high mean Vault/PPP rank indicates that a law school not only places its students well at elite firms, but places them at the most elite of the elite firms.

Depth and quality can be combined in one single variable: total quality score (TQS). The regional TQS equation for School Z is represented as

$$TQS_z = \frac{q_z^{wmu} + q_z^{pppu}}{2} \tag{1}$$

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47. There are two significant issues related to using *U.S. News* data for this purpose. First, *U.S. News* regional employment distributions are not completely accurate for all schools. Fordham, for example, reported to *U.S. News* that it did not know what regions its graduates were located in. Similarly, Cardozo submitted regional distributions that added up to 102 percent rather than 100 percent. I corrected for this by prorating these problematic distributions. Second, *U.S. News* regions do not correspond well with the size of legal markets. By putting secondary legal markets like Pennsylvania in the same region as very large markets like New York, schools such as the University of Michigan, the University of Pennsylvania, the University of Washington, and countless others that send significant portions of their student body to secondary markets are severely underrated in my study. A school could theoretically place better in New York, better in New Jersey, and better in Pennsylvania than any of its peer schools, yet still be ranked lower than in its peer schools in the Middle Atlantic region as a whole because of the disparity in the number of jobs in New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania.

where q_z^{vmu} represents mean Vault rank and q_z^{pppu} represents mean PPP rank. These mean ranks q_z^{vmu} and q_z^{pppu} are given by the following equations:

$$q_z^{vmu} = \frac{F_z^1 \cdot (q_1^v) + F_z^2 \cdot (q_2^v) + F_z^3 \cdot (q_3^v) + \ldots + F_z^N \cdot (q_N^v) + U_z \cdot (250)}{F_z^1 + F_z^2 + F_z^3 + \ldots + F_z^N + U_z} \tag{2a}$$

$$q_z^{pppu} = \frac{F_z^1 \cdot (q_1^{ppp}) + F_z^2 \cdot (q_2^{ppp}) + F_z^3 \cdot (q_3^{ppp}) + \ldots + F_z^N \cdot (q_N^{ppp}) + U_z \cdot (250)}{F_z^1 + F_z^2 + F_z^3 + \ldots + F_z^N + U_z} \tag{2b}$$

In these equations, F represents the number of individuals at a given school working at one of the elite firms examined, and U represents individuals from the school's domestic private-sector cohort who do not work at any of the elite firms. q^v represents a firm's Vault rank,[48] and q^{ppp} represents a firm's PPP rank.[49]

F. Adjusting Regional TQS to Account for Differing Labor Market Conditions

The labor market for lawyers differs from region to region. Some regions have more elite jobs available than others, and one region may have a significantly greater ratio of job seekers to available jobs relative to another. To compare School Z's performance in Region A relative to its performance in Region B, one needs to adjust for these differences. I, therefore, calculated a benchmark TQS, which represents the placement of a fictitious "average school" in each region. I calculated average school TQS for region r using equations (1) and (2), but where F_r represents every associate working at each law firm in region r, regardless of school attended, and where U_r represents every private sector job seeker in region r.[50] The following table lists raw TQS measures for the average school in each region. The larger the TQS value, the fewer, and less prestigious, jobs there are in a given region relative to the number of job seekers.

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48. For 2001 graduates, a firm's *Vault* rank was obtained from the 2002 *Vault* guide. For 2002 graduates, it was obtained from the 2003 guide, and for 2003 graduates from the 2004 guide. Law students typically make final employment decisions during their third year of law school. While many law students, especially those at higher ranked schools, end up working for the firm they summered with, and thus may have used an older version of the *Vault* rankings than is used here, many individuals may attempt to "trade up" employers during 3L OCI or, particularly at lower ranked schools that traditionally place poorly, may obtain an initial job offer during or immediately after 3L year. Given that the number of schools where virtually everyone obtains a firm job through 2L OCI is significantly smaller than the number of schools where most employment outcomes are determined during the 3L year, *Vault* rankings available during 3L year seem more appropriate than *Vault* rankings available during 2L year. In any case, *Vault* rank does not fluctuate much for most firms.

49. Firms in *Vault's* "Best of the Rest" received a *Vault* score of 150, and firms on the *American Lawyer's* PPP list but not ranked by *Vault* received a *Vault* score of 200. The U group received *Vault* and PPP scores of 250.

50. Many thanks to Aaron Chalfin for his help in developing this formula.

Region	Raw (unadjusted) TQS
Region 1: New England	216.33
Region 2: Mid Atlantic	190.00
Region 3: Midwest	223.80
Region 4: West North Central	240.52
Region 5: South Atlantic	213.52
Region 6: East South Central	247.52
Region 7: West South Central	226.82
Region 8: Rocky Mountains	241.99
Region 9: Pacific	213.59

As the table shows, Vault/AmLaw jobs are most plentiful in Region 2 relative to the number of job seekers, and are scarcest in Region 6. To adjust for these disparities in raw TQS, regional TQS values for all schools were transformed to a 0 to 100 point scale. On this scale, 50 represents the fictitious average school's placement in the region. Schools that did not send more than 20 students to a region over the three year period examined were not ranked in that region. Rutgers-Camden and Rutgers-Newark are, in addition, not ranked in any region, because most firm biographies listed "Rutgers University School of Law" as an associate's degree-granting institution without differentiating between the two campuses. Regional TQS values for schools in each region are given in Appendix A.

This method of regional adjustment has two desirable properties. First, it allows the researcher to account for the varying difficulty of finding employment in each region. That is, if there are fewer jobs available in Region 1 than in Region 2, all else equal, schools that place a large proportion of their graduates in Region 1 will have a lower rate of placement in elite firms. Second, this method accounts for transitory differences in regional hiring markets as a result of the varying strength of regional economies. For example, the recent recession has not affected all regions in the United States equally. Region 9, especially California, suffered particularly ill effects. Regional placement of schools that placed a disproportionate number of graduates in the California market might reasonably have been expected to have been lower from 2001–2003. Any regional slump is already built into the benchmark TQS system, so no further adjustments for macroeconomic conditions in regional markets are necessary.

III. NATIONAL RANKINGS

A. Aggregating Across Regions

As stated earlier, one cannot create a national ranking merely by looking at raw

PCPs or raw mean quality ranks, due to the differences in regional labor markets. To develop a national TQS measure, one must aggregate the regional rankings. Two possible aggregation schemes immediately come to mind: aggregation by market share, and aggregation by student preferences. In aggregation by market share, each region is assigned a weight based on its share of the legal employment market. For example, if the Middle Atlantic region compromises 33 percent of the market, placement in the Middle Atlantic region will comprise 33 percent of the national

TQS figure for every school. The formula for aggregation by market share is as follows:

$$TQS^{Nm} = r^1 \cdot (TQS^1) + r^2 \cdot (TQS^2) + r^3 \cdot (TQS^3) + \ldots + r^9 \cdot (TQS^9) \qquad (3a)$$

where r represents market share. In aggregation by student preferences, each region is weighted based on the regional preferences of students at each school. For example, if 80 percent of School X's students work in the Middle Atlantic region, Middle Atlantic placement would comprise 80 percent of national TQS. In contrast, if only one percent of School Y's students work in the Middle Atlantic region, Middle Atlantic placement would only comprise 1% of national TQS. The formula for aggregation by student preferences is as follows:

$$TQS^{Np} = p^1 \cdot (TQS^1) + p^2 \cdot (TQS^2) + p^3 \cdot (TQS^3) + \ldots + p^9 \cdot (TQS^9) \qquad (3b)$$

where p represents the percentage of the school's student body working in the region.

