

Windsor Law 2019 Law School Survey of Student Engagement (LSSSE)

Prepared by the Office of Institutional Analysis

Summary of Results

Administration:

In the Winter 2019 semester, 709 Windsor Law students were invited to take part in the LSSSE. At the survey closing, 533 students had participated with an overall response rate of 75% (margin of error is 2%, 19 times out of 20), the highest rate achieved since LSSSE was first administered on our campus. By year of study, 190 year one (1L), 183 year two (2L) and 160 year three (3L) students completed the survey; the respective response rates are 74%, 79% and 73%. The margin of error for each year is less than 4%.

The peer comparison group used in this report consists of five law schools: University of Detroit Mercy School of Law, University of Alberta Faculty of Law, University of Saskatchewan School of Law, Western Michigan University Law School and American University Washington College of Law.

Respondent Characteristics:

Nearly all (99%) Windsor Law respondents are full-time law students, 60% are female and 3% reported as international students. Overall, 23% are registered in the Dual JD program. Of those in the Dual JD, 38% selected Windsor Law as their first-choice law school comparable to 35% of those in the JD program.

More than one-quarter of respondents (28%) are from families where neither parent has a university degree. Seven percent of Windsor Law respondents have a parent with a law degree. Approaching graduation, 71% of 3L Windsor Law respondents expect to work at a private law firm once they graduate where their anticipated area of legal specialization will be litigation and trial (25%), corporate and securities (19%) or criminal (17%).

Finances:

About 9 in 10 (91%) Windsor Law respondents expect to have repayable educational debt once they graduate; up from 87% of Windsor Law students surveyed in the 2017 LSSSE. Three-quarters responded that the financial counseling provided by the faculty regarding education loans was not sufficient/helpful (40% somewhat, 35% very little) although 48% of those who received financial aid advising, were satisfied.

In their final semester of law school, 93% of 3L respondents reportedly have debt from attending law school averaging about \$97,700. This is notably more than in LSSSE 2017 and LSSSE 2015 when the average amount for 3L students was about \$87,800 and \$76,700 respectively.

Respondents in the Dual JD program with reported expected debt anticipate having to pay back substantially more money than those in the JD program. On average, Dual JD respondents will owe \$151,000 once they graduate compared to \$78,500 for JDs. Also affecting the amount of debt is the time elapsed between earning an undergraduate degree and enrolling in law school. Windsor Law respondents who started law school three or more years after earning their undergraduate degree expect to pay back an average of \$85,200, significantly less than those who enrolled within 2 years who anticipate owing about \$99,300 on average.

Engagement Indicators (EIs):

LSSSE uses four EIs to summarize different themes relevant to the law school experience. The EIs are combinations of 4 to 6 related survey questions and are expressed as an average score on a 50-point scale. The higher the score, the more positive the student responses are regarding that particular indicator. The EIs are:

- **Learning to Think Like a Lawyer** – To what extent do your students report that their courses emphasize critical and analytical thinking?
- **Student-Faculty Interaction** – How do your students interact with faculty in matters both related and unrelated to classes and assignments?
- **Student Advising** – How satisfied are your students with several areas of advisory services?
- **Law School Environment** – How do your students perceive the law school environment and their “fit” in that environment?

Table 1 shows that although there has been some movement in the EI scores over time, there are few instances of statistically significant differences. There has been a small but steady improvement since the 2015 LSSSE in both the Student-Faculty Interaction and the Student Advising indicators, most notably for 2L and 3L respondents. After increasing from 2015 to 2017, the Law School Environment EI has decreased in LSSSE 2019 for all years of study. The EI measuring the Learning to Think Like a Lawyer theme has declined steadily since the 2015 LSSSE administration for 1L and 2L respondents.

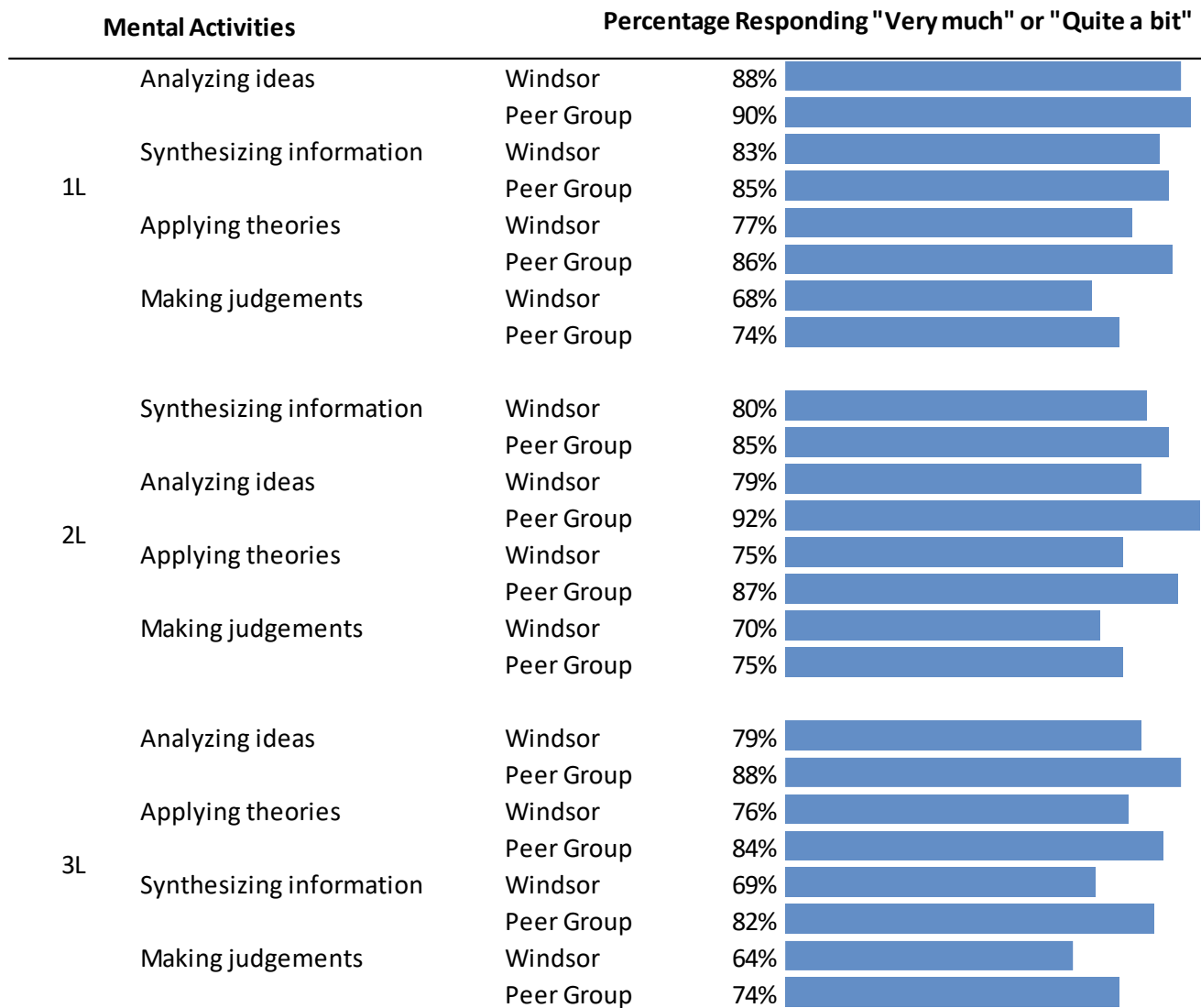
Table 1: Windsor Law Average EI Scores Over Three LSSSE Administrations

