



- Lee Burgess: Welcome to the Law School Toolbox podcast. Today, we're talking about COVID-19 and the potential impact on future 1Ls. Your Law School Toolbox hosts are Alison Monahan and Lee Burges, that's me. We're here to demystify the law school and early legal career experience so you'll be the best law student and lawyer you can be. We're the co-creators of the [Law School Toolbox](#), the [Bar Exam Toolbox](#), and the career related website [CareerDicta](#). Alison also runs [The Girl's Guide to Law School](#). If you enjoy the show, please leave a review on your favorite listening app. And if you have any questions, don't hesitate to reach out to us. You can reach us via the [contact form](#) on LawSchoolToolBox.com, and we'd love to hear from you. And with that, let's get started.
- Alison Monahan: Welcome back to the Law School Toolbox podcast. Today, we're talking about how potential 1Ls can think about their options around whether to even start law school in the fall, given the current uncertainty. Well, this is a hard decision.
- Lee Burgess: Oh my gosh, yeah. My heart goes out to everyone who's trying to plan big changes for the fall, because there's just so much uncertainty, even about the next week, let alone six months from now. I know everybody's rescheduling weddings, and there are all these questions about graduations, and all of this stuff. It's incredibly difficult, let alone a life-changing decision that's a very expensive one, like starting law school.
- Alison Monahan: Yeah, I think we're just dealing with incredibly high uncertainty around all kinds of things, and I think that makes it very difficult to figure out what to do here. Is the school that you're thinking about even going to be open? Are they going to be having classes in-person? Are they going to be doing something else? And I think the other factor here is, you have to think about the job market. We're in such an uncertain economic situation. What is that going to look like for you after your first year for a summer job, or second year, or third year? What are you walking into here?
- Lee Burgess: Yeah, I think that's very true. Although typically, recessions are a time where a lot of people go back to school. I think this is a unique economic slowdown that may be very different than what we've seen before. We just don't know. Nobody knows, because nobody's back to work.
- Alison Monahan: Right, exactly. I read this morning that the unemployment numbers are exponentially high. Well, not exponentially high, but higher than... Two years of job losses in the last recession have happened in the last three weeks. So I think we're in pretty uncharted territory here.
- Lee Burgess: Yeah.



Alison Monahan: So let's take these one by one. I think the most obvious question is just this uncertainty around classes, and whether schools are even going to re-open as they normally would in what might seem like a far-off world, but is actually only a few months from now.

Lee Burgess: Right. And I think a lot of this seems to be regional. I think right now, we should probably note that it is April 9th when we're talking about this, because we now have to date everything because it's all about what you know today. So today is April 9th. But right now, in April, California is seeing a lot less destruction than some places like New York. But New York City has tons of law schools. So if I was an incoming 1L in New York City and I was questioning, "Should I move and relocate to New York City? Are these New York City schools going to be able to house me? Are they going to be able to hold classes?" – who knows? In California, things are not necessarily as dire now, but they're saying that things could peak in June. Well, if you're trying to move to law school in August, what is August going to look like? So, some of it's going to be, I think, regional, and some of it, I think we may not know until right before because the world seems to change every single day.

Alison Monahan: Right. Well, that was one of the things I was thinking about when we were talking about this topic is, when are schools actually going to be making these decisions? And can you really count on that date? What are they really committing to? For example, with the bar exam right now, a lot of states are saying, "Oh, we don't think we're going to be able to do it in July, but September seems possible, so we'll just postpone until September." Is that really going to be a different option? I don't know. So, even if your school says, "Okay, we're going to decide on May 1st what we're going to do", or June 1st, or whatever – what are they even really committing to? And what can they commit to? Not clear.

Lee Burgess: It's so true. Yeah, it's very unclear. Right now, there's a lot of uncertainty about the bar exam, and I think we're having the same kind of debate in the bar world. Some places are making decisions, some places are not. Some states are saying, "We can't make decisions. We'll make decisions later." And you're just like, "Okay, people are supposed to plan for the future." There are so many unknowns here. And the law schools are part of these huge bureaucracies, and how does that all play into this?

