Section II

Literature Review

Introduction

American society has witnessed an incredible expansion of the legal profession over the past three decades. The tremendous increase in the number of people becoming lawyers gave rise to increasing diversity within the profession, as more women and members of minority groups have become members of the Bar. However, while as of 1999 women have nearly achieved equal representation in the profession, there is still much improvement to be made in the representation of lawyers of color.

The contemporary structure of the legal profession has also been heavily influenced by the overall economy and by the business sector in particular, which have promoted the emergence of increasingly large firms and a highly specialized labor force. Future trends point toward a continuing influence of these factors on the structure of the profession, boosted by the role of technology and the Internet in the economy as well increasing globalization.

One result of this unprecedented growth of the legal profession has been an increase in research designed to understand the expanded production of lawyers and the proliferation of legal services and activity. We undertook a highly focused review of this literature, relying primarily on reports by the American Bar Association, relatively recent academic journal articles addressing issues of supply and demand for lawyers, plus articles from popular journals and magazines like *U.S. News and World Report*, in order to determine the most current trends in the profession. While most of the studies we identified were national in scope, a small subset addressed legal education and the legal profession in California.

The resulting literature informed our development of the profile of practicing attorneys in California as well as our projections of future supply and demand. It also suggested important themes to be pursued in interview protocols. We summarize the findings below, first for national-level literature and then for studies particular to California.

Trends in the Supply of Lawyers

There are several key factors that have influenced the growth of the legal profession and its changing demographics, beginning with a combined effect of the baby boom and rising educational levels. The entry of women and members of minority groups into the profession has increased over the past several decades, increasing the diversity of the legal profession. In addition, since the late 1960s the responses of American law schools to changes in the level of demand for legal education have played a major role in shaping the profession.
The Expanding Lawyer Population

Between 1870 and 1970 the growth in the legal profession merely mirrored the growth in the American population, both of which increased at approximately 25 percent per decade over this period. However, beginning in the early 1970s, the legal profession entered a period of tremendous growth. From 1970 to 1980, the size of the profession (as measured by the number of lawyers) increased by 90 percent, and by an additional 48 percent between 1980 and 1988 (Rosen, 1992). This rapid increase was unique to the legal profession, which grew at four times the rate of the general work force and twice as fast as the medical profession (Sander and Williams, 1989).

While there have been periods of decline in demand for lawyers and legal services linked to recessions in the economy, especially in the late 1980s and early 1990s, for the most part the profession has continued to prosper over two and a half decades following the initial expansion. A recent *U.S. News and World Report* article (Kleiner, 1999a) describes a boom in hiring in 1999 related to the continued strength of today’s economy. The article estimates that firms will fill 32,000 entry-level positions in 1999, up from 22,000 last year (the class of 1999 equals approximately 40,000). Further, many firms are recruiting more broadly, in terms of considering more schools and going beyond the top 10 percent of each class. First-year compensation is up as well, as increased competition among firms for qualified graduates hikes up starting salaries at the elite firms.

These trends are also apparent in recent findings by the National Association for Law Placement (NALP). Their findings highlight the upward pressure on startup salaries due to competition for legal talent faced by private firms, who are now competing with consulting firms, accounting firms, banks, and public sector employers.

The Role of Law Schools

Law schools facilitated the growth in the legal profession through three main mechanisms: an increase in the number of ABA-approved law schools, growth in the size of existing law schools, and an increase in the graduation and bar passage rates of law students. The capacity of the legal education system expanded to meet the increase in demand by expanding the number of ABA-approved law schools from 135 in 1967 to 175 by the mid-1980s, representing a 30 percent increase (Rosen, 1992). Additionally, the size of existing schools grew by 75 percent over this period. Rosen (1992) concludes that school size increases were responsible for twice as much growth as increases in the number of schools. Law schools also became more efficient at producing graduates because the schools became more selective, and therefore enrolled higher quality law students. Dropout rates declined, and graduation rates increased from 60 percent in the mid-1960s to 90 percent in the 1980s.