	1L				2L				3L			
	2019	2017	2015	sig	2019	2017	2015	sig	2019	2017	2015	sig
Learning to Think Like a Lawyer	34.3	36.4	39.3	↓↓↓	33.3	34.8	36.5	↓↓↓	32.7	33.3	32.8	
Student-Faculty Interaction	20.4	20.5	20.2		24.2	22.6	21.0	↑	23.0	21.7	21.5	
Student Advising	31.3	29.7	30.9		28.1	30.0	26.5		27.6	28.6	21.4	↑
Law School Environment	25.2	27.1	24.8		22.7	26.6	24.2	↓	23.1	25.2	21.3	

↑: 2019 EI significantly higher than in 2015, $p < .05$
 ↓: 2019 EI significantly lower than in 2017, $p < .05$
 ↓↓: 2019 EI significantly lower than in 2015, $p < .05$

The scores by Windsor Law respondents given for the Learning to Think Like a Lawyer EI are significantly lower than those of the peer group for all levels of study. Included in this EI are four questions that address the kind of learning or mental activities that the curriculum emphasizes. Figure 1 shows the percentage of respondents in Windsor Law and the peer group responding ‘Very much’ or ‘Quite a bit’ for each of the questions.

Figure 1:



Overall Satisfaction:

Satisfaction with Windsor Law as measured by two summative questions has dropped somewhat over the most recent LSSSE administrations in 2017 and 2015. In 2019, 77% evaluated their educational experience at Windsor Law as excellent or good compared to 81% in 2017 and 83% in 2015. Following a similar pattern, 80% of respondents would choose Windsor Law if they could start over compared to 82% in 2017 and 84% in 2015. Figures 2 and 3 show that the responses of 2L and 3L students contribute the most to the general decline in overall satisfaction.

With 122 students or about half of all Dual JDs responding, this group is significantly less satisfied with the educational experience at Windsor Law and less likely to choose Windsor Law if they were starting over. About two-thirds (67%) of Dual JDs compared to 81% of JDs, evaluated their educational experience as excellent or good and 74% of Dual JDs would select Windsor Law again as opposed to 81% of JDs. Interestingly, Table 2 shows that for Dual JD students in their first-year, although only 64% rate their educational experience as

excellent or good, nearly all (97%) would choose Windsor Law if starting over. This pattern is not apparent for the 2L or 3L respondents.

Figure 2:

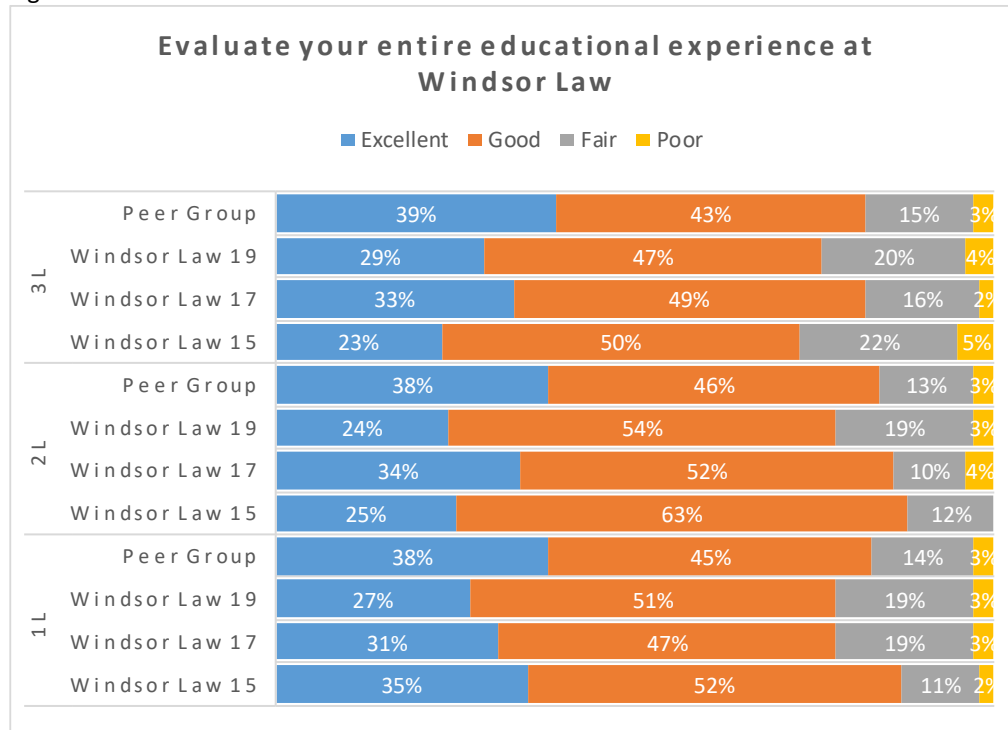


Figure 3:

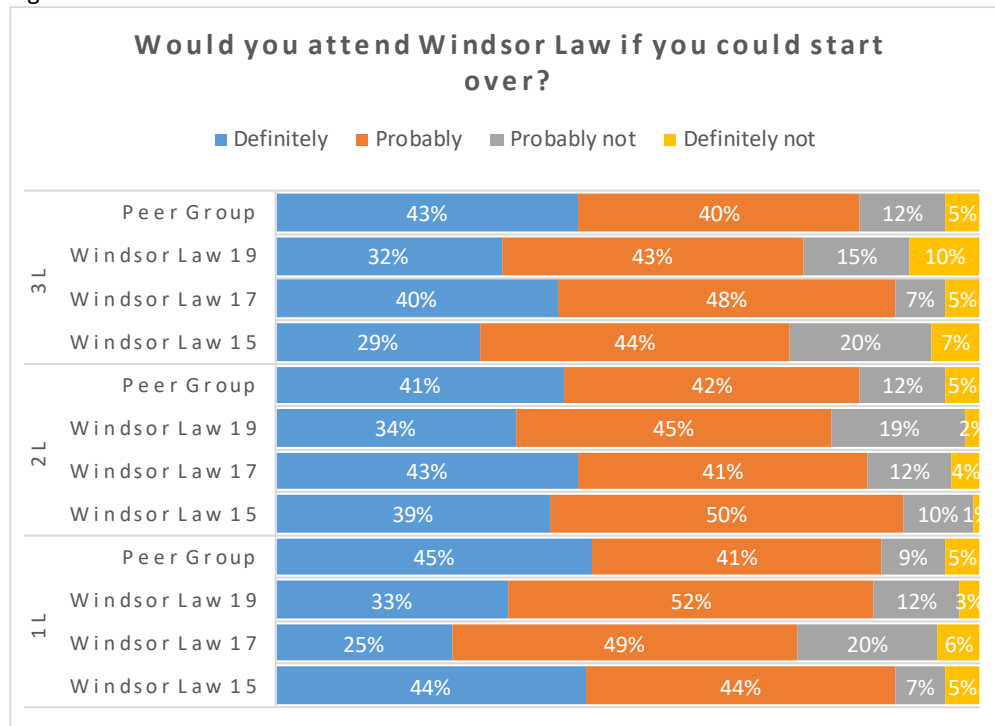


Table 2:

Percent saying educational experience at WL is “excellent/good”

	JD	DualJD
1L	81%	64%
2L	79%	77%
3L	82%	57%
All	81%	67%

Percent saying they would “definitely /probably” choose WL again

	JD	DualJD
1L	81%	97%
2L	82%	69%
3L	78%	57%
All	81%	74%

Table 3 shows that in terms of specific support services, Windsor Law students at each level of study are the least satisfied with the financial aid advising they have received; in particular, about four in ten 2L and 3L respondents who have sought financial aid advising in the current year are satisfied. With the exception of library assistance where scores are high for all levels, 1L respondents are significantly more satisfied than senior level students with all the listed support services.

Table 3: Usage and Satisfaction with Support Services, 2019

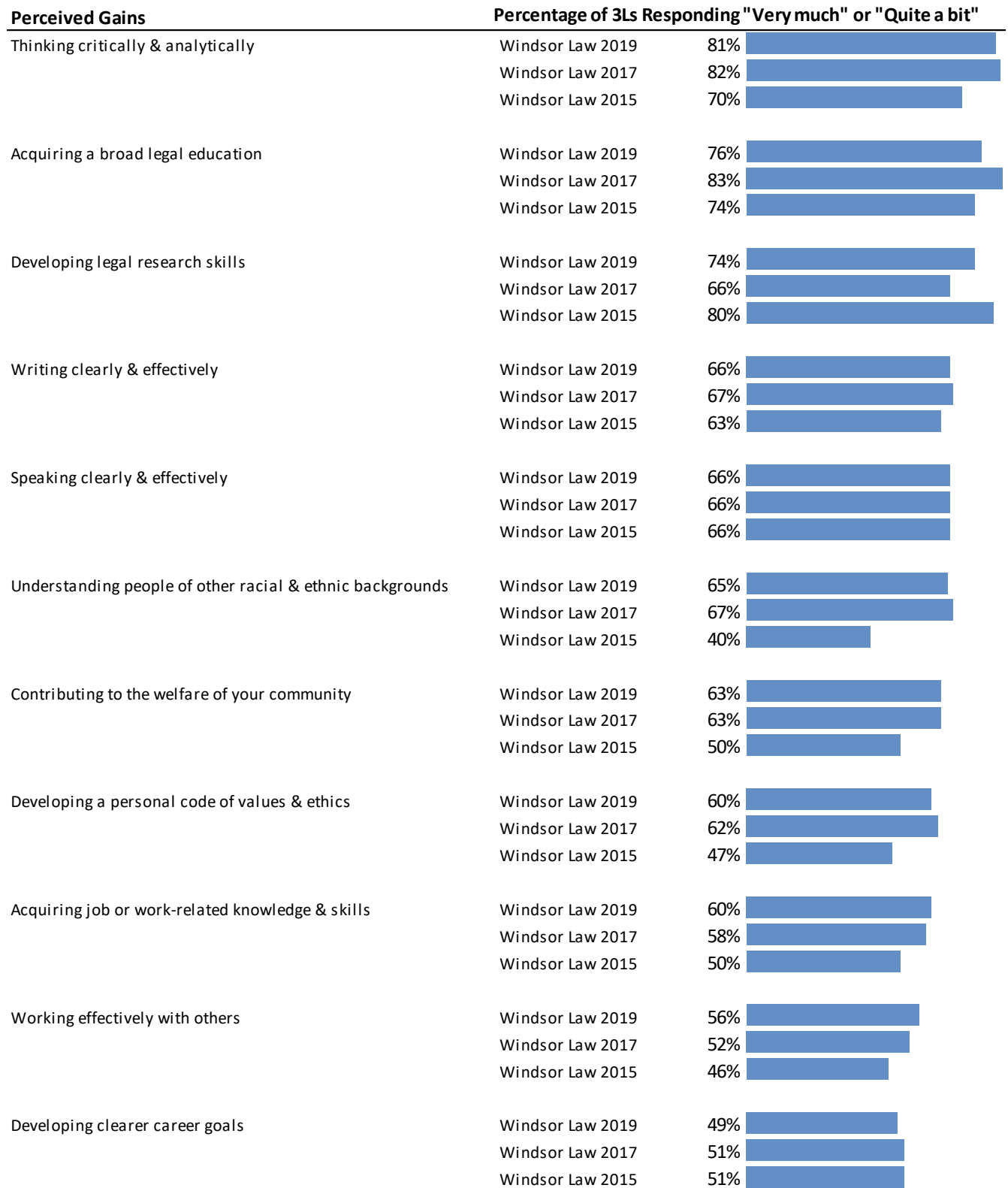
Support Services:	1L		2L		3L	
	% Using	% Satisfied	% Using	% Satisfied	% Using	% Satisfied
Academic Advising	90%	76%	92%	65%	94%	63%
Career Counselling	81%	85%	93%	69%	94%	62%
Job Search Help	71%	76%	91%	69%	93%	59%
Financial Aid Advising	65%	63%	69%	41%	68%	40%
Library Assistance	87%	97%	87%	95%	89%	98%

