Alison Monahan: Welcome back to the Law School Toolbox podcast. Today we're excited to have admissions consultant Anna Ivey here with us to talk about the law school admissions timeline. Your Law School Toolbox hosts are Alison Monahan, and typically, I'm with Lee Burgess. We're here to demystify the law school and early legal career experience, so that you'll be the best law student and lawyer you can be. Together, we're the co-creators of the Law School Toolbox, the Bar Exam Toolbox, and the career-related website CareerDicta. I also run The Girl's Guide to Law School. If you enjoy the show, please leave a review or rating on your favorite listening app. And if you have any questions, don't hesitate to reach out to us. You can always reach us via the contact form on LawSchoolToolBox.com, and we would love to hear from you. With that, let's get started.

Welcome back to the Law School Toolbox podcast. Today, we're excited to have admissions consultant Anna Ivey here with us to talk about the law school admissions timeline. Welcome, Anna.

Anna Ivey: Hi, Alison.

Alison Monahan: It is my pleasure to have you back again with us. Always a pleasure. To start us off, can you just give our listeners a little bit of information about your background, so they have some context here?

Anna Ivey: Yeah. Like many of your listeners, I was in your shoes one day. I myself applied to law school, went to law school, practiced law, and then went back to my law school at the University of Chicago and became Dean of Admissions there. Since then, I've bounced around a little bit. I also worked in development at Stanford. But my longest job so far has been working as an admissions consultant – so, working with law school applicants as they are going through that pre-law process, and then trying to make some smart decisions while they're applying.

Alison Monahan: Awesome. And if people want to learn more about what you do or reach out, how can they do that?

Anna Ivey: Just come to my website, Annalvey.com; or come find me on LinkedIn.

Alison Monahan: Awesome. Well, when we were talking about ideas for this podcast, you brought up that you thought we should talk about the law school admissions timeline. So, why do you think we should talk about that?

Anna Ivey: It sounds like the most boring topic ever. I wish I could make it sound more exciting and like bait-y. But I do think it is such an important thing to get right

for success in this process. And what we always tell people when they first contact us, if there's one piece of advice we can give, we'll say, "Start earlier than you thought you would." Because the timing of the whole process really catches people off guard for a number of reasons. And so, the more lead time you give yourself and the more you educate yourself about the sequence of things and what should be happening when, the less stressful it's going to be for you, and hopefully a better the outcome as well.

Alison Monahan: That makes sense. So if people aren't aware, they're just sort of thinking about maybe applying, that type of thing, what is the ideal admissions timeline? And where do you see people going wrong with this?

Anna Ivey: Yeah. I'll start with the most important thing first. I think the sweet spot for submitting your applications is sort of around September, October, November. That is still plenty early in the application cycle, and it preserves your opportunities for doing any kind of binding early application that you might want to do. So that's really the sweet spot. So if you reverse engineer from there, that means you have to have an LSAT score that you want to apply with by that point. And that's where things get into a little bit of a pickle for some people. We can take a deeper dive into that aspect of things, but if that's what you're aiming for, you need to reverse engineer the process from that submission window.

Alison Monahan: Okay. And you mentioned early something. Tell me more about what are the options if people do want to apply early? What options are there?

Anna Ivey: Yeah, some applicants might remember from when they applied to college this concept of binding early admissions or binding early application. Not all colleges use it, and not all law schools use it. So, if you're not familiar with it already, it basically means that you're submitting an application and you are making a commitment that if you are lucky enough to receive an offer, you will accept it and you will withdraw all your other applications. Typically those early binding application deadlines are around November, so that's the "early" part of the definition. Some schools are now also offering second early rounds. They're not really early; they're just binding. And those are typically the same deadline as regular decisions. So, the nomenclature gets a little bit confusing, unnecessarily so in my opinion, but the first round, and for some schools the only round of those binding early decisions applications are typically in November.

Alison Monahan: Okay. And if I do that, I'm assuming that I have to go ahead and say I'm going to pay for this too. My decision is not going to be contingent on financial aid. Is that right?

