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PANEL ORDERS CHANGES IN TREATMENT OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES WHO TAKE THE LAW SCHOOL ADMISSION TEST

Recommendations part of lawsuit filed by CA Department of Fair Employment and Housing

A Best Practices Panel Report issued a report this week calling for changes in the way the Law School Admissions Council (LSAC) treats requests by students with disabilities for accommodations on the Law School Admissions Test, the standardized examination used in the law school admissions process. The Panel's recommendations are part of a lawsuit filed by the DFEH after complaints were received by test takers.

The final report addresses ten areas where the Law School Admission Council must improve, including a requirement that LSAC increase and diversify the number and types of individuals who review requests for testing accommodations and that LSAC implement a timely appeals process for any denied requests.

The report also addresses the documentation requirements on test takers with disabilities by clarifying what documentation is sufficient.

"The expert panel's recommendations level the playing field for students with disabilities who for years had to endure a burdensome, expensive process to obtain the testing accommodations they had received for most of their academic careers," said Annmarie Billotti, acting director DFEH.

The Best Practices Panel Report was issued under the terms of a settlement reached and filed in federal court in San Francisco last May, to resolve DFEH's claims - that LSAC's policies and practices resulted in the unwarranted denial of valid requests for testing accommodations - the Parties agreed to the establishment of a Best Practices Panel composed of five experts.

The settlement also includes a payment totaling \$8.73 million, with \$6.73 million to be equally distributed nationwide to an estimated 6,300 individuals who applied for testing accommodations on the LSAT from January 1, 2009 to the date of the signing. In addition to making payments to eligible individuals, the settlement will reimburse DFEH for its attorney's fees and costs.

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