Alison Monahan: Yeah, a lot of law schools are part of much larger universities. If you think about opening a college again, or a university with 20,000, 30,000, 40,000 students, some of these places are huge. All those people living in a dorm – that seems really difficult in a few months. Is it going to be possible to the law school which is much smaller, and maybe they're not providing housing, and the students aren't as concentrated where they're living? Can they reopen if the bigger university doesn't? I don't know the answer to that.



- Lee Burgess: Yeah, and I don't think anyone knows the answer to that. I guess it's what's so challenging. And I don't know how the schools are going to make these decisions.
- Alison Monahan: Right. When I say "reopen", I mean reopen in person. Obviously, they're probably going to keep doing their online thing that they're doing now. We can talk later about whether you want to start law school with that. But yeah, I think we're in very uncharted waters. I would be feeling very uncertain if I had to make this decision. I went to Columbia, that's literally in the middle of New York City. Would I do that this year? I don't know.
- Lee Burgess: Yeah, I don't know, because they're saying that there could be another wave of this in the fall, and then we could be back to social distancing pretty quickly, or worse. In Europe, they have now prohibited people from exercising. Things are really intense in a lot of places, and I'm not sure how this is all going to shake out.
- Alison Monahan: Yeah, and I think you have to keep in mind, too, that universities were really some of the first places to take those steps and close down. They understand the problem here. So, I don't think universities, including law schools, are going to be out in front of the curve in terms of letting people come back on campus and live there permanently before this is resolved in some way or another.
- Lee Burgess: Yeah, because one of the things that I think they really saw that was so disruptive was, a lot of students had no home to go back to.
- Alison Monahan: Right.
- Lee Burgess: They told everyone to leave, and then it was like, where are some of these people supposed to go? Go home to live with their parents if their parents have room? A lot of people were living in student-sponsored housing, or some sort of temporary state. And I think that that is one of the real risks that people need to start thinking about is, if you have an acceptance letter for a school, and you're planning on going somewhere, I would call and start asking a lot of questions about how they've handled the situation too, because if this happens again, I think you want to know what the protocol was, and how it played out this last time.
- Alison Monahan: Yeah, I think you definitely want to talk to current students and just kind of hear from them how they feel about the choices that their schools have made. Obviously everyone is making difficult choices, but I feel like some schools probably have handled this better than others. Yeah, I think the housing thing is so important if you're going to be moving. How late can you wait to sign a lease? Also, I guess people have to decide, would you start school if it's online? And if



the answer to that is "Yes", then I think you have a little more flexibility. If the answer's "No", then I think you really have to see, can you put off paying that deposit? I know a lot of undergraduate schools are doing that – they're extending their deposit deadlines. Or can you put off signing a lease? But then does that put you in a position where you're not going to be able to find housing?

Lee Burgess:

Right.

Alison Monahan:

And also around housing – is the school going to refund your money if you have to leave? Because I understand they didn't necessarily do that in the current situation.

Lee Burgess:

Right, yeah. And also, what is your financial aid going to look like? What if this turns out to be a remote learning situation? Are you still taking out tons of loans? Is your debt load going to be the same? There are really a lot of open questions, and I think that the schools need to make a decision and provide clarity for everybody's benefit. I think it's just when that's going to happen. But most people by April, if you're going to school in the fall, you've pretty much decided.

Alison Monahan:

Well, typically.

Lee Burgess:

You're starting to make plans, typically. Maybe you've given notice to your job, you never know. Some people are already starting to make those plans. So, it is a moment to maybe press "Pause" on all of that until we get more information. And hopefully the schools will start making decisions, I would hope before the end of the semester, but most law schools are going to finish up exams in May, and then they're going to be able to see how this all shook out. But they've got to tell people soon. And if they are telling you, then you need to start asking questions, or asking for things – asking for a delayed deposit, asking for allowances, because you deserve it. This is an unprecedented situation; everybody deserves additional flexibility.

Alison Monahan:

Yeah, absolutely. I think one key issue here is that law school classes just aren't really set up to be lectures the way that a lot of undergraduate classes are. And it's really hard, I would imagine, to do a Socratic dialogue where the professor is asking questions and the students are answering on video. So I think law schools are even more impacted by this online situation than an average class would be.

Lee Burgess:

Yeah. I'm a member of a non-profit board, and we were having a board meeting via Zoom. There were only nine people on that meeting and I was losing it, because somebody is still late and then the video freezes, and then people are talking over each other, and it is really hard. I know that everybody's championing Zoom happy hours and all that stuff...



