

2020-2021 AccessLex Institute/AIR Research Grant Proposal

Submittal ID: 2840

Proposal Title: Promoting the Representation and Success of Students from Minoritized Racial Groups at U.S. Law Schools

Principal Investigator

Name: Nicholas A. Bowman

Affiliation: University of Iowa

Unit/Department: Educational Policy and Leadership Studies

Title: Professor

Email: nick-bowman@uiowa.edu

Financial Representative

Name: Wendy Beaver

Affiliation: University of Iowa

Department: Division of Sponsored Programs

Title: Executive Director

1. Project Description

1a. Statement of the research problem and national importance (limit 1,000 words).

Address the following questions in your response:

What is the research problem this proposal intends to address?

How does this topic relate to the research priorities areas of access, affordability, and value of **graduate/professional or legal education**?

Why is this topic of national importance?

If single institution proposal, will proposed research yield findings that are scalable and replicable?

Why is it timely to conduct this research at this time?

In the legal education sector, progress has been slow in improving racial diversity among both students and degree recipients. This proposed project will examine factors that predict changes in enrollment and graduation of students from marginalized racial groups at U.S. law schools. This endeavor will involve consolidating datasets about law school admissions, student funding, student success, rankings, and state demographics. Deliverables from this study will be tailored separately to scholars of student success and to law school professionals in order to inform efforts related to understanding and eliminating barriers to law school and the legal profession.

The proposed study aligns with the AccessLex Center for Legal Education Excellence's research priority to understand barriers to law school access for underrepresented groups. Moreover, it builds upon prior AccessLex Institute work to advance research on access and affordability at a national scale. In an AccessLex-sponsored systematic literature review on predictors of graduate school aspirations, Harris and Zhang (2019) identified relationships between undergraduate institution selectivity and professional school enrollment, as well as between social identities and both graduate aspirations and enrollment. They also echo Tienda and Zhao's (2017) warning that researchers should not assume that undergraduate debt necessarily affects graduate school enrollment. Harris and Zhang (2019) issued a call for researchers to analyze graduate school enrollment based upon individual types of graduate programs and student groups. In response, our focus here specifically examines legal education programs and students from marginalized racial identities. We approach this research question about race and access with a particular emphasis on law school price and financial aid.

National Importance of Examining Law School Borrowing and Minoritized Law Students

Mainstream media coverage has directed national attention to the phenomenon of graduate and professional school debt. Recent feature reporting in *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *The Wall Street Journal*, and *National Public Radio* has described the outsized influence of graduate and professional school borrowing on the U.S. student debt crisis (Carey, 2019; Douglas-Gabriel, 2020; Herships, 2019; Mitchell, 2020). This new popular media focus on the problem affords researchers a platform to explain the reasons behind these financial issues and to help the concerned public understand their widespread effects. The proposed study seeks to contribute to the national discourse on graduate and professional student debt through subgroup analyses of law school admission and persistence, with financial implications at front of mind.

Law school borrowing comprises a large portion of nationwide graduate school debt. Law students are more likely than their peers pursuing academic master's degrees to take out loans to pay for school (Pyne & Grodsky, 2020). Moreover, when they do receive loans, law students typically borrow amounts many times higher than their peers, even after accounting for differences in race, socioeconomic status, and gender (Belasco et al., 2016; Pyne & Grodsky, 2020).

Scholars of student financial aid argue that both overborrowing and underborrowing to pay for school are both major problems. Overborrowing can contribute to greater default rates (Avery & Turner, 2012), while underborrowing can contribute to declines in student persistence and completion (Barr et al., 2019). Borrowing trends among graduate and professional students from different racial groups are uneven. African American and Latinx students are more likely to borrow money—and borrow significantly greater amounts—to pay for graduate and professional education than White students (Pyne & Grodsky, 2020). Meanwhile, Asian American students are less likely to borrow to pay for graduate school and borrow smaller amounts when they do. This difference holds implications for the academic and professional success of law students from minoritized racial groups, particularly as more students from historically underrepresented groups begin to attend law school.

Demographic Trends and Law School Administration

The racial diversity of new 1Ls cohorts has improved over the last 10 years, but these gains have been quite modest. In 2011, 28% of incoming students were categorized as racial or ethnic minorities by the American Bar Association (2013), and that representation was 31% in 2019 (ABA, 2020). Conferral of J.D.s followed a somewhat stronger upward trend: 24% of J.D. degrees were earned by students from racially minoritized groups in 2011, whereas this percentage increased to 31% by 2019. However, this representation still falls short of the U.S. population as a whole, in which 40% of residents are racial or ethnic minorities (U.S. Census, 2019).

