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Law Students Slack Off in Their Third Year, Survey Finds

By PAULA WASLEY

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Third-year law students come to class less prepared, are less likely to discuss legal issues outside the classroom, and work less hard generally than their first- and second-year counterparts, according to a national survey released on Tuesday.

The survey, officially the Law School Survey of Student Engagement, adds weight to the common perception that J.D. students tend to slack off in their final year of law school.

The second annual survey, conducted by Indiana University at Bloomington's Center for Postsecondary Research, collected feedback from 28,000 J.D. students at 73 American and Canadian law schools about their law-school experiences; their participation in co-curricular activities, like pro-bono service or work on a law journal; their professional goals; and their levels of satisfaction with their programs of study.

A report on the survey found that students in more ethnically diverse programs were more satisfied with their overall law-school experience and that part-time and full-time law students had similar perceptions of how institutions supported their academic and social needs.



THINK AS A TEAM.



The survey aims to provide empirical data to law schools about what students do during their studies and how they assess their education. The online questionnaire on which the survey was based had a 57-percent average response rate among the participating institutions.

The same researchers at Indiana University also compile an annual National Survey of Student Engagement, which examines similar issues at four-year colleges and universities ([The Chronicle](#), November 11), and an annual Community College Survey of Student Engagement ([The Chronicle](#), April 12).

The report on the law-school survey, "The Law School Years: Probing Questions, Actionable Data," is available at <http://nsse.iub.edu/lssse>

Background article from *The Chronicle*:

- [Law Students Say Their Schools Provide Poor Career Counseling, Survey Finds](#) (1/5/2005)

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