Alison Monahan: I went to one; it was horrible.

Lee Burgess: You didn't like it?

Alison Monahan: Well, it was the same thing – it was just like 10 people sitting there and everyone was trying to talk a little bit at once, and you can't tell who's talking, and the Zoom's flipping back and forth between the video. It got better once someone decided, "Okay, this is ridiculous. We should just have everyone talk about one topic that's not related to this virus." And then it was interesting because it was just one person talking. But I think to have a conversation with multiple people is really challenging.

Lee Burgess: Yeah, it's not easy. I think that there's a lot of championing how these technology tools are allowing us to connect during this time of social distancing, and thank goodness. On the other hand though, it is an imperfect technology, and it depends on everybody's Wi-Fi speed and a lot of different things. Also, everybody's comfort level with doing things on the screen. It's very different to even take a sales call or do some of the work that you and I do in this electronic format, even when the situation isn't perfect. But I'm going to go give a talk to an undergrad class in a couple of weeks, and then I started to be like, "Okay, where is the best Wi-Fi? Where's good lighting? Where can I set up my computer so it's not like looking up my nose?" All of those different things. It just becomes much more complicated, and the schools are not set up to work in this way, and the professors, many of whom are not used to working in this way, there's going to be a big learning curve. And I think students have to ask themselves if it's going to be a digital first semester 1L year, or even an entire 1L year, is that what you want your 1L year to be like? And I don't think there's a right answer to that, but you have to at least ask yourself that question.

Alison Monahan: Right, and is that what you want to pay for at full price?

Lee Burgess: Yeah, that's what the schools are going to... If the schools are still charging full price, yeah. And are they planning on staying pass/fail? We have [another episode](#) where we talk about the benefits of pass/fail, or I guess the mixed bag of pass/fail, and the implications. But I think for a 1L, there is another level of implications, because those are the grades that are supposed to feed into your job opportunities. And so if they say, "We can do these classes remote, but we're going to stay in this pass/fail model", I think then students have to make sure that they understand what the implications are of that. That's not to mean that that's not the right thing for the schools to do in a chaotic situation, but there are going to be ramifications for that, too.

Alison Monahan: Right. Yeah, the reality is part of going to law school is who you meet, and this might be massively curtailed if you have a virtual orientation and you may not



meet your classmates and professors for months. I was thinking about this in the context of, certainly law schools and other professional schools, a lot of them do these kinds of professional remote learning type of situations. But even there, people come together for two weeks and go to classes maybe twice a year or something like that. If you take out all of that, then I think it gets just increasingly hard to see how you are even going to meet your classmates really.

Lee Burgess: Yeah, it's hard. I have some friends who are in the middle of MBA programs or executive MBA programs that have now all switched to virtual. And a lot of them were asking if it is even worth it because in an MBA program, I think that social element is even more intense than in the law school space. And then the few friends I have who are close to graduating, they're like, "I might as well just finish at this point. I mean, I've gotten what I can out of it." Because we don't know what's going to come next.

Alison Monahan: Yeah. Someone I know who's a Harvard MBA said that the same conversation was happening among current students in the second year. It's like, "Well, whatever, we'll just graduate." But if you're a first-year MBA, it's like, "How long is this going to go on? I'm paying a lot of money for this. What am I getting out of it?"

Lee Burgess: Right.

Alison Monahan: I think law school that's less, but I think it's still a huge factor.

Lee Burgess: Yeah. Another thing I think students need to consider is if they are going to be responsible for children, or if they are breadwinners in their household, or if they have parents that they're responsible for. It just may not be practical to be taking online classes at home full time and also managing children who may or may not be in school, and possibly needing to have a part-time job to help contribute to the family. I mean, there are a lot of factors going on. So, one thing that some folks may want to reach out to their school about is this idea that they could go part time. Maybe if the part-time program is up and running, they can take a couple of classes that first semester remotely, but then if things resolve in 2021, they can go back to school in person, maybe go back to a full-time schedule. I think there might be some alternatives available to students that wouldn't exist in the real world or the normal world. And the only way we're going to learn about those is ask questions. And it may be that the law schools haven't even considered some of these things. So, you're going to have to ask questions to get them to consider it.