Anna Ivey: Yes. That is what you are signaling as a practical matter. That's not to say they won't discount the tuition for you. And let me back up a little bit. When schools give scholarships, it's such a nice word. It gives us all the feels because it sounds so flattering to get a scholarship. Internally, at the university side – this is true for undergrad or any other program too – they don't call them scholarships internally. They're tuition discounts. That's all that is. It's a coupon, basically. Think of it as a coupon, but you can call it a scholarship on your resume, certainly. But when a school offers you a scholarship at the law school level, with very few exceptions, they are using that money as a recruiting tool, to try to recruit you from some other range of schools that they think they're going to lose you to. So, you're sort of a big fish for them. If you are pre-committing to accepting, then you're really giving up some leverage, as far as finding out what other coupons, a.k.a. scholarships, you might get from other schools, and you're also giving up any kind of opportunity to negotiate based on what those other offers are. So for some people, that's fine for them. For other people, it might factor into whether they do binding or not and what the rest of their list looks like.

Alison Monahan: Right. Yeah, I think we all probably saw those articles recently about how undergrad is at least $100, 000 per year. I would imagine law schools, some of them have to be close to that, if not over at this point.

Anna Ivey: Yeah. And what's really interesting – and this is not specific to law schools – is that the super hard, most prestigious law schools are not more expensive than some of the schools way on the other end. You end up paying the same or borrowing the same. Now, that being said, if you are a catch for one of those schools, whatever that may be, whatever range that puts you in – that is where you're more likely to get a discount. So, you might decide that certain safer options are worth it to you if you're not paying full fare. You might decide, "I'm not going to pay list price for that school, but if they throw me a nice tuition discount, then yeah, I'll consider them." But for any safer school that you're thinking about putting on your list, I want you to be brutally honest with yourself – not anyone else, with yourself – if that were the only school you got into, would you actually go? And if the answer is "Hell no", don't bother. Just don't bother. If the answer is "It depends" – it might depend on something like price point – okay, that's fair. But if the answer is, "No, that is beneath me, I can't see myself doing that, that doesn't fit into my goals" – then don't even bother, honestly, because it's so easy to add a school to your list. It is frictionless. And then, okay, you pay 70 bucks or whatever to apply. That's not the hard part, right? I think sometimes when people are putting their lists together, they're maybe not as thoughtful about, "Would I actually accept an

offer from that school?" So, I'd rather you think about that at the front end than at the back end, where maybe it is your only option and you're feeling reservations about it, but you end up enrolling, you're in orientation, you have a meltdown because you just don't want to be there. Once you've enrolled, there's sort of an official status to that, meaning even if you drop out and decide, "I made a mistake, I want a do-over" – if you then re-apply and start the whole process all over again, you now have to disclose that you attended law school previously, and then you have to write a whole little thing about what happened. So, no, I'd rather you just have that conversation with yourself way at the start, and not find yourself in that situation.

Alison Monahan: I agree 100%. And I think another piece of that that comes up with some people is they say, "Well, I'm going to start here, but I know I'm going to transfer." And it's like, well, if you wouldn't be happy graduating from the school you're starting at, do not start at that school.

Anna Ivey: 100%, it is too risky. You might end up stuck there. I mean, you could leave at any time; no one's forcing you to stay, right? But if you are going to get that JD, you might end up graduating from the school you started at. There's magical thinking about transfers, just as there is often magical thinking when people are initially applying. I've heard very smart, capable people say to me, "I thought it would be easy to transfer to a top five school." And I'm thinking, "Okay, but if that were true, wouldn't everybody do it?" And guess what? Not everyone does. It's not a backup plan, I would say, and it's not some sort of side door to get into some other law school that you didn't get into the first time around. You have to be really thoughtful about that risk that you're taking, that you might end up staying there. You might have that school on your resume and that's where you went to law school. And if that's not okay with you, I would say don't even show up for orientation and make it official that you're enrolled, because that then complicates things if you do a do-over.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, I completely agree with you on all of that. Let's go back to our timeline. Why do you think people are waiting too late to apply in a lot of cases?

Anna Ivey: I blame the LSAT. I blame the LSAT for so many things, but messing with people's heads when it comes to timeline. I've used the phrase "magical thinking" before. I use it about 20 times a day, because there's an assumption that a lot of people make that, "Okay, a test prep course hypothetically lasts two months, so I need to budget two months to really wrap my arm around this thing and master it and optimize my performance on this test." And the other magical thinking continued is, "And I only need to take it once and I will love my score, and it's done and dusted." And that is the case for just vanishingly few

people. So, into your timeline, you should be baking in the assumption that you might want to take it again. So, assume maybe you'll take it twice, which means that second score needs to be available in time for that sweet spot of submitting your applications in October, November, which means, if you look at the LSAT calendar, you need to get cracking right now.

