

Alyssa Leon, Silvia Rodriguez, Santiago Lastra and Florida State Law Assistant Dean of Student Affairs Chris Busch

BACKGROUND

- 1.3 billion people worldwide live with a disability.
- Over 90% of surveyed law schools reported an increase in accommodations within the last five years.
- The percentage of law students receiving accommodations is increasing at a faster rate than disability diagnoses overall.
- "Crip Time": Time should adapt to disabled bodies and minds—not the other way around (Kafer, 2023).
- Children diagnosed with ADHD are found to have significantly lower math and reading scores on standardized tests several years later (Currie, 2004).
- Today's law students are the most accommodated in history, largely due to rising ADHD and anxiety diagnoses.
- Non-law entities often decide law school accommodations with little to no involvement from law schools.
- Some research suggests diagnostic labels may reinforce fixed mindsets, lower self-efficacy, and pathologize normal performance fluctuations, increasing demand for possibly ineffective accommodations (Jarvis, 2026).

METHODS

Research Design: Cross-sectional, survey-based study examining the administration of J.D. academic accommodations at ABA-accredited law schools.

Sample: Electronic distribution to accommodations administrators at all ABA-accredited institutions; 73 law schools responded (n=73). Respondents held responsibilities related to eligibility determination, scope decisions, or administrative execution. Participation was voluntary and confidential.

Instrument: 16-question survey incorporating:

- Fixed-response and multiple-selection questions (institutional structure, staffing models, training background)
- Likert-scale items (levels of concern regarding fairness, professional competency standards, staffing capacity, and bar exam alignment)
- Short-answer responses (accommodation thresholds, reevaluation policies, supplemental supports)

Data Analysis:

- Descriptive statistics used to calculate frequencies and distribution patterns
- Likert-scale responses aggregated to assess overall concern trends
- Open-ended responses thematically coded to identify recurring institutional patterns

Approach: Mixed-method design combining quantitative baseline metrics with qualitative contextual analysis.

ANALYSIS

To what extent does the law school have decision-making authority in determining eligibility for academic accommodations for J.D. students?