Alison Monahan: Right. No, I think that's right. I'm actually suddenly curious about what Michigan is doing with their Summer Start program. We'll go look it up.

Lee Burgess: Yeah, that's a good point. I hadn't thought about that.



Alison Monahan: I should have looked that one up. I hadn't either until right now. No, I think that's right. I think this is the time to be sort of flexible and think about different options. Everyone is doing that. So, you've got to think about what your life looks like and what would actually work for you. And to be realistic, because I don't think there's any benefit in someone starting in a situation that is basically setting themselves up to be in an impossible situation, and then not succeeding. In my opinion, you're better off deferring for a year, which typically schools will let you do very easily, and I'm sure would probably let you do in this scenario. And wait until your kids are back in school or whatever it is before you start to try to take this on. There's no point in setting yourself up for failure here just because you've decided this was something that you were going to do right now.

Lee Burgess: Yeah. This is an unprecedented situation where everybody is having to pivot. I don't know anyone whose business or school life or anything hasn't been affected. It's affecting everyone. So, this is a time to get creative, but I think also to have a lot of compassion that we are going through something that most of us have never gone through before, and our community has never gone through before, and our schools have never gone through before. And even schools who did a lot of disaster planning did not disaster plan to this extent. I've heard about schools who have had distance learning plans where if the school is closed for more than three days, we have distance learning. But that's different than distance learning for semesters.

Alison Monahan: Right. I mean, even something like an earthquake is like, the earthquake happens, things are bad and then you deal with it. Whereas here, we're in this condition of ongoing uncertainty with no clear end date.

Lee Burgess: Right.

Alison Monahan: So, I think it's just very difficult for people to make decisions based on any sort of future information when, like you said, the information may be changing daily.

Lee Burgess: Yeah. One of the things I have to keep reminding myself of and I think anyone trying to make decisions around this time will have to remind them of is, we do know this will end at some point. Life will return to a normal, whether it be a new normal or a normal normal. We just don't know when that is. And I think I'm getting into that cycle where it could be hard to remember that this will end, because it does seem like it's going on forever.

Alison Monahan: Yeah. I always go back to, the Black Death ended at some point. And they had way less good science, so that stopped basically on its own. This will eventually end.



- Lee Burgess: Yeah.
- Alison Monahan: I'm not saying that's uplifting, but...
- Lee Burgess: Way to take it to the plague.
- Alison Monahan: Yeah. Well, I mean, we basically are in a plague situation. This is literally... This is very medieval.
- Lee Burgess: Somewhat medieval. With Zoom. But yeah, I think it is important.
- Alison Monahan: It's fundamentally the same.
- Lee Burgess: You're right, it is fundamentally the same thing. Knowing it will end though eventually, I think, can help you decide. If you just really don't want to be part of this educational experiment, which is moving all of these schools into an online forum, then delay. It's one year. It could be one year of your life. Maybe you could spend that year doing something else. I think that becomes the question: What do you do if you delay?
- Alison Monahan: Yeah. That's what we were talking about before, like, "Oh, I could just defer." Well, what if you just got laid off? You're like, "Oh yeah, that's a good point." And I guess you can't really job hunt right now, so, yeah, I don't know what people do in that year. You can't really go abroad and volunteer, or whatever those things would be that people would do.
- Lee Burgess: Right. They sent everyone home from the Peace Corps. Yeah, this isn't a time to travel, this isn't a time to do a lot of the things that folks do. There may be plenty of opportunities for volunteer work. I know almost every non-profit is going to be in a crisis and I'm sure would love people to work for free, but I think that that's not a viable option for a lot of people.
- Alison Monahan: Yes, I think in terms of what suggestions we have, I think thinking about your backup plan and does it make sense for you to defer? If you are in a job that for whatever reason is currently stable and you feel like that job is likely to continue, then I would say there's a pretty strong argument for deferring for a year. If you're not in that scenario, then maybe doing law school is a better option than sitting around in your house with no income and doing nothing.
- Lee Burgess: Yeah. It's really hard, but it is a time to sit down and I think start looking through scenarios and seeing what answers you need to be able to make these choices. So, start making lists and then start going to the school and asking questions.



