

Georgetown Law School

Review these five applicants. As a committee, decide which applicants, if any, you'd accept and why. Rank the applicants from first to last.

Georgetown Law does not have a minimum or maximum length for the personal statement, though we recommend around two pages double-spaced. You can write your personal statement on any subject that will enable the Admissions Committee to get to know you.

LSAT

- 75th Percentile 168
- 50th Percentile 167
- 25th Percentile 163

UGPA

- 75th Percentile 3.91
- 50th Percentile 3.80
- 25th Percentile 3.58

Applicant 1

Michelle A.

GPA: 3.86

LSAT: 167

Applicant 2

Meghan H.

GPA: 3.71

LSAT: 165

Applicant 3

John U.

GPA: 3.92

LSAT: 166

Applicant 4

Nadia I.

GPA: 3.84

LSAT: 166

Applicant 5

Sarah F.

GPA: 3.87

LSAT: 167

Applicant 1 – Michelle A.

GPA: 3.86

LSAT: 167

I collected the slips of paper from the six groups and began to add them up so I could share the results with my class. I struggled to control my expression as I announced, “Our grand total of consumer debt aside from mortgages is, \$315,695.00”.

Because I had led this financial literacy course several times before, I knew this was a shockingly large number for six young households in the suburbs of Birmingham, Alabama. At the end of the session, a young woman pulled me aside to share her situation. She was burdened with over \$200,000 of undergraduate student loan debt and had no idea how to begin paying it off. She had accepted a partial athletic scholarship at an out of state university and decided to continue her degree at sticker cost after suffering a career-ending injury her freshman year. In the next several weeks, I taught the class basic personal finances topics such as creating a zero-based budget and the difference between a Traditional and Roth 401k. I helped each person draft a plan to minimize their lifestyle expenses, maximize their incomes, and pay off their debts in the shortest amount of time possible.

At 21, I purchased my first home - a true “fixer-upper”. This home had been sitting on the market for eight months and the owner was desperate to sell. I submitted an offer under asking price and it was immediately accepted. The 90s style home featured pet stained carpets and a dying AC unit, but to me, it was the perfect investment opportunity. I spent the next two years reading DIY blogs and spending my weekends at Home Depot. In March of 2018, I sold the renovated property at a profit to fund my move to Washington, DC.

As I made my transition to D.C., I tested for my Virginia and D.C. real estate licenses to help me reach my own financial goals. I marketed myself as a “first time home buyer specialist” and did over \$1,000,000 of transactions in my first 6 months. Though I was successful for my first year, I quickly realized that I did not enjoy the salesperson role of constantly searching for

and signing new clients, but I thrived in the contracts and negotiation. As an agent, I guided my clients through the process and standard contracts involved in the purchase or sale of a home. I crafted my offers to be competitive in one of the hottest real estate markets in the country and negotiated with the representation on the other side of the transaction to win the deal. In my time selling real estate, I only ever lost out on one contract.

Fast forward to this year, I have shifted from selling houses and condos, to working in commercial real estate law for a firm in Washington, DC. We take on clients exclusively in the affordable housing space, whether they are local housing authorities, investors, or non-profit organizations. In my role, I support three senior partners and focus my work on our firm's Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) transactions. I currently serve as the Managing Editor of the HUD Resource Desk, a website that houses updates to HUD guidance and instructions, broken down by category for quick access. I assist our attorneys with the proper formation of corporations and non-profits, to structure the deals to the greatest benefit of our client. I prepare submissions to government agencies for the funding of projects in cities around the country. I have heard from tenants, first hand, of the impact that affordable housing has on their lives. It is a field that encompasses my interests and strengths while adding value to individuals and is one that I hope to continue pursuing upon graduation from law school.

Applicant 2 – Meghan H.

GPA: 3.71

LSAT: 165

I help women in an emergency shelter for victims of domestic violence. They've been strangled, stabbed, shot, thrown down stairs, and locked up in their own basements. These women are among the most likely to be killed by their intimate partners. I answer their hotline calls and then drive them and their children, sometimes in the dead of the night, to the safety of our emergency shelter.

After working in the shelter for a year, I asked to meet with the director to discuss my concerns about a few staff members. I had witnessed these advocates treat our clients as though they were prison inmates rather than survivors in need of help. In the meeting, I laid out a plan to train our advocates on the best practices for serving victims of gender-based violence. I also requested a promotion that would give me the authority to implement my plan. Before I left the office that day, my promotion was approved and I was asked to get to work.

I am now responsible for hiring, training, and supervising advocates in a much larger organization. When I was hired, the advocates had been without a direct supervisor for almost two years. They had no manual and were inadequately trained. Their previous supervisor, who was widely respected and loved, died unexpectedly. I knew that I needed to make changes to the existing system while also honoring her legacy.

