

May 11, 2012

The story behind the numbers: February 2012 bar results released

The February 2012 bar scores have been released, and while Denver Law's 76% first time pass rate may appear unimpressive at first glance, the overall trend is excellent.

Trends in bar passage are best measured by (1) looking at the two bar exams following a class's graduation (in this case July 2011 and February 2012, the exams taken by most members of the Class of 2011), and (2) comparing our graduates' performance on those two exams with the statewide average pass rate. Looking at this rate, we see two positive trends emerging.

Bar Dates	DU Pass Rate	State Pass Rate	Difference
July 05/Feb 06	69.4%	76.4%	-6.9%
July 06/Feb 07	67.6%	75.0%	-7.4%
July 07/Feb 08	78.3%	79.0%	-0.8%
July 08/Feb 09	82.3%	83.5%	-1.2%
July 09/Feb 10	88.3%	87.7%	0.6%
July 10/Feb 11	86.8%	85.6%	1.2%
July 11/Feb 12	87.7%	84.5%	3.2%

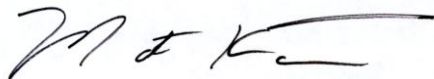
First, we have seen significant improvement in our overall pass rate. Since the July 2006/February 2007 bar season, our pass rate has increased from 67.6% to 87.7% – an improvement of more than 20%. And this year's pass rate of nearly 88% is very close to our record pass rate.

Second, and perhaps more importantly, is our performance relative to the state average. This comparison is the one that *US News* uses in its rankings, as it takes into account the level of difficulty of the exam. Our performance relative to the state average has improved dramatically over the last few years. In the July 2006/February 2007 bar season, our DU pass rate was 7.4% below the state average. Since the July 2009/February 2010 season, we have routinely exceeded the state average (a critical goal in our Strategic Plan). And this year, we exceeded the state average pass rate by a record 3.2%.

We will continue to work on improving our pass rates, particularly those on the February exams. But the overall bar pass trend at DU is very encouraging. We are on track.

Please join me in congratulating and welcoming the newest members of our profession.

Regards,



Martin J. Katz
Dean & Professor of Law