I elected to aggregation by market share for purposes of the national rankings presented in this paper. While Model B might be useful as a measure of rating career services offices, it is not useful as a tool for prospective law students, who may have preferences that differ significantly from the preferences of students at those schools. When attempting to measure national opportunities, it makes sense to assume that the average prospective student may have preferences in line with market share and would find rankings based on market share useful. While not all people conduct a truly national job search and even fewer people have regional preferences that are exactly in line with market share without any deviation, no alternative model is attractive. Model (3b) has the added disadvantage of ranking schools using criteria that are not consistent from school to school. While School A might have New England placement weighed as one percent and Pacific placement as 35 percent, School B might have New England placement weighed as 90 percent and Pacific placement weighted zero percent. When attempting to measure national opportunities, uniformity is necessary, and (3a) provides that uniformity.

As with the regional rankings, the raw national TQS values were adjusted to ensure that the average school receives a score of 50. Because this is a national ranking, schools that did not send a minimum of 20 graduates to at least two geographical regions during the three year period studied were excluded from the national rankings. While a national TQS value was calculated for every law school that met the two-region requirement, Appendix B includes only those schools that placed a minimum of 50 associates over the three-year period studied.

IV. WHAT INFLUENCES NATIONAL EMPLOYMENT PLACEMENT?

The regional and national rankings are not the main point of this paper. Ordinal rankings based on TQS measures alone will have only limited utility to current or

prospective students or to career services professionals. Although it is interesting that Chicago is ranked number one in national employment placement, and that Columbia is ranked significantly higher than Yale, this information alone means little. More important are questions such as "Why is Chicago ranked first?" and "What factors cause Columbia to place better than Yale?"[51] If these deeper questions can be answered, prospective law students will know what traits to value highly when considering law schools and academic administrators will be able to identify ways that make their student bodies more attractive to elite legal employers.

The factors that are associated with national employment placement are contained in the following fitted regression line:[52]

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51. Some have suggested that Yale's ranking might be deflated due to the nature of the elite-law-firm hiring process and the requirements for tenure-track positions in legal academia. Successful candidates for a tenure-track law professor position typically finished in the top 5% of their graduating class from Harvard, Yale, or Stanford and obtained a prestigious U.S. Court of Appeals clerkship or U.S. Supreme Court clerkship. To put it in other words, the cream of the crop goes into law teaching, but the elite-law-firm hiring process does not coincide with the law-professor hiring process. Elite-law-firm hiring typically takes place during the second year of law school, during the on-campus interviewing process, in which firms send recruiters to campus to interview primarily second-year students for summer-associate positions—positions that can result in an offer for full-time employment being extended at the end of the summer. The clerkship-application process does not, however, begin until the third year of law school. Individuals at the top of the class at Harvard, Yale, and Stanford contemplating legal academia will often work as a summer associate during the second-year summer, but, rather than returning to their summer firm after graduation, will take an appellate clerkship and then enter the job market for legal academics.

Nevertheless, this probably has little impact on most of the rankings. The per-capita placement portion of the rankings is determined by the percentage of 2001, 2002, and 2003 graduates who ultimately work at law firms; hence, individuals who clerk but then do not return to their summer firm do not negatively affect Yale's depth ranking. This practice, however, might affect the firm quality part of the rankings. The most selective and prestigious law firms, such as Wachtell and Cravath, often only hire individuals who are at the very top of their law-school class. The Harvard students Wachtell hires, therefore, are the very best at Harvard—however, if many of those Harvard students ultimately do not accept full-time associate positions at Wachtell because they take an appellate clerkship and then attempt to become legal academics, Harvard's mean Vault/PPP rank would be reduced. Schools such as Penn and Northwestern, which send significantly fewer graduates to academia, will not be affected the same way, since most individuals at the top of the class who obtain appellate clerkships will ultimately work at a law firm after their clerkship ends.

52. Regression analysis was not performed on individual regions. It is likely that law school reputations among practitioners are characterized by heavy regional bias and that legal employers make significant regional distinctions. In its 2005 rankings, *U.S. News* reported that three law schools share a practitioner score of 3.4—Boston University (BU), Fordham University (Fordham), and Indiana University-Bloomington (Indiana). U.S. NEWS & WORLD REP., *supra* note 38, at 72. BU is located in Boston, Fordham in New York City, and Indiana in Bloomington, Indiana. It may not be appropriate to apply a national practitioner rating to determine employment prospects of these schools that place a large proportion of their graduates in one region. While these three schools might have identical national practitioner scores, they may not be perceived as equivalent in all regions. Although employers in New England may view BU and Fordham as better schools, employers in the Midwest may prefer Indiana graduates. New York employers, likewise, may strongly prefer Fordham graduates to graduates of the two other schools. If school reputation differs from region to region, national reputation rankings are inappropriate to use in a regression, for they do not reflect a school's true regional reputation.

$$NationalTQS = -24.727 + (18.194 \cdot Reputation) + (0.006 \cdot Size)$$
$$- (9.005 \cdot NoGrades) - (9.136 \cdot Numbers) + (2.446 \cdot APlus)$$
$$+ (6.442 \cdot NoRank) + (1.440 \cdot Classes) \qquad (4)$$

"Reputation" represents *U.S. News'* academic reputation rating.[53] "Size" signifies total class size for the classes of 2001–2003. "NoGrades" represents whether schools use an honors/pass/fail grading system, where 0 = No and 1 = Yes. "Numbers" represents schools using a numbers-based grading system, where 0 = No and 1 = Yes. "APlus" represents whether the school has an A+ or equivalent grade, where 0 = No and 1 = Yes. "NoRank" signifies whether the school discloses class rank information or class rank cutoffs to either students or employers, where 0 = No and 1 = Yes. Finally, "Classes" stands for the total number of classes taken during the first year of law school.

Below are statistics relating to this regression:

Table 2. Regression Results

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
	b	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	-24.727	9.022		-2.741	.010
Total Class Size	.006	.004	.125	1.402	.171
US News Academic Reputation Rating	18.194	2.054	.820	8.860	.000
No Grades	-9.005	4.280	-.163	-2.104	.044
Number Grades	-9.136	2.668	-.250	-3.425	.002
Does Not Rank	6.442	2.502	.209	2.575	.015
No. of 1L classes	1.440	.717	.154	2.008	.054
School has A+ grades	2.446	2.292	.082	1.067	.294
R^2 = .865, Adjusted R^2 = .833, Standard error of estimate = 6.152					

The fitted regression equation "explains" 86.5 percent of all variation in national employment placement. As Table 2 shows, five of the seven independent variables used in the regression are significant predictors of national employment placement. Academic reputation and using a numerical grading system are significant at the 0.01 level, while using a no grades system and lack of class rank disclosure are significant at the 0.05 level. The number of classes required during the first year of law school is significant at the 0.10 level. Total class size and the presence of an A+ or equivalent grade are not significant predictors of national employment placement.