Alison Monahan: Fair enough.

Anna Ivey: Time's already been a wasting, to be in fighting shape for this fall. So, if you're watching this more or less in real time, get on it. It is definitely not too early to start getting reduction around the LSAT. And for plenty of people, they are not even happy with their second score, and then that makes for some big decisions that they need to make. Are they going to move forward in the given cycle with a score that they don't love, or scores plural, that they don't love? How optimistic, how realistic are they feeling about squeezing more points out of that test? Is it worth deferring their application for a whole year? Those are hard decisions, and this year is especially wonky because the test is changing. Applicants who are watching this and who are taking the test this year probably already know this, but the games section is going away. For some people they're weeping bitter tears because that section really plays to their strengths. They think it's fun and whatever. I'm not one of those people.

Alison Monahan: I didn't hate that part, but I don't think too many people are going to be that sad to see it go.

Anna Ivey: Ridiculous. Anyway, it's a hoop you have to jump through. That section is going away. There are other people for whom that is skies parting, angels singing, this is a wonderful development. But it makes things a little bit tricky, depending on which camp you fall in. And it makes things especially tricky if you're thinking, "Okay, I'll take the test now for the first time, and then maybe in the fall for a second time when the sections are changing." That adds a whole extra layer of complication to the analysis. If you're kind of on the fence and kicking that can down the road about when to start thinking about the LSAT, go do it as soon as this podcast is done. Get on it.

Alison Monahan: Yeah. Somebody we know who tutors LSAT said that they've actually had interesting results with people who are preparing for much longer than he thought 10 years ago would be normal. And that they have a lot of people preparing really for over a year and seeing very drastic score increases that they were not able to see in two to four months.

Anna Ivey: Yeah. Some people are going to need six months, some people are going to want 12 months. And the other depressing news for applicants is that for some of those tippy, tippy top schools, the really hardest ones to get into, their median and quartile LSAT scores have just been going up, up, up, up. So, among top five-ish schools, it's not unusual to see a median LSAT score of like 174.

Alison Monahan: Wow. That's very high.

Anna Ivey: That did not used to be the case. So, all of the applicants out there – oh my gosh. I don't know what explains this. Are you prepping better, are you prepping differently than cohorts in the past? But those numbers have been creeping up, so it's not to be underestimated. And I will say the LSAT breaks so many hearts. I think it's the hardest standardized test out there – harder than the GMAT, certainly it's harder than the GRE.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, for sure. That's not even close.

Anna Ivey: What makes it so hard in my opinion is it measures such a narrow bandwidth of skills, whereas those other standardized tests are broader, and so you can sort of diversify a little bit more, in terms of different sections, maybe playing to your strengths. The LSAT skill range is so narrow, and if that's not your sweet spot... You might be a very smart person, you might be super accomplished academically – no question about that – and you have trouble sticking that landing on the LSAT. Happens all the time.

Alison Monahan: Yeah. Well, on the flip side, some people like me are just really good at that particular type of standardized tests, but that's definitely a rare skill set.

Anna Ivey: Yeah. So, whenever a test is in flux... And the SAT is way more in flux than the LSAT. But this is the year for all kinds of exciting things with the LSAT, so it makes planning a little bit harder.

Alison Monahan: And then for people starting law school, the bar is also changing in a few years, so yay for that! Yeah, so the very short answer is the UBE is changing the Uniform Bar Exam starting in July 2026 and they're phasing out the current test by July 2028. They don't currently actually really have even a field tested version, so it is a very interesting time.

Anna Ivey: A big question mark. Okay.

Alison Monahan: People who've already started law school, and definitely people coming in this fall are probably going to be taking a new exam, or might be taking a new exam, depending on the state.

Anna Ivey: And how do you prep for that?

Alison Monahan: Great question. I would not be wanting to run the bar program at any law school right now, because we don't really know the answer to that.

Anna Ivey: Good times. Good times. Well, I think that's a little dose of reality to send to law school applicants. If you think the LSAT is hard...