As these advocates' new supervisor, I sent out a survey, asking all employees to indicate anonymously how satisfied they were with their jobs, their organization, and their leadership. The advocates, I learned, did not understand why they were being asked to change. This feedback helped to explain why many advocates were slow to adopt the best practices that I was introducing to the organization. On some days, I walked into the office only to find that my instructions had been reversed or ignored by long-term staff members. Some even rolled their eyes at nationwide best practices as they continued to follow outdated service models. Small acts

of resistance cropped up everywhere. When some part-time staff members stopped showing up for our mandatory meetings and training sessions, I decided to overhaul the entire program.

To combat the lack of transparency, I wrote a training and policy manual. And although I had experience designing and instituting a training manual at my previous organization, as a newcomer here, I had to learn how to sell my new manual as well. I partnered with advocates who had been in the organization for several years so I could absorb their knowledge and get it down on paper. They taught me how they had fixed problems in the past, I explained the current best practices, and then we found a compromise that worked for our shelter. Staff members who hadn't had a voice were now involved in building policies. Even better, they were starting to understand why we were building them.

To recruit and retain well-trained advocates, I started regular supervision and evaluation meetings. In a direct supervision meeting, I show advocates how to interact with clients and discuss new advances in trauma research. I also mentor them through their experiences with vicarious trauma. I use this supervision time to identify signs of burnout and compassion fatigue and to teach them how to identify those signs in themselves. I update them on policy changes and encourage them in areas where they are lacking. When staff members are struggling, I set up a performance improvement plan, giving them the tools they need to improve and setting clear expectations for their work.

I wish that I could have presented all these changes to our staff members slowly and gently, but certain corrections were far overdue and required immediate action. The shelter was out of compliance with local HUD regulations, for example, because men were restricted from services. Integrating men, trans, and gender non-binary people into the shelter was the breaking point for some advocates. With many staff members ready to resign, I rolled out a gender-integration plan that I presented in their direct supervision meetings. I then held a staff meeting for advocates to air their concerns as a group. Although their list of concerns was long, we

addressed them. The open dialogue between our leadership team and staff members was new for most of the advocates. They felt heard.

My advocates now trust my leadership decisions. I explain why and how we are making a transition, and they get on board quickly. There is buy-in with nearly all staff members, despite the challenges we faced when I started. Supervision is consistent and anticipated, and staff are flourishing. I am now switching my focus to succession planning. I regularly train a few hand-picked advocates to move into management positions. Their new skills are starting to manifest in their daily duties. They are working independently, taking the lead on projects, and managing groups of volunteers. I recently watched while an advocate effortlessly handled conflict between two clients. Witnessing this interaction, I realized that when I transition to law school, our clients and advocates here will be in good hands.

Applicant 3 – John U.

GPA: 3.92

LSAT: 166

My journey toward law school began in unlikely places: on a stage and inside the body of a giant turtle. As early as middle school, I began exploring the world of entertainment through music and playing in bands. As a young adult, I was immersed in that world as the University of Maryland's coveted mascot, "Testudo." I've been in the spotlight much of my life and enjoy the thrill of entertaining others. However, the world behind the spotlight is where I found my true passion.

As long as I can remember, I loved playing music and have been fortunate to play in multiple bands and perform for audiences. There is a unique and raw connection that only exists in those moments during a live performance. When you go to a concert to see your favorite band and you scream the words of the song back to the band with everyone else in the crowd, there is passion and love linking you together. There is an unspoken energy shared by those in that moment and the music provides the medium to connect people. When people are connected, they are happy and I love being a part of that experience.

However, there is the not so "entertaining" side of entertainment as well. I spent many hours outside of practice and gigs, as our "business manager". I have successfully published my band's music on all major streaming services such as Spotify, Apple Music, etc. I have been involved from the creation of the initial idea, to the recording and audio engineering phase of producing the idea into tangible music, to filing copyrights and signing royalty agreements with streaming services to ensure that we were legally protected and compensated our fair value. While I took this role on out of necessity, it sparked my interest behind the scenes and created the foundation for the greater and more challenging role I took on in college.

In my freshman year, I tried out for the role of "Testudo" alongside many other candidates. Testudo is the mascot of the University of Maryland, a symbol not only of Terrapin

athletics but also of camaraderie, school spirit, and the student body's devotion to a common cause. As a lifelong Terrapin fan, I was ecstatic when the selection committee chose me for this coveted job: to wear Testudo's outfit and entertain crowds for football and basketball games. It was a unique form of leadership that called on my creativity and boundless energy to help rally our teams to victory.