Moreover, there was little change in the past decade within demographics of the overall legal profession. According to the ABA National Lawyer Population Survey (2019), the percentage of active attorneys of African American (5%), Asian (2%), Native American (1%), and Hawaiian/Pacific Islander (0%) descent remained flat. During this time, some increases occurred for the percentage of multiracial lawyers (0% to 2%) and Hispanic lawyers (4% to 5%), while the representation of Caucasian/White lawyers remained quite high and notably disproportionate (88% to 85%).

Why are these changes occurring so slowly? As one reason within the control of law schools, qualitative studies have found that many law school administrators believe that admitting more students from racially marginalized groups would negatively impact their rankings (Espeland & Sauder, 2016; Sauder, 2006). Espeland and Sauder explained how maintaining or improving position in the *U.S. News and World Report* (USNWR) rankings takes priority above nearly all else in law school administrative decision-making, even when espousing institutional and personal commitments to equity, diversity, and inclusion. Little is known about whether and how recruitment, admissions, and enrollment initiatives directed toward students from minoritized racial groups actually change as a result of a law school's shift in the rankings. This proposed project will directly assess how the racial composition of the incoming classes at U.S. law schools changes as a result of rankings and law school costs, which could contribute important evidence to the narratives around rank, race, prestige, and funding.

1b. Review the literature and establish the theoretical grounding for the research (limit 1,000 words).

Address the following questions in your response:

What has prior research found about this problem?

What is the theoretical/conceptual grounding for this research?

Law schools have been criticized—even in their own journals—about the use of institutional financial aid practices (Merritt & Merritt, 2017; Whitford, 2017), about the perception that the number of admitted law students notably exceeds the number of available legal jobs (Adler, 2014; Grothoff, 2018; Holbrook & Hornok, 2014), about the price of tuition being set higher than the salaries of legal jobs that students ultimately obtain (Engel, 2018), and about their ability to prepare students who can pass the bar and subsequently practice law in a competent manner (Austin et al., 2016; McGrath & Morriss, 2018).

Tuition and Financial Aid Practices

In a highly competitive field marked by these pressures, ranking mechanisms (e.g., USNWR) and digital transparency initiatives (e.g., <http://www.lawschooltransparency.com>) have attempted to direct students to the law schools that could be considered students' best choices (Espeland & Sauder, 2016). Kelchen (2019) suggested that this information-rich and transparent landscape of law school pricing may have kept schools from increasing tuition even more sharply. Transparency about finances, however, does not mean that all prospective students will benefit from the information. Winkle-Wagner and Locks (2019) point out that students and families of color are vulnerable based on information asymmetries about the financial aid process. Scholars have also argued that substantial racial differences in the need to borrow money to afford postsecondary education have important implications for higher education access and completion (Goldrick-Rab et al., 2014). Additionally, some research has found that increasing financial aid does not always improve the likelihood that students from minoritized racial backgrounds will initially enroll in law school (Kim et al., 2017). No matter the asymmetries, different factors affect the application and persistence patterns of students from different racial and ethnic backgrounds, leading to stratification of the graduate education system in the U.S. (Posselt & Grodsky, 2017).

That said, research on undergraduate education strongly supports the use of financial aid as a tool for improving postsecondary access and completion. Herbaut and Geven (in press) conducted a systematic review of experimental and quasi-experimental studies on the impact of financial aid for students of color and students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds. Overall, receiving financial aid or tuition discounts led to improvements in college enrollment, persistence, and graduation, especially when need-based aid was provided. Other reviews suggest that the impact of financial aid may be especially strong for students of color and for low-SES students (Goldrick-Rab, Harris, & Trostel, 2009; Mayhew et al., 2016), so efforts to improve financial assistance and reduce costs have the potential to improve equity in higher education participation and degree attainment.

Rankings

Professional schools are highly professionalized and structured, as evinced by their commonly adopted regulation, program formats and content, and administrative organization. As such, professional schools are very susceptible to isomorphic pressures (Wedlin, 2007). Rankings are the clearest indicator of a law

school's peers, and Espeland and Sauder (2016) prove compelling evidence about why USNWR rankings matter more than any other. Prospective law school students certainly use USNWR rankings to inform their decision about where to attend (Author, 2020; Espeland & Sauder, 2016; Sauder & Lancaster, 2006), but research to date has not examined whether or how law school rankings affect the racial composition of incoming students.