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53. Despite its many flaws, *U.S. News* academic reputation ratings are the best proxy for institutional reputation currently available. The *U.S. News* attorney-judge rating is less useful because only 27 percent of the practitioners surveyed responded. U.S. News, *supra* note 43, at 61. With a response rate this low, the results are likely not representative of how the legal community views these schools. *See supra* note 6.

That a school's academic reputation is the single most significant predictor of national employment placement is hardly surprising. Reputation is, however, not the sole arbiter of national employment placement. As the following table illustrates, the top 15 law schools according to the *U.S. News* academic reputation rankings and the top 15 in the national employment placement rankings developed here are not identical:

Table 3. Top-Ranked Schools

U.S. News Academic Reputation	School Name	National Employment Placement	School Name
1	Harvard	1	Chicago
1	Stanford	2	Harvard
1	Yale	3	Columbia
4	Chicago	4	NYU
4	Columbia	5	Virginia
6	Michigan	6	Michigan
6	NYU	7	Northwestern
8	UC Berkeley	8	Yale
9	Virginia	9	Penn
10	Penn	10	Stanford
11	Cornell	11	UC Berkeley
11	Duke	12	Vanderbilt
11	Northwestern	13	Duke
14	Georgetown	14	Cornell
15	Texas	15	Georgetown

If a school's academic reputation were the sole determinant of a school's national employment placement, one would expect the national employment placement rankings to mirror the academic reputation rankings. While there are strong similarities—14 schools appear on both lists—there are differences. Most notably, two of the schools tied for first place in the academic reputation rankings, Yale and Stanford, are located in the lower half of the top ten in the national employment rankings.[54]

This is not to say that employers would prefer to hire Michigan or Northwestern graduates over Yale and Stanford graduates. All is not equal, however, among these schools. Yale, Stanford, Michigan, Northwestern, and other schools included in this study differ in their grading and rank disclosure policies as well as in the number of courses they require students to complete during the first year of law school. A Yale student cannot have letter grades appear on his transcript rather than honors/pass/fail grades, and a Georgetown student cannot refuse to have any class rank information released to any students or employers when Georgetown

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54. Studies examining reputation and faculty quality, such as the rankings compiled by Leiter, have Yale and Stanford ranked at or near the top. *See id*. Leiter ranks Yale and Stanford number 1 and number 4 respectively in faculty quality. *Id. See* Brian Leiter, Ranking of Law Faculty Quality for 2003–04, http://www.utexas.edu/law/faculty/bleiter/rankings (last visited Aug. 23, 2005).

freely discloses rank cutoffs. A Penn student cannot choose between taking eight, ten, or twelve classes during his or her first year of law school. These matters deserve further discussion.

A. Grading Systems

The chair of Stinson, Mag & Fizzell's recruiting committee summarizes

concisely the importance of grades in the hiring process:

> No matter how much law students wish it was not true, law firms do care about
>
> grades and class rank. Every lawyer I interviewed in connection with this article mentioned academic achievement as one of the primary criteria used in evaluating law students. One lawyer described academic record as the "door opener." Without a good academic record, the student may never get a chance to persuade a firm to interview him or her. There are a number of reasons for this. First, it is very difficult in an interview, whether it is 20 minutes or a full day, to evaluate the student's intellectual and analytical ability. High academic achievement is at least an indication that a student "has the bullets" necessary to do well at a law firm.[55]

However, ABA-accredited law schools use several different grading systems, and have differing class rank disclosure policies; top schools in particular seem hesitant to reveal class rank information. An employer cannot simply put a Chicago transcript side by side with a NYU or Yale transcript and determine which individual has a higher class standing. After all, how would one go about comparing a 178 from Chicago with a 3.42 from NYU with one H and three HPs from Yale?

Employers willing to put the effort into researching these differing systems might find a way of comparing these applicants with each other. "[G]rading systems vary widely among law schools, and most practicing lawyers do not want to spend a lot of time trying to interpret and distinguish these differences."[56] Some schools may have greater success at placing their students if schools implement a grading system that employers find more favorable.

Previous researchers have classified grading systems into three groups: a traditional letter grade system, a numbers system, and an honors/pass/fail system (often called a "no grades" system).[57] The unique characteristics of each system are

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55. Heather S. Woodson, *Evaluation in Hiring*, 65 UMKC L. REV. 931, 932 (1997).

56. *Id.*

57. *Cf.* Nancy H. Kaufman, *A Survey of Law School Grading Practices*, 44 J. LEGAL EDUC. 415, 416 (1994); Jay M. Feinman, *Law School Grading*, 65 UMKC L. REV. 647, 650 (1997). Kaufman identified three types of grading systems—letter grade, numbers grade, and "other." Kaufman, *supra*, at 416. The "other" systems included schools that used the honors/pass/fail system, like Yale, as well as schools that used a hybrid numbers/letters system, like Stanford. *See id.* Feinman identified two types of systems: ordinal systems and interval systems. Feinman, *supra*, at 650. Schools with ordinal systems had the honors/pass/fail system, while schools with interval systems had either a letter system or a numbers system. *See id.* I chose to use the letter, number, and honors/pass/fail categorizations because each of these systems is truly unique and it is inappropriate to merge honors/pass/fail systems with some numbers systems, as Kaufman did, or to merge letter systems with numbers systems, as Feinman did. Although it is true that some schools, like Stanford, have what appear to be hybrid systems, these systems resemble a numbers system in that they offer more gradations than a letter system, and the number grade appears on the transcript even if a letter grade is also present.

apparent from their names. The traditional letter grade system awards letter grades such as A−, B+, C, and F, to students. The numbers system, rather than (or in addition to) using letters, awards numbers as grades. The no-grades system either uses pure pass-fail grading or uses pass-fail grading in conjunction with an "honors" distinction. As a general rule, the no-grades system has very few gradations available, while the numbers system has many gradations available. In other words, relative to the letter grade system, the no-grades system minimizes differentiation among students while the numbers system maximizes differentiation. Supporters of both the numbers and the no-grades systems have argued that these alternative systems are more beneficial to their students than traditional letter grade systems. Those who support the numbers system argue that transcripts that show great differentiation among students provide immense benefits to the top of the class. For instance, Chicago's strong clerkship placement is often credited to its numbers grading system, as it allows for very fine differentiation even at the top of the class. Similarly, those who support honors/pass/fail systems argue that those in the lower half of the class are benefitted since it is extremely difficult for employers to differentiate among them. Both of these claims are true to some degree. These nontraditional systems, however, bring about substantial costs to the middle of the class—a significantly larger group—and result in a net negative effect on national employment placement relative to the traditional letter system.