As a member of the cheer team and the most recognizable ambassador for UM's image, Testudo consumed much of my time. In addition to urging crowds to their feet on our home court, I travelled the country, spearheaded our marketing campaign through traditional and social media, and participated in efforts to strengthen ties among students, faculty and alumni. I worked many hours sweating inside that turtle suit and many hours outside the suit representing and promoting UM. I also saw the underlying structure that exists to make the magic happen, whether it be contracts, liabilities, or business royalties. I loved every minute of it.

The entertainment industry has always defined and motivated me. While I entertained others, I was equally entertained by the joyful reactions of my audience. However, I discovered that I truly thrive and succeed outside the spotlight. I am fascinated by the intricacies and actions behind the scenes and the detail and attention required to create an inspiring end product. Law school will help instill the discipline necessary in me to be best suited for these needs. I look forward to a career in entertainment law where I can combine my passion for the industry with my ability and desire to promote the success and connectivity of others. I have hung up my turtle suit and, while I will always enjoy playing music and performing, I'm excited to shine on a new stage through the legal world of entertainment. I believe that law school will provide me the knowledge and opportunity to continue my passion that was sparked early on in my life.

Applicant 4 – Nadia I.

GPA: 3.84

LSAT: 166

After immigrating from Russia, I was fascinated by the American legal system. Where I grew up, it was normal for police officers to give out unsubstantiated traffic tickets, expecting to get a bribe in return. To learn more, I decided to pursue a paralegal certificate program. At first, it was hard to believe that it was possible not only to enforce the law and prevent bribery, but also to contribute to the development of the law through precedent. After completing my certificate program, I started working as a paralegal at a growing law firm in our city.

I was the first paralegal to join the Veterans Affairs department at the firm. We were buried in cases and paperwork. To help my boss quickly find what she needed for each client, I set up an electronic filing system. I also organized our physical files by separating incoming and outgoing correspondence, color-coding key VA decisions, and creating a spreadsheet that allowed us to post updates on each case.

After streamlining our workflow, I started researching VA laws and regulations to find different avenues of pursuing compensation for our clients.

Last year, I researched Total Disability based on Individual Unemployability for one of our cases. My task was to determine whether backpay could be awarded in cases where TDIU had been granted. It was a new area for us and there wasn't much precedent to research. My findings helped our team win the appeal and get the client over \$200,000 of backpay—one of the largest backpay awards we've won.

In another case on wrongful termination, our team was trying to work around an at-will employment agreement. While researching our options, I discovered the Vietnam Era Readjustment Assistance Act (VEVRAA), which the attorneys hadn't heard of before. They included it in their brief in negotiations with opposing counsel.

I also translate for our Spanish-speaking clients. When I was helping our Workers Compensation team, I listened to recordings of conversations that our client had with his doctors and his insurance company. I made a detailed transcription-translation of each recording. The attorney used my translations to prepare for mediation.

Because filing VA appeals takes a long time, I like to keep our veterans updated throughout every stage of the process. Recently, the VA delayed processing our records request for several months. We even received a voicemail from the VA saying that there was no phone number that we could use to contact them. I kept looking, however, and found a working phone number. When I called, they said that they had already sent the records. We hadn't received them, so I requested them again. They asked for another 30 days to process my request. But even after that, we didn't hear from them. At that point, I started calling every day and asking for a supervisor. After a week, they sent us the records with certified mail—something that we've never seen before. We all considered that delivery a small victory.

When medical experts can't find a strong correlation between our veterans' injuries during their service time and their current medical issues, we contact our clients to gather as many key details as possible. This process often involves following up after their medical appointments to see how they did and whether there is any new information that we can add to their case. Because most of our veterans have PTSD or some other mental health issue, it can be difficult for them to talk about past events. But more of our clients have opened up as I've learned how to approach these sensitive topics.

I enjoy working in this area because I've seen the results of our work. Many veterans come to us frustrated with the system and the legal representation that they have received. Our goal is to change that perception, and I am proud to be contributing to that change.

Applicant 5 – Sarah F.

GPA: 3.87

LSAT: 167

In 2014 I was the head coach of a high school girls rugby team. We were on a two-year winning streak and reigning champions after our first year as a club. Every Saturday, we smashed our opponents and racked up points, and as we neared the end of our season, we had easily secured the number one seed heading into playoffs. Our last regular season game was against the Dead Rabbits, a team recently incorporated into our division. I was confident yet cautious. My players were not. They were riding high on a wave of shutout victories, feeling invincible. It wasn't until we reached halftime, trailing by ten points, that my players realized we were up against a legitimate foe. While they guzzled water and caught their breath, I reminded them to stick to playing the rugby I knew they were capable of. Tackle low, support each, play clean. But their confidence was shaken, and they never recovered. We lost that game by three tries.