Some inquiry provides indirect evidence into this issue. Earlier studies had found that the students who were most likely to use rankings to inform their college choice were those that applied to more selective institutions and those from privileged groups (e.g., higher income, traditional-age; Howard, 2002; McDonough et al., 1998). Both studies found that Asian American students placed a greater emphasis on rankings than other groups; Howard found that Hispanic/Latino students felt rankings were less important, and McDonough et al. observed that Black/African American perceived rankings to be more important. Another layer of complexity rests in the competition among highly ranked undergraduate institutions to recruit and admit more high-scoring students of color from national and international locales in order to obtain a racially diverse incoming class (Armstrong & Hamilton, 2013). To the extent that such dynamics also occur within law schools, rankings may simultaneously affect institutional and student decision making.

Theoretical Frameworks

The most influential conceptualization of the college choice process is provided by Hossler and Gallagher (1987). This model describes the process via three phases of predisposition, search, and choice, each of which is important for understanding whether and where students attend college (for overviews of postsecondary choice models, see Bergerson, 2009; Paulsen, 1990). The present study explores dynamics that pertain primarily to the second and third phases. USNWR rankings and ABA disclosures provide ample information about law schools for the search process, which may lead prospective students to quickly rule out a large number of institutions to which they are unlikely to be admitted, that would likely cost more than they are able or willing to pay, or that have lower standards or outcomes than they would prefer. This same information may prove integral to students' final law school choice, and accepted applicants will have additional information about their own financial aid offer and other relevant considerations.

The proposed analyses predicting law school graduation are informed by student success theories that highlight the roles of financial considerations and campus racial climate in shaping persistence intentions and behaviors (e.g., Nora, 2004). Many existing theories overlook the role of finances, even though financial aid clearly promotes undergraduate student retention, persistence, and graduation (see Nguyen et al., 2019), and these undergraduate effects tend to be larger for students of color and for students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds (Goldrick-Rab et al., 2009; Mayhew et al., 2016), as noted above. The present study expands upon prior research by examining relevant dynamics among law schools and by considering the institution's racial representation as a factor that may shape graduation for students of color.

1c. Describe the research method that will be used (limit 1,000 words).

Address the following questions in your response:

What are the research questions to be addressed?

What is the proposed research methodology?

What is the statistical model to be used? (please include equations if appropriate)

This study will explore two primary research questions:

1. What factors are associated with changes in the proportion of racially minoritized students who initially enroll at U.S. law schools?
2. What factors are associated with changes in the graduation rates of racially minoritized students at U.S. law schools?

Sample and Data Sources

The analytic sample will consist of U.S. law schools that are ABA accredited. The analyses will examine data from 2011-2019, since ABA required disclosures are publicly available for this period of time; the recency of these data will also facilitate stronger conclusions about current dynamics at these institutions. Law schools that merged or closed during this period of time will be excluded the sample. Therefore, the analyses will include approximately 200 institutions, which is sufficient for conducting the fixed effects analyses described below.

Data will be obtained from three primary sources. First, ABA 509 Disclosures will provide school-level information about student demographics, enrollment, attrition, graduation, tuition/fees, living expenses, and financial aid. Second, college rankings for each school will be obtained from USNWR listings. Third, the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS) 1-Year Estimates will provide demographic information for the states in which each law school primarily operates.

Measures

Dependent Variables. The percentage of first-year students who identify with a racial minority group will be examined. This general construct will be operationalized in several ways: the percentage of all students of color (SOC), of underrepresented racial minority students (URM; i.e., American Indian/Alaska Native, Black/African American, Hispanic/Latinx, Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander), and of individual racial groups that have sufficient representation within U.S. law schools (Asian, Black, Latinx).

Unfortunately, the ABA does not report graduation rates by race/ethnicity, and attrition from the institution has only been reported separately by race/ethnicity for the past three years. Therefore, graduation outcomes will be operationalized via the total number of graduates from these same five racial categories (SOC, URM, Asian, Black, Latinx) and the percentage of total graduates out of all degree recipients from each of these racial categories. In addition, we will compute on-time graduation rates via the number of graduates divided by the lagged number of entering students (three years for full-time and four years for part-time) plus the lagged number of students who transferred into the institution

(two years, since the vast majority of transfer occurs among full-time students and between the first and second year).