1. *Letter-Grade Systems*

Under a traditional letter-grade system, there is little differentiation in the nebulous middle. At many top schools 30–35 percent of the class gets a B+ and another 30–35% gets a B. Employers can easily distinguish among the 25-30 percent of the class that consistently get either As/A−s or Bs/Cs, but the differences in the rest of the class are not as apparent because of the curve structure. Interviewers—often first-year associates who have only recently finished law school themselves—know that the difference between a B+ and a B might not amount to much. A system that generates outliers at the extremes, but leaves an undifferentiated middle, might not benefit those in the very top of the class, who could one day apply for Supreme Court clerkships, or those at the very bottom, whose failings are obvious, but seems to strongly benefit the class as a whole, since most of the class ends up in the middle.

2. *Numbers Systems*

The numbers system allows more differentiation, to the point where it reduces

opportunities for those in the lower end of the middle, whose credentials would look more impressive if employers did not know that they barely got their B+s, or who just narrowly avoided getting a B− instead of a B. A numbers system may also make the bottom of the class look worse than under a letter system. The B− (or C) grade provides an artificial floor for those who did very poorly, but not so dismally as to fail. Under a numbers system the difference between the median grade and the lowest possible non-failing grade can be very large, which could do more damage to an individual's job prospects than a B− or two.

3. *Honors/Pass/Fail (No-Grades) Grading Systems*

While those at the bottom of Yale or Berkeley's class might benefit from their nontraditional honors/pass/fail systems, those in the nebulous middle may have their job prospects impaired because employers cannot distinguish them from the bottom of the class. Those who favor these systems argue that creating very little differentiation helps most students because employers traditionally attach too much weight to grades, and having what amounts to a binary honors-pass grading system (since failures are extremely rare) makes it impossible for an employer to use grades to differentiate most of the class.

The flaw with this argument[58] is that few employers recruit exclusively at Yale—the typical law firm might recruit at as many as 25 or 30 law schools. Yale students are not competing just with other Yale students; they are also competing with students from Harvard, Columbia, Penn, Georgetown, and other prestigious schools. While Yale might be more prestigious than Columbia, the reputation gap between them is not so large that most employers would prefer hiring from the very bottom of Yale's class over the top (or even middle) of Columbia's class.

There are some lower ranked law firms that will hire a Yale student simply because he or she attends Yale. Those firms, however, would hire Yale students regardless of whether Yale had a traditional grading system or an honors/pass/fail system. Higher ranked firms, which are more selective and place a high value on grades, when faced with hiring a Columbia student who they are almost certain is in the middle of his or her class or a Yale student who could be in the middle of the class but could just as plausibly be in the bottom 20 percent, might hire the Columbia student. A risk-averse firm would rather hire an individual who is known to have excelled at a slightly less prestigious school than a less well known quantity from a slightly more prestigious school. In other words, Yale's system, by only creating outliers at the top and then having a "nebulous bottom 70%," likely causes individuals from the middle of Yale's class to go to lower-ranked firms than they would otherwise, and thus brings about the net negative effect on employment placement detected in this study.

There is an additional reason to believe that no-grades systems impair the average student's employment prospects. Scholars have theorized that law school grades serve as a motivating factor: by having grades, students are motivated to learn more than they would otherwise.[59] Empirical research suggests that students who take courses on a pass-fail basis are significantly less likely to perform well in those courses relative to students taking the courses on a letter grade basis.[60] It is not hard to imagine that the examination papers from Yale students taking their

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58. *See generally* Daniel Keating, *Ten Myths About Law School Grading*, 76 WASH. U. L.Q. 171, 177–82 (1998).

59. Steve H. Nickles, *Examining and Grading in American Law Schools*, 30 ARK. L. REV. 411, 430–31 (1977).

60. *See* Richard Lempert, *Law School Grading: An Experiment with Pass-Fail*, 24 J. LEGAL EDUC. 251, 284 (1972) (concluding that "if a 'wildcard' type pass-fail system such as the one used in this experiment were to be generally adopted, student performance in pass-fail courses as measured by examination grades would fall off noticeably").

first-year courses on a pass-fail basis are significantly lower in quality than they would be under a letter-grade system. To the extent that this is the perception of potential employers, they may prefer to hire students from roughly comparable schools.[61] They may believe that Yale students might require a greater amount of training than their counterparts from other schools, and thus employers may prefer to hire from other schools in order to avoid taking on this additional burden.[62]

B. Number of First-Year Law School Classes

The number of classes taken during the first year of law school can lessen the

negative aspects of both nontraditional systems. The more classes an individual takes, the more possibilities for differentiation emerge. If students take twelve classes, the number who fail to get even one honors grade will be smaller than if students only took five or six classes. Thus, employers could more easily identify individuals at the very bottom of the class, and distinguish them from individuals who are truly in the middle.

While employers may still have difficulty comparing a Yale applicant to a Columbia applicant, the Yale applicant will benefit from having more classes (and more honors grades) on his or her transcript. Even if the employer assumes the worst possible scenario with the Yale applicant's grades, that scenario is better with twelve classes than it is with only six classes. The same is true of the numbers system, but in the opposite direction. More classes add slightly greater ambiguity: it allows individuals who might have done poorly in their first term to visibly improve their performance and thus make it easier to persuade an employer that a very low number grade was an aberration. Those at the top of the class also look even better when more classes are required, since sustaining a very high average over the course of twelve classes is harder than over the course of eight classes.

Employers may prefer individuals who attend schools that require many first year courses for another reason. Some research indicates that increasing the number of tests in a first-year course improves scores on the final examination.[63] It is likely that a similar effect might take place at schools that require more first-year classes—particularly schools like Chicago that run on the quarter system and may break down traditional one term first-year courses into two quarter courses. If Chicago students who earned the median course grade in contracts have greater knowledge of contracts than Columbia students who earned the median course

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61. *See generally* Tom Ginsburg & Jeffrey A. Wolf, *The Market for Elite Law Firm Associates,* 31 FLA. ST. U.L. REV. 909, 925 (2004). Many of the elite Chicago law firm hiring partners the authors interviewed stated that it was not worthwhile to interview at Yale due to the school's heavy academic focus. The authors speculate that many of these firms recruit at Yale to signal quality to future clients and competitors and not because they intend to actually hire any students.

62. One might argue, alternatively, self-selection. Students who enroll in schools that use honors/pass/fail systems might not care as much about firm prestige and might not be as competitive as students who attend schools that use letter or number systems. Nothing in the previous literature suggests, however, that students at Yale are less competitive or less ambitious than students at Harvard or that students at Northeastern are less competitive or less ambitious than students at Suffolk.

63. Gary A. Negin*, The Effects of Test Frequency in a First-Year Torts Course*, 31 J. LEGAL EDUC. 673 (1981).

grade in contracts, and if this difference manifests itself on the job, employers would have a reason to prefer Chicago graduates.

C. Class Rank Disclosure

The regression analysis suggests that the best overall system uses letter grades, but does not disclose class rank or class rank cutoffs to students or employers. Under this system, employers can identify individuals at the very top and very bottom of the class, but cannot accurately distinguish within the nebulous middle because they will not know the exact GPA cutoffs for the top 33 percent or top 50 percent. Although those at the extreme top may not do as well as under a numbers system, and those at the extreme bottom may not do as well as under an honors/pass/fail system, the class as a whole is better off because most of the class ends up in the nebulous middle.

