

# Ask Dean Mercado Anything

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## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

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## SPEAKERS

Attendee 1, Attendee 2, Attendee 3, Attendee 4, Attendee 5, Attendee 7, Attendee 8, Attendee 9, Dean Mercado



Dean Mercado 00:05

Good afternoon, everyone. This is Dean Mercado. I'm just going to let everybody kind of log in for a second and connect and all of that good stuff. You are more than welcome to turn on your camera so I can get to know your faces but you if you're in a place where cameras aren't appropriate or it's just one of those days where you just can't do it, I understand. And I promise I won't take it personally and you should still feel free to ask questions. Thank you so much for joining me. This is something that I think we're going to do periodically throughout the rest of the spring and even into the summer, because I know that with current conditions, it's really tough to feel connected and to feel like you have great avenues to connect with people. Email is great, but I know it's not the same as being able to have a conversation, and I know sometimes hearing other people's questions invites a question of your own. And so, sometimes it's helpful to have these opportunities where we can kind of like come together as a group. I expect that you will have questions that change over time, especially if you do in fact end up joining us. Thank you again so much for joining me. Just to let you know, if you need to log off early, we are going to post a transcript of the chat on the admitted students website. If you need to leave because the baby's crying, the dog is going crazy. Feel free to drop off and you can always check out the transcript later. Of course, you're always also welcome to send us questions or set up a time to chat with myself or one of the directors. And if you want to connect with the student or an alum, those are all things we're currently working on, but you can also just contact us and we can try to facilitate that on on as requested basis.

Thanks to some of you sent questions in advance, which is fantastic. Sometimes that's helpful as people are warming up and getting their feet wet, so to speak, and feel comfortable asking questions. I'm going to answer a couple of those. And then, and then I will open it up to those of you who are logged on. When we get to that point, you can either use the raise hand function, you can physically raise your hand because there's not so many of you that I wouldn't see it. Or you can write it in chat if you're in like a noisy location and that's easier or if you're just feeling shy, that's okay too. So I'm just going to take a couple that came to me in advance. One of the questions I received was about the MLK scholarship. So for those of you who are planning to apply for the Martin Luther King Public Interest Scholarship, which is our only scholarship you actually have to submit an application for. That scholarship deadline is March 30 so you still have some time. If you weren't thinking about applying for it and think that you might be a strong candidate, I encourage you to apply. It does require a supplemental essay. And the question I got was what makes for a strong essay for the scholarship application. This scholarship is geared towards two groups of folks and sometimes those groups overlap. One group that we're looking to support with the scholarship are individuals who come from backgrounds and identities that aren't well represented in law school -- if you're first generation, if you're an immigrant, if English isn't your first language, if you come from any group that is not particularly well presented in the law. That's the the demographic of students that we had in mind in terms of the MLK scholarship. And so one of the things that you would want to probably talk a bit about in your scholarship essay -- if it's not in your application essay -- is a bit about that background. In particular, if you can share with us a bit about not just challenges you might have faced and overcome, but also how it informs your perspective on what you want to do as a lawyer, how you view the world, how you interact with people. One of the reasons why it's so important to have a diverse student body is because we're serve such a diverse world, right, we're all different. It's so helpful if your lawyer can have some insight into what your experiences, so the more experiences and backgrounds that we represent in our student body, and in the legal profession, the better I think we do as a profession in representing people's diverse interests. The other group of students that the scholarship looks to support are people who have a really strong passion for public service and are planning to pursue a career in public interest. One of the questions I get is are you required to do public interest work after graduation. The answer is no. But we, we sincerely hope that you will. The intent of the scholarship is to help folks who are going into what is typically lower paying public interest work after graduation, to provide them with some additional financial support for law school so that coming out of school they have a bit lower debt load that they're managing. And public interest is a huge big, broad world. So maybe you have a particular passion that you've dedicated a lot of yourself to over the years and that's what you want to share with us. Maybe, it's a more recent interest or the idea of being a public interest lawyer is a more recent goal, but you share with us experiences that led you to that point. So, we're looking