Alison Monahan: Wait till... Well, they're not going to have the MBE anymore, really. It's going to be kind of worked in. Kind of there, not really. I don't know, we'll see.

Anna Ivey: Just wait until the bar exam. Or even just wait until law school. I had a six-hour Property Law exam. I mean, the LSAT is kindergarten compared to what you're about to embark on.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, but I do agree with you. It is a very specific test, and I do think people need to allow for that. And just because you've done pretty well in other standardized tests does not mean you're just going to roll up and get a 175 on the LSAT.

Anna Ivey: Yeah, so that's LSAT. That's a big one that really messes with people's timelines. I would say some other things are an assumption that you can work on different components sequentially, when in fact you need to be working on them in parallel. One example is you think, "Oh, I'll talk to my recommenders and they can be working on their recommendation letters while I'm working on my essay." And the very first recommender you talk to says, "Oh yeah, I'd be happy to write a letter. Please send me your personal statement."

Alison Monahan: Exactly. I think they all ask for that, and understandably so.

Anna Ivey: It's not really a process you want to compress like that. So, really the takeaway from all of this is, lead time is your friend. Don't let it go to waste, take advantage of it.

Alison Monahan: So, for something like recommendations, when do you think people need to start thinking about that? And also, does that vary for people who are in school and they can just drop by office hours, versus people who maybe have been out for a while and are going to have to go back and see if people remember them?

Anna Ivey: Yeah. I think if you're still in school, it's not as difficult a situation. Ideally you're asking someone who knows your academic work. A big misconception is that they really need to know you on some personal level, and that's really not the case at all. What recommendations get used for on the admissions side for law school is, how do you do as a student in a demanding academic environment? That's what they want to know. That's what they want to know from someone who has a first-hand opinion on this. So, recommenders don't have to know how you spend your time outside of class, they don't have to offer a character reference – that's not what this is about. There are a lot of odd notions about what these letters are supposed to do. In theory, they don't even need your personal statement. Really, it should have no bearing on their opinion on you, about you, as a student in their own demanding academic environment. It's really backwards looking, right? They are not expected to have an opinion on what kind of law student you'll be or what kind of lawyer you'll be. I've seen recommendation letters where they say, "Oh, I know that this person will end up on your Law Review." And I'm like, "Really?"

Alison Monahan: How would they know that?

Anna Ivey: Right. So, there's a lot of wagamaga stuff in recommendations, because they're trying to do something that they're actually not being asked to do. So, if you're still in school, you should have options, presumably. And don't worry about title. They'd rather see a recommendation from a TA who graded all your essays and your tests and ran the discussion sections, than the professor who gave the lectures and wouldn't recognize you on the street. Don't worry about the professor; get it from the TA. If you're already out of college and sometimes it's hard to go find people, sometimes it's hard to get them to remember who you are if enough time has passed – well, admissions officers are understanding of that reality, and so maybe then you get professional recommendations. But if you have the option, I would say, do try to get academic ones if you can, if they're meaningful. If they're not going to be meaningful, because these people don't remember you, it just doesn't add any value. Just let that go.

Alison Monahan: Yeah. I think it might be the case where you have to have a phone call or a coffee date or something, if it's been 10 years since you graduated, and then they might be like, "Oh, right, of course." Otherwise it's like, "This person got an A minus in my class."

Anna Ivey: I think 10 years is probably ambitious, to get an academic recommendation 10 years later. But you raised an interesting point. If you have already graduated, go get those letters now. You don't benefit from procrastinating on that and

letting more time go by. You can park those suckers at LSAC, and I think they sit there for however long your LSAC account is paid up for. So, I'm not worried if you end up using it the following cycle instead of the current one. That's not a biggie.

Alison Monahan: Oh, that's interesting. So, imagine if you're graduating, maybe you're thinking about possibly going to law school, maybe not. You think it would be appropriate to basically go to your people that you would like to be your recommenders and just tell them that and ask them to write the letter then.

Anna Ivey: Yeah. And then just have them parked at LSAC. And what's wonderful about... I don't often say nice things about LSAC, but one of the good things about LSAC, because this wasn't always the case, is you can just park them at LSAC in your account, and the recommenders never have to know if you actually used their letter or not.

Alison Monahan: Oh, interesting.