Independent Variables. Several financial variables will be included: total tuition and fees, average cost of living expenses, percentage of students receiving grants/scholarships worth at least half of tuition, percentage receiving grants/scholarships for less than half of tuition, and whether some of these scholarships are conditional (aka performance-based; 0 = no, 1 = yes). Additional ABA variables will indicate the percentage of instructors who are racial minorities, the total student enrollment at the institution, the average size of a first-year section course, and the percentage of non-first-year courses that have fewer than 25 students. For analyses predicting graduation rates, the percentages of Asian, Black, Latinx, and other students of color within the undergraduate student body will be included as independent variables.

USNWR rankings will also be used; one variable will indicate the ordinal ranking and another will consist of a squared term for the ranking to identify potential curvilinear effects. The ordinal variable will be standardized with a mean of zero and standard deviation of one before computing the squared term to reduce multicollinearity (e.g., Jaccard & Turrisi, 2003). Moreover, using ACS data, the percentage of Asian, Black, Latinx, and other residents of color within the state that houses the law school will be included to account for any relationships that might be attributable to changes in the state's demographics.

Analyses

Fixed effects regression analyses will be conducted. This approach accounts for all between-institution variance in the outcomes so that the results convey the extent to which within-institution changes in the predictors are associated with changes in the outcomes. The benefit of this approach is that it accounts for all observed and unobserved differences across institutions, which increases the likelihood that the coefficients for non-experimental data reflect causal estimates of the variables of interest (see Allison, 2009). This approach can be summarized via the following equation:

$$y_{it} = \alpha_{it} + \beta \mathbf{x}_{it} + \gamma \mathbf{z}_i + \delta \mathbf{w}_t + \varepsilon_{it}$$

in which y_{it} is the outcome variable, \mathbf{x}_{it} is a vector of time-varying predictors, \mathbf{z}_i is a vector of dummy variables representing each institution (leaving out one as the referent group), \mathbf{w}_t is a vector of dummy variables representing each year (also leaving out one), α_{it} is the intercept, and ε_{it} is the error term.

The lag time between the predictors and outcomes is important within fixed effects regression, since it should reflect the timing in which the predictors were most likely to have had an effect on the outcomes. The ideal lag for this study depends upon the type of outcome examined. For analyses predicting the racial representation of first-year students, data from the prior academic year will be used to create the independent variables. For instance, prospective students who entered in the Fall 2018 cohort were making final decisions about which law school to attend in 2017-18, so a one-year lag between independent and dependent variables will be used for analyses predicting this entering racial composition. However, this issue becomes more complicated for predicting graduation outcomes, since students are attending law school over multiple years. Because the vast majority of law school students enroll full-time (ABA, 2020), the three years in which students are expected to have attended will be averaged. For instance, students who entered in Fall 2015 will have data from the 2015-18 academic years used as predictors of graduation outcomes in 2018.

1d. References cited (no word limit).

- Adler, R. W. (2014). Renewing the “social contract” between law schools, lawyers, and society. *Utah OnLaw: The Utah Law Review Online Supplement*, 2014(1), 19-35.
- Allison, P.D. (2009). *Fixed effects regression models*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.
- American Bar Association. (2013). *ABA approved 1st year JD and minority enrollment: Fall 2013*.
https://www.americanbar.org/groups/legal_education/resources/statistics/
- American Bar Association. (2019). *ABA national lawyer population survey: 10-year trend in lawyer demographics*.
https://www.americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/administrative/market_research/national-lawyer-population-demographics-2009-2019.pdf
- American Bar Association. (2020). *2019 JD enrollment and ethnicity. ABA Section of Legal Education and Admissions to the Bar*. <http://abarequireddisclosures.org/Disclosure509.aspx>
- Armstrong, E. A., & Hamilton, L. T. (2013). *Paying for the party: How college maintains inequality*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Austin, K. A., Christopher, C. M., & Dickerson, D. (2016). Will I pass the Bar Exam: Predicting student success using LSAT scores and law school performance. *Hofstra l. rev.*, 45, 753.
- Avery, C., & Turner, S. (2012). Student loans: Do college students borrow too much--or not enough? *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 26(1), 165-92.
- Barr, A. C., Bird, K. A., & Castleman, B. (2019). *The effect of reduced student loan borrowing on academic performance and default: Evidence from a loan counseling experiment* (EdWorkingPaper: 19-89). Retrieved from Annenberg Institute at Brown University:
<http://www.edworkingpapers.com/ai19-89>
- Belasco, A. S., Trivette, M. J., & Webber, K. L. (2014). Advanced degrees of debt: Analyzing the patterns and determinants of graduate student borrowing. *The Review of Higher Education*, 37(4), 469-497.
- Bergerson, A. A. (Ed.) (2009). *College choice and access to college: Moving policy, research, and practice to the 21st century* (ASHE Higher Education Report, vol. 35, no. 4). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Carey, K. (2019, June 25). Canceling student loan debt doesn't make problems disappear. *The New York Times*. <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/06/25/upshot/student-loan-debt-forgiveness.html>
- Chambers, D. L. (1992). The burdens of educational loans: The impacts of debt on job choice and standards of living for students at nine American law schools. *Journal of Legal Education*, 42(2). 187-232
- Douglas-Gabriel, D. (2020, February 13). Graduate school debt is driving up the cost of helping borrowers manage their student loans. *The Washington Post*.
<https://www.washingtonpost.com/education/2020/02/13/graduate-school-debt-is-driving-up-cost-helping-borrowers-manage-their-student-loans/>
- Engel, S. P. (2018). The economics of law school: Employment prospects and market inefficiencies. *Miss LJ*, 87, 501.
- Espeland, W. N., & Sauder, M. (2016). *Engines of anxiety: Academic rankings, reputation, and accountability*. New York, NY: Russell Sage Foundation.
- Goldrick-Rab, S. Harris, D. N., & Trostel, P. A. (2009). Why financial aid matters (or does not) for college success: Toward a new interdisciplinary perspective. In J. C. Smart (Ed.), *Higher education: Handbook of theory and research* (Vol. 24, pp. 1-45). New York, NY: Springer.