for two buckets of folks: folks that will bring a perspective and an identity that's not well represented. And then people who want to do public interest work and so the scholarship essay should kind of focus on those aspects. One or both depending on you know your situation. Just like the application essay, you want to make sure it's super strong writing. You want to take some time, do some proofreading, have some folks look at it. It can be a bit more personal than your application essay. You don't have to have like a firm career plan -- five years now I'm going to be doing X, and 10 years from now, doing Y. Your career plans don't have to be like set in stone. But it is helpful, particularly if you're someone who's applying to the scholarship, as someone wanting to do public service work, if you can kind of explain to us what what you hope to do and what role you hope to serve in that big broad world that is public interest lowering. So that's one of them hopefully I answered that person's question. On a slightly different note, I got some questions about the TA and RA positions for 2Ls and 3Ls. Some of you have asked about them and they're mentioned often in your Gift Aid letters. Some folks have asked me follow up questions. One of the things that our students do really successfully to reduce their cost of attendance as a second and third year student is work as RAs and TAs. RA is -- you're probably familiar with from undergrad, or grad school -- a research assistant. Those are typically just salaried positions. They make more than minimum wage, but it really depends on who the professor is and what their funding is. Most of the students who as RAs work for a professor at the law school. All of them I think hire. Our professors are very lucky that the law school does afford them with a summer research budget and so they use that typically to hire research assistants for the summers but then a lot of them also have funding that they use to have research assistants during the year. But technically you could RA anywhere on campus. If you have expertise in a different area, and someone is looking for an RA. There's a graduate student job database, and that's where you look for job opportunities on campus that are not at the law school, but are open only to graduate students. In terms of TA positions, there are TA positions at the law school and then there are TA positions elsewhere on campus. Our students seem to be equally successful with those in terms of what employers are looking for in the law school TA candidates. The law school TA positions are all hired through the Academic Success Program Office. We have a Assistant Dean for Academic Success, Chris Ide-Don. He is looking for a few things in students. Definitely who did well in in their first year of law school and those core foundational classes. When he's hiring the Contracts TA, he is going to want someone who did pretty well in Contracts. That doesn't mean you have to have gotten like the highest grade in Contracts to get the job because the second thing that he's looking for are for students who are interested in being of service to their peers. People who are good at explaining things, people who are patient. People who are interested in that type of work. Now, there's a lot of self selection so usually it's a little it's a combination of grades and fit. And I would say generally people who have that. I don't think he has a grade cutoff to apply. So I think if you're a particularly strong teacher, even

if you're only in the top half of the grade distribution of your class, I think there are people who have done it and do a fine job. You do get training, he does a training session and so you have that. Because there is a TA for each professor who teaches each section of each class -- for example there's, you know there'll be multiple sections of Contracts and there's a TA for each section of Contracts -- so you also have like your fellow Contracts TA's as a resource. They will work collaboratively. Though some of the time they might be doing their own office hours and some things they'll do independently because that particular professor has a quirk that maybe the other professors don't share and the TA wants to give that insight to the 1Ls who have that prof. Typically somewhere between 30 and 45 TAs work for ASP over the academic year. About 15 hours a week. It's going to be tied to the semester because you're working at the law school. You have a sense of you know it's gonna be a little busier -- as you get closer to that midterms and at the towards the end of the semester. But again, it's not a particularly onerous job, the financial benefit is you do get a salary again, I am not sure what the what the hourly wage is going to be for this upcoming year or definitely not in two years, but it's more than minimum wage, it's not super high. But the big benefit to it is that you do get a fee remission with it. It covers your student health insurance if you're on student health insurance, it would waive that fee and then it also reduces your tuition. The amount depends on the year and it changes a little bit. I think right now, it's typically about \$6000 to \$7,000 per term. If you TA for both semesters, you would get a larger a larger fee remission. It's a really popular way to kind of help curb a little bit of your costs. Your existing gift aid doesn't go away if you get if you get a TA position with a fee remission because it's not a form of gift aid. We're not going to reduce your existing scholarships or grants, because you have a TA position. So just something to keep in mind. As far as TA positions elsewhere in campus, those are very popular. Some of our law students, particularly folks who did graduate school before law school and have been a TA before, it's a really popular option. They're not typically the TA positions where you're like teaching the whole class. They usually have their doctoral students in the various departments doing those, but you might be doing the discussion section, doing office hours, it's kind of fun. The undergrads are super nice at Davis, they're very normal. They're very friendly and TAs are usually typically hired in subject areas that draw students who are thinking about law school. To them you're kind of like cool. Sometimes you get to do a little informal advising, they're very impressed that you're in law school. For the other departments primarily you're going to want to probably target your search to departments where you have an academic background. So if you were like an environmental sciences major, check out the different environmental departments, of which there are many Davis. If you did econ or you did physics, you want to target it to your experience. I don't think they're really super concerned about your law school grades, they probably would be just more interested in your experience, but those are, again, they're going to be kind of similar dollar amounts in terms of the fee remission, but they change a bit because the rest of campus is on quarters. They'll be slightly less than a