- Alison Monahan: Right. If classes are going to be completely virtual, do you even move to that area immediately, or do you wait?
- Lee Burgess: Right. It's really hard to know. The other thing that I think folks should also consider is whether or not this changes wait list situations. A lot of people are sometimes waiting to hear from high-ranked schools. This could be interesting if you're right on that cusp to see what happens, because I think a lot of people might decide not to go. So, if you're trying to get off a wait list or try and get into a different school, this could be an interesting opportunity. I don't even know... Using the word "opportunity" at a time like this feels very bizarre, but it is going to be a shakeup and it will be interesting to see where everyone ends up.
- Alison Monahan: Right, yeah. I think if you are, for whatever reason, 100% committed to go into law school, come hell or high water, and you will start virtually if you have to, and you will do whatever it takes to make that happen – then if you are on a wait list, let that school know. I'm sure if they're looking for people to pluck off the wait list, they're going to go for like, "Hey, Lee called me and said she is 100% in if we admit her. Alright, let's take her."
- Lee Burgess: Yeah, exactly.
- Alison Monahan: It's going to have value to the schools. They're looking to fill classes. They're going to have a serious problem, I think, a lot of places filling the class this year, which I guess brings us to another question. I think one thing people should think about is, is this school actually in danger of closing? There are a lot of law schools that have kind of been limping along for a while, a few of them have closed. But you want to be really sure that the school that you're committing to is not in that scenario.
- Lee Burgess: Yeah, it's a huge danger, really. Also, I would look at the financial health or the schools that are at risk of losing their accreditation. I know in California that's been a big thing. Maybe that's not where you put your eggs in that basket right now. We have hardly seen schools struggle with the down tech and some schools threatening to close, or almost closing and not closing. I just don't think it's a great time to gamble on a school that doesn't have a lot of resources. I think this is one of those times for a school that's got a great endowment or is connected to a university that's very stable and has a reputation and has stable alumni. That's who sees you through, because the schools are going to put their hands out and ask for money to solve these problems, and if they're already having financial troubles, not a great time to invest.
- Alison Monahan: Yeah, because you have to imagine anyone who had money in the stock market has a lot less money than they did. I think you just want to be cognizant of, like



you said, that you're going to a well-resourced organization that has the bandwidth to survive this, because I don't think everyone is going to survive.

Lee Burgess: No, no. We have been talking a lot about different businesses and this really kind of showing who had a disaster plan, who had money in the bank, who had a depth of resources to pull from. We had to sit down with our own books and have an honest conversation about that. Luckily we are very conservative people, so that helps, but not every organization is like that.

Alison Monahan: And we already had a virtual business.

Lee Burgess: And we already had a virtual business, so we didn't have to shift our business model. But I think that the schools are the same thing. You're going to see which deans are able to pivot, which faculty are willing to use technology. There's going to be a lot of new information and you should try and get as much as you can, read about what people are writing about the different schools, and see what people are saying about how it's being handled.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, absolutely, I think you want to pay attention to the news, I think you want to reach out to current students, I think you want to ask hard questions and be skeptical of the answers. This is not the time to sort of take on face value from the school, like, "Oh yeah, everything is going to be great. We're sure it will be fine", because you don't want to be in a scenario a year or two in when it's not fine, and suddenly you're having to scramble to try to transfer to a school that's going to accept your credits. That does not make sense; do not do that.

Lee Burgess: Right, absolutely, you just have to be very cautious. Also, if the word comes out that people are dropping their acceptances and they're not going, it could also, if you are an attractive applicant, be a time to go try and ask for more money, make this attractive to them to grab you. So if you are between two schools or you get off a wait list, go try and get scholarship money. This is a great time not to incur debt.

Alison Monahan: Right, exactly.

Lee Burgess: And so, if a school is in a position to offer you money because they want to fill those classes, ask for it. I don't think that's an inappropriate thing to do at this time. I think it's a smart business thing to do, especially in light of a possibly uncertain job market.

