

April 12, 2023

Joe West, Council Chair
American Bar Association
Legal Education and Admissions to the Bar
JKWest@duanemorris.com
Fernando.Mariduena@americanbar.org

Re: Suggestion for ABA Standard 503

Dear Mr. West:

For those of us who were able to attend the ABA Mid-year meeting, we were heartened to learn that the Council on Legal Education and Admissions to the Bar is interested in hearing from law school deans on the proposed revisions to ABA Standard 503. In the spirit of collaboration, we therefore write with a recommendation on how ABA Standard 503 might be revised to allow for the greater flexibility in J.D. admissions some law school deans are requesting, while not leading to the unintended negative consequences that many of us fear.

We recommend that the Council consider revising ABA Standard 503 along the following lines – change the existing interpretation language from:

Interpretation 503-3 (a) It is not a violation of this Standard for a law school to admit no more than 10% of an entering class without requiring the LSAT from: (1) Students in an undergraduate program of the same institution as the J.D. program; and/or (2) Students seeking the J.D. degree in combination with a degree in a different discipline. (b) Applicants admitted under subsection (a) must meet the following conditions: (1) Scored at or above the 85th percentile on the ACT or SAT for purposes of subsection (a)(1), or for purposes of subsection (a)(2), scored at or above the 85th percentile on the GRE or GMAT; and (2) Ranked in the top 10% of their undergraduate class through six semesters of academic work, or achieved a cumulative GPA of 3.5 or above through six semesters of academic work.

To the following:

Interpretation 503-3 (a) It is not a violation of this Standard for a law school to admit no more than 25% of an entering class without requiring a valid test for admission. ~~the LSAT from: (1) Students in an undergraduate program of the same institution as the J.D. program; and/or (2) Students seeking the J.D. degree in combination with a degree in a different discipline. (b) Applicants admitted under subsection (a) must meet the following conditions: (1) Scored at or above the 85th percentile on the ACT or SAT for purposes of subsection (a)(1), or for purposes of subsection (a)(2), scored at or above the 85th~~

~~percentile on the GRE or GMAT; and (2) Ranked in the top 10% of their undergraduate class through six semesters of academic work, or achieved a cumulative GPA of 3.5 or above through six semesters of academic work.~~

We recommend that the Council evaluate the effectiveness of this revision within six years of its adoption to ensure that students and law school graduates are not negatively impacted by the revision. This gradual change would provide the data that many of us desire before making a more sweeping revision that could produce negative and unintended consequences. Certainly, once an admissions test is abandoned it will be hard to reverse course.

We acknowledge that some administrators desire flexibility in the law school admissions process and believe that such flexibility will lead to increased diversity within law schools. Yet, we are concerned that a revision of Standard 503 without any limitation will lead to the opposite result and will negatively impact future students and law school diversity. Without more data, it is impossible to know what will happen. We believe that the revision we propose provides a path forward, allowing for increased flexibility while maintaining guardrails to protect students and the legal profession. The proposed revision is also one that we could see ourselves supporting at a future ABA House of Delegates meeting.

We look forward to the opportunity to collaborate with the Council on this effort, and welcome further dialogue. We appreciate your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

Kerry Abrams
James B. Duke and Benjamin N. Duke Dean of the School of Law
Distinguished Professor
Duke University School of Law

Klint Alexander
Dean and Professor of Law
University of Wyoming College of Law

Mark C. Alexander
Arthur J. Kania Dean and Professor of Law
Villanova University Charles Widger School of Law

Michèle Alexandre
Dean and Professor of Law
Loyola University Chicago School of Law

Horace Anderson
Dean and Professor of Law
Elisabeth Haub School of Law at Pace University

John P. Anderson
Interim Dean & Henry Vaughan Watkins and Selby Watkins McRae Professor of Law
Mississippi College School of Law

April Mara Barton
Dean and Professor of Law
Duquesne University Thomas R. Kline School of Law

Theresa M. Beiner
Dean and Nadine Baum Distinguished Professor of Law
UA Little Rock William H. Bowen School of Law