- Goldrick-Rab, S., Kelchen, R. & Houle, J. (2014). The color of student debt: Implications of federal loan program reforms for black students and Historically Black Colleges and Universities. *Wisconsin HOPE Lab Working Paper*.
- Grothoff, E. (2018). Learning from law students: How PhDs might seek legal remedy in the face of widespread underemployment. *Ind. LJ*, 93, 1299.
- Harris, Z. & Zhang, L. (2019). *Aspirations and decisions to enroll in graduate programs: A literature review of contributing factors*. AccessLex Grantee Research. <https://arc.accesslex.org/grantee/46>
- Herbaut, E., & Geven, K. (in press). What works to reduce inequalities in higher education? A systematic review of the (quasi-)experimental literature on outreach and financial aid. *Research in Social Stratification and Mobility*.
- Herships, S. (2019, August 14). Graduate students are increasingly shouldering the country's student debt. *National Public Radio*. <https://www.npr.org/2019/08/14/751235991/graduate-students-are-increasingly-shouldering-the-countrys-student-debt>
- Holbrook, J. R., & Homok, J. R. (2014). Addressing twin crises in the law: Underdeserved clients and underemployed lawyers. *Utah L. Rev. OnLaw*, 15.
- Hossler, D., & Gallagher, K. S. (1987). Studying student college choice: A three-phase model and the implications for policymakers. *College and University*, 62(3), 207–221.
- Howard, M. (2002). *Student use of rankings in national magazines in the college decision-making process*. Unpublished dissertation, University of Tennessee.
- Jaccard, J., & Turrisi, R. (2003). *Interaction effects in multiple regression* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.
- Kelchen, R. (2019). An empirical examination of the Bennett Hypothesis in law school prices. *Economics of Education Review*, 73, 101915.
- Kim, H, Oster, M., Ueda, N, & DesJardins, S. (2017, April 30). Predicting law school enrollment: The strategic use of financial aid to craft a class. *AccessLex Institute Research Paper No. 18-07*. <https://arc.accesslex.org/grantee/7/>
- Mayhew, M. J., Rockenbach, A. N., Bowman, N. A., Seifert, T. A., & Wolniak, G. C., with Pascarella, E. T., & Terenzini, P. T. (2016). *How college affects students (Vol. 3): 21st century evidence that higher education works*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- McDonough, P., Antonio, A. L., Walpole, M., & Perez, L. X. (1998). College rankings: Democratized college knowledge for whom? *Research in Higher Education*, 39(5), 513-537.
- McGrath, J, & Morriss, A. P. (2018). Assessments all the way down. *The Green Bag*, 21, 139-151.
- Merritt, D. J., & Merritt, A. L. (2017). Agreements to improve student aid. *Journal of Legal Education*, 67(1), 17-50.
- Meyer, J. W., & Rowan, B. (1977). Institutionalized organizations: Formal structure as myth and ceremony. *American Journal of Sociology*, 83(2), 240-363.
- Mitchell, J. (2020, February 12). Student debt forgiveness in U.S. to total \$207 billion in next decade, CBO says. *The Wall Street Journal*. <https://www.wsj.com/articles/student-debt-forgiveness-in-u-s-to-cost-207-billion-in-next-decade-cbo-says-11581541486>
- Nguyen, T., Kramer, J., & Evans, B. (2019). The effects of grant aid on student persistence and degree attainment: A systematic review and meta-analysis of the causal evidence. *Review of Educational Research*, 89(6), 831–874.
- Nora, A. (2004). The role of habitus and cultural capital in choosing a college, transitioning from high school to higher education, and persisting in college among minority and nonminority students. *Journal of Hispanic Higher Education*, 3(2), 180-208.
- Paulsen, M. B. (1990). *College choice: Understanding student enrollment behavior* (ASHE-ERIC Higher Education Report, no. 6). Washington, DC: The George Washington University.

