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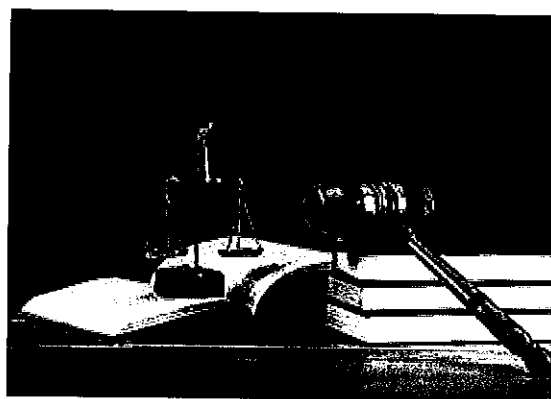
From the Pittsburgh Business Times:
<http://www.bizjournals.com/pittsburgh/print-edition/2016/05/13/businesses-exploit-j-d-advantage.html>

Businesses exploit J.D. advantage

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Corporations were a major employer of 2015 law school graduates, according to newly released data from the American Bar Association. But that doesn't necessarily mean they're working as lawyers — or passed the bar.

"Every lawyer coming out of school needs mentoring and training and most corporate legal departments don't have the time or inclination to do that," said Lori Carpenter, president of recruitment firm Carpenter Legal Search. "They'd rather the students go to law firms and gain experience in a wide variety of industries versus just one."



SEBASTIAN DUDA/ISTOCK PHOTO

A federal court has overturned Pennsylvania's ban on same-sex marriage.

The ABA report showed that law firms continue to be the largest employers of new grads, but business and industry remained a solid second.

For example, 196 graduated from the University of Pittsburgh School of Law last year, and about one-fourth were hired by businesses including Alcoa, GlaxoSmithKline, Highmark, UPMC, Texas Instruments and Wells Fargo & Co.

Lori McMaster, director of the office of professional and career development at Pitt Law, noted increasing student interest in jobs for which formal bar admission is not required, "but a law degree is deemed to be an advantage." These include contracts administration, compliance, human resources and tax and financial planning.

Of the 2015 graduates, 108 took jobs where bar passage was required and 45 opted for J.D. advantage posts, according to the ABA data.

"Nationally, the percentage of graduates working in J.D. advantage roles in particular has been increasing since 2001, demonstrating that business and industry are increasingly leveraging the skill sets derived from a legal education, and that more law school applicants are seeking to use their law degree outside of traditional private practice," McMaster said.

Duquesne University School of Law had 145 graduates in 2015, of which 86 have jobs where bar passage was required and 21 work in J.D. advantage posts. All told, 43 grads are employed by corporations. That's one fewer than in 2014, but Duquesne and Pitt both voluntarily reduced admissions in 2013, so both graduated a smaller number of students — 25 fewer for each — in 2015.

Maria Comas, Duquesne Law's director of career services, believes there are two reasons.

"Some of our evening division graduates have high-level jobs that they maintain right after graduation," she said. "Second, companies are

hiring graduates in jobs where the J.D. degree is an advantage to the job, in addition to some that require the graduate to pass the bar exam.”

These include compliance positions at banks and public utility companies, wealth management positions at banks, contracts analysts at health care providers or government agencies, landmen with energy companies and legal publishing.

“For these reasons, I think business and industry will continue to be a large employer of our graduates,” Comas added.

The big change from 2014 at the West Virginia University College of Law was fewer hires by the energy sector.

“In the past, a lot of our students went to work directly for energy companies doing title and property work, but that hiring has slowed down,” said Amber Brugnoli, assistant dean for career services.

As a result, 91 of WVU Law’s 2015 grads have jobs for which bar passage was a requirement, compared to 78 last year, while just nine opted for J.D. advantage, down from 26 in 2014.

CLOSER LOOK

DEGREE OF LEVERAGE

Where 2015 graduates from local law schools are working

Law school	Graduates	Employed/ Bar passage required	Employed/ J.D. advantage	Working at firms	Employed by industry
University of Pittsburgh	196	108	45	71	52
Duquesne University	145	86	21	60	43
West Virginia University	125	91	9	55	14

AMERICAN BAR ASSOCIATION BASED ON DATA SUBMITTED BY INDIVIDUAL LAW SCHOOLS

Patty Tascarella
Senior Reporter



Pittsburgh Business Times