Anna Ivey: Used to be – this is already a long time ago – it used to be that as soon as their letter got uploaded, it would automatically go to your law schools, like you had no choice. You didn't even have a choice in terms of the timing, like if you wanted certain letters to go before others. Now they just get uploaded and then you get to decide which ones you actually want to use, which ones you send where. If you never use a letter, the recommender never has to know, which is nice. Makes the whole process a bit more diplomatic for you as the applicant, because one of the other weirdnesses is you ask someone, they say "yes", and then for one reason or another you start getting the spidey sense like, "Oh, it's not going to be a great letter, there's something off here." You start having reservations. Well, under the old system, what are you going to do?

Alison Monahan: Too bad.

Anna Ivey: Yeah, or you have to go back to the person and say, "Please don't send it." That's really awkward. So now you just have total freedom. If they get sent to LSAC, you never want to use that letter, no one's the wiser.

Alison Monahan: That's great. You can kind of hedge your bets and say, "Well, if I had to get to do these three, I'd do these three. But maybe in the next year or two, I'm going to grad school. Maybe I'll get a better recommender. But let's just have that in my pocket."

Anna Ivey: And also on the insurance front, I would say, always ask for N plus one. So, for a vast majority of law schools, you only need two letters, so that means ask for three, because it is not unusual at all for some recommender to sound totally enthusiastic, they sound like they're totally game, they've agreed to do it – and then nothing. They're not returning your emails, they're not returning your phone calls, you have no idea what happened with this person, and the letter just doesn't materialize. You don't want that to hold up your entire application from becoming complete on the law school side. So, always ask for one extra. And maybe you end up using them all, maybe you only end up using a subset of them, but you have that insurance.

Alison Monahan: Oh, that is great. And what about essays? I mean, when can people kind of get access to what the questions are? Do these change? Are they always the same? When can I start working on those if I'm thinking about applying?

Anna Ivey: The applications themselves typically don't open up until September at the earliest at the start of the given cycle. But the prompts don't change in substance very much from year to year. The labels changed last year, I think as a result of the Supreme Court decision on affirmative action. I think some law schools totally overreacted. They just stripped their essay prompts of the word "diversity". And I'm like, "It's not illegal to use the word."

Alison Monahan: We could probably do a whole podcast on the implications of that one.

Anna Ivey: If you're a law school, you should know that you're still allowed to use the word. But anyway, there was a little bit of futzing around with the wrapper that went around the essay prompts. But fundamentally, they're still in the same ballpark and that doesn't really change from year to year. What you can do before the applications open up is you can start drafting sort of a little portfolio of essays that you'll be able to mix and match for any law school that you end up applying to when those applications open up. So, you do not have to wait until September to start writing. You don't have to wait for those applications to open up to plan ahead and get some writing done.

Alison Monahan: Right. I would imagine anywhere you're applying basically wants you to be able to answer, "Why do you want to go to law school? Why do you want to go to this law school? What do you think you might want to do? Give us some evidence."

Anna Ivey: Yale doesn't. No, Stanford doesn't. It really depends. Some are much more "choose your own adventure", write about anything you want, doesn't have to relate to law or law school in any way. Most law schools do invite that, either in

the main essay or in the optional essay, but not all law schools do. So, you have some flexibility there, but I would say have that as one of your templates ready to go. You'll need it at least for some of the law schools on your list, even if not all of them.

Alison Monahan: In addition, you probably should be able to answer those questions for yourself.

Anna Ivey: Alison, you raise a really good point, because over the years, more and more law schools have started doing interviews. That's another big change over the years. Most of them are by invitation only, so you apply and then you find out whether you get invited for an interview or not. Not all law schools do it that way, but some do. Not all law schools offer interviews, but a lot of them do. And even if the essay prompt didn't ask in any way, shape or form "Why law? Why law school?", you can believe it'll come up in the interview. So, you need to have a coherent story to tell about yourself – why you are knocking on their door saying, "Let me give you all this money. Let me spend all this money and time and opportunity costs, and blood, sweat and tears, and heartburn, to come spend three years with you." What's your story? Why?

Alison Monahan: Why does this even make sense? Alright. Well, sometimes people apply late, or maybe they didn't apply late, but they just don't get the results that they want, but they still have some options. What are your thoughts around, "Should I take the bird in the hand and just get started with this? Should I wait? Should I re-apply maybe on a more ideal timeframe?" What do you think?