Of course, employers could attempt to estimate rank themselves. Law firms may be disinclined, however, to undertake such research, and even if they do, withholding class rank can benefit students:

> At the very minimum, we could stop publishing grade point averages and class ranks. Employers can, of course, calculate averages on their own. But in the process of doing so they may realize that the average of an A in Appellate Advocacy and a B- in Property simply does not mean much. Employers may also, in studying the particular grades, pay some attention to the courses and try to determine whether likely job performance is indicated in some of the grades more than others. Furthermore, over time, employers might begin to see patterns in the predictive quality of the data—for example, tax grades might predict performance as a tax planner, but not as a litigator. Employers could, in other words, get more information out of the data they already receive if they were made to take a longer look.[64]

The lack of class rank might also have psychological benefits for students.[65] Students who discover that they were ranked in the bottom of the class interpret their ranking as a symbol that they have "failed,"[66] and as a result become both cynical and unemotional,[67] and their people skills become impaired.[68] Law students

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64. Jeffrey Evans Stake, *Who's "Number One"?: Contriving Unidimensionality in Law School Grading*, 68 IND. L.J. 925, 928–29 (1993).

65. *See* Andrew S. Watson, *The Quest for Professional Competence: Psychological Aspects of Legal Education*, 37 U. CIN. L. REV. 91, 131 (1968).

66. *Id.* at 119, 130.

67. *Id.* at 131.

68. *Id.* at 133.

with low class ranks often doubt their ability to be successful practitioners and suffer from lower self-confidence and self-awareness.[69]

Students who know their exact or approximate class rank might be more risk averse in on-campus interviewing due to their greater cynicism, lower self-confidence, and greater identification with their rank. If a law firm lists top 50 percent rank as a requirement, individuals who just barely missed out on being in the top 50 percent may not bid to interview with that firm, believing that they would not get the job. Similarly, individuals who know they are in the top 33 percent but not in the top 25 percent may avoid interviewing with firms who have a top 25 percent cutoff. In contrast, students who go to schools where no class rank information is disclosed to anyone may cast a broader net, since individuals who in reality are in the top 33 percent but not top 25 percent may think they are in the top 25 percent, and individuals who are really only in the top 55 percent may think they are in the top 50 percent. While firms often do list rank cutoffs, it is common for firms to allow for factors such as personality to compensate for a lower than desired rank.[70] Additionally, if the people skills of law students who are aware of their low rank are impaired, they may not interview as well compared to students at schools who do not rank.

V. WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

Some individuals urge students to make enrollment decisions subjectively. *U.S. News*, for instance, printed the following statement from admissions counselor Loretta DeLoggio in its law school guide: "I think anyone who applies to both Cornell and NYU hasn't got a clue what they're doing."[71] Never mind that both schools are clearly wonderful choices if you want a very high chance of earning a $125,000 salary after graduation and that such schools are so hard to get into that only a fool would not apply to multiple top schools. DeLoggio seems to think that subjective factors such as "fit" should take priority over financial considerations.

But how are students to make this sort of subjective decision? No doubt, prospective students should consider geographic location, culture, diversity, and a host of other factors, but these students also should have objective data on such matters as employment placement so that they can make the appropriate tradeoffs at their own discretion.

This study provides the first set of national and regional employment rankings that properly account for student geographical and sectoral preferences as well as differing class sizes. It identifies several variables that are strong predictors of national employment placement, yet more can still be done. The information used

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69. Jack Himmelstein, *Reassessing Law Schooling: An Inquiry into the Application of Humanistic Educational Psychology to the Teaching of Law*, 53 N.Y.U. L. REV. 514, 590–91(1978); *see also* Philip C. Kissam, *Law School Examinations*, 42 VAND. L. REV. 433, 481 (1989) ("many disappointed members of the journeyman and loser classes develop attitudes of hostility, isolation, emotional detachment, and malaise.").

70. Woodson, *supra* note 56, at 933.

71. Loretta DeLoggio, Fifteen Minutes of Fame, *at* http://www. deloggio.com/satisfid/quoted.htm (last visited Aug. 23, 2005).

to generate these rankings is not perfect. Law schools release such limited employment data, however, that it is necessary to rely on law firm Web sites.

Ideally, employment data for every law school, broken down by all student demographics, would be publicly available. Median salaries and percentage of students employed at graduation are not sufficient, since both measures are flawed. Perfect data are not, however, necessary. If law schools were to publicly release more standardized employment data, prospective law students would not need to look at external sources to determine whether attending a given law school is the best choice for them. Prospective students should have access to basic employment information—which employers recruit on campus, how many students request interviews with them, how many students ultimately interview with each employer, how many callbacks were given to students who interviewed, how many students accepted those callbacks, how many students received offers, how many students accepted offers, and what percentage of the entire class received at least one offer from an employer that participates in on-campus recruiting. This should be the bare minimum information provided—ideally, schools would also include information about each employer, such as starting salary.

Although some law schools, such as Harvard, already provide this information to their current students, all law schools should provide this information on their Web sites, or the information should appear on a centralized Web site. Naturally, schools that do a poor job of placing their students will not want to release these data, but the AALS and the ABA should require law schools to do so, just as they require public disclosure of student attrition and bar examination passage rates. Not only would this decrease reliance on unscientific and unreliable ranking schemes, such as *U.S. News*, but would give deficient law schools an incentive to redirect their resources toward improving employment placement.

APPENDIX A. REGIONAL TQS RANKINGS

Region 1: New England—CT, MA, ME, NH, RI, VT (n = 20 minimum)

School Name	Region 1 TQS	School Name	Region 1 TQS
Columbia	100.00	*Average School*	*50.00*
Virginia	92.16	Fordham	49.90
NYU	87.81	Notre Dame	31.08
Penn	86.80	Connecticut	28.36
Harvard	74.95	Syracuse	24.52
Duke	73.13	Western New England	16.85
Georgetown	70.97	Pace	15.73
Michigan	66.77	Franklin Pierce	13.53
Yale	62.02	Vermont	13.50
Chicago	61.91	Suffolk	13.37
Boston College	59.15	Quinnipiac	6.16
Cornell	57.59	Roger Williams	0.61
Boston University	53.82	Maine	0.00
George Washington	52.18	Denver	0.00
Northeastern	51.88	New England Law	0.00

Region 2: Mid Atlantic—NJ, NY, PA (n = 20 minimum)

School Name	Region 2 TQS	School Name	Region 2 TQS
Chicago	100.00	Cardozo	42.19
Northwestern	99.29	Miami	39.26
Harvard	95.34	Connecticut	37.91
Virginia	90.96	Wisconsin	34.94
NYU	90.89	Iowa	33.04
Columbia	89.23	Vermont	31.78
UNC	88.64	St Johns	31.23
Yale	85.94	Washington & Lee	29.15
Michigan	84.11	Northeastern	26.88
Cornell	80.23	Brooklyn	25.76
Penn	80.01	Franklin Pierce	25.04
Stanford	79.89	Catholic	24.07
UC Berkeley	79.53	Temple	23.25
Texas	77.68	Villanova	22.43
Emory	75.18	Pace	21.43
UCLA	73.77	Suffolk	16.84
UC Hastings	69.49	Pittsburgh	16.83
Boston University	68.51	New York Law School	15.85
Boston College	68.45	Hofstra	15.26
Vanderbilt	67.46	Syracuse	15.08
Howard	67.14	UIUC	13.59
Duke	66.96	Quinnipiac	10.68
WUSTL	65.76	SUNY Buffalo	9.97
Notre Dame	62.08	Penn State	9.93
George Washington	61.60	Seton Hall	9.67
Georgetown	59.95	Albany	7.92