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1 Currently there are 181 ABA-approved law schools in the U.S.
The Changing Face of the Legal Profession

One of the most notable trends in legal education and the current and future supply of lawyers is the dramatic increase in the number of women entering the legal profession. The increased participation of women was a major factor in the explosion of the overall number of lawyers that began in the mid-1970s. Between 1975 and 1984, women increased their representation in the legal profession by a factor of four. In 1970 women made up only 4.7 percent of the profession; by 1988 this proportion had risen to 19.4 percent (Sander and Williams, 1989). This increase of women in the legal profession has occurred at a faster pace than in medicine, engineering, or accounting. Today, women have almost completely closed the gender gap in law school graduation rates; the 1998 class of new J.D.s was 45 percent female (National Association For Law Placement, 1999).

With regard to race, there has been substantial improvement in the representation of members of minority groups among law students. Between 1971–1972 and 1991–1992 the total number of minority students in law schools increased from 5,568 to 19,410, a factor of nearly 3.5 (The Task Force on Law Schools and the Profession: Narrowing the Gap, 1992, hereafter The MacCrate Report). Overall, over the last 20 years the proportion of law students who are members of minority groups has increased from 8.4 percent to 19.6 percent as of 1997–1998. More specifically, over this same period of 1976 through 1997 the proportion of law students who are African American has increased from 4.9 percent to 7.2 percent. Hispanics have increased their representation in law schools from 2.1 percent to 5.5 percent, Asian Americans have increased from 1.2 percent to 6 percent, and Native Americans have increased from 0.3 percent to 0.9 percent (American Bar Association, 1998).

Persistence of Minority Underrepresentation

In spite of this narrowing of the ethnic gap in law schools, minority groups are still underrepresented in the legal profession. While whites represent 78.8 percent of the total workforce, they represent 92.6 percent of the legal profession. In contrast, while African Americans make up 10 percent of the total workforce, they constitute only 3.4 percent of the legal profession. For Hispanics, the comparable proportions are 7.8 percent and 2.5 percent of the total workforce and legal profession, respectively; for Asian Americans, the proportions are 2.8 percent and 1.4 percent, respectively, and finally, for Native Americans, 0.6 percent and 0.2 percent respectively (American Bar Association, 1998).

A recent study by the Law School Admission Council (1998) raises additional concerns about the effects of the recent changes in affirmative action policies on the future diversity of the legal profession. The 1995 UC Regents decision in addition to the passage of Proposition 209 in California initially resulted in a dramatic decline in the number of African American and Latino students being admitted or enrolling in the three UC law schools subject to both new policies (UC Berkeley (Boalt Hall), UC Davis, and UCLA). For example, the 1996–1997 incoming class at Boalt included 7.3 percent African American students and 10.7 percent Latino students; the following year, these percentages plummeted to 0.4 percent African American and 5.2 percent Latino. More recent data from the University of California indicate modest improvement in the diversity of the student body at the three UC schools; while the 1999 first-year class is 73 percent
white, it includes 17 percent Asians or Pacific Islanders, 7 percent Mexican Americans or others of Hispanic ethnicity, 2 percent African Americans, and less than one-half of a percent American Indians (University of California, 1999).

Bar Passage Rates among Examinees of Color

In 1998, the Law School Admission Council published a study of bar passage rates in order to address unfounded rumors and anecdotes suggesting that bar passage rates among examinees of color were so low as to make potential law school applicants reconsider entering the field altogether. These data were gathered about the 1991 class of entering law students (23,086 students), including information from students, their law schools, and state boards of bar examiners over a five-year period. The goals of the analysis were to 1) report for the first time national bar examination outcomes by race, ethnicity and gender, and 2) explore factors that may explain differences in outcomes.