semester. But it's not uncommon for law students to TA for two quarters. Because, and then you have your spring free. It's a popular option you can only do as a 2L or 3L. But it's a great way to lower the cost of attendance, it's a pretty low stress job, it is on campus, it's easy to fit in with the rest of your student schedule, particularly if you get involved in things at the law school. So that's a popular option. So I do have more questions, but I want to make sure I also get to some of the questions that you all might have that I have not seen it in advance. So again, feel free to either pop them in the chat, you can use the raise hand function. Or you can just physically Raise your hand. And then, once I call you, you can just unmute yourself and ask your question. Blaine, go ahead. So just unmute yourself and ask away.

A

Attendee 1 14:43

That's me. How are you?

D

Dean Mercado 15:15

Good, nice to see you.

A

Attendee 1 15:17

Yeah, you too. Um, okay, I've got a two part question, I'll keep it pretty brief. Okay. I'm going to try my best. One is, I've got a 120 pound dog that I'm going to be bringing with me, a big old dog, and I'm a little bit nervous from a from a lot of different perspectives: about bringing your dog into law school environment, financial, housing, time etc. Are there a lot of other students, is that a common thing, I guess, to have a dog while you're in law school or is that like, leave them at home? What's the deal?

D

Dean Mercado 15:55

So I'm a little biased in my answer, I will admit, because I am dog owner. I'm a dog Mama. And I did not have a dog in law school, but I did get it while I was studying for the bar and I managed to navigate that so I think you can do it. And actually if you're on Facebook, there is a Facebook group called Pets of King Hall. That is all law students posting pictures of their dogs and cats, and even some mice and horses and other things. I think you can have a dog, large dog,. What I will say if you're renting, you probably want to get started on your housing search a little bit earlier, just because size wise, that's definitely on the high end so you might have to do you know a little more searching. The other thing I would recommend I recommend is checking out Sacramento, or Woodland, which are on kind of either side of Davis, just because it's a bigger, more diverse rental market and so

sometimes it's easier to find an owner-landlord who maybe lives on the second floor and so they're a little more, you know they're a little more amenable to that. I was renting when I came to California from Chicago, that's what I did and that's the kind of place I found. And I had an 85-pound dog at the time, so not quite as big as yours. But I think in terms of the issue of is your dog going to be like horribly lonely at home without you, it really kind of depends. I think the first year you should expect to be at the law school, pretty much nine to five or nine to four most days. If you're living in Davis, you can certainly go home at lunch and take your dog for a walk. I think one nice thing about Davis is that it is a pretty outdoorsy place and there's lots of places to walk your dog, lots of dog parks and dog-friendly places. You see Dean Johnson's dog, all the time at the law school. Lots of people have them. if you have a roommate, obviously that's also a nice perk because then you don't always have to make sure you're home to let your dog out. I think if you live in Davis, it doesn't take that long to get anywhere in Davis. So you could always run home, and let your dog out or feed your dog and go back to your study group. If you decide to live outside of Davis, then you might have to do a little bit more planning. But if you're living in Sacramento there's tons of dog walking services and doggy daycares and things like that so if you're going to have a long day. Or you need a dog walker, you will find lots of folks who can give you recommendations, including myself, my dog goes to doggy daycare. Having a pet is a great stress relief. So if you have a pet, that is a way for you to make sure you carve out time to like just be a normal person. Those are good things, good tools to bring with you to law school. They will help you immensely manage your stress levels. So you might have to do a little bit more work finding a place initially, but I think you can find one and I think you would probably be much happier to have your dog with you. But you also have to kind of know your pet. If your pet is okay with chilling at home some of the time by themselves and they won't be climbing the walls then, you know, bring them. You will definitely find other animal lovers that can help.