- Posselt, J. R., & Grodsky, E. (2017). Graduate education and social stratification. *Annual Review of Sociology, 43*, 353-378.
- Pyne, J., & Grodsky, E. (2020). Inequality and opportunity in a perfect storm of graduate student debt. *Sociology of Education, 93*(1), 20-39.
- Sauder, M. (2006). Third parties and status position: How the characteristics of status systems matter. *Theory and Society, 35*(3), 299-321.
- Sauder, M., & Lancaster, R. (2006). Do rankings matter? The effects of *US News & World Report* rankings on the admissions process of law schools. *Law & Society Review, 40*(1), 105-134.
- Tienda, M., & Zhao, L. (2017). Institutional and ethnic variations in postgraduate enrollment and completion. *The Journal of Higher Education, 88*(4), 561-592.
- U.S. Census Bureau. (2019). *QuickFacts: Population estimates, July 1, 2019 (V2019)*. <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/US/PST045219#>
- Wedlin, L. (2007). The role of rankings in codifying a business school template: Classifications, diffusion and mediated isomorphism in organizational fields. *European Management Review, 4*(1), 24-39.
- Whitford, W. C. (2017). Law School-Administered Financial Aid. *Journal of Legal Education, 67*(1), 4-16.
- Winkle-Wagner, R., & Locks, A. M. (2019). *Diversity and inclusion on campus: Supporting students of color in higher education*. New York, NY: Routledge.

- 1e.** List the datasets that will be used and explain why they best serve this research. Applicant should also provide a statement indicating whether the proposed research will require use of restricted datasets. If restricted datasets will be used, the plan for acquiring the appropriate license should be described (limit 750 words).

As noted in the Method section above, data will be obtained from several sources. First, the American Bar Association 509 Disclosures provide school-level information about student demographics, enrollment, attrition, graduation, tuition/fees, living expenses, and financial aid. These data are vital for approaching the research questions about matriculation and persistence to graduation. Second, historical rankings for each school will be obtained from USNWR listings. Previous research has demonstrated the profound effect of rankings on the U.S. legal education system, so these constitute an important factor to examine in the present study. Third, demographic information for the states where the law schools operate will be pulled from the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates to avoid confounding regional demographic shifts with the key predictors of interest.

1f. Timeline of key project activities (no word limit).

June-Aug 2020: Download, merge, and clean datasets

(note that the ABA data for all institutions is only downloadable via non-customizable spreadsheets that contain one set of variables for one year at a time, so this process will involve a substantial amount of work)

Aug-Oct 2020: Create variables and codebook; conduct preliminary analyses

(this step is important to prepare all of the planned analyses and to ensure that we do not encounter any unforeseen difficulties; we also intend to explore whether we may be able to conduct analyses for additional groups, such as multiracial students)

Nov-Dec 2020: Conduct primary analyses

Dec-Mar 2021: Write empirical papers on these findings

April 2021: Submit papers to journals; submit conference proposal(s)

Apr-May 2021: Write and distribute report for law school practitioners

1g. List deliverables such as research reports, books, and presentations that will be developed from this research initiative (no word limit).

This project will have several deliverables. The analyses will result in two empirical papers: one examining the racial representation of entering first-year law school students and another examining law school graduation outcomes by race. Consistent with the grant proposal guidelines, our deliverables will involve submitting these papers as the final report, providing a 1-2 page executive summary of these papers, and presenting at the AccessLex Institute Legal Education Research Symposium. In addition, we also plan to present this work at one or more additional higher education research conference; those presentation(s) are expected to occur after the grant funding period has ended.

1h. How will you disseminate the results of this research (limit 250 words)?