The study found that the eventual pass rate for this sample was 94.8 percent. For people of color, the rate was 84.7 percent. More specifically, the eventual pass rate by race/ethnicity was as follows: 82.2 percent for American Indian examinees; 91.9 percent for Asian American examinees; 77.6 percent for African American examinees; 88.4 percent for Mexican American examinees; 79.7 percent for Puerto Rican examinees; 89 percent for Hispanic examinees; 96.7 percent for white examinees; and 91.5 percent for examinees of other race or ethnic groups. The study did not find a gender difference in passage rates. The strongest predictors of passage for all groups were law school GPA and LSAT score. Controlling for the above factors, passage rates varied considerably by geographic region (in which the bar was taken) and by law school cluster.2

The Structure of the Legal Profession

Work Settings

A 1992 study by the American Bar Association (The MacCrate Report) describes the phenomenal growth in the legal profession since World War II. This growth has influenced the manner in which law is practiced, the ways in which law firms are structured and the organization of their work, and has permitted greater specialization in practice. The authors of the MacCrate Report claim that there had not been major changes in the distribution of lawyers across work settings between 1980 and 1991. The proportion of lawyers in private practice increased from 72.1 percent in 1980 to 76.4 percent in 1991; the proportion in business decreased from 10.6 percent to 9.2 percent during the same period; government decreased from 9.8 percent to 8.6 percent, judiciary 3.7 percent to 2.8 percent, and public interest/education from 3.8 percent to 3 percent (MacCrate Report, 1992; Curran and Carson, The Lawyer Statistical Report: The U.S. Legal Profession in the 1990s, 1994). However, more current data from the graduating class of 1998 does show some recent changes in the distribution of lawyers across

2 It was necessary to cluster law schools by characteristics such as public/private, more or less prestigious, and the like, in order to maintain confidentiality. The report did not contain information regarding what these regions or clusters were, specifically.
work settings, with greater proportions of lawyers going into business and the judiciary and fewer going into private practice. Of the class of 1998, only 55 percent went into private practice initially, while almost 14 percent went into business, 13 percent entered the government or military sector, 11 percent went into judiciary, and 4 percent entered academia or public interest law (NALP, 1999).

Work Settings by Race and Ethnicity

Nationwide, there are few data available to describe the distribution of lawyers across work settings by race and ethnicity. The National Association of Law Placement Survey of the class of 1996 (representing 33,615 new lawyers) indicates that minority graduates are more likely than whites to enter the not-for-profit sector (particularly government and public interest) and less likely to enter private practice. NALP data comparing white and minority law students graduating in 1987 and 1996 show some changes in initial employment area by minority status over the past decade. The proportion of minority graduates going into business more than doubled over this period, increasing from 6 percent in 1987 to 15 percent in 1996. (American Bar Association, 1998). In addition, fewer minority graduates are going into government (down from 22 percent to 17 percent); currently the proportion going into private practice decreased from 55 percent to 50 percent, likely a result of the overall shift towards the business sector described above. These data also indicate differences by race/ethnicity for initial employment in terms of firm size. Among graduates who enter private practice, minorities are more likely than whites to go to very large firms initially (firms with more than 100 lawyers). Large increases in the proportion of Asian American graduates initially being employed in large firms are a major influence on this finding.

The Role of the Economy in Law Firm Structure

One of the major changes in the structure of law firms is size; there has been steady movement towards larger and larger firms. Between 1968 and 1987, the average size of the 20 largest firms grew fourfold from 127 to 527. The number of firms with more than 100 lawyers grew from 45 in 1975 to 247 in 1987 (MacCrate Report, p. 78). One of the most important contributors to law firm size is the economy, especially the business sector.

