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and saddle you with a "Thinking about law school?" bag, that will sit in your room, untouched for the duration of the semester. The prelude must be endured before being allowed to enter the hallowed ground of the Law Forum.

Directly across from the doors that enclose the forum, not surprisingly, stand more LSAS agents ready to ply you with their goods. LSAS publications such as *"The Official Guide to US Law Schools"* are available for specially reduced prices. Curiously, I bought the same guide at the Columbia Bookstore for the same specially reduced price.

Once you survive the prelude you qualify to enter the forum itself: the formidable place where you meet admissions officers and law students. The first morning of the Law Forum, 13 September 1991, the doors to the actual forum were opened 15 minutes late. Meanwhile, a large crowd of interested people and law school hopefuls had gathered in front of the doors. Many had stopped by on their way to work, hoping to quickly pick up some applications and leave. Others had just wanted to arrive early, before the crowd, yet inevitably became part of the it. The doors eventually opened, to a stampede, as everyone pushed their way through, under which the hopes of avoiding the crowds and being to work on time were completely trampled.

The diversity of the crowd was impressive and included college students of all races and cultures as well as a large number of graduates. Of these diverse people, however, everyone was in the same boat. As the Forum proceeded, the interested group appeared increasingly less interested; impressing an admissions officer became less important than trying not to sweat in the hot and stuffy room. Ultimately jackets were removed, sleeves rolled up and collars undone, in an effort to combat the oppressive heat and congestion.

Admissions officers and their assistants, usually second or third-year law students (Apparently first-year law students are too incoherent to answer questions.) waited behind long row of tables. There were usually two or three people from each law school per table. But too often they were greatly outnumbered by an interested crowd. Thus, while waiting to speak to an admissions officer from a school such as NYU, one could easily find one at the next table learning the merits of the University of Kansas Law School.

Once you have captured the attention of the admissions officer you may be disappointed to find the kind of information provided. They come equipped with introductory booklets, and armed with graphs that show the placement and salaries of their graduates. They do not, however, come prepared to answer questions such as: "How does the intellectual atmosphere compare with other schools?", and "Will I learn everything it takes to be successful, competent lawyer?" and, of course, "Could

this be the right law school for me?" Admissions officers look uncomfortable and sweat a little more when asked such questions. However, you rarely get the opportunity to do more than grab a booklet because there are others behind you waiting rather impatiently. They, too, will be disappointed if they try to get a more abstract sense of the school from the admissions team.

Ultimately, attending the Law School Forum will not give anyone direction. As far as surface information, the Law School Forum succeeds, but it fails at anything more in-depth. In considering whether or not to attend next year's Law School Forum, one must consider the kind of information desired and hope that the Vista Hotel decides to hold it in a larger and more accommodating room.

Kim Abraham is a Barnard College senior.

Law School Profile: Harvard Law School

By Niza Motola

Just five hours by bus from New York in the center of Cambridge stands the Harvard University Law School. Since it is the oldest law school in the nation, (established in 1815), there is a certain mystique around Harvard. Harvard has never fallen below number five since the beginning of rating manuals; indeed it has spent most of its time at number one.

The campus's physical facilities comprise sixteen buildings including dorms, dining halls, administrative offices and classrooms. All of the buildings are close to each other and within walking distance. The campus is picturesque, with traditional ivy-covered red brick buildings in surprisingly good condition. Harvard has the largest law school library in the world with 14 million volumes. The library is separated into two sections: Langdell Hall and The International Legal Studies Wing. The atmosphere is tranquil by New York standards; no one is really rushing anywhere, and the clerical assistants are helpful and courteous.

The school has over seventeen hundred students with an average of 540 per class. There are nearly one hundred professors who offer more than one hundred and twenty-five different courses, providing a diverse and varied curriculum. A Harvard Law education is not geared towards specialization in one specific area of the law; rather, it emphasizes a general and theoretical approach.

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class of 540. About 800 students are admitted for the

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entering class. The student body is very diverse. The school has a twenty percent minority population which includes Latino, Asian, and Native American, as well as black students. A black female student from Texas A&M said she had expected a stuffy white male establishment, but found that quite the opposite was true. The average age of students is twenty-four years old, which is relatively young. There are some married students, most of whom do not have children. Geographically, the student body represents all fifty states and over three hundred undergraduate institutions. About 37 percent of students are women. Minorities are encouraged to apply.

The faculty is composed of 78 full-time professors and assistant professors, and 32 lecturers. The faculty is not as diverse as its student body, women being the best represented. This underrepresentation was attested on campus by posters supporting Professor Derrick Bell's leave of absence as a protest to the lack of tenured Professors of color.