Alison Monahan: Right. And I think it's particularly the case if your circumstances have changed since you filed your FAFSA, somebody in your family who's going to help pay for this has lost a job, you've lost a job and your savings are down, any of these things. Essentially law school is a business decision, and I think treating it like that is a smart move right now because like you said, the job market, which



we've got other podcasts on and we're continuing to talk about, is kind of in free fall right now. People don't really know what's going to happen, and if nothing else, we know that for the next year BigLaw hiring has been pushed off for a semester. I'm guessing that may continue for reasons we've talked about on a [different podcast](#) you can listen to. But there's just a lot of uncertainty, and if you thought you were going to get that job in your second summer that's paying you a lot of money and now that job is more uncertain, then of course it's a financial decision that starts to be a little more questionable. So, I think there's no harm in pushing schools a little bit on this and saying, "Look, I want to do this, but you've got to make this make sense for me."

Lee Burgess: Yeah. I mean, this is their problem too.

Alison Monahan: Right. I mean, they want to have students.

Lee Burgess: They want to have students. They want to keep their faculty employed. The faculty want to keep their jobs. They want to keep this machine going, so they're going to have to pivot and like any good kind of business make smart decisions. And you should make sure that this is the best decision for you. We always talk about worrying about taking on huge amounts of debt. With an uncertain economy and an uncertain job market, I think that load is something that everybody really needs to be thoughtful about. We don't know what's coming down the pipeline. We don't know how long it's going to take to recover. I have the luck of always graduating from school during an economic crash. I graduated from college in 2001, graduated from law school in 2008. It's not fun. So, jobs disappear, money dries up. You find yourself doing all sorts of jobs that you hadn't planned on doing. There are economic realities to that, and if you haven't lived through one of those job markets, talk to some people who did, because it's a different world than maybe it felt like, I don't know, four weeks ago. How long have we been at this now? I don't know, it feels like a year.

Alison Monahan: I don't know. Certainly we could say January, I think, when we were all celebrating the new decade. It was 2020 and it was a new decade and it was going to be so great and we were all making our freaking vision boards. My vision board now has big Xs across everything on it. Not I'm good about that, but this was not on the vision...

Lee Burgess: Yeah. I was talking to my therapist about how this was going to be the year for all these goals.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, I know. And now we're just like, "Wow, no more vision board. Alright, next."



- Lee Burgess: I know. I saw a great meme that was like, "I called my therapist and started screaming, 'You told me that I was overreacting by always planning for the worst-case scenario situation. Well, here we are!' And they're like, 'Good point, good point.'"
- Alison Monahan: Yeah, you're probably underreacting.
- Lee Burgess: I know.
- Alison Monahan: Yeah. I think one other point is if you do decide to do this, you need to do well. You need to make sure that you're in a position where you can set yourself up for success. I mean, there are going to be some jobs, they're just going to be harder to get.
- Lee Burgess: True.
- Alison Monahan: So you need to be the one who's in that position to get those jobs. That sounds harsh, but that's just, again, the financial reality. Not everyone is going to get that job.
- Lee Burgess: No, and depending on how recruiting and things like that shake out, and how long this distancing goes on, it's possible that how you look on paper is going to become more and more important because they may not be able to do as many in-person things. And so, that's another thing you want to think about. You don't really do well, but how can you set yourself up so your resume stands up? How are you going to be able to build relationships with the professors?
- Alison Monahan: Right.
- Lee Burgess: This is complicated, but it's going to be a different ball game and you need to make sure that the choices you're making are going to make you an attractive applicant in the way that they're going to be able to judge applicants.
- Alison Monahan: Right, which is really going to come down probably even more to your transcript, which then may or may not have grades on it. So these are all questions that you need to ask and really think about. I think people just really need to be realistic. I can see someone being in a scenario where they're like, "Well, things are not looking great for my job, I'm not happy", blah, blah, blah, "Maybe this is my big chance. I should just go grab that gold ring and everything will be fine." And I just think you can't do that right now. You really need to think through, "What kind of debt am I taking on? What am I signing up for? What am I really signing up for in terms of classes and grades and my school's positioning?" and all this stuff. You want to make sure that when this does all settle, you end up looking back and saying, "Yeah, that was a solid decision. I



really had thought about that", not just, "Oh, I just took this because it seemed like maybe it would be better." I don't think you can do that right now.