A

Attendee 1 19:41

I work an eight to five now and she's fine at home all day. Okay, well that kind of segues really well into my second question. So you said that I might have to start my housing search a little bit earlier, what's a good timeline for housing searching to start? I live in Texas and so all of our housing stuff over here is like six months in advance I know exactly where I'm going to be at, and I have a lease already. I understand that's not the case everywhere. So what's a good timeline that I should be shooting for?

D

Dean Mercado 20:11

I mean, I think if you definitely want to be a Davis, I would start in April. You could even maybe start kind of checking things out a little bit earlier. The tricky thing with this year is

that a lot of people aren't sure what they're doing, like they may have kept their place, but they're not there a lot of the time. And they're not sure if they're going to renew because of remote learning. People changed up their housing situations a lot this year. But I think by and large the, the one tricky thing with Davis is that because almost the entire campus is on the quarter system. There are a lot of leases that start September 1, but you all need leases that really start August 1 or maybe pushing it to August 15. And there are fewer of those. It's not like they're impossible to get but it does mean starting a little bit earlier. It's a great question to check in with current students and kind of get a feel for what people are doing. We post to the Class of 2024 Facebook group when current students will send us posts if they're looking for a new roommate or if they're moving out of their place. There's a lot of places that aren't in complexes, and it's a private owner and they like law students because they're quiet and clean and good tenants. They'll ask their current tenant when they're moving out, "hey can you get me another law student to take over your lease." So we try to help out where we can but I think probably starting in spring is a good idea just to give yourself some time and because there is a little bit of unpredictability. I think with the market in Sacramento, you could wait until the summer. Sacramento is a midsize city and in cities, there's not really like one time a year where people are moving in and moving out so you have a little more flexibility. Emily?

A

Attendee 2 22:21

I'm Emily. Nice to meet you guys. I just had a quick question. Um, so, first of all is, is the school right now virtual because of COVID? And also, if it is if you think it's still going to be virtual come this fall?

D

Dean Mercado 22:47

We are in remote learning right now and we have been since the start of the year. However, unlike some schools that are remote, our students still have access to the building and they've had access all academic year. So that means if they work in the clinic, they're able to use that space. They can use the library, the computer lab, the printers. All of those things are available to them. We actually had the bar exam, which was pushed from July to October, and was done online, we actually were able to offer offices to our graduates, so they could take the bar exam in a quiet setting with reliable high speed internet. And we haven't had to take any pauses in that access because of outbreaks. We've actually been pretty lucky at Davis. Some of you might have seen on the news recently a few stories on UC Davis. It is one of those campuses that developed its own COVID testing and we actually rolled it out to everybody who's part of the campus community but also everybody who's part of the Davis community, and it's free COVID-19 testing. So, all which is to say the campus has been really good about keeping on top of it

and we haven't had any large outbreaks on campus. But we've stayed remote based on the guidance from our local public health, as well as what guidance we're getting as part of the whole UC system. UCOP governs all of the UC campuses. The current plan is to have primarily in person instruction this fall. We do expect though that there will be some students who may need to be able to attend remotely, because of various health issues, people who are in really high risk categories. There will probably be some amount of accommodations that are happening. And the questions that we don't have answers to right now are things like: Are you still going to have to wear a mask when you're in classroom, are we going to still have to sit six feet apart. There's some of those things that we're still waiting to get guidance from public health. But there is a planning committee for the UC Davis campus that is working on exactly how everything will come back online this fall and in what order and what steps. We also have a Student Advisory Committee at the law school that is dedicated to issues related to COVID-19 and we've had that actually all year. And so what that does is make sure that we're aware of what issues students are facing on a day to day basis, and that we incorporate those issues into planning and are aware of those issues. That's been really successful for us to try and stay on top of issues. But the plan is to be back primarily in person in fall. The priority would be on trying to make things as normal as possible, especially for 1Ls. You would get the priority in our planning, and the other good thing is that we were prepared to have in person instruction this past fall. And so we had all of the safety measures in place, we had already been set up technology wise to have some people attending remotely, having professors teaching remotely. We were ready for all kinds of configurations. So the good news is we actually already have a lot of the work done. It's just we're waiting on specifics about what the actual classroom configuration will look like. As we learn those things, we will update you. Part of my goal is, and why I think we will probably do something like this periodically, so I can give you guys updates about those kinds of topics and answer questions to address concerns. We will keep you up to date as we know more, but right now we're all speed ahead for in person instruction, this fall. Other questions from anybody in the group? Or I can go back to some of the ones that were submitted ahead of time. Go ahead, Jillian. You can unmute yourself.