First-year students are required to take Torts, Contracts, Property, Criminal Law, and Civil Procedure. The entering class is divided into four sections, and the same group of students remains together throughout the year. After the first year a student is basically free to take whatever courses he or she desires; the only requirements after the first year are a paper and a course in Ethics. Students are also allowed to cross-register with other departments. In addition to the J.D., the Law School also offers two graduate degrees: the LL.M.—Master of Laws and the S.J.D.—Doctor of Juridical Science. Like many other schools, Harvard offers concurrent degree programs with their business school (M.B.A.), the Kennedy School of Public Policy (M.P.P.), and the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University (M.A.L.D.). A student must apply and be admitted to both schools separately in order to obtain concurrent degrees.

If there is an emphasis on one type of law at Harvard, it is on public policy. The office of the Public Interest Placement Adviser conducts a work fair and prints an extensive manual titled *Who Worked Where in Public Interest, 1991*. Harvard's Low-Income Protection Plan, which they proclaim to be the most generous in the country, gives students assistance with their loans if they pursue an area of law which pays below a certain salary.

Students are also encouraged to pursue clinical

programs as a valuable part of the Harvard experience. The Commonwealth of Massachusetts allows law students to represent the less privileged in the district courts. Harvard has at least three organizations under the curriculum that represent clients under this stipulation. There are also other extracurricular organizations such as the Harvard Legal Aid Fund and Prison Legal Assistance Project which allow students hands-on experience.

There are a great number of extra-curricular activities at Harvard Law School related to a variety of interest and career goals: ten student law school publications, and numerous ethnic and racial groups such as La Alianza, Indian Law Students Association, Harvard Black Law Student Association, and the Committee on Gay and Lesbian Legal Issues. There are also the traditional Moot Court and Mock Trial Programs. Students can also join athletic organizations such as crew and be active in the numerous religious organizations on campus.

The tuition is \$15,560 per year, about the same as that of Columbia College. Room and board is estimated at \$7,643., and students warn of the high cost of living in Cambridge which can be closer to \$ 10,000. Expenses for an off campus student including medical care, books, and personal expenditures average, \$28,135.00. The cost is slightly less for those who choose to live on campus—\$27,310. Students live in dormitories and housing apartments owned by Harvard. There are seven dorms and 68 percent of the available space is reserved for law students. A substantial number of students live off campus in apartments.

Financial aid is available but it is limited and based entirely on demonstrated need, and the school often asks students to take out large loans. Many students, however, receive outside scholarships. Students also hold jobs on campus ranging from teaching assistants, to pre-law advisors, to resident assistants.

Admission to Harvard Law is extremely competitive. The school receives more applications than most

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law schools. Admission depends on a number of factors. The 1988-89 applicant pool had an average LSAT of 41 and GPA of 3.5. Most of the students interviewed had much higher numbers than the average. The school stresses that it does not make admissions decisions solely on the

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attempts to look beyond the numbers, to recruit students that will add dimension to the school while at the same time ensuring that the student can succeed in the law school. Admission is based largely on a student's undergraduate record, with consideration of the institution and grading system.

A narrow transcript is less than ideal, since the committee prefers a broad liberal arts education. Despite rumors that Harvard was no longer requiring LSATs, the exam is still a factor in the admissions process. It is also necessary to register with LSD AS in order to be considered, and letters of recommendation are essential. The letters should be substantive and compare the applicant to other students; academic recommendations are preferred. According to Assistant Dean of Admissions and Financial Aid Joyce Curll, the point of this part of the application is to "get a sense of what kind of student you are going to be."

Another component of the Harvard application is the personal statement, which provides the admissions committee with the ability to discern what a specific student will bring to Harvard. This year's application has a new section called an "Ideas Statement," the object of which is to learn the applicant's thoughts about ideas. This new section serves to analyze if a student will adapt to the "abstract nature" of Harvard Law School. Curll remarked that "No application at Harvard is likely to be successful if they have not been inspired by some intellectual idea."

When asked to estimate the value of the GPA, LSAT and volunteer work as well as recommendations, she replied that they are valued differently for different individuals. Activities are important in that they are meaningful for the student who participated in them. However, she warns against the practice of resume padding. According to Curll, the GPA and LSAT are factors in that they "distinguish people from each other," but they are reviewed for "individual circumstances." There is no formula for gaining admissions into Harvard; an excellent record does not guarantee admission with a stellar record because of different components which distinguish applicants. The school does not have an affirmative

action program per se, but it does "try to reach out to groups that have not traditionally been represented at Harvard Law School and extends a welcome to them," according to admissions literature. Diversity of experience is important for the school itself but there is also a commitment to changing traditional policies through the legal system through representatives of different groups.

