

## University of Mississippi School of Law Scholarship Policy

February 2, 2013

### **Educational Mission, Scholarships, and Admissions**

The University of Mississippi School of Law seeks to train lawyers who will enhance the legal profession, promote progress and reform, serve the public, and improve the quality of justice. As a state institution, the Law School also has a special responsibility to educate state residents and to train lawyers who will serve the needs of the State of Mississippi. The Law School seeks to graduate professionals who will continue the tradition of outstanding contribution by our graduates to the legal profession.

To further these goals, the Law School strives to enroll a student body that is academically excellent and broadly diverse. The Law School's educational mission requires such a student body because only a class distinguished by its academic excellence and broad diversity can work to create the educational environment essential to the rigorous training of lawyers.

In particular, the Law School's faculty and administration view the realization of the educational benefits of a broadly diverse student body as a compelling state interest. In order to serve a broad range of clients and constituencies, to formulate and implement policies locally and globally, and to function in varied public and private capacities, students must gain experience interacting with people who have diverse viewpoints and perspectives. A class composed of students with varied backgrounds, characteristics, and perspectives will promote the educational benefits of diversity. Additionally, the enrollment of a critical mass of members of historically underrepresented and excluded groups such as African-Americans—rather than a mere token presence—is also necessary to further the School's interest in securing the educational benefits of diversity.

The ultimate goal of the Law School's Scholarship Policy is the same as that of the Admissions Policy: To further the Law School's educational mission by ensuring enrollment of a class that is academically excellent and broadly diverse. First, the Admissions Policy seeks to ensure that the pool of applicants accepted for admission by the Law School is a well-qualified and broadly diverse group from which the Law School can recruit a class that will further the School's educational mission. Second, the Scholarship Policy seeks to ensure the successful recruitment of an academically excellent and diverse class so that the subset of admitted students who choose to enroll at the Law School and constitute the incoming student body will further the School's mission.

The Law School's faculty and administration view scholarships as an indispensable recruiting tool absolutely necessary to advance the School's educational mission, including achieving the compelling state interest of diversity. Significantly, applicants who have the greatest potential to contribute to the Law School's mission will also have the greatest number of competing opportunities—from other law schools and from other career paths. Therefore these applicants must be both admitted *and recruited with scholarships* if the Law School is to seat a class that is academically excellent and broadly diverse. In particular, the faculty and administration believe that scholarship awards are absolutely necessary to achieve the enrollment of a critical mass of members of historically underrepresented and excluded groups.

## Scholarship Criteria

To further the Law School's mission, members of the Admissions and Scholarships Committee will award scholarships based on a holistic file review of applicants--without any form of automatic awards, quotas, or set-asides for any group. The holistic file review of applicants will consider a broad range of factors which include:

*Academic excellence and other indicators of a potential for high achievement.* As part of holistic file review, the Committee will consider factors indicating a potential for high academic achievement. Such factors include an applicant's score on the Law School Admissions Test and undergraduate grade point average as well as the applicant's personal statement, recommendations, undergraduate institution, class rank, major, course work, scholastic awards, grade trends, and advanced degrees. Additional significant factors extend to extracurricular activities, demonstrated leadership abilities, community involvement, military service, and other significant life and work experience. Finally, other important considerations include whether the applicant has overcome adversity or hardship, exceeded expectations in personal achievement, or otherwise demonstrated a special motivation to succeed.

*Contributions to diversity.* As part of holistic file review, the Committee will also consider an applicant's potential contributions to the broad diversity of the class, taking into account factors such as the applicant's race, ethnicity, state and regional ties within the U.S., national origin, gender, age, religion, sexual orientation, disability, family background, socioeconomic background, educational background, travel abroad, military service, educational experience, work experience, and other life experiences and personal perspectives promoting a multiplicity of viewpoints. As part of the effort to secure the educational benefits of diversity, the Committee will seek to recruit classes that ensure a meaningful critical mass of historically excluded and underrepresented groups—such as African-Americans.

*Residency.* As a state institution, the Law School has a special mission to educate and serve the people of Mississippi. Therefore, as part of holistic file review, the Committee will consider the relationship of applicants to the State—such as an applicant's status as a resident, a former resident, or a student non-resident who has attended an undergraduate school in Mississippi.

*Recruiting considerations.* The purpose of the scholarship program is to recruit students. Therefore, as part of holistic file review, the Committee may consider practical recruiting concerns such as the need to compete with a given applicant's other scholarship offers or the likelihood that a scholarship offer from the School will not affect the applicant's decision to enroll at UM or elsewhere.

*Special endowed scholarships.* Certain endowed scholarships may also be awarded based on narrower considerations as set out in the endowment agreements consistent with governing nondiscrimination law (e.g., a special endowed scholarship reserved for military veterans will be awarded based on holistic file review within the confines of that reservation).

## Periodic Review

The faculty shall review the effectiveness of this policy and reconsider its provisions no later than three years from the date of its adoption.