School Name	Region 2 TQS	School Name	Region 2 TQS
Case Western	56.76	Touro	4.25
American	56.70	Cooley	4.15
Fordham	54.04	Western New England	4.12
William & Mary	51.32	Widener	3.24
Average School	*50.00*	CUNY	0.00
Tulane	48.84	New England Law	0.00

Region 3: Midwest—IL, IN, MI, OH, WI (n = 20 minimum)

School Name	Region 3 TQS	School Name	Region 3 TQS
NYU	100.00	Case Western	48.47
Penn	97.64	Ohio State	45.46
Vanderbilt	93.85	DePaul	35.59
Chicago	93.20	Syracuse	33.21
Harvard	92.06	Chicago-Kent	28.61
Virginia	84.30	Cincinnati	18.61
Michigan	79.89	John Marshall	18.59
Columbia	79.38	Cleveland State	14.20
Duke	76.43	Indiana-Indianapolis	13.42
Northwestern	75.88	Capital	10.38
Stanford	73.65	Marquette	10.36
Georgetown	68.05	Toledo	8.66
Yale	67.95	Valparaiso	8.21
Minnesota	67.41	Wayne State	7.96
Texas	66.34	Akron	7.77
George Washington	65.12	Northern Illinois	7.18
Iowa	64.77	Michigan State	5.04
Boston College	62.79	Detroit	4.66
UIUC	60.98	Ohio Northern	4.12
Notre Dame	60.01	Dayton	3.87
WUSTL	59.42	Saint Louis	3.24
Tulane	58.63	Southern Illinois	1.70
Indiana – Bloomington	52.21	Louisville	0.00
Wisconsin	51.06	Northern Kentucky	0.00
Loyola Chicago	50.54	Cooley	0.00
Average School	*50.00*		

Region 4: West North Central—IA, KS, MN, MO, NE, ND, SD (n = 20 minimum)

School Name	Region 4 TQS	School Name	Region 4 TQS
Michigan	100.00	George Washington	37.34
Wisconsin	90.86	Washburn	29.91
Notre Dame	79.90	Saint Louis	26.79
UIUC	60.10	William Mitchell	25.84
Minnesota	59.75	Creighton	24.68
Tulsa	58.57	Hamline	17.99
Harvard	56.36	Missouri–Columbia	16.40
Iowa	56.07	Nebraska	16.40
WUSTL	54.97	Southern Illinois	16.14
Georgetown	50.03	Drake	14.29
Average School	*50.00*	South Dakota	11.50
Missouri – Kansas City	45.94	North Dakota	10.71
Kansas	43.99		

Region 5: South Atlantic—DC, DE, FL, GA, MD, NC, SC, VA, WV
(n = 20 minimum)

School Name	Region 5 PCP	School Name	Region 5 PCP
Chicago	100.00	U of Georgia	30.88
UC Berkeley	93.30	Minnesota	29.33
Harvard	89.33	Iowa	29.03
Columbia	88.72	U of Florida	28.13
Yale	83.86	Wake Forest	28.08
Cornell	77.34	New York Law School	27.63
Vanderbilt	75.95	Villanova	27.12
Stanford	75.03	Memphis	22.83
Duke	74.41	Brooklyn	21.42
Northwestern	74.31	Georgia State	20.74
Michigan	71.29	Toledo	20.74
Georgetown	71.01	Miami	20.35
NYU	70.08	John Marshall	20.09
Virginia	69.36	South Carolina	19.90
Notre Dame	65.39	Florida State	19.44
Penn	63.27	Mercer	16.80
Boston University	63.12	SUNY Buffalo	16.45
Boston College	59.61	Michigan State	15.57
Syracuse	57.91	Mississippi	14.25
George Washington	57.31	Richmond	14.14
Case Western	55.68	Suffolk	13.94
Franklin Pierce	55.56	UC Hastings	13.57
Brigham Young	54.52	Vermont	12.88
Emory	53.79	Temple	12.79
American	53.45	Northeastern	11.38
UIUC	53.13	Widener	11.29
Washington & Lee	52.65	Tulsa	11.23
Texas	52.46	Baltimore	10.17
Kentucky	51.35	Penn State	9.55
WUSTL	50.44	DePaul	8.42

School Name	Region 5 PCP	School Name	Region 5 PCP
William & Mary	50.39	Nova Southeastern	6.57
Average School	*50.00*	Dayton	6.00
Ohio State	49.67	Oklahoma	5.74
Alabama	48.37	St. Thomas	3.89
U of Washington	45.46	Stetson	3.81
Tulane	45.08	Loyola New Orleans	3.47
Catholic	44.79	Samford	2.89
Tennessee	42.98	North Carolina Central	2.59
Howard	40.86	West Virginia	2.22
George Mason	40.67	Cooley	1.96
Denver	40.50	Florida Coastal	1.22
Kansas	39.65	Campbell	0.00
Saint Louis	39.06	Regent	0.00
UNC	36.49	Appalachian	0.00
Maryland	35.20	Albany	0.00
Oregon	34.66	Valparaiso	0.00
Wisconsin	32.81	Ohio Northern	0.00
Pittsburgh	31.35		

Region 6: East South Central—AL, KY, MS, TN (n = 20 minimum)

School Name	Region 6 TQS	School Name	Region 6 TQS
Emory	100.00	Alabama	5.81
Vanderbilt	62.74	Samford	5.81
Cincinnati	55.24	Mississippi College	0.00
Loyola New Orleans	52.99	Louisville	0.00
Virginia	51.10	Northern Kentucky	0.00
Average School	*50.00*	Washington & Lee	0.00
Tennessee	37.02	Kentucky	0.00
Mississippi	28.29	Appalachian	0.00

Region 7: West South Central—AR, LA, OK, TX (n = 20 minimum)

School Name	Region 7 TQS	School Name	Region 7 TQS
Harvard	100.00	*Average School*	*50.00*
Virginia	96.76	Tulane	47.07
Michigan	86.82	Baylor	44.56
Vanderbilt	86.73	Texas Tech	24.46
Chicago	86.37	South Texas	12.96
Georgetown	78.71	Oklahoma	12.83
Notre Dame	75.66	St. Marys	12.68
NYU	72.66	Arkansas–Little Rock	10.29
Duke	72.44	Louisiana State	8.74
Stanford	69.98	Texas Southern	6.38
Texas	68.36	Tulsa	3.45
Washington & Lee	57.85	Loyola New Orleans	2.26
Houston	57.07	Oklahoma City	2.22
Southern Methodist	56.01	Texas Wesleyan	0.82
George Washington	52.39	Cooley	0.00

Region 8: Rocky Mountains—AZ, CO, ID, MT, NV, NM, UT, WY
(n = 20 minimum)