A

Attendee 3 27:32

Yeah. Hi, um, I had a question about on campus student housing is that offered through the school or do most people find apartments or do most people have on campus housing, what does that look like?

D

Dean Mercado 27:46

Yeah so Davis is is different than some of the other UC campuses or big state school



campuses in that most students are not living in student housing. Not even the majority of undergrads live in it. There is some graduate student housing that run through the campus housing office. On the admitted students website I believe under housing, there's a link to the campus office. There's some on campus housing that's very very bare bones, but it's very cheap. That's really close to law school, the priority goes to students with families, students with disabilities. There are some newer University owned housing. It's sort of like a dorm, except that you have shared space and it's furnished. So you have your own bedroom and your own bathroom but you share a common space. It's actually turned out to be pretty popular with law students, especially people who were like coming straight from undergrad or didn't have like a house full of their own personal possessions that they were bringing with them to school. So that is an option, but you know honestly, most students just live in apartments or there's, people will get a house together. You'll find private housing is sort of the preferred thing and it's it's there's not a big like cost differential, so it's not a financial hardship to do it, especially if you get roommates. Then your expenses can actually be knocked down quite a bit. If you're living on your own. It's going to be a little bit more expensive obviously. But it's not like your only option is to live in student housing if you want to live alone or not pay a ton. You can you can find a range.

A

Attendee 3 29:50

Thank you.

D

Dean Mercado 29:51

Yeah, no problem. Okay, I'm gonna do one from that came in in advance. So someone asked about what are the examples of employment opportunities in Sacramento or the Bay Area? So, this person also asked about public interests and government so I'm going to focus a little bit on that, but I would say that there are similar wide range of private sector employment in both those places. The biggest concentration of graduates is in the San Francisco Bay Area. And that's a huge diverse legal employment market and so there are students in every part of that legal market. In terms of public sector jobs in the Bay Area, there's definitely a lot of Legal Aid type organizations, there's also government offices there, quite a few federal government offices. For example, we have some students who have externed and some students who have gone on to work in things like like the SEC, which has an office in San Francisco. In terms of state government that's primarily going to be in Sacramento, which is, is, essentially, this is our second biggest concentration of graduates. And those are pretty much every office of state government that you can think of we've probably had students working there or we have graduates there. We have a lot of students take advantage of our externship program which lets you do work in out in the world for academic credit, you can do it anytime during your 2L and 3L years. There

are a lot of externships that are in Sacramento, that are focused around state government, public agencies. Those might be for state senators, the governor's office, committees like the Judiciary Committee for the California State Assembly. There are tax externships with the text franchise board, there's a there's a taxpayer rights advocates office so if you want to be on the other side like helping you know push back against the taxes. There are both state and actually federal environmental departments, like the Natural Resources Division of the DOJ, state environmental agencies. Sacramento is home to pretty much all of the agencies' offices, public rights, environmental enforcement, consumer rights. Lots of environmental regulatory groups like California Air Resources Board, Department of Conservation. If you want to just do health care, that's another big department, Fair Employment and Housing, that hires a lot of students for its externship program and they handle a whole range of issues as well as some like civil rights. We have several major medical systems in Sacramento and people interested in health care law have worked for those organizations. US Attorney's Office, public defenders, district attorneys. I mean honestly that list is really long. Judges are huge employers, a whole contingent of students who are doing that. Then there's also a number of, you know, public interest organizations. Ones that that typically hiring, as well as have grads there, are California Rural Legal Assistance, Disability Rights California, California lawyers for the arts. There's just a huge network of different opportunities in the public sector so depending on what your area of law, your legal interest, is you can kind of filter down from that. We have a great director of externships and she helps students navigate what might be a good fit for their interests. Then we do have someone on the Career Services team who does public sector employment and she works with our students who want to do anything in the public sector, including government. She's a great resource. Her background is in legal aid and she has her own professional network as well as the network that the law school has. There's a lot of a lot of good options. You can do externships in the Bay Area too. Most of the time, those are going to be full time instead of part time with your classes. But there's a there's a lot of options, and a lot of things you can do. We do also have a new Southern California externship program, a judicial externship program where you're down there full time. It launched this year so it had to be remote but it would be in person next year. It's a full time judicial externship that you do down in Southern California. For folks who want to build their network down there, it's a great opportunity and just a way to increase our reach and take advantage of the alumni base that's there and eager to to connect. I'm happy to answer other questions. Katrina?