Both of the empirical papers will be submitted to top-tier higher education journals (e.g., *Journal of Higher Education*, *Research in Higher Education*). We will also present these results not only to the AccessLex Institute Legal Education Research Symposium, but also at additional higher education research conferences (e.g., the Association for the Study of Higher Education). Moreover, we will create a research brief that we will provide to the broader legal education community. Specifically, we will target the National Association for Law Placement's *NALP Bulletin*, which reaches legal career professionals in law schools and law firms, and the American Bar Association's digital publication *After the Bar*, which is disseminated to newcomers to the legal community at large.

2. Statement of Institutional Review Board Approval or Exemption

As part of the online application, a statement outlining a plan for Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval is required. The statement should outline the applicant's timeline and plan for submitting the proposal to an IRB or explain why IRB approval is not necessary. Final IRB action is *not* necessary prior to submitting the application (limit 250 words).

Because all of the data are publicly available and no interaction with human subjects will occur, this project does not require IRB approval. We will submit a university Human Subjects Research Determination form so that we will have written confirmation of this classification from our university's IRB office.

3. Biographical Sketch

A biographical sketch should include prior degrees earned, relevant professional work experiences, skills necessary for completion of the proposed study, and prior research experiences with national datasets (limit 750 words).

Note: Include a biographical sketch for each person listed on the grant proposal.

Nicholas A. Bowman is a professor in the Department of Educational Policy and Leadership Studies, director of the Center for Research on Undergraduate Education, and a senior research fellow in the Public Policy Center at the University of Iowa. Starting in Fall 2020, he will also be the Mary Louise Petersen Chair in Higher Education, which is held by Ernest T. Pascarella. He currently serves as an associate editor of *The Journal of Higher Education* and *Higher Education: Handbook of Theory and Research*.

Before working at the University of Iowa, Dr. Bowman was an assistant professor in the Department of Higher Education and Student Affairs at Bowling Green State University from 2011-2015 and a postdoctoral research associate at the University of Notre Dame from 2008-2011. He received an interdepartmental individualized Ph.D. in psychology and education from the University of Michigan. His plan of study involved virtually all required coursework from two doctoral programs in social psychology and higher education. He also received two master's degrees in education (one in higher education and one in research methodology), along with a graduate certificate in culture and cognition, from the University of Michigan. He earned a bachelor's degree in psychology with a minor in education studies from the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA); he graduated *summa cum laude* with departmental honors and membership in Phi Beta Kappa.

The vast majority of Dr. Bowman's work has used large and/or complex datasets to conduct sophisticated quantitative analyses. Especially early in his career, this work often explored multi-institutional secondary datasets, such as the Wabash National Study of Liberal Arts Education, various surveys from the Cooperative Institutional Research Program in the Higher Education Research Institute at UCLA, National Longitudinal Survey of Freshmen, Beginning Postsecondary Students Longitudinal Study, and the Campus Religious and Spiritual Climate Survey. He has also created his own datasets that draw from a variety of sources, which include original national and institutional surveys; the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System; institutional records of student, course, and faculty data;

published and unpublished empirical papers (for use in meta-analysis); information from college rankings; and more.

The analyses of these data sources involve a variety of quantitative techniques: propensity score analysis, regression discontinuity, difference-in-differences, instrumental variable analysis, multilevel modeling, meta-analysis, bootstrap mediation analyses, structural equation modeling, fixed effects regression analysis, and multiple regression. This work has examined continuous, binary, ordinal, count, and categorical outcomes.

Dr. Bowman uses a social psychological lens to explore key issues in higher education; the present study represents a confluence of his interests in student success, diversity, admissions, and rankings. Overall, this inquiry has resulted in a strong record of scholarship. Since 2009, Dr. Bowman has had 82 peer-reviewed journal articles that were published or are currently in press. These outlets include top journals in higher education (e.g., *Journal of Higher Education*, *Research in Higher Education*, *Review of Higher Education*, *Journal of College Student Development*, *Higher Education*, *Studies in Higher Education*) and P-20 education (e.g., *Review of Educational Research*, *Educational Researcher*, *American Educational Research Journal*, *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, *Educational Policy*), along with disciplinary journals in psychology and sociology (e.g., *Social Psychological and Personality Science*, *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology*, *Applied Psychology: Health and Well-Being*, *Sociology of Education*). This research has also appeared or is currently accepted in other formats; since 2009, this work includes 23 book chapters, five books and monographs, 30 additional publications, and 110 peer-reviewed conference presentations. Finally, he is an author of the third volume of *How College Affects Students*, which systematically reviewed over 1,800 studies on the short-term and long-term effects of postsecondary education.