Richard A. Bierschbach
Dean and John W. Reed Professor of Law
Wayne State University Law School

Mary Anne Bobinski
Dean and Asa Griggs Candler Professor of Law
Emory University School of Law

Nichola Boothe
Dean and Professor of Law
University of Illinois – Chicago
School of Law

Gregory W. Bowman
Dean & Professor of Law
Roger Williams University School of Law

Mark E. Brandon
Dean and Thomas E. McMillan Professor of Law
The University of Alabama School of Law

Karen E. Bravo
Dean and Gerald L. Bepko Professor of Law
Indiana University Robert H. McKinney School of Law

Martin H. Brinkley
Dean and William Rand Kenan, Jr. Distinguished Professor
University of North Carolina School of Law

Jennifer Gerarda Brown

Dean and Professor of Law
Quinnipiac University School of Law

Lonnie T. Brown, Jr. (Individually)
Dean and Elvin E. Overton Distinguished Professor of Law
University of Tennessee College of Law

Marcilynn Burke
Dean and Dave Frohnmayer Chair in Leadership and Law
University of Oregon School of Law

Michael T. Cahill
President, Joseph Crea Dean & Professor of Law
Brooklyn Law School

Charles B. Campbell
Dean and Associate Professor of Law
Faulkner University, Jones School of Law

Camille Carey
Dean and Karelitz Chair in Evidence and Procedure
University of New Mexico School of Law

Megan Carpenter
Dean and Professor of Law
University of New Hampshire Franklin Pierce School of Law

Paul L. Caron
Duane & Kelly Roberts Dean and Professor of Law
Pepperdine University Rick J. Caruso School of Law

Erwin Chemerinsky
Dean and Jesse H. Choper Distinguished Professor of Law
University of California, Berkeley School of Law

Marisa S. Cianciarulo
Interim Dean and Donald P. Kennedy Chair in Law
Doy & Dee Henley Chair in Law
Dale E. Fowler School of Law
Chapman University

Danielle M. Conway
Dean and Donald J. Farage Professor of Law
Penn State Dickinson Law

Anthony W. Crowell
Dean and President
Professor of Law
New York Law School

Rose Cuison-Villazor
Interim Co-Dean, Professor of Law and Chancellor's Social Justice Scholar
Director, Rutgers Center for Immigration Law, Policy and Justice
Rutgers Law School

John M. Czarnetzky
Chief Executive Officer and Dean
Ave Maria School of Law

Judith Daar
Ambassador Patricia L. Herbold Dean and Professor of Law
Chase College of Law | Northern Kentucky University

Camille Davidson
Dean and Professor of Law
Southern Illinois University School of Law

Lincoln L. Davies
Dean & Frank R. Strong Chair in Law
Michael E. Moritz College of Law
The Ohio State University

Mary J. Davis
Dean and Ashland-Spears Distinguished Research Professor of Law
University of Kentucky J. David Rosenberg College of Law

Matthew Diller
Dean
Paul Fuller Professor of Law
Fordham University School of Law

Susan Duncan
Dean and Professor of Law
University of Mississippi School of Law

Allen K. Easley
Dean & Professor of Law
Western State College of Law at Westcliff University

Felecia Epps

Dean and Professor of Law
UNT Dallas College of Law

David L. Faigman
Chancellor & Dean
William B. Lockhart Professor of Law and John F. Digardi Distinguished Professor of Law
University of California College of the Law, San Francisco (formerly UC Hastings Law)

B. Keith Faulkner
President and Dean
Appalachian School of Law

Joshua P. Fershée
Dean and Professor of Law
Creighton University School of Law

Daniel M. Filler
Dean and Professor of Law
Drexel University Thomas R. Kline School of Law

Barbara Glesner Fines
Dean and Rubey M. Hulen Professor of Law
University of Missouri Kansas City School of Law

Lee Fisher
Dean and Joseph C. Hostetler-BakerHostetler Chair in Law
Cleveland State University College of Law

