



**New York University**  
*A private university in the public service*

School of Law  
Office of the Vice Dean

## MEMORANDUM

To: All Continuing and Transfer Students

From: Barry Adler, Thomas Delaney, Michelle Kirkland, Liam Murphy

Re: Changes to the Registration System

Date: April 25, 2008

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This memorandum sets out important changes that will take place in our registration system over the next two years. Please carefully read and save this memo.

Before we begin: We would like to thank all those students who participated throughout this semester in discussions about the registration system. The feedback we received was extremely important as we worked towards some final decisions.

### **Highlights**

1. Registration for the coming 2008-2009 academic year will use the existing lottery system. The new bidding registration system will be introduced for 2009-2010.
2. The transition to a new paradigm of parity for all students (rather than priority for graduating students) will start with registration for 2008-2009.
  - In 2008-2009, we will offer some 15 more seminar and colloquium opportunities for Substantial Writing credit than in the current year. We will endeavor to maintain these numbers for the following two years.
  - For 2008-2009, we will reserve some spaces for 2Ls in all seminars.
  - For 2008-2009, we will discontinue the practice of closing to 2Ls during add-drop those seminars that fill with 3Ls and LLMs during the lottery period.
3. We announce in this document the major changes that will take place for both the 2008-2009 and the 2009-2010 registration periods so that students who will be 2Ls in 2008-2009 can plan their curriculum with full knowledge of the changes to come.

## **Year by Year Changes**

### **2008-2009**

1. No change to the registration mechanism. The existing lottery system will be used. All graduating students (3Ls, full-time LLMs, graduating part-time LLMs) will receive absolute priority in the lottery.
2. The number of seminar and colloquium Substantial Writing opportunities will increase substantially compared to 2007-2008; at present we estimate an additional 15 such opportunities.
3. We will reserve 5 spaces for 2Ls in each seminar.
4. We will discontinue the current practice of closing to 2Ls during add-drop those seminars that fill with LLMs and 3Ls during the lottery.
5. We will maintain the current rule limiting students to two seminars or colloquia per semester. Waivers of this rule may be sought by petition to the Vice Dean.

*Rationale:* Our aim for the coming year is to begin the gradual transition to parity for all students in the registration process. A major reason for this change is the need to make writing opportunities more readily available for 2Ls. In taking the first transition step now, for registration for 2008-2009, we substantially reduce the transition costs imposed on those who will be registering as 3Ls for 2009-2010.

***Registration Advice for 2008-2009 2Ls:*** When you enter lottery selections for 2008-2009, you should take into account that when you come to register for classes for 2009-2010 you will have limited priority over those moving into their second year.

## 2009-2010

1. The lottery system will be discontinued. The new Auction Based Registration Algorithm (“ABRA”) system will be introduced. The basic structure of this system is as follows:

- Students will be allotted bidding points and will bid for fall and spring classes simultaneously. There will be a separate allotment of bidding points for each semester.
  - ABRA will retain the current registration system’s alternative priority mechanism. Specifically, a student will be able to bid points conditionally on her failure to win another course, essentially replicating the “A, B, C” ranking of the current system.
- There will be three initial periods during which a student may submit bids, each such period (or “round”) ending in an automated auction.
  - Round 1 will last approximately 3 weeks.
  - Rounds 2 and 3 will last one week each.
- In each round, you may enter or change your bids at any time prior to the end of the round (and there is no benefit to bidding early).
- After an auction is run, students admitted to a class will be charged a “clearing price” in points equal to the highest bid from a student *not* admitted to the class at that auction.
  - If every student who bids for a class is admitted—i.e., if the class does not close—the clearing price for the round is 0.
  - Any points bid above the clearing price are refunded.
- Each subsequent round of bidding (including during the add-drop period) will produce its own clearing prices for each course and the clearing prices may change from round to round.
  - Once a seat in a course is won, the amount a student is charged for that seat does not change even if a seat in the course later clears at a different price.

(ABRA basic structure continued . . .)

- Adding and Dropping Courses: We will discontinue the practice of ad hoc add-drop, where students are forced to troll for open spots or arrange late-night trades with friends.
  - At any time after an auction is run, a student who has won a seat in a class may drop that class and receive a refund of all points paid for the seat.
  - Refunded points along with unused points can be applied to a subsequent round of bidding.
  - After Round 3 the add-drop period will begin with additional selection rounds.
  - Add-drop rounds will be widely spaced at first then become daily once classes begin until the end of drop-add.
  - Add-drop will *not* be instantaneous, so there will be *no time pressure* on bid adjustment prior to the end of a round.

*Rationale:* A bidding system permits students to express not only a preference for a class but the intensity of that preference. A multiple-round bidding system promotes a fair allocation of coveted classes, as a student unable to obtain a spot in a desired class in an early round will have more points to bid for classes that might open in a later round. Although, historically, only about 1/3 of classes close (and less than 20% of non-seminars), fair access matters.

2. Points. Graduating students—3Ls, full-time LLMS, and graduating part-time LLMS—will be allotted 1,400 points per semester. All other students will be allotted 1,000 points per semester. (For 2010-2011, the 3L/LLM allotment will be reduced to 1,200 points per semester; parity will be reached in 2011-2012.)
3. Required courses, including those that offer Substantial Writing Credit. To ensure that no student risks inability to register for a required course, under the new system first priority for any course will go to students for whom the course is required. A student who has not yet registered for required Substantial Writing will have priority for any (one) seminar or colloquium over other students. Some LLM programs require concentrations in subject areas rather than specific course requirements. There will be special carve-outs of seats for LLMS within these concentrations.
4. We will maintain the current rule limiting students to two seminars or colloquia per semester. Waivers of this rule may be sought by petition to the Vice Dean.
5. We will endeavor to maintain the same high number of seminar and colloquium opportunities for Substantial Writing credit established in 2008-2009.

6. No bidding points will be deducted for those admitted to a clinic, or who are taking some of their classes outside the law school.

7. As there will be a separate allotment of bidding points for each semester, students such as joint degree students who are present for only one semester will bid on an equal footing with all other students for classes in that semester.