A

Attendee 9 35:43

Yeah, thank you for answering that question. As a follow up, are there judicial externships in Sacramento too or is it just there?

A

Attendee 4 35:53

You got it. Nice to meet you guys. Um, so I was just wondering, in the Gift Aid letter. It said that a lot of 2Ls and 3Ls are able to find other merit aid scholarships. Is that a common thing for King Hall students? Are there other ways to finance our law school education, outside of TA positions and the merit aid that we receive?

D

Dean Mercado 35:53

There are federal and state judicial externships in that you do as an externship for academic credit, as well as summer positions. And so if you're doing a term time externship, you'll be going through the externship office at the law school. If you're doing one during the summers, that would be something you would be working with Career Services in terms of applying for those. But we've got them the trial court level, both state and federal, and the appellate level. The California Supreme Court every semester we we have several justices who take externs. And those are great experiences. The Chief Justice of the California Supreme Court is this really amazing woman who is also an alumna of King Hall so it's nice to have a doorway into there and makes sure we can keep a healthy pipeline going there for our students. Those are those are all options in Sacramento, as well as in the Bay Area. Then of course we do have students who clerked afterward law school, at both the state and federal level. And, people who you know maybe work for a few years and then decide to clerk and Career Services is available to help you with that as well. There, there's a school of thought that says doing particularly a federal district court clerkship can be even more beneficial after you've actually practiced for a bit. So you get what's actually happening, and you have some sense of what the lawyers are doing. And sometimes we'll have graduates contact career service and say I want to apply for a clerkship and they've been out two or three years and have been successful in making that happen too. So definitely an option to explore and one of the lawyers and Career Services works specifically with the folks who want to do clerkships and post grad clerkships. Anjali, am I pronouncing that right? So we do a couple things. For all second and third year law students each fall, we do an open application for a group of about 20 scholarships. They're just for one year, and they have a range of amounts. These are scholarships where donors have specified they want it to go to a student who is really interested in say criminal defense. So they're kind of more focused around your evolving career plans. Some of them are for first generation students, there's really a range of criteria. What we do is an open general application. We have a selection committee, a faculty committee, that selects recipients. They do look at grades but they're equally weighted with experience and career plans. There's a huge range in terms of dollar amounts. There's some that are book scholarships and they're \$500. But trust me, \$500 less that you have to borrow is a good thing. And some of them, depending on what's in the fund that year, can range up to \$7000 or \$8,000. You apply in the fall, and it's

disbursed to you in the spring with the rest of your financial aid. We don't discount any of your existing financial aid, it always just gets added to. That's a general principle with any aid you get from the school. It's going to be cumulative, we're not going to be like swapping out aid forms. As I said, there's usually about 20 students, sometimes 25, who get those each year. And then the other thing that the financial aid folks do is put together a list of outside scholarships. We get information about tons of scholarships and we do some vetting to make sure they're legit, and then we publish it on the website. Then we also push out announcements to each class's email listserv. I have seen that the students be very successful with managing their debt load and decreasing their cost of attendance over their life as a law student are the ones who take advantage of all the opportunities. It doesn't mean you have to spend like you know send out 100 scholarship applications. There's so few people that apply for them that honestly if you send a few each semester, chances are pretty good that you will pick up some money. Most of these scholarships are not going to be like 10s of 1000s of dollars, but they could be several thousand. You pick up a couple of those, maybe you get one of the law school 2L/3L scholarships. Combined with what you already have, and you TA one semester, you can make a huge difference in what your cost of attendance is from one year to the next. By just investing a little bit of time, being aware, and kind of taking advantage of those opportunities, we try to make it as easy as possible for students to grab those outside opportunities and push them out. I've been known to like post in the class Facebook's group if there's a deadline coming up for a really good scholarship to try and draw attention to it and get people to apply. We've had students be successful with some of the bigger national ones too, like the MALDEF one. We've had folks get some of the ABA ones. So, you know, people are successful, but you do have to put in a little bit of effort. Spend one morning once a month, applying for some outside stuff. I think it's worth it and that would be what I see the really the good planners doing.