Educational and Personal Growth:

Towards the end of their final year of legal education, 3L respondents report that their overall experience at Windsor Law has contributed the most to their learning to think critically and analytically, acquiring a broad legal education and developing legal research skills (Figure 4).

In keeping with the LSSSE 2017 findings, there are two areas where 3L Windsor Law students stand out as having gained more than 3L students in the peer group. About two-thirds of third-year Windsor Law students credit their educational experience with giving them a greater understanding of other racial and ethnic backgrounds as well as recognizing the benefit of contributing to their communities compared to about half of their counterparts in the peer group.

Figure 4:



Selected Results:

First-year Windsor Law respondents report spending on average about 8.5 more hours in a typical week reading and preparing for class than those in third year (Table 4).

Table 4: Average Number of Hours in a Typical Week Doing the Following, 2019:

	1L			2L			3L		
	Peer Group	2019	2017	Peer Group	2019	2017	Peer Group	2019	2017
Reading and preparing for class	31.6	30.0	32.2	30.0	25.7	26.0	25.6	21.6	21.0
Participating in law school sponsored activities moot court, student bar association, etc.)	2.3	3.2	3.0	4.6	3.9	5.6	4.9	3.6	5.5
Working for pay	8.2	2.1	1.2	10.0	3.4	3.9	11.3	3.8	4.2
Legal pro bono work not required for a class or clinical course	1.6	2.2	2.0	1.9	2.7	3.4	1.9	2.0	2.0

Two-thirds of 1L students agree that Windsor Law provides the necessary support services (responding “Very much/Quite a bit”) to help them to be academically successful compared to just over half of 2L and 3L respondents (Figure 5). Overall, 9% of respondents say the school provides very little academic support however, this is not the view of Dual JD respondents in their second year. Of this group, nearly one-fifth (19%) report that the academic supports provided are not sufficient at all (Figure 6).

Figure 5:

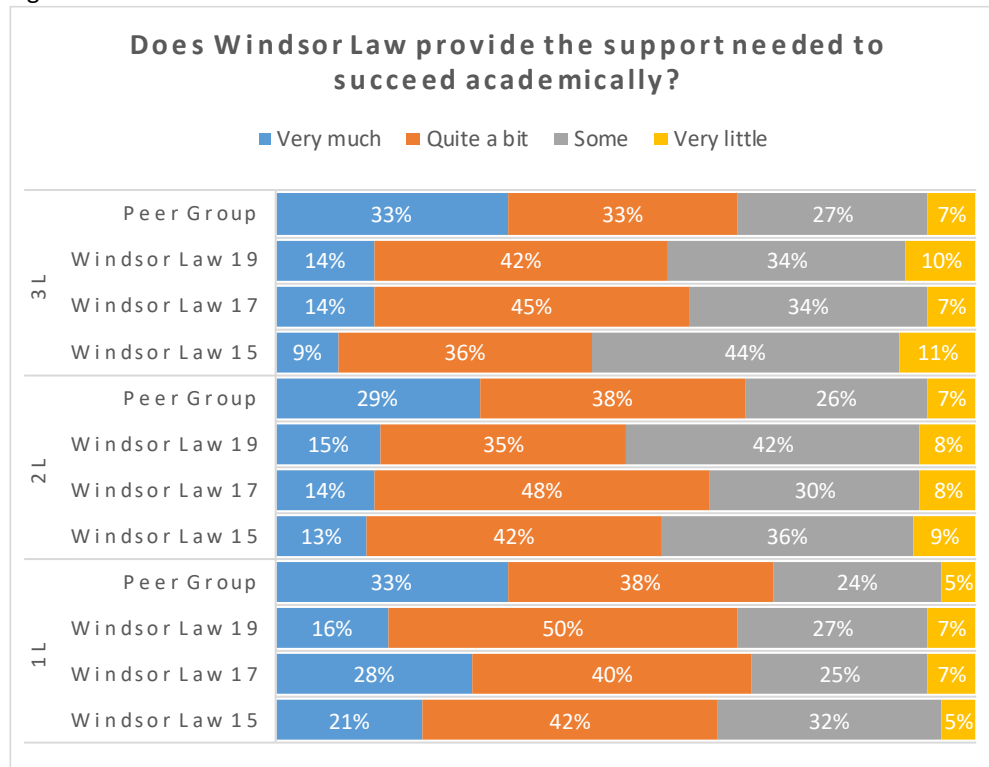
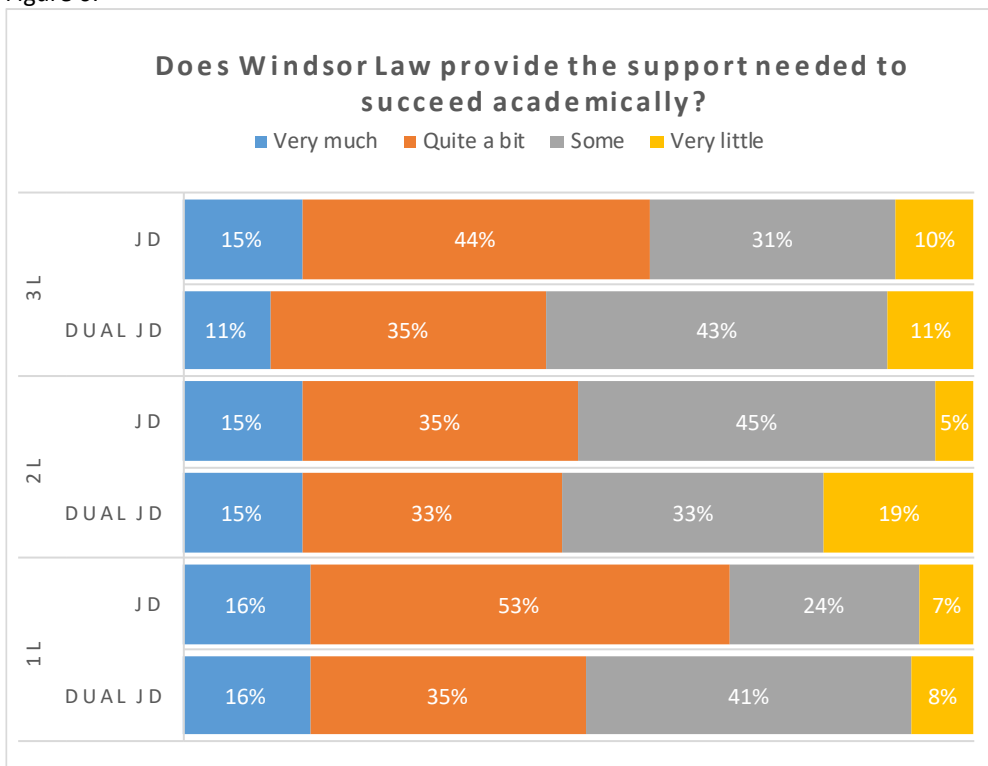
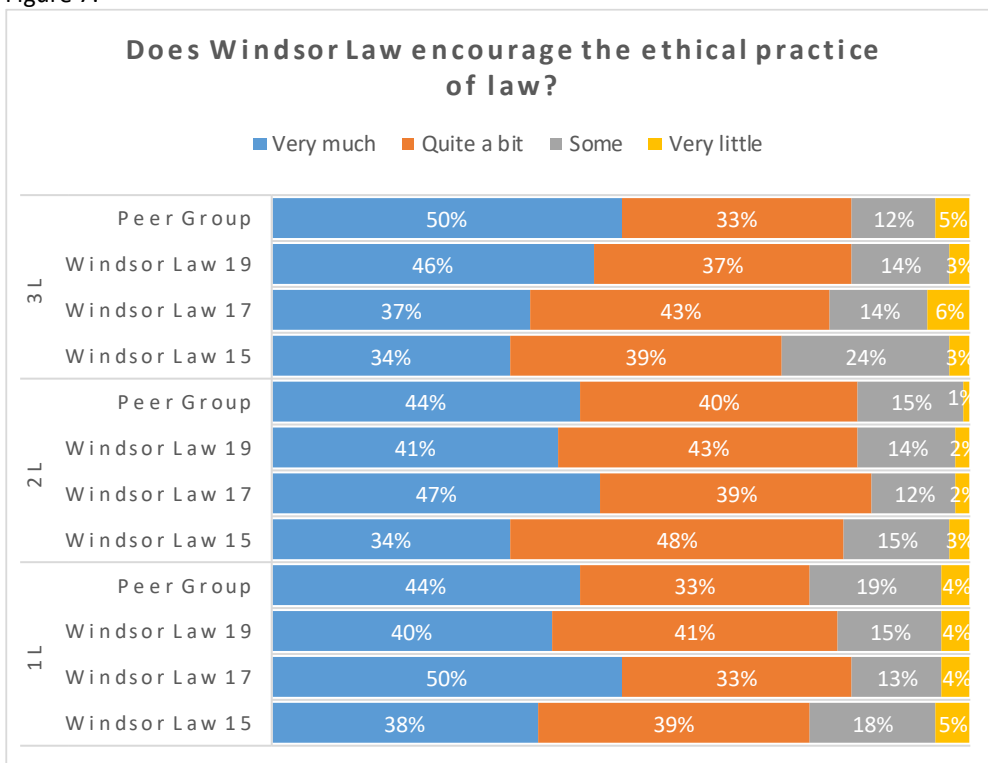


Figure 6:



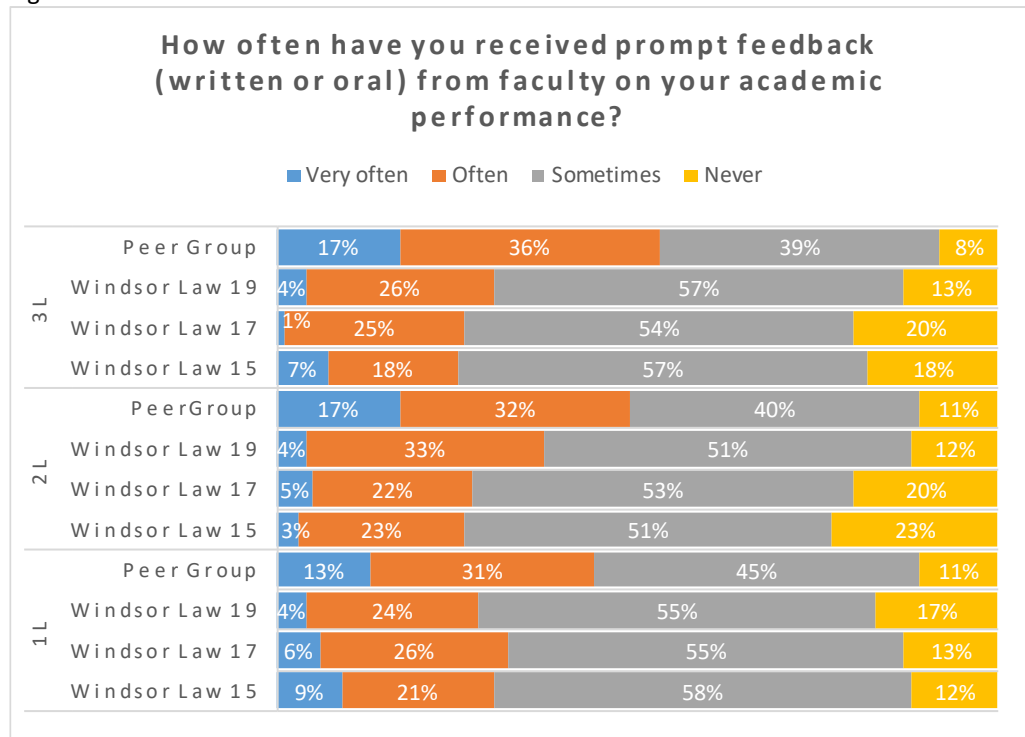
More than eight in ten (83%) respondents agree (responding “Very much/Quite a bit”) that Windsor Law strongly encourages the ethical practice of law. This finding is consistent over the past LSSE administrations and with the peer group (Figure 7).

Figure 7:



Overall, only 31% of Windsor Law respondents frequently received (responding “Very often/Often”) what they considered as prompt feedback from faculty. Nearly one in five (17%) 1L respondents report never having received timely feedback on their academic performance (Figure 8).

Figure 8:



Since the start of the current school year, seven in ten respondents say they have at least sometimes discussed ideas from course readings or classes with a faculty member outside of scheduled class time; higher than the 64% in the 2017 LSSSE. The positive change over 2017 is due to higher reported interactions for 2L and 3L respondents (Figure 9).

Nearing the end of their first year of legal education, 24% have already and 66% still plan to participate in a field placement or law clinic before graduating and only 2% have no plans for this. In second and third year, progressively more Windsor Law students do not expect to complete a field placement (Figure 10).

Windsor Law students in their second and third year are significantly more likely to have participated in a clinical or pro bono project in a course than in previous LSSSE administrations. More than four in ten 2L and 3L respondents frequently (responding “Very much/Quite a bit”) engaged in this educational experience compared to three in ten in 2017 and 2015 (Figure 11). With just 23% of 1L Windsor Law respondents participating in a course based clinical or pro bono project, this is still significantly more than 12% of their first-year counterparts in the peer group.

Figure 9:

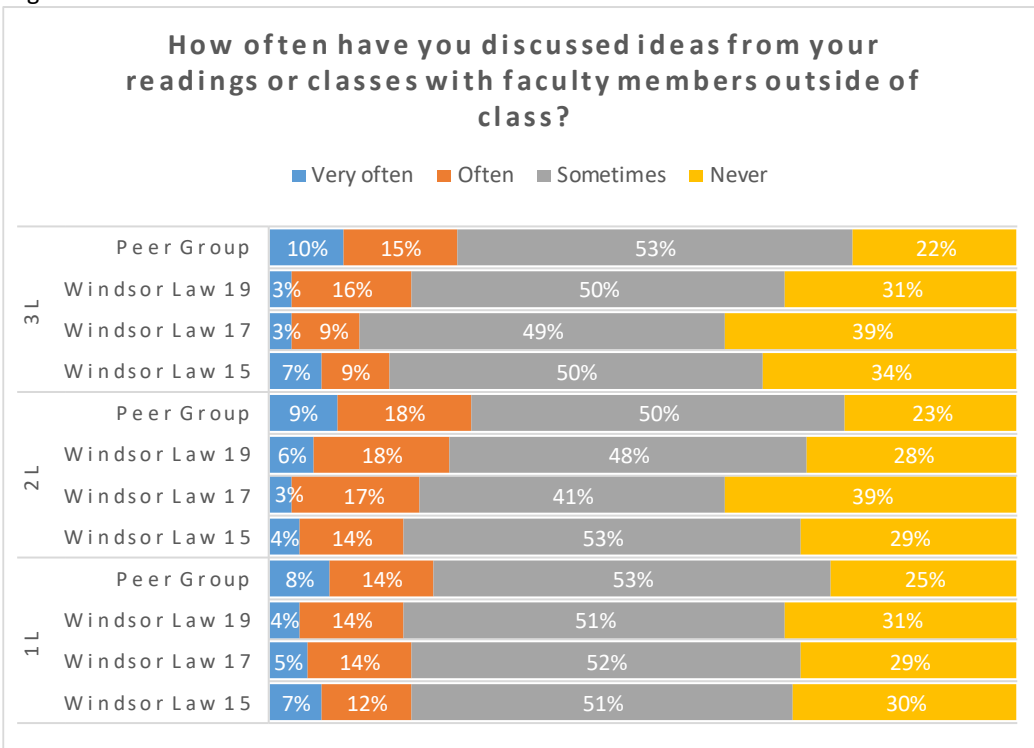


Figure 10:

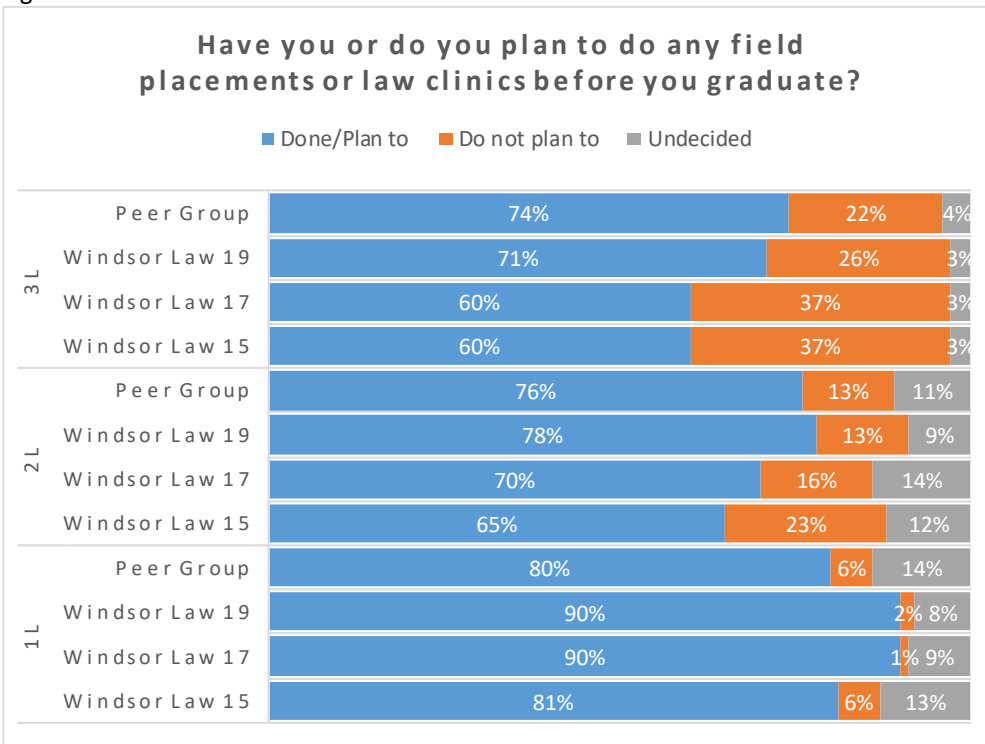
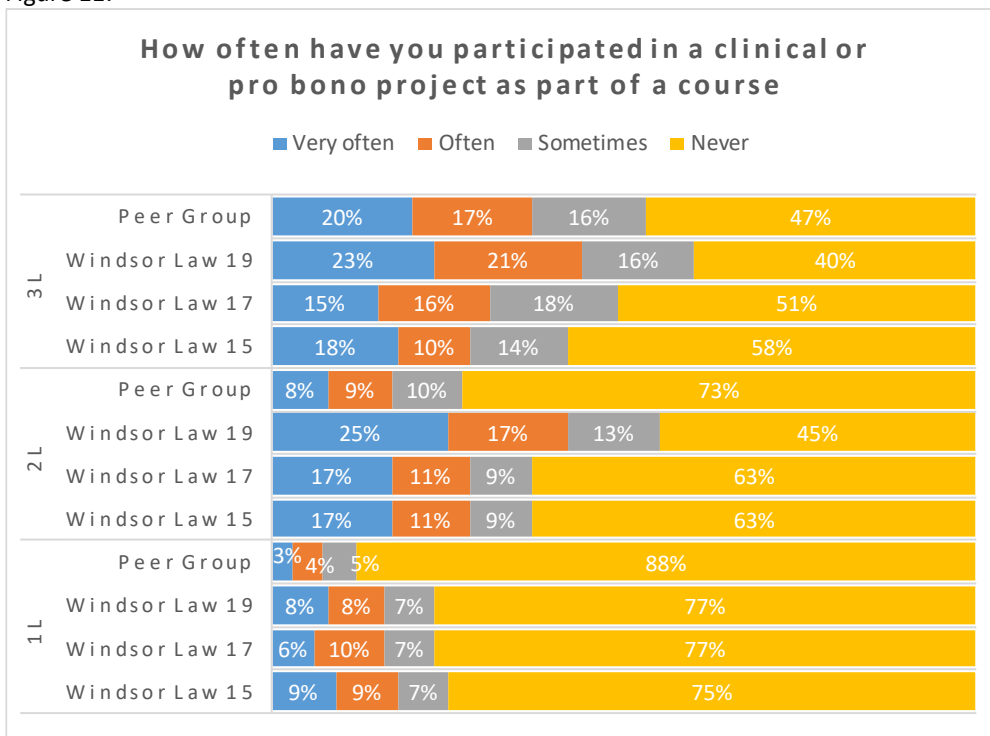
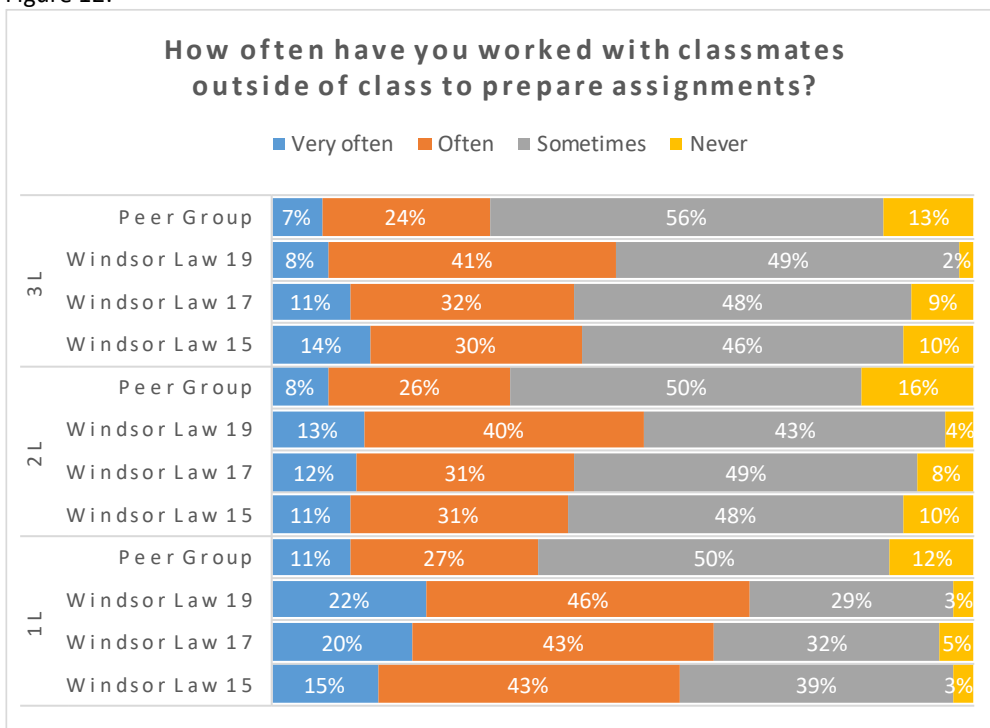