Anna Ivey: The official party line that law schools will give you is, "Yeah, you can re-apply, no problem", which makes it sound like you just get a fresh start. That's not actually true in practice, not least because if it's a place you applied to before – maybe you did, maybe you didn't – but if you already applied there before, that old application doesn't go away. It's there, it's in their records. So, you can't totally reinvent yourself in a re-application. I also think there's a psychological component, because at the end of the day there are still people making admissions decisions, right? It's not a bot for now. It is not a bot. If it were just a weighted algorithm – GPA, LSAT, whatever – you wouldn't need to have people involved at all making admissions decisions, right? We even have bots reading your essays – probably poorly. But as long as there are people still on the other end evaluating your application, I do think there's a psychological component of, "Well, you applied before and we took a pass. Why should we let you in now?" So, you're coming in with a presumption against you, and it's a presumption that might be overcome, and sometimes it is overcome. But gosh, getting into law school is hard enough without doing it with a preexisting presumption against you. So, especially if you're late in the cycle, you haven't

gotten your ducks in a row, I would say sit this one out. Do it when you're really in top shape. Or you're already putting yourself behind the eight ball, and why? Why?

Alison Monahan: No, that makes a lot of sense. People might be thinking, "Oh well, and I'll take the LSAT later and get a better score." It's like, you should probably do that before you apply.

Anna Ivey: Right. And again, that's where I think it's very tempting just to feel like, "Oh, I'll just take the LSAT or I'll just apply really late in the cycle, see what happens."

Alison Monahan: Right. "Just give it a shot."

Anna Ivey: Sometimes people are getting this advice from other people in their lives. And let me just state categorically, it's bad advice. Don't do that.

Alison Monahan: I just think that's true in life in general. I think of so many examples – the same thing with the bar. People are like, "I'll just sit for it for practice." That's not a good idea.

Anna Ivey: You have a little bit more flexibility now than you used to with LSAT scores and just taking it for giggles, because now you're allowed to see your score before making the cancellation decision. Now, it's a money grab – LSAC will charge you for that privilege. Fine, I think it's worth it.

Alison Monahan: I did that with the GRE. I did an early computerized version and I thought I'd done really poorly because they keep giving you harder and harder questions, but then they give you the score and I was like, "Oh, that's fine. I'm good."

Anna Ivey: I think eventually the LSAT will become adaptive too. So many other tests are. And the other thing that makes re-applying hard is, you have to submit new written work. And if you did a great job on that the first time, you don't get to just resubmit what you wrote before – at least for the personal statement, I wouldn't recommend that. You already gave it your best shot. What are you going to do the second time around? You're not just going to use a thesaurus and substitute all the words for synonyms and submit. What are you going to do?

Alison Monahan: Yeah. I can see maybe if somebody actually had a relevant job they could talk about now – they were doing some internship or something.

Anna Ivey: Or you can use the new personal statement as sort of an update. Can you squeeze two pages out of that? Maybe. Bottom line is, it's just far from ideal.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, no, I agree.

Anna Ivey: I'm brutally honest with re-applicants. In my experience, which is not a scientifically rigorous data set, obviously – this is very much anecdata – but from what I've seen over the years, law schools are not terribly forgiving to re-applicants. So, I'd rather you do it once, do it right.

Alison Monahan: So, given that, before we wrap up, how late do you think is too late to even really consider applying?

Anna Ivey: Okay, with the big caveat that this is not a hard and fast rule, this is a guideline – if you're still applying in the same calendar year, I'm okay. If the sweet spot is September, October, November – fine. Life gets in the way, December is your wiggle room. Once we're in the new calendar year, I get a little squirrely and I'm starting to think maybe you should be nice and early the coming fall.

Alison Monahan: Right. And to be clear, even in December, you need to have a very solid LSAT that you're happy with at that point.