A

Attendee 4 43:33

Thank you so much is definitely relief so that's good to hear.

D

Dean Mercado 43:37

It's definitely possible but you just have to be active. It's not always gonna just get handed to you sometimes you got to kind of put yourself out there but I think you can be successful if you do that.

A

Attendee 4 43:50

Thank you.

D Dean Mercado 43:51  
Yeah, no problem. Morgan. Go ahead.

A Attendee 5 43:57  
Going off of that question staying within like aid conversation. So, within the letter I saw the merit based and then the need based estimate. I remember every time I started a new semester at a different UC school, there would kind of be all these random awards awarded through the school that I didn't apply for. There was no way to track, I guess, or anticipate that they were going to appear. So can we kind of assume that the need based is an estimate of those random things that will pop up?

D Dean Mercado 44:30  
The amounts that you get in your award letters are the amounts the law school has committed, its dollars to you. Okay. We do occasionally get some of those random ones that come that come from main campus and they're not necessarily law school specific. But those are very very rare, we get like one or two.

A Attendee 5 44:55  
So, yeah, and then a second question about residency. So, I currently have residency in North Carolina, but I graduated from a California high school, and I grew up in California. So do I just follow the process, like I were determining residency as an out of state person and then just state at some point like I tell them I graduated from California High School?

D Dean Mercado 46:28  
I'll preface all this by saying that the law school doesn't have to do anything with your residency determinations. It's all done through the campus registrar's office and they have a special residency deputy team that does that. But all entering students have to submit something called the statement of legal residency (SLR). And essentially, it's going to ask you for information that allows them to determine whether you're going to be classified as a resident or non resident, so that process would in most cases, based on the information you just shared, make you probably someone though even though you've not you're not physically residing in California, you would qualify for California residency. Under the AB 540 state law, which is most commonly associated with folks who are undocumented, but it's actually conveys residency status also for anybody who meets the criteria: grew up in California, graduate from a California high school, etc. You're essentially a California

resident who's left the state for a little bit and so you would qualify for resident tuition your first year and then you would establish reestablish physical residency and you would have normal California residency as a 2L and 3L. It's something their website actually does pretty good. There's a link to it from the cost of attendance section of our website. You can get the link to their office and they have a decent FAQ. You can also email them, they're actually helpful. If you put in the subject line "question from an incoming law student," it'll go to the right person and you probably will get a better reply because obviously graduate students, professional school students are treated differently than undergraduates. So does that answer your question?



Attendee 5 48:17

Totally. Thank you. Great.



Attendee 7 48:22

So I have a, just a follow up to Morgan's question which is, thank you Morgan for asking that because I had no idea. So, I guess, I also not to like overshare I also grew up in California and went to a California high school. So am I understanding you correctly that that means I may be eligible this year?



Dean Mercado 48:43

You might. I would recommend going to the residency website because they spell out a few of the things that they're looking for. Like you have to have graduated from a California High School. There's a couple other things. But it's possible. Now, if you don't or you know you're coming from outside of California. Everybody, as long as you are a US citizen or an eligible non citizen, you can establish residency for tuition purposes after a year. And so, It's a year of physical residency. But then you also there's other things that they'll look at, and so it's really important to spend a little time, at the beginning of the year. And make sure you know what it is you need to do. It's not nothing is really that onerous, and none of it is permanent. But you have to do it because otherwise they won't classify you as a resident. I've seen law students not do all the things and then they didn't get it. It's stuff that is not really that big a deal, get a California driver's license, which you're technically supposed to do anyway, register your car, register to vote, things like that establish ties to the state. Obviously you can change all of those things if you absolutely plan on leaving the state the day after graduation. But there are some things you'll have to do so you want to make sure you check that out, ask some questions, and always go to the residency office, the residency deputy for the last word. Because we hold zero sway with them. We just try to give you guys information about what what past

students have done and been successful but honestly, most people establish it after a year, and the ones who don't I honestly don't know why not. It's definitely a popular conversation and we won't reduce your scholarships, because you suddenly are now paying resident tuition. Yosh. Go ahead.

A

Attendee 8 51:13

Yeah sure, um, thank you for taking the time to answer our questions.

D

Dean Mercado 51:19

Yeah, go ahead.

