

University of Baltimore School of Law Fannie Angelos Program for Academic Excellence



WHO WE ARE: The Fannie Angelos Program for Academic Excellence represents a revolutionary, comprehensive approach for addressing the lack of diversity in legal education and the legal profession. We have created a unique collaboration between the University of Baltimore School of Law and Maryland’s four historically black colleges and universities. The Program was awarded the ABA Section of Litigation’s prestigious 2017 Diversity Leadership Award.

WHAT WE DO: The Program prepares HBCU students to gain admittance to law school and continues to support them so that they can excel and thrive in law school. We provide extensive LSAT preparation, one-on-one academic mentoring, individual “whole life” support, and career counseling.

HOW WE SUCCEED: Our students have excelled. More than 100 of our students have been accepted at law schools around the country. They have served on law journals, won national moot court competitions, graduated at the top of their class, and obtained prestigious judicial clerkships and employment at law firms and public interest organizations.

The Challenge

Minorities – particularly African Americans – are alarmingly underrepresented in both the legal profession and legal education. For example, although African Americans comprise 12 percent of the population, the National Association for Legal Career Placement found in November, 2015 that nationwide:

African Americans make up only 1.77 percent of law firm partners.

African-American women make up only 0.64 percent of law firm partners.

African Americans make up 3.95 percent of law firm associates.

African-American women make up 2.25 percent of law firm associates.

This disparity is mirrored in our nation's law schools. According to the most recent statistics, African Americans account for only 8.6 percent of law school students. And there is a second, disturbing trend. African Americans who do go to law school graduate with a far higher level of student debt than their white classmates. In 2015, 61% of African American law students reported that they will graduate with more than \$100,000 in debt, compared to about 40% of white law students.

The Causes

One of the primary causes of declining African American law school attendance is that law schools are increasing their reliance on Law School Admissions Test (LSAT) scores in admission decisions, even as the test itself comes under increased scrutiny for cultural bias. The LSAT's enlarged role is due to the fact that it is easy for an admissions office to use, the score has some correlation to one's first year performance in law school, and, perhaps most importantly, a law school's median LSAT score is a major component of its US News & World Report rankings.

The racial difference in LSAT scores is significant:

1) "The LSAT score for African-American students has remained exactly the same for more than 20 years. It has not moved one point That median score is a 142." Tiffany Pennamon, "Moving the Needle Forward on Legal Diversity," *Diverse: Issues In Higher Education*, March 28, 2019.

2) The average score for white students has also been virtually unchanged, staying at 153 since at least 2005. Susan P. Dalessandro, Lisa C. Anthony & Lynda M. Reese, *LSAT Performance With Regional, Gender, and Racial/Ethnic Breakdowns: 2005–2006 Through 2011–2012 Testing Years* (Law School Admission Council, LSAT Technical Report 12-03 October 2012).

From 2003 to 2008, 61 percent of African American applicants were denied acceptance by every law school to which they applied, compared to just 34 percent of white applicants.

The Law School Admission Council, which administers the test, acknowledges this racial disparity, stating, “The primary reason that minority test takers perform less well on the LSAT is lack of preparation. In addition, research indicates that minority group members, particularly African Americans, are more vulnerable to test anxiety than other test takers.”

LSAT preparation costs, specifically those for test-preparation classes, are substantial. A commercial course can cost \$2,000 or more. Many predominantly white colleges, such as the University of Maryland and University of Maryland, Baltimore County, provide such courses for their students at either no cost or at a greatly reduced cost. None of Maryland’s HBCUs, however, offer LSAT prep courses for their students; for students at the University of Maryland Eastern Shore, there is no commercial course within reasonable driving distance.

LSAT scores drive not only admissions decisions but scholarship offers as well. Law schools will frequently only give scholarships to students with high LSAT scores. Thus, the uneven playing field of the LSAT both reduces minority enrollment in law schools and greatly increases the costs for minority students who manage to gain admittance.

One Part of the Solution: The Fannie Angelos Program for Academic Excellence

The Program is run by Michael Meyerson, DLA Piper Professor of Law and Faculty Director and Co-Founder of the Program, Dionne Koller, Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, Professor of Law, and Director of Education for the Program, and F. Michael Higginbotham, Dean Joseph Curtis Professor of Law, Chair, Faculty Committee on the Fannie Angelos Program and Co-Founder of the Program. The Program is administered by Ms. Lenora Giles.

