



Don't Go To Law School (Unless): A Law Professor's Inside Guide to Maximizing Opportunity and Minimizing Risk

Paul Campos

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Going to law school has become a very expensive and increasingly risky gamble. When is it still worth it? Law professor Paul Campos answers that question in this book, which gives prospective law students, their families, and current law students the tools they need to make a smart decision about applying to, enrolling in, and remaining in law school. Campos explains how the law school game is won and lost, from the perspective of an insider who has become the most prominent and widely cited critic of the deceptive tactics law schools use to convince the large majority of law students to pay far more for their law degrees than those degrees are worth.

DON'T GO TO LAW SCHOOL (UNLESS) reveals which law schools are still worth attending, at what price, and what sorts of legal careers it makes sense to pursue today. It outlines the various economic and psychological traps law students and new lawyers fall into, and how to avoid them. This book is a must-read if you or someone you care about is considering law school, or wondering whether to stay enrolled in one now.

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Tess Huelskamp says

If you are considering going to law school, read this book.

Connor Fuhrmann says

MUST READ BOOK

Do not even think about law school without having fully read this book. This book may have saved me my entire life and career.

Michael DeJesus says

Realistic view of legal field in contemporary US

If you're considering post-grad options, as I am, you should read this Is before settling on law school -- it raises good points that need to be considered

Campbell Stuart says

A prerequisite course in law school as an investment proposition.

As a graduate of law in a foreign jurisdiction, with both a First Class Honours LLB degree and an LLM in International Commercial Law from UCL, the decision of whether to undertake law school on my return to my home country has been a daunting one, plagued by self doubt and a concern for future prospects. This book made my ultimate choice easy. Law school is either a good financial risk, or it isn't. For the overwhelming majority, it isn't.

Simon Shimmy says

I would suggest this book to anyone who is thinking about law school. Paul Campos is like an uncle telling you it straight and the true facts about law school. This book is chucked filled with information and helped me to understand how to pick a law school or helped me to rethink about a career as a lawyer. Remember life's a poker game and never show your hand, this is true about the law school game.

Shahara says

This is seriously a book that I needed to read. I think that this should be given to every Pre-law student from their advisor everywhere, at every university. While it does take such a cynical look at things, it tells the truth which so many students consciously avoid. And while I did love the bluntness of the book, and its way of not sugarcoating the realities of each student, it really is so cynical. The luck of the draw isn't going to allow everyone to succeed, but the luck of the draw also says that not everyone is going to lose. Either way this book is a must read for prospective students especially.

Vladimir Cuk says

This book is a page Turner. I enjoyed it excellent and educational read very well researched

Great book. Highly recommended and this can be applied to other schools and degrees as well. Red entire book in one day. Much more interesting than I expected.

Thor Klinker says

Read If Thinking About Going To Law School

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Good book with some very informative information. Although it relies on a broad range of applicants it holds valuable information for all, and at the very least will make you think.

Xavier Shay says

USA your student loan program is fucked up. This book wouldn't need to exist otherwise. Average loans for a 3yr law degree are like \$200K, with employment rates of like only 50%. And most of those don't even pay anywhere near 6 figures.

Diana Crow says

Excellent advice

Gives a no nonsense view of law school, student debt and attorney jobs.

I'm still planning to go to law school though!

Mb says

Make \$100,000 an hour (give or take) by reading this book....:)

No, not by becoming a lawyer, but by dodging a bullet and NOT becoming a heavily indebted law school graduate without a job.

This is not a purely anecdotal book written by a disgruntled graduate with a horror story, although I have heard many, often by bright, intelligent, attractive, enthusiastic young lawyers who have every reason to be highly sought after and wildly successful in this profession and are not. What the book is instead is a well researched, statistically based review of the current state of the legal profession by a law professor who has seen the alarming state of affairs today and who is trying to warn people of the pitfalls. It's well worth the read and in fact should be mandatory reading for anyone who is even thinking about attending law school. The book is actually a lot of fun to read too---I couldn't put it down---and is equally eye opening. Although I can confirm pretty much every anecdote in the book as something that indeed happens--I've heard similar stories-- I still would have recommended law school to some before I read it. But I now would direct people to read this book before even considering law school under current conditions, because even if they decide to continue, at least they can make an informed decision and can be aware of and hopefully avoid some of the serious, sometimes life-wrecking issues that can affect aspiring lawyers. As one young woman told me, who has a couple hundred thousand in loans which add up to about half of her monthly salary from the \$55,000 job she finally got after a year's search that makes her work big firm hours for the privilege, "somebody has to warn people about what this does to your life."