While analyses of the market for lawyers have not found a clear, direct relationship between the demand for legal services and total population, there is evidence of a positive relation between demand for legal services and per capita income. For example, demand for legal services is stronger in business-oriented urban areas and areas of financial concentration (Abel, 1989). The authors of the MacCrate Report point out evidence that illustrates how closely linked corporate law practice is to the general level of economic activity. One source of evidence is the 1990–1992 downturn in the economy, which forced many large firms to downsize. In addition, “various studies of law practice show a clear relationship between the size of a firm and the source of income: as firm size increases the percentage of fees from business clients rises and the percentage of fees from individuals drops” (The MacCrate Report, p. 31). Legal services for the business community are closely linked to economic activity; they are largely discretionary services for which demand rises in periods of business prosperity and quickly falls when businesses contract or postpone transactions requiring specialized legal services.
Thus, the current economic boom may be creating growth in the legal profession. The American Lawyer’s annual report of the nation’s 100 largest firms likewise shows tremendous recent growth in the legal profession; for the third year in a row, the largest 100 American firms reported double-digit growth in gross revenue, with the average over the period close to 15 percent (Morris, 1999). Further, these big firms are getting bigger in terms of the proportion of the overall legal market that they capture; in 1998, these top 100 firms accounted for 18 percent of the $130 billion for-profit legal services, up from 14 percent in 1995.

Specialization

A defining feature of the legal profession is the scope of specialization within the field; the distribution of lawyers across specialties is a key factor in the analysis of supply and demand trends. For example, with the growth of Silicon Valley over the past decade or so, there has been a huge increase in demand for lawyers who specialize in intellectual property, including patent and copyright law, as well as virtually every area related to technology and the Internet. This trend has influenced both legal education and the legal profession in many ways. For example, many law schools have responded by hiring additional faculty specializing in intellectual property and increasing the number of courses they offer in this area (see law school survey results). Geographically, more and more lawyers with expertise in these areas have been attracted to the Silicon Valley area, and it is likely that greater proportions of law students are pursuing intellectual property in response to both the market demand and the increased preparation in the field offered by law schools. In sum, the phenomenon of specialization plays a major role in defining the landscape of the legal profession.

The current trend towards increasing specialization within the legal profession began in the early 1970s, when the state of California became the first to formally recognize specializations. Fourteen other states have since followed California’s lead. In August 1990, the ABA Standing Committee on Specialization developed Model Standards for Specialization in 24 specialties, although currently there are more than 116 identified in the Martindale Hubbell database. Specialization has been fostered by the increasing size of large firms and competition among such firms. Specialization is more common in larger firms that have a larger number of attorneys. Because large firms can support a wider variety of specialists, they often have a competitive advantage over smaller firms in attracting business. This in turn promotes more specialization. Overall, specialization seems to have become a dominant feature of the profession; a 1991 Survey of the State Bar of California found that 75 percent of the lawyers spent at least half of their time in one area of concentration, while more than half limited their practice to three or fewer areas of law.

The National Law Journal annually publishes a “Who’s Hot in the Job Market,” which is useful for assessing the current and potential future trends within the specialties of the legal profession nationwide. The 1999 report, published in August, claims that intellectual property is so hot that even lawyers with mediocre credentials are being courted for choice jobs (Smith, 1999b). Demand for intellectual property expertise is expected to continue unabated. Corporate attorneys are also highly sought, as the thriving economy and rush to consolidation throughout American industry has created a boom in demand for experience in mergers and acquisitions, securities and
any form of transactional work. Employment, litigation defense, and employment and litigation advising are also strongly in demand, while demand for environmental and traditional labor and insurance defense lawyers seems to be down. Other areas that are considered to be either slow or in decline include bankruptcy and banking. Trends in litigation demand appear to depend on the region of the country, while real estate is strong in most parts of the country. Tax law seems to be steady, and trusts and estates are surging in many areas. Finally, in-house legal departments are increasingly popular and are said to be luring associates away from private law firms.

The Role of Earnings

Any attempt to understand the phenomenon of the increasing supply of lawyers over the past several decades would be incomplete without the consideration of the role that earnings expectations play in the decision to become a lawyer. A few recent studies have addressed this issue, finding that when law firms advertise high starting salaries as part of their recruiting efforts, potential law students respond by entering the profession. However, since these prestigious jobs are difficult to obtain, only a small fraction of new lawyers find such lucrative first jobs within the legal profession. When reality does not meet expectations, some lawyers respond by leaving the profession.