School Name	Region 8 TQS	School Name	Region 8 TQS
Michigan	100.00	Vermont	36.83
Harvard	87.04	Denver	35.08
Texas	82.64	Pacific	27.72
Arizona State	79.45	Tulsa	23.22
Georgetown	77.16	Gonzaga	20.60
Iowa	72.92	Oregon	13.55
Syracuse	63.25	Idaho	11.17
Utah	60.90	U of Nevada–Las Vegas	9.49
U of Arizona	56.51	Montana	5.68
UC Berkeley	56.04	New Mexico	3.25
Brigham Young	55.23	Wyoming	0.00
George Washington	52.66	Chapman	0.00
Colorado	50.87	California Western	0.00
Average School	*50.00*	Cooley	0.00
San Diego	44.88		

Region 9: Pacific—AK, CA, HI, OR, WA (n = 20 minimum)

School Name	Region 9 TQS	School Name	Region 9 TQS
Columbia	100.00	Pepperdine	32.60
Chicago	92.05	WUSTL	30.86
NYU	82.44	U of Arizona	29.07
Penn	81.69	U of Washington	26.04
Virginia	76.83	American	24.90
George Washington	75.79	San Francisco	24.33
Stanford	75.12	San Diego	22.21
Northwestern	74.82	Syracuse	21.42
Yale	74.80	Southwestern	21.16
Michigan	73.83	Denver	19.79
Harvard	72.00	Northeastern	16.68
Duke	71.80	Arizona State	15.85
Georgetown	68.30	Iowa	14.90
Cornell	68.15	Oregon	9.61
Boston University	65.60	Chapman	8.62
UC Berkeley	65.50	Seattle	7.95
Boston College	65.29	California Western	5.37
Vanderbilt	63.53	Pacific	5.03
Texas	63.09	Lewis & Clark	3.86
UCLA	60.87	Golden Gate	3.71
USC	57.00	Willamette	3.01
Wisconsin	56.20	Thomas Jefferson	1.43
Notre Dame	53.96	Hawaii	0.00
UC Hastings	52.36	Western State	0.00
Brigham Young	50.63	Whittier	0.00
Minnesota	50.57	Western New England	0.00
UC Davis	50.39	Drake	0.00
Average School	*50.00*	Tulsa	0.00

School Name	Region 9 TQS	School Name	Region 9 TQS
Santa Clara	48.90	Idaho	0.00
Tulane	43.78	Cooley	0.00
Loyola Marymount	34.13		

APPENDIX B. NATIONAL TQS RANKINGS

The National Rankings (r = 2, F = 50 minimum)

School Name	National TQS	School Name	National TQS
Chicago	92.48	Brigham Young	51.20
Harvard	87.88	William & Mary	50.52
Columbia	85.20	*Average School*	*50.00*
NYU	82.30	Ohio State	49.43
Virginia	81.70	American	48.95
Michigan	78.82	UC Hastings	48.79
Northwestern	78.43	Tulane	48.25
Yale	75.86	Minnesota	47.65
Penn	74.97	Cincinnati	46.60
Stanford	73.59	San Diego	45.45
UC Berkeley	71.87	U of Washington	45.17
Vanderbilt	71.52	Washington & Lee	43.83
Duke	70.31	Wisconsin	43.17
Cornell	69.27	UIUC	40.08
Georgetown	66.71	John Marshall	39.97
Texas	65.69	Catholic	39.30
Boston College	62.51	DePaul	39.27
Boston University	61.67	Iowa	36.38
George Washington	61.32	Villanova	35.87
Notre Dame	60.81	Brooklyn	35.71
UNC	59.78	Pittsburgh	34.95
Emory	59.64	New York Law School	33.81
UCLA	59.58	Temple	32.99
Howard	53.64	Syracuse	32.79
WUSTL	53.37	Pace	31.72
Case Western	53.31	Suffolk	29.29
Fordham	51.33	Northeastern	28.64

APPENDIX C. REGIONAL PER CAPITA
PLACEMENT RANKINGS

Region 1: New England—CT, ME, MA, NH, RI, VT (n = 20 minimum)

School Name	Region 1 PCP	School Name	Region 1 PCP
Virginia	77%	George Washington	21%
NYU	73%	Notre Dame	17%
Columbia	65%	Connecticut	12%
Penn	65%	Syracuse	12%
Harvard	51%	Western New England	7%
Georgetown	49%	Pace	6%
Duke	48%	Franklin Pierce	5%
Chicago	44%	Vermont	5%
Michigan	40%	Suffolk	5%
Yale	34%	Quinnipiac	3%
Boston College	34%	Roger Williams	0%
Cornell	32%	Maine	0%
Boston University	25%	Denver	0%
Northeastern	23%	New England Law	0%
Fordham	22%		

Region 2: Mid Atlantic—NJ, NY, PA (n = 20 minimum)

School Name	Region 2 PCP	School Name	Region 2 PCP
UNC	82%	Connecticut	26%
Northwestern	81%	Miami	26%
Chicago	75%	Washington & Lee	26%
Virginia	73%	Vermont	25%
Harvard	69%	Wisconsin	23%
NYU	68%	Northeastern	21%
Columbia	65%	Temple	21%
Penn	64%	Iowa	20%
Michigan	63%	St. Johns	20%
Cornell	62%	Villanova	20%
Yale	60%	Catholic	18%
Texas	59%	Franklin Pierce	17%
UC Berkeley	59%	Brooklyn	16%
Stanford	55%	Pace	16%
UCLA	54%	Pittsburgh	16%
Boston College	52%	Suffolk	14%
Boston University	51%	Syracuse	12%
Vanderbilt	49%	Hofstra	10%
Notre Dame	48%	New York Law School	10%
Duke	48%	Penn State	9%
WUSTL	47%	Seton Hall	9%
UC Hastings	47%	Quinnipiac	8%
Case Western	44%	SUNY Buffalo	7%
Howard	44%	UIUC	7%
George Washington	44%	Western New England	6%

School Name	Region 2 PCP	School Name	Region 2 PCP
William & Mary	42%	Albany	5%
American	41%	Cooley	4%
Georgetown	40%	Touro	3%
Emory	36%	Widener	3%
Fordham	36%	CUNY	0%
Tulane	31%	New England Law School	0%
Cardozo	27%		

Region 3: Midwest—IL, IN, MI, OH, WI (n = 20 minimum)

School Name	Region 3 PCP	School Name	Region 3 PCP
Vanderbilt	81%	Loyola Chicago	18%
NYU	73%	Ohio State	17%
Harvard	66%	DePaul	12%
Penn	64%	Syracuse	12%
Chicago	63%	Chicago-Kent	10%
Virginia	62%	Cincinnati	9%
Duke	58%	Indiana–Indianapolis	8%
Michigan	56%	John Marshall	7%
Northwestern	49%	Capital	6%
Columbia	47%	Cleveland State	6%
Georgetown	42%	Marquette	5%
Stanford	42%	Northern Illinois	4%
George Washington	41%	Toledo	4%
Iowa	41%	Wayne State	4%
Minnesota	40%	Akron	3%
Notre Dame	40%	Michigan State	3%
Boston College	39%	Valparaiso	3%
Texas	37%	Dayton	2%
Yale	33%	Detroit	2%
WUSTL	32%	Saint Louis	2%
UIUC	31%	Ohio Northern	2%
Indiana – Bloomington	25%	Southern Illinois	1%
Tulane	25%	Louisville	0%
Wisconsin	21%	Northern Kentucky	0%
Case Western	20%	Cooley	0%