Susan Freiwald
Dean and Professor of Law
University of San Francisco School of Law

Elaine Gagliardi
Interim Dean and Professor of Law
Alexander Blewett III School of Law, University of Montana

Brian Gallini
Dean and Professor of Law
Willamette University College of Law

Jace C. Gatewood
Dean and CEO, Professor of Law
Atlanta's John Marshall Law School

Hon. Alberto R. Gonzales
Dean and Doyle Rogers Distinguished Chair of Law
Belmont University College of Law

Peter Goplerud
Dean
Florida Coastal School of Law

Leah Chan Grinvald
Dean and Richard J. Morgan Professor of Law
William S. Boyd School of Law at University of Nevada, Las Vegas

Chris Guthrie
Dean and John Wade-Kent Syverud Professor of Law
Vanderbilt University Law School

Andrew T. Guzman
Dean and Carl Mason Franklin Chair in Law, and Professor of Law & Political Science
USC Gould School of Law
University of Southern California

Danielle R. Holley
Dean and Professor of Law
Howard University School of Law

Blake Hudson
Dean and Professor of Law
Samford University Cumberland School of Law

Renée McDonald Hutchins
Dean, Maryland Carey Law

Melanie B. Jacobs
Dean and Professor of Law
Louis D. Brandeis School of Law
University of Louisville

Emily Janoski-Haehlen
Dean & Professor of Law
The University of Akron School of Law

Garry W. Jenkins

Dean and William S. Pattee Professor of Law
University of Minnesota Law School

Jennifer J. Johnson
Dean and Erskine Wood Sr. Professor of Law
Lewis and Clark Law School

Kevin R. Johnson
Dean, Mabie-Apallas Professor of Public Interest Law, and Professor of Chicana/o Studies
UC Davis School of Law

Twinette L. Johnson
Interim Dean and Professor of Law
UDC David A. Clarke School of Law

Johanna Kalb
Dean and Professor of Law
University of Idaho College of Law

Michael J. Kaufman
Dean and Professor of Law
Santa Clara University School of Law

Alicia B. Kelly
Interim Dean & Professor of Law
Co-Director Family Health Law & Policy Institute
Widener University
Delaware Law School

Russell Korobkin
Interim Dean and Richard C. Maxwell Distinguished Professor of Law
UCLA School of Law

Anita K. Krug
Dean and Professor
Chicago-Kent College of Law
Illinois Institute of Technology

Elena B. Langan
Dean and Professor of Law
Touro Law Center

Tamara F. Lawson
Toni Rembe Dean and Professor of Law
University of Washington School of Law

J. Rich Leonard
Dean
Norman Adrian Wiggins School of Law
Campbell University

Melanie Leslie
Dean and Samuel Belkin Professor of Law
Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law |Yeshiva University

Brad Lingo
Dean, Regent University School of Law

Paul Litton
Interim Dean and R.B. Price Professor of Law
University of Missouri School of Law

Lee Ann Wheelis Lockridge
Interim Dean and Professor of Law
LSU Law School

Matthew R. Lyon
Vice President and Dean
Lincoln Memorial University Duncan School of Law

John Makdisi
Interim Dean & Emeritus Professor
St. Thomas University
Benjamin L. Crump College of Law

Dayna Bowen Matthew
Dean and Harold H. Greene Professor of Law
George Washington University School of Law

Stephen Mazza
Dean and Professor of Law
University of Kansas School of Law

Beth McCormack
Interim Dean

Vermont Law and Graduate School

James McGrath
President, Dean and Professor
Western Michigan University Thomas M. Cooley Law School

Richard Moberly
Dean
Richard C. & Catherine S. Schmoker Professor of Law
University of Nebraska College of Law

Kimberly Mutcherson
Dean & Professor of Law
Rutgers Law School

Jason P. Nance
Judge James Noel Dean
Professor of Law
SMU Dedman School of Law

Camille Nelson
Dean and Professor of Law
University of Hawai'i at Manoa – William S. Richardson School of Law