In an economic analysis of the market for law school students, Ehrenberg (1989) found that the number of law school applicants is related to their perceptions of earnings levels in the profession. Data on the starting salaries of graduates were taken from 99 of the 174 ABA approved law schools for the graduating class of 1985, as reported in Barron’s Guide to Law Schools, and the “Gourman score”3 was used as the ranking measure. Based on salary trends from 1975–1976 through 1985–1986, Ehrenberg found that the attractiveness of a legal career increased relative to entering the labor market immediately following college graduation, as well as compared to pursuing an MBA degree in the late 1980s. He also found that students from higher-ranked public and private law schools are less likely to go into public service. This tendency for graduates of more prestigious law schools to enter the private sector as opposed to the public sector results in part from the fact their law schools charge higher tuition; the data suggest that higher tuition levels may reduce the likelihood of students entering the public sector.

Sander and Williams (1989) attempted to explain what they refer to as the “lawyer boom,” meaning the substantial increase in the number of lawyers since the 1970s. The dramatic increase was created by both a surge in the number of individuals becoming lawyers as well as an increase in demand for legal services. In addition to the general trend of an increase in supply was the emergence of a surplus of sole practitioners, characterized both by the rising numbers of sole practitioners and their falling incomes, as seen in U.S. Census data and data on earnings acquired from the IRS, covering roughly the period from 1960 to 1985. The authors hypothesized that this surplus results from the fact that many lawyers are attracted to the

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3 The Gourman score comes from the Gourman report, which is claimed by the author to be an objective evaluation based on a wide number of criteria. No details are provided by Gourman on precisely how these scores are calculated. It is interesting to note, however, that the correlation between the rankings of the top 20 law schools provided by deans of law schools in a recent *U.S. News and World Report* article and the rankings of the same schools’ scores in the Gourman report is about 0.85 (Ehrenberg, note 15).
profession by the advertisement of high starting salaries of associates in large firms; however, this vision does not represent the reality that most young lawyers encounter in the profession. Given that the competition, especially for partner, is intense in the elite firms, many lawyers leave because of failure to make partner or poor quality of life. Many of these lawyers either go into solo practice or leave the profession altogether. The data presented by Sander and Williams do in fact suggest that these trends exist, and further their argument that there might well have been an oversupply of lawyers, at least as of 1989.

While trends in earnings help explain some of the recent explosion of the legal population, Sander and Williams admit that much of the trend is still a mystery. Some additional contributing factors are a proliferation of legislation that has spurred the need for more complex legal services, increases in litigation since 1960, and increases in the divorce rate and criminal activity. Sander and Williams’s data further describe a somewhat segmented demand for legal services, with solo practitioners facing sharply declining incomes while those employed by large firms were experiencing great prosperity. In addition, there seems to be a third sector of smaller, highly specialized firms that are holding their own against the competition from larger firms. It is the large firms, however, that seem to be responsible for many of the profound changes within the profession over the past several decades. Overall, trends in the profession are very difficult to predict given the multitude of factors involved. The importance of the economy to the health of the profession further complicates the issue.

One of the factors described by Sander and Williams as partly responsible for the oversupply of lawyers in the late 1980s, the prominence of high starting salaries, seems to be a characteristic of the job market for the most recent graduating class of lawyers. The National Law Journal (Smith, 1999a) has reported a current surge in the market for lawyers, based on its annual survey of lawyers’ earnings. They report that the nation’s law firms are particularly healthy this year (1999), continuing an upturn that started in 1995. Salaries for incoming associates are setting records, especially in the top corporate law departments. Starting salaries for new associates in elite firms are at record highs, with many firms breaking the $100,000 barrier. The new boom is not doing much for those in the public sector, however, with the salaries of public interest and legal aid attorneys trailing far behind those in the private sector. Overall, firm profits are still not back up to 1980s levels, but are recovering from the recession of the early 1990s.