Region 4: West North Central—IA, KS, MN, MO, NE, ND, SD (n = 20 minimum)

School Name	Region 4 PCP	School Name	Region 4 PCP
Michigan	48%	Creigton	6%
Wisconsin	38%	George Washington	5%
Notre Dame	34%	Washburn	5%
UIUC	16%	William Mitchell	4%
Minnesota	15%	Saint Louis	4%
Tulsa	14%	Nebraska	4%
Harvard	14%	Southern Illinois	4%
Iowa	13%	Hamline	3%

School Name	Region 4 PCP	School Name	Region 4 PCP
WUSTL	12%	Missouri–Columbia	3%
Georgetown	8%	Drake	2%
Missouri–Kansas City	7%	North Dakota	2%
Kansas	7%	South Dakota	1%

Region 5: South Atlantic—DC, FL, GA, NC, SC, VA (n = 20 minimum)

School Name	Region 5 PCP	School Name	Region 5 PCP
Chicago	95%	Pittsburgh	15%
UC Berkeley	90%	Oregon	14%
Columbia	80%	Minnesota	13%
Harvard	80%	Villanova	13%
Yale	71%	Wisconsin	13%
Vanderbilt	70%	Iowa	11%
Northwestern	66%	Georgia State	11%
Duke	64%	New York Law School	11%
Cornell	60%	Toledo	11%
Stanford	60%	South Carolina	11%
Michigan	55%	Florida State	11%
Virginia	55%	Miami	10%
Georgetown	54%	Brooklyn	9%
Notre Dame	52%	Memphis	9%
NYU	50%	John Marshall	9%
Boston University	44%	Mercer	9%
Penn	39%	Richmond	9%
Boston College	38%	Mississippi	8%
Syracuse	38%	Michigan State	7%
George Washington	35%	SUNY Buffalo	7%
Franklin Pierce	33%	Northeastern	6%
Emory	33%	Suffolk	6%
Case Western	30%	Temple	6%
American	27%	Vermont	6%
Washington & Lee	27%	Widener	6%
Brigham Young	26%	UC Hastings	5%
William & Mary	26%	Baltimore	5%
Texas	25%	DePaul	4%
Kentucky	25%	Nova Southeastern	4%
UIUC	24%	Oklahoma	4%
Alabama	24%	Penn State	4%
WUSTL	23%	Tulsa	4%
Tulane	21%	Dayton	3%
Tennessee	21%	Stetson	3%
Ohio State	20%	St. Thomas	2%
U of Washington	19%	Samford	1%
Catholic	19%	Loyola New Orleans	1%
George Mason	19%	West Virginia	1%
Denver	19%	Cooley	1%
Kansas	18%	Florida Coastal	1%

School Name	Region 5 PCP	School Name	Region 5 PCP
Saint Louis	18%	North Carolina Central	1%
UNC	18%	Albany	0%
Howard	16%	Appalachian	0%
Maryland	16%	Campbell	0%
Wake Forest	16%	Ohio Northern	0%
U of Georgia	16%	Regent	0%
U of Florida	15%	Valparaiso	0%

Region 6: East South Central—AL, KY, MS, TN (n = 20 minimum)

School Name	Region 6 PCP	School Name	Region 6 PCP
Emory	15%	Samford	0%
Vanderbilt	6%	Mississippi College	0%
Cincinnati	4%	Louisville	0%
Loyola New Orleans	4%	Northern Kentucky	0%
Virginia	4%	Washington & Lee	0%
Tennessee	2%	Kentucky	0%
Mississippi	2%	Appalachian	0%
Alabama	0%		

Region 7: West South Central—AR, LA, OK, TX (n = 20 minimum)

School Name	Region 7 PCP	School Name	Region 7 PCP
Harvard	66%	Baylor	14%
Virginia	66%	Tulane	13%
Vanderbilt	66%	Texas Tech	9%
Michigan	55%	South Texas	5%
Chicago	55%	Oklahoma	4%
Georgetown	45%	St. Marys	4%
Duke	44%	Arkansas–Little Rock	3%
Notre Dame	42%	Louisiana State	3%
NYU	41%	Texas Southern	2%
Texas	38%	Loyola New Orleans	1%
Stanford	34%	Tulsa	1%
Washington & Lee	27%	Oklahoma City	1%
Houston	23%	Texas Wesleyan	0%
Southern Methodist	23%	Cooley	0%
George Washington	23%		

Region 8: Rocky Mountains—AZ, CO, ID, MT, NV, NM, UT, WY (n = 20 minimum)

School Name	Region 8 PCP	School Name	Region 8 PCP
Michigan	52%	Utah	5%
Harvard	28%	Pacific	4%
Texas	27%	Tulsa	4%
Iowa	27%	Gonzaga	3%
Georgetown	24%	Oregon	3%
Syracuse	20%	Vermont	3%
Brigham Young	12%	Idaho	2%

School Name	Region 8 PCP	School Name	Region 8 PCP
Arizona State	11%	Montana	1%
UC Berkeley	9%	New Mexico	1%
Colorado	7%	U of Nevada – Los Vegas	1%
U of Arizona	5%	California Western	0%
Denver	5%	Chapman	0%
George Washington	5%	Cooley	0%
San Diego	5%	Wyoming	0%

Region 9: Pacific—AK, CA, HI, OR, WA (n = 20 minimum)

School Name	Region 9 PCP	School Name	Region 9 PCP
Columbia	85%	Pepperdine	14%
Chicago	75%	WUSTL	14%
Penn	63%	U of Washington	13%
NYU	62%	San Francisco	11%
Virginia	61%	Arizona State	10%
George Washington	60%	American	9%
Stanford	57%	Denver	9%
Michigan	55%	San Diego	9%
Yale	55%	Southwestern	9%
Northwestern	54%	Syracuse	9%
Duke	49%	Northeastern	9%
Harvard	49%	U of Arizona	9%
Georgetown	47%	Iowa	7%
Cornell	46%	Oregon	5%
Boston College	44%	Chapman	4%
UC Berkeley	42%	Seattle	4%
Boston University	42%	California Western	2%
Vanderbilt	40%	Lewis & Clark	2%
Texas	38%	Pacific	2%
UCLA	36%	Willamette	2%
USC	32%	Golden Gate	1%
Wisconsin	32%	Thomas Jefferson	1%
Notre Dame	28%	Hawaii	0%
UC Hastings	25%	Western State	0%
Brigham Young	24%	Whittier	0%
Minnesota	22%	Western New England	0%
UC Davis	22%	Drake	0%
Santa Clara	20%	Tulsa	0%
Tulane	17%	Idaho	0%
Colorado	17%	Cooley	0%
Loyola Marymount	14%	Southern	0%