

LAW GRADUATES STILL STRUGGLING TO LAND DECENT LEGAL CAREERS



In 2009, Brian Tamanaha, a Washington University School of Law professor, stated that *more than 50 percent of graduates from at least 30 accredited law schools did not get jobs requiring a law degree.* This was concluded from data assembled by U.S. News & World Report. Only 80 percent of Washington University School of Law graduates found work as lawyers in the same year. The school is currently ranked 18th in the nation by U.S. News & World Report. Even Harvard and Yale Universities are struggling to improve the employment rate of graduates as lawyers. Although their ranking is still relatively high since it is in the low 90 percent range, this proves to be a scary thought knowing that even the country's two top-ranked law schools are cracking. *"It was a bad year for everyone," said Tamanaha. "A lot of graduates don't become lawyers."* Students should consider the negative employment trend when deciding on what type of career they would like to have. The data for 2010 has not been released yet, but Tamanaha predicts that things will get much worse with the years to come. Tamanaha gives friendly advice to students regarding the current situation: *"The main message I am trying to deliver here is trying to make a smart decision. Students should...weigh the cost or how much debt they are paying before applying,"* Tamanaha said. *"It is a big investment of both time and money."* In theory, it used to be a good thing to become a lawyer in a bad economy, but not so much anymore. Thousands of lawyers have been laid off due to the economic crash and it was probably due to the oversupply of lawyers that already exist. In the world of lawyers, graduates will usually go first because they do not have the necessary skills and knowledge to move forward in such tough times. Despite the bad media around the lawyer profession, first-year law student Elad Gross is actually not feeling the heat when it comes to finding a future job as a lawyer: *"It's not time to be panicked, [but] it's time to be urgent,"* Gross said. *"I can see that a lot of students are stressed out. But...we are still investigating. Though we are hearing or being told about the rumors, I don't want to be panicked when it's not necessary."* Gross isn't particularly worried solely because he is not studying law to become a high-powered executive lawyer, but instead to learn how to effectively help students achieve success in school. Gross isn't the only student who isn't phased by the negativity surrounding law professions as fellow sophomore Quanhao Tang has said that *"having a JD degree opens doors to other professions as well, besides being a lawyer. To me, students truly interested in law schools are unlikely [to be] discouraged by the unfavorable employment data and make decisions purely based on the employability of having a JD degree."*