Nicholas Stroup will be collaborating with Dr. Bowman on this project; Stroup is a Ph.D. student in Higher Education and Student Affairs and a graduate researcher in the Center for Research on Undergraduate Education at the University of Iowa. He has received the most competitive award in the College of Education, which is provided to students with exceptional academic achievement. His current research explores graduate students and their socialization in various contexts, including global and digital domains. Prior to his doctoral studies, Stroup worked for six years in graduate and professional academic affairs, and he served multiple terms as the sponsored program chair for ACPA's Commission for Graduate and Professional Student Affairs. His ongoing research projects include a study of doctoral student socialization in the Republic of Kosovo and an analysis of law school websites.

4. Statement of Prior, Current, and Pending Funding

A statement of prior, current, and pending funding for the proposed research from all sources is required. The statement should also include a history of prior funding (past 10 years) from AIR to any of the PIs. Funding from other sources will not disqualify the application but may be considered in the funding decision (limit 250 words).

Current Grants

Title: A Belonging Intervention to Improve STEM Outcomes for Underrepresented Students: A Randomized-Controlled Trial at 22 Colleges

Source of Support: NSF/Indiana University

Role: PI

Total Award Amount: \$222,713

Period Covered: 7/1/2017 – 6/30/2020

Location of Project: University of Iowa

Pending Grants

Title: A Multilevel Investigation of Group and Instructor Effects Within a Postsecondary Academic Success Intervention

Source of Support: IES

Role: Co-PI

Total Award Amount: \$1,073,804

Period Covered: 7/1/2020 – 6/30/2024

Location of Project: University of Iowa

Title: Career Preparation for Postdoctoral Fellows in Education Sciences and Practice

Source of Support: IES

Role: Faculty Mentor

Total Award Amount: \$760,063

Period Covered: 7/1/2020 – 6/30/2025

Location of Project: University of Iowa

Title: ECR DBER DCL: Examining the Impact of Supplemental Instruction on the Achievement and Persistence of Computer Science Majors

Source of Support: NSF

Role: Co-PI

Total Award Amount: \$449,627

Period Covered: 7/15/2020 – 7/14/2023

Location of Project: University of Iowa

Title: ECR DBER DCL: STEM Student Success Interventions and College Outcomes: A Comprehensive Quantitative Meta-Analysis

Source of Support: NSF

Role: Co-PI

Total Award Amount: \$750,760

Period of Performance: 8/1/2020 – 7/31/2023

Location of Project: University of Iowa

Appendix

Please include charts, graphs, or other images referenced in earlier sections of this document.

N/A



Research Grant Proposal Budget Form



Personnel - Salary

| | | |
|-------------------------------|----|----------------------|
| Principal Investigator | \$ | <input type="text"/> |
| Second Principal Investigator | \$ | <input type="text"/> |
| Third Principal Investigator | \$ | <input type="text"/> |
| Graduate Research Assistant | \$ | <input type="text"/> |

Travel

| | | |
|--|----|----------------------|
| 2020 AccessLex Institute Legal Education Research Symposium: Principal Investigator | \$ | <input type="text"/> |
| 2020 AccessLex Institute Legal Education Research Symposium: Second Principal Investigator | \$ | <input type="text"/> |
| 2020 AccessLex Institute Legal Education Research Symposium: Third Principal Investigator | \$ | <input type="text"/> |
| 2020 AccessLex Institute Legal Education Research Symposium: Graduate Research Assistant* | \$ | <input type="text"/> |
| Other research related travel: | \$ | <input type="text"/> |

(Note: Other planned travel should be listed in the "Timelines and Deliverables" section)

Other research expenses

Please provide a breakdown of expenses below and add the total value in the box to the right. Allowable expenses include: materials, such as software, books, supplies, etc.; consultant services, such as transcription, analysis, external researchers, etc.; and costs for publishing articles in journals. The purchase of computer hardware, overhead or indirect costs, and living expenses are not allowable. If you have questions about specific expenditures, please contact AIR.

TOTAL REQUESTED – Maximum Allowable is \$50,000 \$

**Note: The AccessLex Institute believes graduate student professional development and mentoring opportunities are important aspects of the Research Grant Program. Therefore, Research Grant recipients are strongly encouraged to designate funds for graduate student travel for the AccessLex Institute Legal Education Research Symposium Presentation.*