

# The Law School Tuition Crisis

## Tuition: Then and Now

Law School tuition has skyrocketed since the dawn of the US News era (1990). To put the current tuition crisis in perspective:

### Law School Tuition - 2013

Average Public School tuition today....**\$23,214**  
 Average Private School tuition today...**\$40,634**  
 Average CA tuition today.....**\$45,583**  
 Average UC tuition today.....**\$47,557**

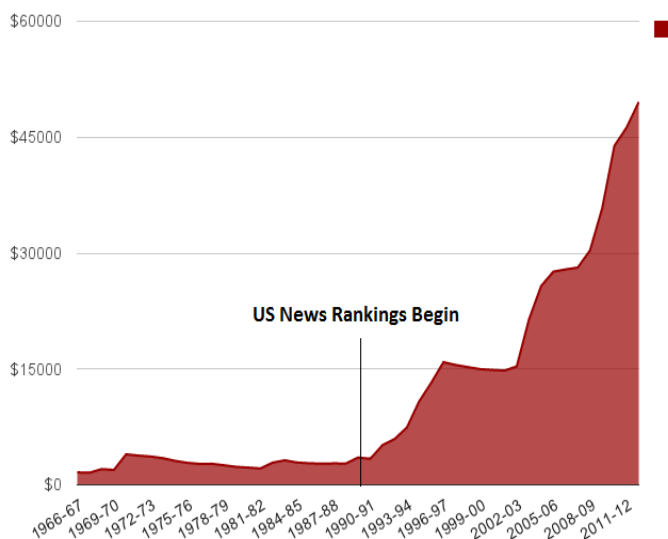
### Law School Tuition in 1985 (Pre-US News)

*All figures adjusted for inflation!!!*

1985 Avg Public School Tuition .....**\$4,339**  
 1985 Avg Private School Tuition.....**\$16,281**  
 1985 UC Davis Law Tuition.....**\$2,793**

*“Legal education today is very similar to that which I received in the mid-1970s, and I would guess that the legal education that I received in the mid-1970s is much like those in the mid-1930s.” – Irwin Chemerinsky, Dean of UC Irvine Law (\$47,308/yr tuition)*

## UC Davis Law Tuition: a case study



**2000: 15.2 to 1; Rank #41; \$14,873 (adjusted)**  
**2013: 11.1 to 1; Rank #38; \$49,564**

## Faculty Expenditures: Then and Now

While there may be other factors (accreditation standards, loan availability, state budget cuts, misleading “average salaries” creating demand, etc), more student money is funding legal research than ever before:

**Estimated Total # of Law Review articles published in 1990: 4,255**

**Estimated Total # of Law Review articles published in 2010: 9,856**

### Historical Student-to-Faculty Ratio *(schools with 500-699 students)*

1980 - 26.4 to 1  
 1990 - 24.4 to 1  
 2000 - 16.9 to 1  
**2010 - 14.5 to 1**

*“From 1998 until 2008, the number of law faculty at 195 ABA-accredited law schools grew from 12,200 to 17,080 - a 40 percent increase....This increase in staffing accounts for 48 percent of the tuition increase from 1998 to 2008, the study shows.” – National Jurist Magazine, March 9, 2010*

## **Are all Faculty expenditures “instructional”?**

*“[The focus on rankings] leads to: reducing teaching loads to free time for scholars to write (and thereby requiring larger faculties or more adjunct hiring); hiring faculty who have interests that may be provocative, press-worthy, or attractive to university press and law review editors (and paying them premium salaries or giving them reduced teaching loads); encouraging faculty to travel (and supporting it generously); and promoting faculty to appear on television, write editorials, participate in national law reform or other social movements (with appropriate support and staff assistance).” – Richard Matasar, Former Dean of New York Law School*

## Law Student Average Debt

These are the latest Law School Debt figures, but tuition has already increased significantly!

2011-12 Avg. Pub. School Debt.....**\$84,600**  
2011-12 Avg. Private School Debt...**\$122,158**

Salary req'd to service \$84k debt..... **\$119,185**  
Salary req'd to service \$122k debt... **\$172,098**

## How do US News Rankings work?

*Is this a student-based model of rankings?*

### **The Prestige Ranking: 40%**

Reputation survey to select Deans and Law Faculty on 1-5 scale.....25%  
Reputation survey to State A.G's, BigLaw hiring partners, and Judges on 1-5 scale...15%

### **Selectivity in Admissions: 25%**

Median LSAT.....12.5%  
Median GPA.....10%  
School Acceptance Rate.....2.5%

### **Student Outputs: 20%**

Employment at Graduation.....4%  
Employment 9 months post-grad.....14%  
Bar Passage Rate.....2%

### **Faculty Resources: 15%**

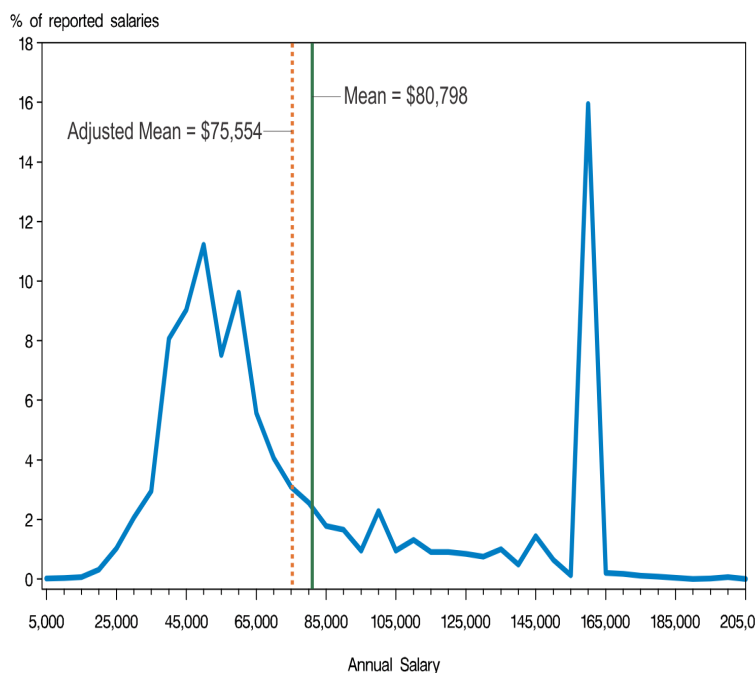
Expenditures-per-student.....11.25%  
Student-to-Faculty ratio.....3%  
Total library resources......75%

## Law Student Starting Salary Data

On average we (conservatively) need to make between \$119k-\$172k to service our debt, but what are we actually making?

**Median Salary for 2012 grad.....\$61,254**  
51% of grads make between.....\$40-65k  
16% of grads (BigLaw).....\$160,000

Schools advertise high “average” salaries, but very few students make those salaries. Salaries aren't distributed along a bell curve, rather it's more like a two-humped camel!



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## **Ideas to Start Organizing!**

Hold Townhall meetings to discuss the Tuition crisis/ US News rankings with your classmates

Use articles to discuss the Tuition Crisis with Professors to build urgency in the movement

Lobby legislators for action

Stage walkouts, protests, or other demonstrations

Leverage Student Government to campaign for a “Student Budget Committee” which can review Law School financials and have a voice in future budget and tuition decisions

Reach out to alumni for allies who can exert pressure on the administration

What ideas do you have?