Andrew Lee says

I came across this book when looking up an author of a Time article that was critical of law schools and job prospects. Turns out he wrote a book on the whole subject. Being only two years out of law school but lucky enough to be practicing law in a decent government job, I was curious to see what a long tenured law professor had to say about the state of the profession starting at school. This is an incredibly cynical book but not without it's truths. I believe the target audience is undergrads considering law school and while the tone is pessimistic to say the least, he doesn't come off supercilious and presents the facts in a cold, harsh light.

He talks about things like the costs, job prospects, law school prospects, and such. Most of what everything he says is a true in my opinion through personal experience and I even found myself agreeing or seeing myself in the shoes of the naive pre-law undergrad he's aiming his message for. That said, I did think he drew very broad conclusions about the quality of law professors. I'm sure there are many as he described here who do not know much about being a lawyer but I disagree that their experiences should be as dismissed as he makes them out to be.

Overall I think it's a great book to pick up when considering law school and I did wish I had this when I was in the position. The cost-benefit analysis he provides here (especially in terms of financial costs) are very true and should be heavily considered. There are helpful analogies and his chapter on special snowflake syndrome had be reminiscing a bit as well. It's a quick read but very helpful and should be considered by law school prospective students.

Karen Owes says

Very realistic and factual. Good advice for students considering law school. I wish it were written when I attended law school. I am still saddled with student loan debt.

I would REQUIRE prospective students to read this book before selecting a law school to attend. Very good quick engaging read.

Martha says

I have to say this is well-written and is a definite must-read for most students heading to law school.

I do wish more resources existed for scientists who are considering law school, but the salient points still stand, especially that law school is expensive. Not only is it expensive, it is prohibitively expensive for the majority of students. I also wish the "unless" portion of this book had something more, but I do think that is mostly based on individual circumstances (and so difficult to put in a catch-all book).

In all, it's a quick read that could save you \$100,000s. I would recommend.

Mephistia says

I was interested in law school, but conflicted. My father is a lawyer, and while I was in undergrad, several of my professors recommended that I pursue a law career. I have discovered in myself an enthusiastic interest in Constitutional law, labor law, and civil rights law.

Through my professors, I arranged several informational interviews with both lawyers and paralegals. I was able to speak to people who worked both in private and public law. Eventually I decided to become a lawyer and aim to enter the field through government work, so as to get my student loans dismissed. Sure, I was a little concerned about the much-publicized and discussed cost of law school, and I was *really* concerned about my lack of enthusiasm -- rather than, "This is my dream career," my approach was more like, "Well, it's not the *worst* career, and it certainly seems challenging."

But then I realized that several of my FB friends were wrapping up their law school careers, or had recently done so. So I contacted them to see what law school (and the job market) is like right now. Several of my friends had graduated at the top of their classes, been published in law journals, and had participated in internships and clerkships. These were all things my professors and the lawyers who met with me for informational interviews cited as key to their long-term career success.

If my friends are any example, these are no longer guarantees of career success. Some chose, after looking fruitlessly for work in a glutted field, to return to school for yet another degree (and to put off their debt a little longer). Some ended up taking a job unrelated to their degree. And some are still unemployed, still looking.

This book explained why. It explained the hierarchy of law schools and the pros and cons. It broke down the cost and the so-called financial aid structures. It clearly outlined the current state of the legal field (in a word, saturated). It explained why lawyers are becoming less necessary (the internet). And it pointed out some

things I hadn't considered -- for instance, becoming a paralegal is a perfectly good career that pays pretty well, but if you have a JD, no lawyer will hire you as a paralegal. It also pointed out that since a law degree still has a high cultural cache attached to it, regardless of the employment reality, then you end up looking overqualified for a lot of positions and the potential employers are left trying to figure out what's so wrong with you that you can't find work as a lawyer.

All in all, this book addressed the doubts and concerns I had about the current state of the field in a way that lawyers who got their degrees in the 80s, 90s, and early 00s couldn't or wouldn't address. It was a breath of fresh air in the face of the manic denial I seemed to encounter when I spoke with lawyers established in the field, frantic to justify the cost.