Anna Ivey: Well, that's this goofiness called "rolling admission" that law schools do and cling to. If there's one thing I could change about the process to eliminate stress for applicants, it would be rolling decision. It's just a garbage practice, but it's been around forever and ever. And it may yet still be here for a while. Because as soon as those applications open up in September, in theory, people are submitting applications every day. In theory, admissions decisions are also getting made on a rolling basis. In practice, law schools really stretch out their internal timeline. And this is the part that they don't really tell you, it's nowhere on the admissions website. Just because you submit your application super early, as you should – get your foot in that door, get into their queue, be one of the earlier people to make an impression on them in the current cycle – you might still be sitting here in April, May, June, July of the following year, waiting for final decision. That is very normal. You're most likely to hear from your safer options first, because they're no dummies. If you're a catch for them, they're going to try to snap you up. But target schools, let alone reach schools – they're going to keep you in a limbo state, some of them for an unconscionably long time. And for a lot of people, if you still haven't heard after their deposit deadline, which is typically April-May, which is a lot of people they keep in limbo, probably it's going to be a soft "no". They're just kicking that can down the road, they're delaying the bad news. They're basically over-ensuring for an

enrollment risk. They keep very, very deep waitlists. But as an applicant, if these are schools you still care about, you still absolutely have to stay in active applicant mode and stay on their radar screen all throughout the spring and summer for the schools you care about. There are other schools you might decide, "You know what? You're stringing me along like a bad ex. We're done. Stop sending me DMs. We're done." That's fine, totally fine. But the ones that you really, really care about, you need to be proactive with them. You might get that call while you're sitting in orientation somewhere.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, that happened to one of my supposed to be roommates. She just never showed up, and apparently we heard went to Harvard. Yeah, I think we did. Didn't we do a whole podcast on the waitlist that we can link to? I'm pretty sure we did.

Anna Ivey: We've had so many awesome conversations in the past and some of the stuff really is evergreen, but things do kind of morph over time. And this is kind of an interesting period of morphing, I think, for admissions. So, it's good to do an update.

Alison Monahan: Definitely. Alright, well, we are actually over time, but any final thoughts you would like to share at this point?

Anna Ivey: I would say, since we're on the topic of timeline, you've already heard to get cracking if you want to be competitive this fall. I would also say, especially around the LSAT – think back to the time you took the SAT or the ACT. Maybe you didn't; maybe you were part of the COVID cohort when you didn't take tests, and so that's actually harder for you. If this is your first big standardized test that you've ever taken – oh, that's really rough. You probably need an even longer timeline. If you are of a generation or a cohort where you did take the ACT or SAT when you were applying to college, I would treat the LSAT the same way, which is, "I'm very, very busy" – like you were in high school – "and I have to take this test, and I have to take it by a certain time in order to submit my applications in the fall. And I'm just going to make it work. And whatever that score is, it's going to be what it is." With law school, because you have much more flexibility with when you actually go to law school, there's a much greater temptation to just keep procrastinating: "Oh, I'm not ready yet. I'm not ready yet." Some people will do this for years, waiting for some magical perfect time to take the LSAT. There will never be a perfect time, ever. Ever. So, I would recommend a mindset shift. Treat this the way you would the SAT – you just have to get it done by a certain date, and make your peace with that. Otherwise this could consume your life for a stupid amount of time, when you might just have some harder decisions to make about what makes sense for you.

Alison Monahan: Yeah. I mean, at some point you just have to go take the test and see how it goes and hope for the best.

Anna Ivey: Yeah.

Alison Monahan: Alright. Well, remind us again how people can find out about you.

Anna Ivey: Sure: www.AnnaIvey.com.

Alison Monahan: Perfect. Well, thank you so much for joining us. It's been a real pleasure.

Anna Ivey: Great talking to you, Alison, as always.

Alison Monahan: My pleasure. Well, everyone, thanks for watching, and check out LawSchoolToolbox.com and find all of Anna's old podcast episodes as well.

Anna Ivey: I think some of them are on my YouTube channel too, if you want to come there. Alison and I have been chatting for years, for years.

Alison Monahan: Yeah. We'll link to all of that. Alright, well, thanks everybody. 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 or alison@lawschooltoolbox.com. Or you can always contact us via our website contact form at LawSchoolToolBox.com. Thanks for listening, and we'll talk soon!

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YouTube: Anna Ivey
Law School Admission Council
Podcast Episode 256: Tips for Applying to Law School (w/Anna Ivey)
Podcast Episode 335: Things to Consider If You're on a Law School Waitlist (w/Anna Ivey)
Podcast Episode 338: Talking About Law School Admissions (w/Sydney Montgomery)
Podcast Episode 376: Changes to the Law School Admission Process (w/Steve Schwartz)

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