Future Trends

A recent article published in the American Bar Association’s Law Practice Management Section magazine describes 25 trends that are expected to define the future of the American legal profession, providing some interesting issues to consider (Summer 1999). The authors predict substantial changes in the nature of legal work and in the structure of the legal profession, in addition to increasing numbers of practicing lawyers. They foresee the lawyer of the future functioning as a businessperson and manager who is much more mobile and flexible across different types of work settings beyond private law firms.

Another trend that is likely to redefine the legal profession is the emergence of multidisciplinary practices, or MDPs. An MDP is an organization owned wholly or partly by non-lawyers that
provides legal services directly to the public through lawyers who either own or are employed by the MDP (Bower, 1999). In practice, MDPs include otherwise independent law firms owned only by lawyers that practice in close cooperation with professional service firms; the firms are owned exclusively or partly by non-lawyers, usually under contract. The MDP issue generally is considered within the context of the Big 5 accounting firms (e.g., Ernst & Young, Deloitte & Touche, Arthur Andersen), which currently refer to themselves as business-consulting firms, not accounting firms. At present there is great debate among lawyers as to whether MDPs violate professional rules or provide better service to clients. The American Bar Association has deferred the vote on this question until sometime in the year 2000.

Alternative dispute resolution, or ADR, seems to be spreading to every type of practice. Given the high cost of litigation, the increasing use of “less adversarial” and less costly procedures is increasingly popular. Currently almost all states have experimented with some form of ADR, with the number of disputes handled through the American Arbitration Association nearly doubling over the past decade (Kleiner, 1999b). Lawyers specializing in ADR are in great demand by a broad range of businesses that look to save time and money by avoiding litigation. Demand from both students and the marketplace has influenced many law schools to add or improve ADR curricula; while in 1984 only 47 law schools had ADR courses, by 1997 the American Bar Association’s directory of law school alternative dispute resolution courses and programs listed more than 714 courses and clinics at 177 law schools.

Finally, few would deny that an international focus has taken over at many U.S. law schools and law firms. As a result, international courses and semester-abroad type programs have proliferated at American law schools. For example, Harvard now offers 40 courses addressing a range of issues related to the global legal realm, and Columbia has increased its number of such courses from 34 to 46 within only 5 years. New York University has embarked on a $75 million enterprise to completely revolutionize its law school along this global theme (Streisand, 1999). The same trends that have increased the international focus of American law schools are mirrored in the growing demand for young lawyers with international training, even in small firms and not only in large cities.

The State of California

Few data or literature sources include information that is specific to the state of California; however a recent report by RAND provides a profile of the state Bar in 1994, based on a survey of its members (Hensler and Reddy, 1994). As of 1994, the state Bar was still largely white and male, but growing more diverse. Slightly more than one-quarter (27 percent) were female, 11 percent minority, and 5 percent gay, lesbian or bisexual. In terms of office sizes and settings, 25 percent were in solo practice, 23 percent in small firms (2–5 lawyers), 28 percent in medium-sized work settings (6–50 lawyers), and 24 percent in large firms (51–500+). Eighty-three percent were in private practice, 15 percent in public service or other nonprofit, and 2 percent in some other kind of law-related setting. As of 1994, half of the state Bar members had been admitted in 1980 or later, reflecting many of the recent surges in numbers of new lawyers. In terms of geographic distribution, slightly more than one-third (35 percent) of California attorneys were practicing in the Los Angeles area, 27 percent in the San Francisco Bay Area, 17 percent in...
the Orange County/San Diego region, 12 percent in the area of Fresno and San Luis Obispo, and 9 percent in the Sacramento area (p. 5). In terms of practice patterns, an increasing percentage of younger lawyers were in public interest (16 percent of those admitted to the bar since 1980 versus 4 percent of the oldest group, admitted before 1960). Additionally, only 16 percent of the youngest group were in solo practice, compared to 40 percent of the oldest group (p. 7). These changes likely reflect traditional career paths as well as shifts in the practice patterns of the profession.