After the game, I congratulated the other coach on making playoffs by beating us, and joked about how glad I was for the bye the next weekend to recover from the whooping. His team was set to face Mira Mesa, and the winner would advance to the championship. He protested that he was already scheduled to go play in an old boy's tournament himself. "We're not going. I didn't know. I already have plans!" His team clustered around him, confused and excited. They had never made playoffs, and were ragging him about blowing off their game. I quickly volunteered to take them down to the game, and fill in as their coach on the day. He accepted, seeming relieved.

On the way home, my players kept asking me why I volunteered to help the other team. If the Dead Rabbits missed their game the following weekend, they would forfeit. Mira Mesa, a team we had always beaten by massive, almost pitiable margins, would automatically advance to the championship. Our playoff opponent was the number four seed, and we had already shut

them out twice that season. We would advance to the championship game after clearing that low hurdle, and my players were becoming increasingly pissed that I had just given the Dead Rabbits a chance into that game.

After letting them voice their frustration, I talked to them about what rugby means to me. When I wrote the Articles of Incorporation establishing our club as a nonprofit, I wasn't just putting words on paper. I was codifying the ethos of our club. My mission was "to teach and promote the culture of rugby and its ideals of strong character, good sportsmanship, exemplary leadership, fair play and camaraderie." If I let the Dead Rabbits forfeit because their coach was a schmuck, I was failing in my mission. There's no honor in winning on a technicality, I argued. If we win this championship, it's going to be because we were the best team in the division. If we lose, we lose fair and square.

I coached the Dead Rabbits the next weekend against Mira Mesa, whose coach tried every trick in the book to invalidate the game before it began. He argued that I wasn't the coach on the roster, so the game couldn't proceed. I calmly showed him the email from the executive director of our society, acknowledging the coaching change. At kickoff, several players were still en route but he insisted we start the match on time, so we took the field two players short. He approached the ref, arguing that this should result in a forfeit. I reminded him that the laws allow us to play with as few as twelve players without forfeiting, and we had thirteen on the field. This continued throughout the match, every substitution challenged and try argued against. The Dead Rabbits parents kept muttering about how he was trying to steal the game. I assured them that I wouldn't let that happen, and when we won easily, I couldn't help but feel extremely satisfied. I smiled as I told them all I would see them soon for the big game.

At practice I broke the news to my team that we would indeed be facing the Dead Rabbits. We spent that week rolling out a new game plan. After coaching both teams, I knew better than anyone where the chinks in the armor were, and I was going to do everything in my power to make sure my team was victorious. Using the pictures from the previous week's match

roster, I made my team learn each opponent's name, strengths, and weaknesses. My plan hinged on shutting down their captain, Amy, the most dominant player on their team. She commanded her players like a general, and she was used to scoring most of the points. I assigned my strongest player and the best tackler to headhunt her the entire game. When the ball touched Amy's hands, Faye would be there to smash her into the ground.

The championship was one of those moments in sports that leaves everyone in witness feeling like they had watched one of the truly great games. It was a battle of defenses, bone crunching tackles that left the sidelines wincing. Runner after runner was stopped and thrown to the ground. We scored first, then they countered. For 70 minutes, every single player on the field ran and tackled and rucked with every ounce of their being. The sidelines roared and groaned, completely engaged in the spectacle. Their captain never once broke through our line, and she didn't score once. When the final whistle blew, Dead Rabbits had won by a kick. Even though we lost, my players shook hands and congratulated the other team, exemplars of sportsmanship. Their coach and I met on the field and shook hands, each exclaiming what a great game it had been.

This game has been weighing on my mind. Losing at anything is an opportunity for growth, but only when the playing field is fair. When the game is rigged, a loss becomes an injustice.

In 2016, my husband received orders to Camp Lejeune, North Carolina. After so many years on the west coast, it was like moving back in time. I spent a few weeks reading about the local politics and discovered my state representative proudly wore a stars and bars tie during legislative session. Ideas that had been theoretical and confined to the pages of my political science books were suddenly playing out all around me: gerrymandering, voter suppression, illiberalism.

I had to do something, and I quickly signed up to manage a state house race to unseat the proud Confederate who represented me in Raleigh. My research into the district and incumbent

showed that it would be a very difficult race to win, but that only motivated me to plan smarter and work harder. We learned near the end of the race that the map of our district was being challenged in court because it was one of the gerrymandered state legislative districts. As November neared, it felt more like approaching the gallows than nearing the end of a race.

I'd love to say that we pulled off the upset of the cycle, beating all the odds, but that's not what happened. What happened is we got spanked. It turns out, whoever finagled the maps knew their stuff, and scooping out the most densely populated and predominantly black precinct was enough to make it an unwinnable race. Elections, like games, should be won or lost fair and square. The case challenging these maps will be decided before I begin law school, but there will always be another fight. I think I'm due for a win.