Figure 11:



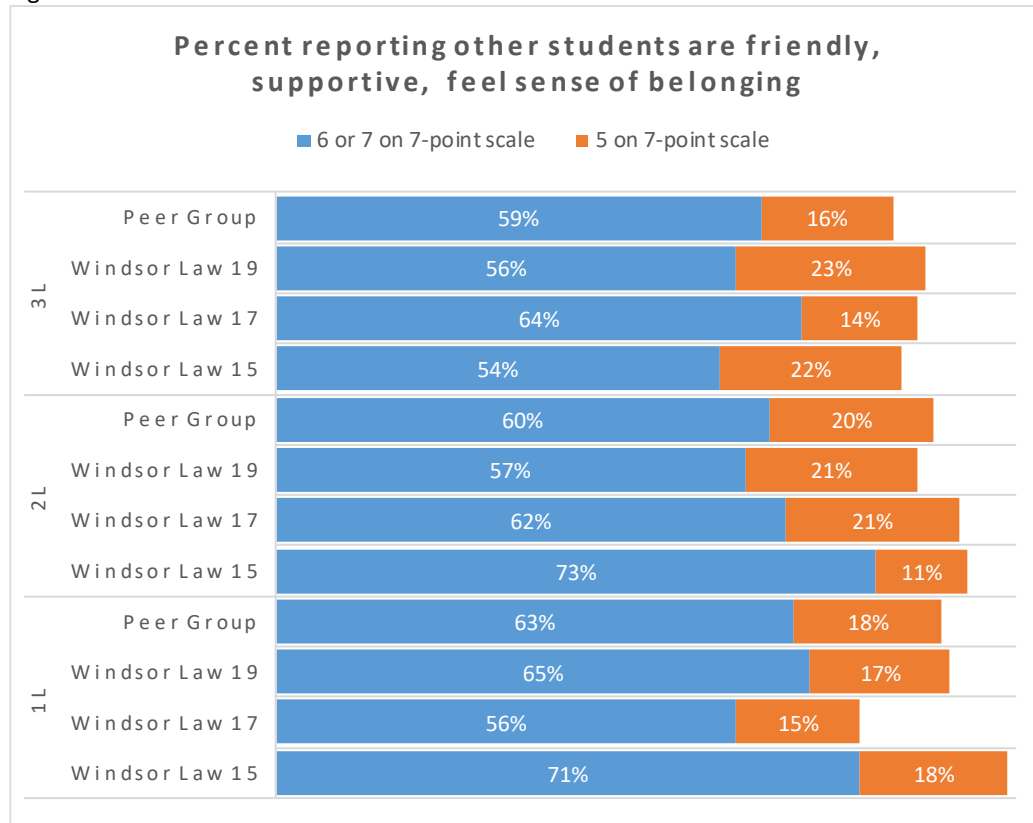
Windsor Law respondents at all levels of study report spending significantly more time working with other students on assignments outside of class than those in the peer group. Only 3% of Windsor Law students said they had never done this in the current year (Figure 12).

Figure 12:



Windsor Law respondents are generally comfortable with reportedly positive relationships with other students. Eight in ten say their classmates are friendly, supportive and make them feel as if they belong (Figure 13).

Figure 13:



Compared to respondents in the peer group, Windsor Law students at all levels are more likely to join a law student organization or club (Figure 14).

In the current year, two-thirds (67%) of Windsor Law respondents report having serious conversations with students with very different religious beliefs, political opinions or personal values on a regular basis (responding “Very often/Often”) (Figure 15).

Figure 14:

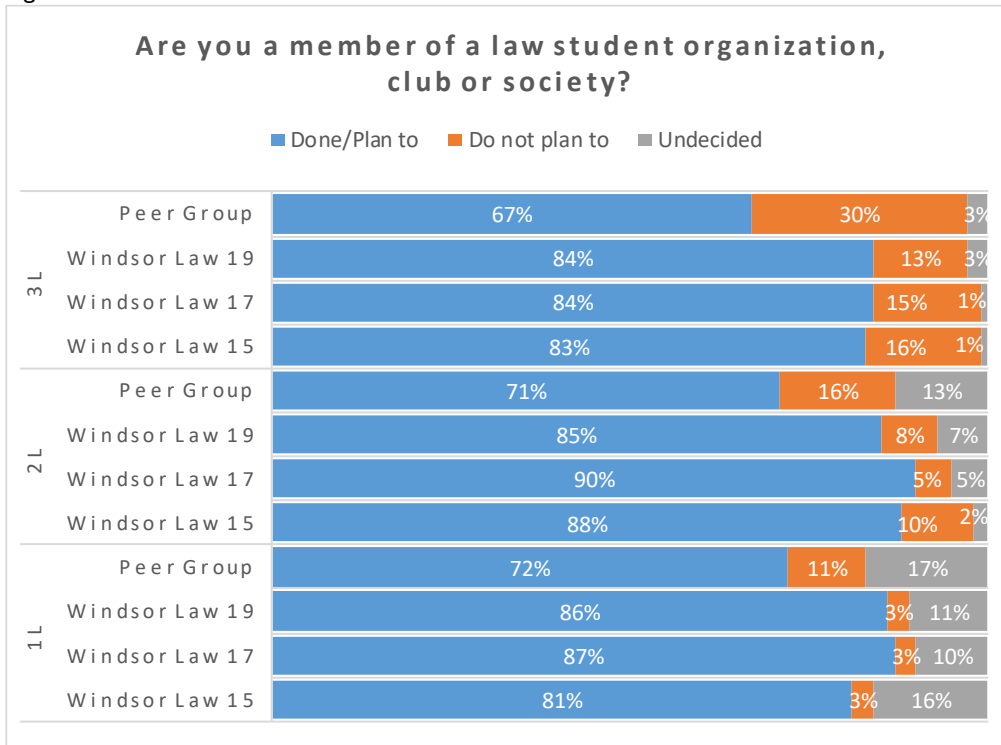


Figure 15:

