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BOOM YEAR: LAW SCHOOL APPLICATIONS JUMP 24 PERCENT, PART OF NATIONAL TREND AS STUDENTS SEEK JOB OPTIONS IN TIGHT MARKET

DAYTON, Ohio — Applications to the University of Dayton School of Law have jumped 24 percent, following another big rise in law school applications nationally.

Approximately 1,669 applicants are vying for between 180 and 190 seats in the first-year class, according to Janet Hein, assistant dean and director of admissions and financial aid for UD’s School of Law.

Interest remains strong in the school’s flagship program in law and technology, which has been ranked nationally and prepares lawyers for practice in intellectual property, patent and cyberspace law.

While a sluggish economy is part of the reason for the upswing in interest in law school, that’s not the motivation for Erik Blaine, who graduated from the University of Dayton earlier this month after majoring in psychology, criminal justice and pre-law.

“I’ve always found law fascinating,” said Blaine, a 22-year-old Cleveland native who will enter UD’s School of Law in August. “Last year, I interned in a law office, and it showed me more than I ever imagined about the law. I just fell in love with it.”

Although the economic downturn played no role in his decision to enroll in law school, he quipped, “I can put off reality for another three years.”

A law degree offers people numerous career options, according to Lisa Kloppenberg, dean of UD’s School of Law. “Law school classically is a revolving door. You come in and you go out prepared for five or six different careers. Our students go into law, business, writing. Nationwide, 20 percent of all law graduates go into non-traditional fields. Law school is a great option for someone undecided about a career.”

Nationally, more than 94,000 people have applied to law schools, a 10.4 percent increase over last year at this time, according to the Law School Admission Council, a nonprofit corporation made up of 201 law schools in the U.S. and Canada.

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For interviews, contact Janet Hein at (937) 229-3555, Lisa Kloppenberg at (937) 229-3795, Erik Blaine at (937) 293-9587 and the Law School Admission Council at (215) 968-1101.