The Program has three distinct parts:

1) Fannie Angelos Scholars Boot Camp

After an application and interview process, eight “Fannie Angelos Scholars” are selected during their junior or senior year of college for a two-week “boot camp” in January at the UB School of Law. As its name implies, this portion of the program is intense and requires that all participating students commit to a rigorous itinerary. The Scholars, housed in a nearby hotel, are immersed in the law school experience – attending classes, reading cases, and writing assignments for review by full-time faculty members. They also meet with law students, visit law firms, and talk with lawyers, judges, and elected officials to become acquainted with the wide variety of career opportunities available to law graduates and to learn how to succeed in law school. The Scholars leave the program with a comprehensive understanding of what the pursuit of a formal legal education entails. After completing the Boot Camp, the Scholars enroll in an intensive, semester-long Princeton Review LSAT preparation course. Scholars contact the Program Director on a weekly basis (at minimum) who monitors their progress until they take the LSAT in June.

While the Fannie Angelos Scholars are not required to attend the UB School of Law, those who complete the program successfully, maintain a cumulative undergraduate grade point average of 3.5 out of 4.0, attain a score of 152 or higher on the LSAT and otherwise qualify for admission receive a full three-year tuition scholarship to the University of Baltimore School of Law.

2) The LSAT Award Program

The Program also provides eligible Maryland HBCU juniors, seniors, and graduates the opportunity to apply for the LSAT Award Program, which provides the same intensive Princeton Review preparation course that the Scholars attend. Twelve HBCU and UB undergraduate students and alumni are admitted to the program annually. To further increase the chances of success for those students enrolled in the preparation program, UB law school faculty and admission personnel, as well as former students from the Program, visit the individual course sites to offer advice on test-taking practices and techniques and to provide personal encouragement and mentoring.

3) Support for those who attend law school

We have also created an extraordinarily effective support system for both Scholars and LSAT Awardees who attend the University of Baltimore School of Law. Law School faculty meet regularly in structured sessions with these law students during their first year to teach them the time management, note-taking, outlining, exam preparation and the other skills necessary to succeed in law school. We help upper class students with their employment search, teaching interview techniques and resume writing, and introducing them to lawyers, judges, and potential employers. We also work with students on the wide range of non-academic issues, including health, family matters, and finances, that can interfere with academic success.

Program Success

The Fannie Angelos Program for Academic Excellence, formerly called the Baltimore Scholars Program, has been in its current form for the past seven years. In the short time since it was launched, we have seen positive results:

More than 100 of our Scholars and LSAT awardees have been accepted at law schools, including the University of Baltimore School of Law, Columbia Law School, the University of Maryland Francis King Carey School of Law, North Carolina Central University School of Law, the University of Minnesota Law School, Howard Law School, and the University of Southern California Gould School of Law.

The Proof is in the Pudding

The Program has given students at Maryland's Historically Black Colleges and Universities the ability to greatly improve their LSAT scores and, thus, their chances of gaining admittance to law school.

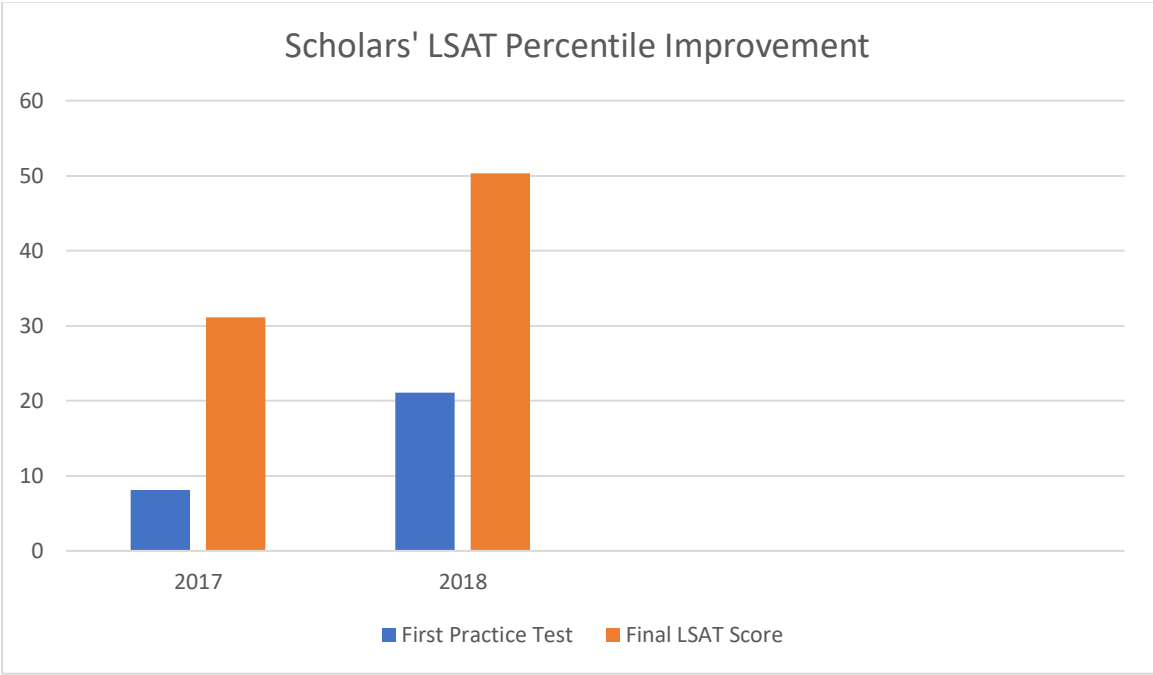
The first chart shows the performance on the bar exam for those taking the exam for the first time:

First -Time Bar Results Summer 2019

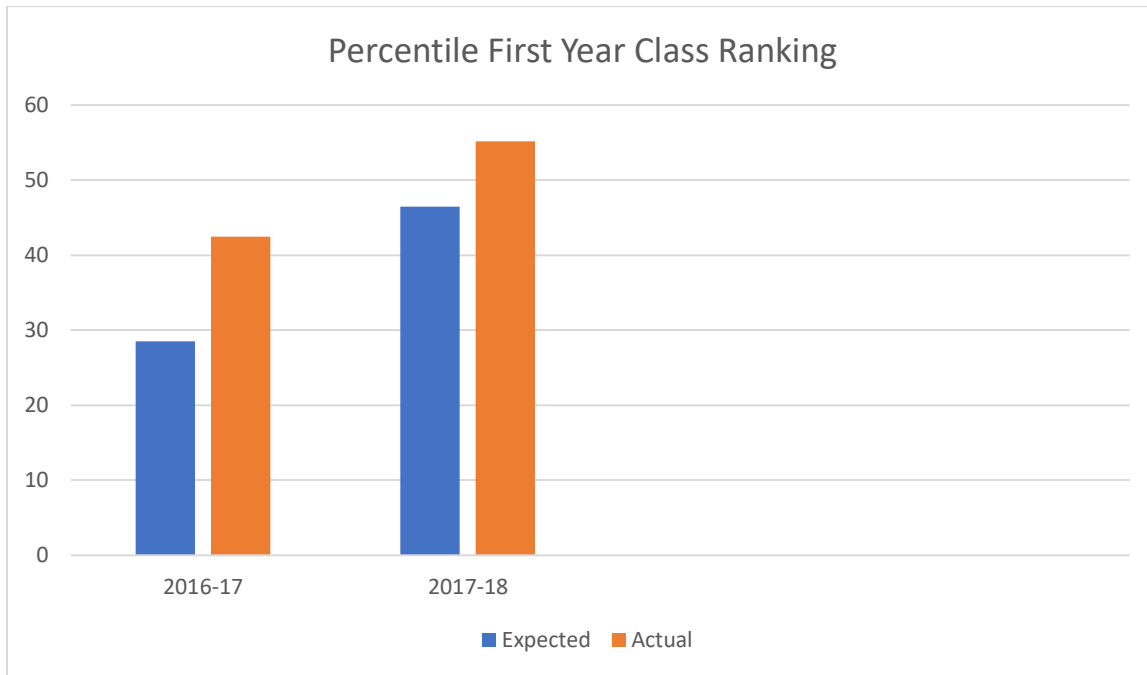
Fannie Angelos Student Pass rate:	82%
UB Law overall pass rate:	75%
Maryland state pass rate:	81%

1st time result	1st Practice LSAT Score	LSAT Score	1st Year UB GPA	Final UB GPA
UBLS PASSED				
Passed NY	135	148	2.54	2.86
Passed MD	138	150	2.84	3.00
Passed MD	139	144	3.58	3.52
Passed MD	140	146	2.54	3.26
Passed MD	144	150	2.47	2.76
Passed MD	145	153	4.04	4.03
Passed MD	148	152	3.31	3.57
OTHER LS Passed				
Passed DC	135	150	NA	NA
Passed NC	142	145	NA	NA
UBLS FAILED				
Failed MD	140	153	2.95	3.14
Failed MD	141	148	2.0	2.53

The second chart shows the increase that our Scholars demonstrated in their percentile ranking of all students taking the LSAT, from their first LSAT practice test to their actual LSAT exam.



The third chart shows how the Program helps students from Historically Black Colleges and Universities succeed in law school. The chart below represents the law school ranking that would be “expected” from students based on our students’ LSAT scores and compares them with the much higher ranking actually obtained by our students in their first year of law school.



* This chart represents the scores of those from our Program who attended the University of Baltimore School of Law. It does not include students who began the year but were unable to participate in the Program due to economic or health issues.