Lee Burgess: The one other thing I think is important to note is that everyone's making the best decisions they can with the information they have in the moment. So, as perfectionists, which a lot of potential law students are, I do think that there's this pressure of, what is the perfect decision? What's the absolute right decision? And I think all you can do is collect information, make a decision that's the best decision you can make with the information that you have, and then execute your plan, because you might have new information two months from now and decisions are already made. There's just no way to know.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, I think part of what you're trying to do here is decrease the uncertainty. So if you make this huge list of questions, many of which we probably brought up, and I'm sure you can think of other questions you would have, and then really start going down that list of, "Okay, can I get information to actually answer some of these questions?" Even if that answer maybe would change, but is there an answer right now? And then at some point you have to make your decision and start executing on it and hope for the best. There's no going backwards in time, unfortunately. If there was, we might be doing some things differently as a world. But we can't go backwards to January and take everything more seriously.

Lee Burgess: Exactly. So, I know that we're running out of time, but I think that my final thought on this is, it's time to start making lists of questions, start reaching out to schools, start reaching out to schools that you have on a wait list, start talking to your family, start being very practical and not optimistic. You can run a few different scenarios. I had a friend who was telling me how her business set up their disaster response, and they kind of do it in a staged approach like a lot of the governments did. But I think it's not a bad way to think about it. It's like, if the world stays as is, this is kind of my decision point. but if things get weirder, then my decisions might change. Or if things get even weirder, then my decisions might change. So it's like, if my job is stable, this is where we are right now. I think maybe I shouldn't go back to school if that happens. But then maybe this next step is, I lose my job, such and such other things happen – now I know what decision to make. So you can almost create these different scenarios for yourself and give you ways you can make decisions based on the state of the world as we think it might be coming down the pipes. So, that's another way to think about this, is if you feel like you can't make all your decisions now, just collect as much information you can, give yourself some framework for making this decision so when the deadlines do come, you have the ability to quickly make decisions.

Alison Monahan: Right. Frankly, even if you pay that deposit and you decide you're going, you can just back out of that.



Lee Burgess: Yeah.

Alison Monahan: I mean, you will lose the deposit probably.

Lee Burgess: Don't throw good money after bad money.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, that sunk cost amount versus your entire future. Lose the deposit if you need to.

Lee Burgess: Yeah, because everybody's losing something. I think that kind of stuff, you try not to lose it, but who isn't losing money or who isn't losing something? These are just tumultuous times. That deposit may equal the plane flights that everybody's cancelled this summer or whatever it might be. It's just everybody's losing something. I wouldn't let a deposit stand in the way and cause you to incur a bunch more debt.

Alison Monahan: Right. If you make a deposit, say, in June and everything seems like it's going to move forward, and then by August it's obvious that this is not going to move forward in the way that you expected, I think you pull out at that point.

Lee Burgess: Yeah.

Alison Monahan: Or you defer, or you talk to them or whatever. But you don't need to feel like just because you decided to do this in June, that you have to do this in the fall.

Lee Burgess: Yeah. That being said, if you want to go forward and do it and you feel that the school is handling the situation in a good way, and that you're in a position in life where it makes sense – go for it. Just know what you're getting into. That's all you need to know; just be educated.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, absolutely. I mean, as well as you can. You probably want to look at our [Start Law School Right program](#).

Lee Burgess: That's true. That's true.

Alison Monahan: It's totally virtual.

Lee Burgess: Totally virtual, pandemic-prepared.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, pandemic-ready. We got you covered.

Lee Burgess: Yeah.

Alison Monahan: Yeah.



Lee Burgess:            Alright.

Alison Monahan:        Alright. Well.

Lee Burgess:            I think we should be out of time at that point.

Alison Monahan:        Yeah, I think we were getting a little punchy.

Lee Burgess:        Yeah.

Alison Monahan:        Yes. If you enjoyed this episode of the Law School Toolbox podcast, please take a second to leave a review and rating on your favorite listening app. We would really appreciate it. And be sure to subscribe so you don't miss anything. If you have any questions or comments, please don't hesitate to reach out to Lee or Alison at [lee@lawschooltoolbox.com](mailto:lee@lawschooltoolbox.com) or [alison@lawschooltoolbox.com](mailto:alison@lawschooltoolbox.com). Or you can always contact us via our website [contact form](https://www.lawschooltoolbox.com/contact) at LawSchoolToolbox.com. Thanks for listening, we'll talk soon, and good luck making your decisions!

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