When asked what is unique about Harvard, Curll replied that the Law School is rich with its own resources, and with the resources of the entire University. Harvard is also unique because of its size, allowing the school to offer just about everything, including the opportunity to meet people from different perspectives and backgrounds. Harvard is also unique because its location allows interaction with a number of major universities and their programs such as MIT, Tufts, and Boston University.

As mentioned previously, an admissions consideration is the applicant's undergraduate institution and how previous graduates of that school have performed at Harvard. The admissions committee adjusts college grades based on how previous students from the applicant's institution have fared at the law school. A Columbia undergraduate is regarded "very well," according to Curll, and Columbia and Barnard students' universal performance has been "good." "Columbia is obviously one of our top feeder schools," she remarked, "that is—not at the very top, but its students are successful." Applications are placed into groups based on undergraduate institution and Columbia is in the top cluster of schools. According to Curll, Columbia students are not competing specifically with one another because the committee does not have a fixed number of places for students of specific schools.

One Harvard law student and a Columbia graduate said that CU students who have graduated have a tendency to attend Yale instead of Harvard. In his opinion, Harvard feeder schools are Harvard undergraduate, Stanford and Yale as well as Berkeley. Another student from University of Michigan at Ann Arbor said that Ivy League students probably represented about 40 percent of the student body, with Harvard feeding approximately 25 percent of the students, followed by Princeton, Columbia and Brown. Adam Floyd, a first-year from Texas A&M (LSAT 43, G.P.A. 3.96) said that the school is "a lot easier than I expected," and that the courses are "challenging—real abstract and concrete." Mr. Floyd added that with most legal questions there are no set answers, but an "infinite number of solutions." In his opinion the student body is racially diverse, an observation with which all students I spoke agreed. There is, however, no real socio-economic diversity; most students agreed that a majority of the students represent middle-class and upper-class backgrounds. A few of the students interviewed felt that there is no real pressure, but that the students are the "high-strung type" which create

their own internal pressures. Another Columbia graduate said that the degree of competition and intellectual prowess was as he had anticipated. Ultimately, however, I got the sense that the student is buying the Harvard name; the most difficult part of the experience seems to be the admissions process.

Most claimed that they "were not typical Harvard

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students" which just reinforced the diversity of the student body. Students who refused to comment outright seemed to be discontented with the school. A third year Dartmouth graduate stated that her expectations were different from her actual experiences. Social life is not the focus of the school: Floyd stated that people do not go out very much and that they are more work oriented. Another student stated that what one encounters is "lousy parties at Harvard." According to this student, the attitude is studious, although the college town atmosphere is good and he recommends MIT parties. The highlight of the partying atmosphere seemed to be watching *LA Law* on a big screen surrounded by free flowing kegs in the Hark Lounge.

It is also evident from talking to students that the full spectrum of political ideologies is represented at Harvard. A conservative student referred to the excess of "Limo-Liberals at Harvard who have paternalistic attitudes towards the masses." Basically what one can expect at Harvard is the same atmosphere as Columbia but intensified, because people that attend Harvard Law are there for a specific purpose.

Although, the education is not as rigorous as the Harvard myth propagates, a Harvard degree will get you far in the work force. Ninety to ninety-five percent of Harvard graduates have accepted job offers by graduation. The majority of the graduating class in 1990 (62 percent) accepted offers from law firms and 26 percent took judicial clerkship positions. Additionally, four percent of the graduates work in legal services and three percent work in government-related jobs, while the remaining five percent are dispersed in teaching, further education, and corporations.

If you are seeking a school with a powerful reputation, then Harvard might be for you, if you can clear the admissions hurdle. The resources available at Harvard are nearly unsurpassable, and once one obtains a JD, a

good job is nearly guaranteed, but if you seek a balance between social life and academic accomplishments after your years at Columbia, you might want to consider another school.

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The AILE Program: How to Enter Law School Your Senior Year of College

by Sergio Van Asch La Porta

The Accelerated Interdisciplinary Legal Education (AILE) program is a special program offered at Columbia Law School. Columbia began the program in the early 70s in order to provide a creative alternative to the standard educational structure: four years of high school, four years of undergraduate work, and the required number of years of graduate work. By enrolling in the AILE program, the student can complete a B. A. and a J.D. degree in six years. Essentially, students enter law school after completing their junior year. The qualifications for admission are slightly higher for AILE applicants than for regular applicants; they must possess leadership abilities, maturity, and the capability to grasp new material quickly. These strict qualifications mean that AILE students are "a shade better than average," according to James Milligan, Dean of the Law School. Both Columbia College and the Law School emphasize that this program is not for everyone—in fact, they discourage most students from applying.

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student's undergraduate and graduate experience in a number of ways. Once students are accepted into the program, they withdraw from their undergraduate insti-