The Hensler and Reddy profile of the state Bar described above is quite consistent with our own (Section 3), constructed using the Current Population Survey and the Martindale Hubbell database. A few differences result from the fact that our profile represents 1999 as opposed to 1994, plus the fact that various databases often use different categorizations. For example, it is difficult to compare the profiles in terms of office setting, given that the CPS uses the categorizations of self-employed, government, private legal services and private non-legal services. Further, the Hensler and Reddy profile relies on self-report data obtained from half the surveyed Bar members (50 percent did not respond); so the findings inevitably reflect some response bias. However, the two profiles are similar in their reports of the proportion of minority lawyers in California, the distribution of lawyers across broad regions of the state, and the distribution of lawyers in offices of varying size.

While progress has been made in achieving a greater gender balance, less progress has been made in promoting racial and ethnic diversity in the legal profession in California. Additional information about the racial and ethnic diversity of the California legal profession is provided from the 1998 ABA report *Miles to Go*. Data for selected California cities show that in 1997 in Los Angeles, 6 percent of partners and 19 percent of associates were members of minority groups; in San Diego, 3 percent of partners and 10 percent of associates were minorities; the corresponding figures for San Francisco are 4 percent and 18 percent for partners and associates, respectively. Again, data are sparse but suggest that minority lawyers are better represented in corporate legal departments than in private law firms (San Francisco appears to have substantial proportions of minority lawyers serving as in-house counsel, as of 1995). The largest proportions of minority lawyers, and of African American lawyers in particular, are found in federal government offices (law clerks, general attorneys, administrative law judges, and patent attorneys).

With regard to the future of the profession, in 1994 most California lawyers agreed that legal practice will become more specialized, that clients will increasingly demand alternatives to hourly billing for legal services, and that technology will improve productivity and improve the quality of the legal product (Hensler and Reddy, 1994). They also expected that the earnings gaps between different work settings will continue to widen. Lawyers disagreed on some of the most controversial new issues facing the profession. For example, in response to the question of whether lawyers will increasingly form prepaid legal service plans, similar to medical HMOs, 38 percent agreed, 43 percent were neutral, and 21 percent disagreed. Lawyers were similarly divergent on the issue of whether lawyers will increasingly form practices with members of other professions, such as accounting or consulting firms, in the form of multidisciplinary practices (MDPs): 29 percent agreed, 41 percent were neutral, and 30 percent disagreed. Finally,

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4 Scales ranged from 1, “agree completely,” to 5, “disagree completely,” with 3 indicating “in between” or neutral.
approximately half of lawyers agreed that non-attorneys will provide many legal services in the future, especially those of a routine nature (56 percent); 29 percent were neutral and 15 percent disagreed.

**Conclusion**

On the whole, what emerged from this review of the literature was a fairly consistent picture across diverse sources, of the legal profession of the past two decades and expectations for the near-term future. However, it also identified some caveats that need to accompany the interpretation of data that bear on recent trends. For example, several authors cautioned against attempting to predict supply of and demand for lawyers. As Ehrenberg (1989) notes, “studies by economists of the labor market for lawyers suggest that it is dangerous to project trends” (p. 627). And even efforts to explain past trends in supply and demand have encountered major difficulties. While Sander and Williams (1989) uncovered many factors that played roles in the expansion of the profession since the 1970s, they admit that “most of the increase is still a mystery” (p. 478).

In what follows, we update this literature with a contemporary profile of California lawyers. Then we provide projections that extend the envisioned trends in supply of and demand for lawyers in California well into the coming century. Finally, we complement this vision with the perspectives of leaders in California's law schools and law firms.