

Law & Industry Daily

Law Schools Sued by Graduates

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NEW YORK, Feb. 1 (LID) — A bevy of U.S. law schools are targeted in consumer-fraud lawsuits filed by graduates who claim the schools inflated post-graduation job placement rates in order to attract enrollees.

Plaintiffs allege, in state and federal lawsuits, that their alma maters misled them about employment prospects, inflated average salaries paid to their graduates and left them with mounting debts and limited job prospects.

“This action seeks to remedy a systemic, ongoing fraud that is ubiquitous in the legal education industry and threatens to leave a generation of law students in dire financial straits,” reads the complaint against one of the schools.

Filed on behalf of 51 recent graduates of law schools in New York, California, Illinois, Delaware and Florida, the proposed class-action lawsuits seek tuition refunds and other unspecified compensatory and punitive damages.

The putative class members are also asking that the law schools hire independent auditors to verify salary and employment data given to students.

Jane Genova, publisher of *Law & More*, had this analysis: “If the 73 JDs filing these suits are shrewd, they will gain public relations experience telling their story, positioning it as a mission to warn others and to reform law schools. PR, unlike the downsizing legal sector, is growing and pays well.”

The defendant schools include Albany Law School, Albany, N.Y.; Hofstra Law School, Hempstead, N.Y.; California Western, San Diego, Calif.; Golden Gate University, San Francisco; Southwestern Law School, Los Angeles, Calif.; University of San Francisco School of Law, San Francisco; IIT Chicago-Kent College of Law, Chicago; DePaul University College of Law, Chicago; The John Marshall Law School, Chicago; Florida Coastal School of Law, Jacksonville, Fla.; and Widener University School of Law, in Wilmington, Del.

Leading the legal charge against the schools are New York plaintiffs’ attorneys David Anziska, Jesse Strauss and Frank Raimond.

Last year, similar lawsuits were filed against New York Law School, Thomas M. Cooley Law School and Thomas Jefferson School of Law.

U.S. Sen. Barbara Boxer (D-Calif.) and Sen. Tom Coburn (R-Okla.), in October, called on the inspector general of the U.S. Department of Education to investigate “the confluence of growing enrollments, steadily increasing tuition rates and allegedly sluggish job placement” at U.S. law schools.

On Jan. 14, a committee of the American Bar Association approved rules that could require law schools to disclose more detailed information about graduate job placement rates.

Approved by the Section of Legal Education and Admissions to the Bar’s Standards Review Committee, the proposal will be presented to the section’s governing council at its March 16-17 meeting in Fort Lauderdale, Fla.

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