

Information for Students at Two-Year Colleges

Podcast Transcript

Yessenia: Hello, this is Yessenia García Lebrón, and today we would like to provide information to all of the DiscoverLaw.org registrants who are at two-year colleges. We are going to talk with Kent Lollis, who is the Executive Director for Diversity Initiatives at the Law School Admission Council, sponsors of the DiscoverLaw.org website. First question, Mr. Lollis: Is a legal career even a possibility for students in two-year colleges?

Kent: Yes, Yessenia. In fact, based on statistics compiled by the Law School Admission Council, substantial numbers of students who begin their post-high school education in two-year colleges ultimately end up in law school.

Yessenia: Well, that's very encouraging news for the two-year college students. And what would a two-year college student need to do to get ready for law school?

Kent: Well, the first thing a student would want to do is to build an academic record that allows them to transfer to a four-year college. They should also think about the core building blocks that law students and lawyers need, and that is the ability to read complex material, think analytically, and engage in logical reasoning.

Yessenia: And who will help students at two-year colleges make this career decision?

Kent: Well, there are three potential sources of information for students who are considering transitioning from a two-year college to a four-year college and then on to law school. The first is the academic advisor at the two-year college who can help you choose the courses to develop the skills we've already discussed that are important. In many schools, this person is called the transitional counselor. And these people are skilled at advising students who want to transition from two-year colleges to four-year colleges. They are particularly evident when a school has an articulation agreement with a four-year college. The articulation agreement usually prescribes the student satisfactorily complete certain courses at a two-year college. They will be offered admission to the four-year college and given credit for their two-year college work. The third person is—college admissions officers who always are a valuable source of information to students who want to transfer from two-year to four-year colleges. So, counselors at four-year colleges are a third source of information for students who want to make this career decision.

Yessenia: So, the articulation agreement would be a piece that they can use to continue their education at a four-year school. And why would a four-year college be interested in students who attend two-year colleges?

Kent: Many students from racial and ethnic diverse backgrounds begin their higher education in two-year colleges, so two-year colleges become a rich source of scholars to draw upon for four-year colleges.

Yessenia: And would that be the only reason for schools to be interested in community colleges?

Kent: No, there are other reasons. Many students choose to begin two-year colleges because of economic pressures. Two-year colleges give them a chance to work and maintain their families while they earn an education. So, there are a number of reasons that students choose two-year colleges, and all of those are beneficial for students who ultimately want to complete a four-year degree and go on to law school.

Yessenia: Okay, that brings me to the next question: How do you know that students from two-year colleges do, in fact, go on to law school? Are there any statistics available?

Kent: Well, since 2003, according to the Law School Admission Council, the number of law student applications from students who began their education in two-year colleges has increased. In 2007, for example, 18 percent of all law school applicants at one time attended a two-year college, and the numbers from ethnic groups were slightly higher: 24 percent for Latinos, 20 percent for Asian Americans, and 19 percent for African Americans.

Yessenia: And those are very good numbers. How do we know their performance once they go to a four-year school?

Kent: Well, according to the same studies conducted by the Law School Admission Council, students who started at two-year colleges performed as well as students who started in four-year colleges.

Yessenia: So, students who started at a two-year college performed just as well as those who started at a four-year college?

Kent: That's correct.

Yessenia: And where can students in general—and particularly community college students—go to find out information about law careers?

Kent: DiscoverLaw.org is a website developed by the Law School Admission Council for students in the early years of their higher education experience. This would include two-year college students. So, the website will contain valuable information for them to help them form the decision, to learn about what kind of legal careers are available to them, and to get information on making the transition from two-year to four-year colleges.

Yessenia: Well, thank you, Mr. Lollis, for providing this information to the two-year college student and providing encouragement and a resource such as DiscoverLaw.org. We want DiscoverLaw.org to be your source of information about preparing for law school. Check the site frequently for new podcasts and other information, and don't forget to tell a friend to register for DiscoverLaw.org today. Thank you.