A

Attendee 8 51:21

Okay, great. On the conversation of cost of attendance and cost of tuition. So, because the, the final. The, the, the estimate letter will come out in April for like cost of attendance and in our total aid package. I was wondering if I took a LSAT in March, would it be possible to submit a score for greater merit aid consideration or is that kind of closed off?

D

Dean Mercado 51:54

Probably not. We'll get your score if you take it again but the issue is that we budget. We plan to put out a certain amount, and once it's out, I can't do anything until I till I know who's actually coming and how much of that money is actually spent for real. And usually, we're pretty good in our projection of who will accept. If you have a pretty significant score increase, it's definitely worth bringing it to my attention. Just send me an email. And if there's space in the budget to do anything, I will, but at this point in the year the vast majority of the offers have gone out, which means the money has gone out. And unless I'm horribly wrong with my predictions, we probably have spent what we can spend. I wouldn't put yourself through the misery of taking the LSAT again, just the hopes of like jacking up your aid package. In part because you, you need to see a pretty significant score increase for it to make a difference in the award, and because even if you did have a large score increase, it may be that I can't do anything because it's already allocated. I'm sorry, I know it's not like the favorite answer to get. But, if you decide to do it, you definitely let me know if you see a good bump. Please bring it to my attention and I'll check to see what where we are with things.

A Attendee 8 54:09  
thank you so much. We appreciate it.

D Dean Mercado 54:11  
Yeah, no problem. Other questions I can answer? I just want to check and see if I got everybody's questions, I think so. So I have time for maybe like one more question.

A Attendee 8 54:35  
I have one more question. I was wondering what is the expected class size for the class, is it still projected to be around less than 200 students?

D Dean Mercado 54:54  
I think we'll probably be a little over 200. 200 is our historical sweet spot. In some years, we've been a little bigger, some years, we've been smaller. There have been a couple of years where we were a lot smaller, but that was a number of years ago. So just to give you some sense of the variation, right now, our third year class is a little over 200, our second year class is about 230, and our 1L class is about 190. I think this class will be over 200, but not 230.

A Attendee 5 56:19  
Are the classes for 1L like coordinated in sections or is everyone together?

D Dean Mercado 56:26  
We will break you into sections so you'll have a small group of folks that you have all of your classes with your first year, but we mix around the sections so that you end up having at least one class with everybody in your class year. You're in the small group sections for your research and writing class and then it'll be several sections together for Contracts, and several sections together for Property. But we mix you up. Typically, I would say most people pretty much know everybody in their class by the end of the first year, even this year they, they actually are you doing remarkably well. I'm pretty impressed with how well they've gotten to know each other. I think some of it is because they are in classes together, but people are really taking advantage of things that student groups are organizing and things that the law school puts on like community events and chances to connect with people, even though, everything has to be done via zoom this year. For y'all



being back in person, you will definitely know your classmates. It's not a big, big community. Everything you do is in the building. So many people live in Davis so your classmate is likely to be your neighbor. It's definitely not one of those places where you'll feel lost in a sea of people by any stretch of imagination. I'm sure that gets a little bit too reminiscent of high school for folks at times, but I think by and large students really like it because they feel like there's always somebody who has their back. Someone notice if you are having a bad day, or you miss class. And people will check on you and want to make sure you're okay. That's kind of a nice thing. I do think that it's a unique feature of our community and some of it is the fact that we are in a small college town, that we're smaller in size, but some of it i think is also just the type of folks who are drawn to Davis. It tends to be a group of people who like to belong and participate and when you do those things, you actually get to know pretty much everyone. You are pretty interesting folks with diverse interests and so you end up coming into contact with everybody, in some way, shape or another. So, we're at the five o'clock mark. If I didn't get your question, or if you have a question that you'd like to ask, you're welcome to email me. You can email the main admissions account at [admissions@law.ucdavis.edu](mailto:admissions@law.ucdavis.edu) or email me directly. I'm happy to answer you via email or set up a zoom chat or anything like that. Like I said, we will do some of these in the future maybe have some like special guests so you don't get sick of me, and you can hear some different perspectives, but please know that even though our physical doors aren't open to you, our virtual doors are. We're just so excited to know you. It's getting to be that time where I get giddy because I can start to see a class forming and I'm really excited to get to know all of you better. And please let me know if you need anything at all and I hope you have a fantastic weekend. Thanks for joining me, everybody!