Nell Jessup Newton
Interim Dean, Wake Forest Law School

Joel A. Nichols
Interim Dean and Mengler Chair in Law
University of St. Thomas School of Law
Minneapolis, Minnesota

Anthony Niedwiecki
President and Dean
Mitchell Hamline School of Law

Jack Wade Nowlin
Dean and W. Frank Newton Professor of Law
Texas Tech University School of Law

Christiana Ochoa
Dean and Herman B Wells Professor
Indiana University Maurer School of Law - Bloomington

Jens David Ohlin
Allan R. Tessler Dean & Professor of Law
Cornell Law School

Angela Onwuachi-Willig
Dean and Ryan Roth Gallo & Ernest J. Gallo Professor of Law
Boston University School of Law

Fernando Moreno Orama
Dean
Pontifical Catholic University of Puerto Rico, School of Law

Hari M. Osofsky
Dean and Myra and James Bradwell Professor of Law
Professor of Environmental Policy and Culture (courtesy)
Northwestern Pritzker School of Law

Alicia Ouellette
President and Dean
Albany Law School

Antony Page
Dean and FIU Foundation Professor of Law
Florida International University College of Law

Brian Pappas
Dean and Professor of Law
University of North Dakota School of Law

Austen L. Parrish
Dean and Chancellor's Professor of Law
University of California, Irvine | School of Law

Jennifer Rosato Perea
Dean and Professor
DePaul University College of Law

Wendy C. Perdue
Dean and Professor of Law
University of Richmond School of Law

Theresa J. Pulley Radwan

Interim Dean and Professor of Law
Stetson University College of Law

LaVonda N. Reed
Dean and Professor of Law
Georgia State University College of Law

Rachel Rebouché
Dean, James E. Beasley Professor of Law
Temple University, Beasley School of Law

Patricia E. Roberts
Dean and Charles E. Cantú Distinguished Professor of Law
St. Mary's University School of Law

Charles H. Rose III
Dean and Professor of Law
Claude W. Pettit College of Law
Ohio Northern University

Laura Ann Rosenbury
Dean and Levin, Mabie & Levin Professor of Law
University of Florida Fredric G. Levin College of Law

Jim Roth
Dean and Professor of Law
OCU School of Law

Theodore W. Ruger
University of Pennsylvania Carey Law School

Peter B. "Bo" Rutledge
Dean and Talmadge Chair of Law
University of Georgia School of Law

Leigh Saufley
President and Dean
University of Maine School of Law

Katharine T. Schaffzin
Dean and Professor of Law
The University of Memphis Cecil C. Humphreys School of Law

Michael Hunter Schwartz
Dean and Professor of Law
McGeorge School of Law, University of the Pacific

Sean M. Scott
President and Dean
California Western School of Law

Sudha Setty
Dean and Professor of Law
City University of New York School of Law

Michael A. Simons
Dean and John V. Brennan Professor of Law
St. John's University School of Law

Karen J. Sneddon
Interim Dean and Professor of Law
Mercer University School of Law

Andrew Strauss
Dean and Professor of Law
University of Dayton School of Law

Daniel P. Tokaji
Fred W. & Vi Miller Dean and Professor of Law
University of Wisconsin Law School

William M. Treanor
Dean & Executive Vice President
Paul Regis Dean Leadership Chair
Georgetown University Law Center

Reynaldo Anaya Valencia
Dean and Professor of Law
Capital University Law School

Anthony E. Varona
Dean and Professor of Law
Seattle University School of Law

Elizabeth Kronk Warner
Jefferson and Rita Presidential Dean and Professor of Law

S.J. Quinney College of Law

Kevin K. Washburn
N. William Hines Dean and Professor of Law
University of Iowa College of Law

Mark D. West
David A. Breach Dean of Law
Nippon Life Professor of Law
University of Michigan

Michael Whiteman
Interim Dean
University of Cincinnati College of Law

Melanie D. Wilson
Dean and Roy L. Steinheimer, Jr., Professor
Washington and Lee University School of Law

Alan Woodlief
Interim Dean and Professor of Law
Elon Law