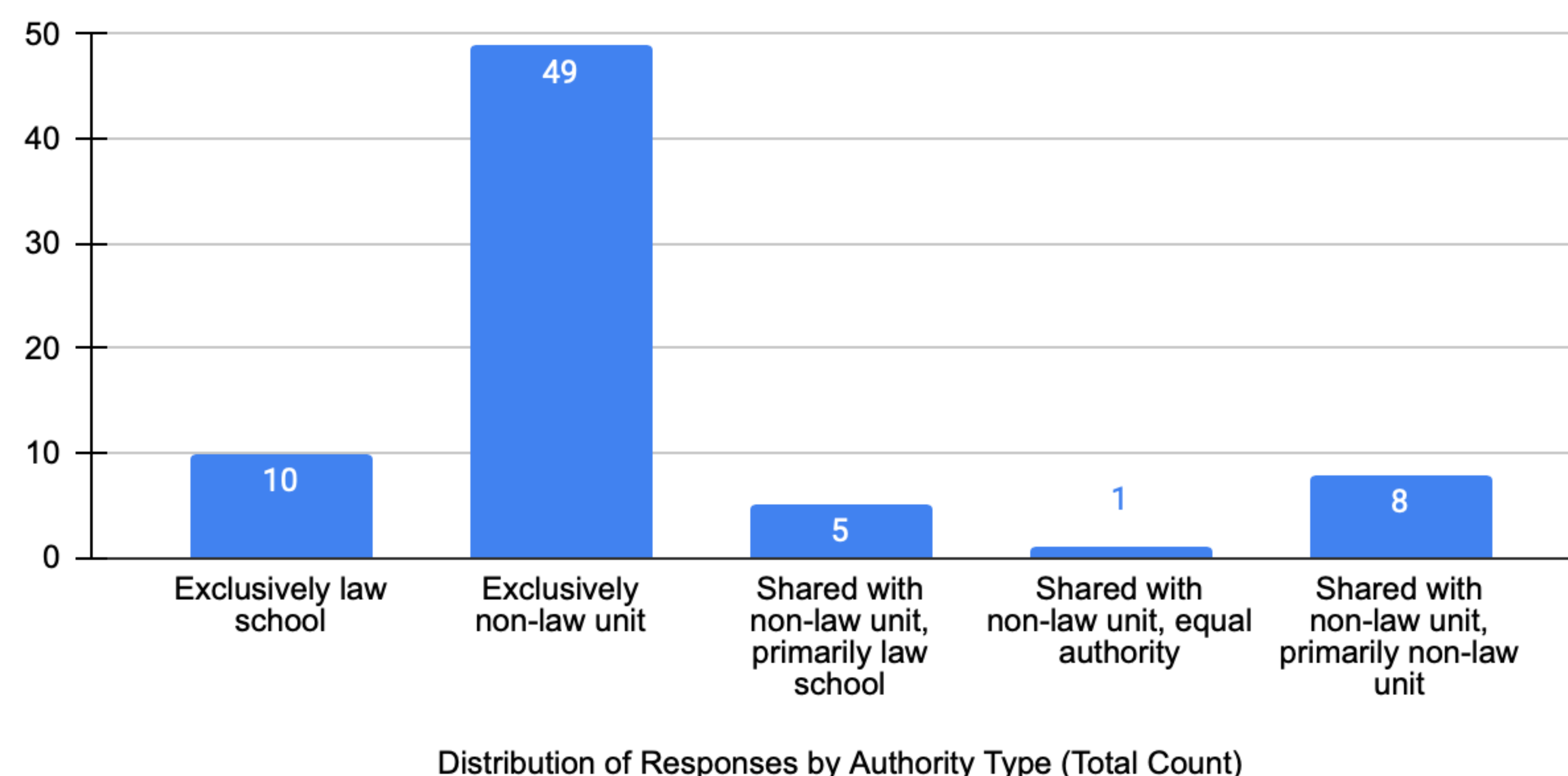


FIGURE 1. AUTHORITY IN DETERMINING ELIGIBILITY FOR J.D. ACCOMMODATIONS

	Accommodation Type	Frequency (Total Schools)	Percentage
1	Extended time on exams	73	100.00%
2	Ability to record class / access to class recordings	70	95.90%
3	Semi-private testing space	69	94.50%
4	Private testing space	65	89.00%
5	Permission to take breaks during exams	53	72.60%
6	Flexible attendance	52	71.20%
7	Flexible / modified deadlines	46	63.00%
8	Access to professor notes / slides prior to class	44	60.30%
9	Peer notetaker	40	54.80%
10	Stop-the-clock exam breaks	22	30.10%
11	No cold calls	20	27.40%

FIGURE 2. PERCENTAGE OF ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION TYPES

Perceived Level of Concern of the Capacity of Law Schools to Manage Accommodation Requests

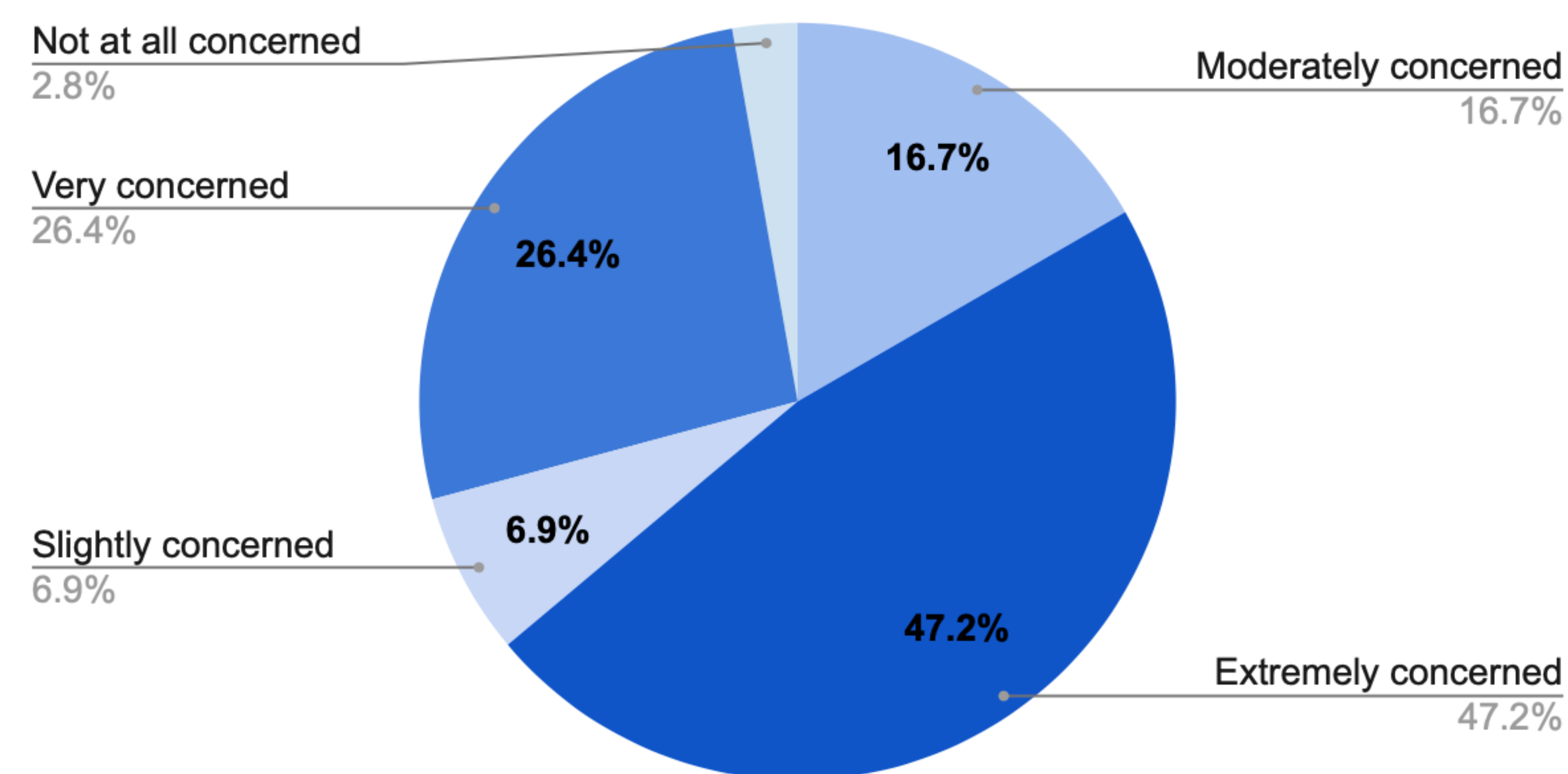


FIGURE 3. INSTITUTIONAL CONCERN REGARDING ADMINISTRATIVE CAPACITY

RESULTS

- A majority of respondents of 67% indicate that authority rests exclusively with a non-law university unit, suggesting a centralized administrative model rather than law-school-specific oversight for initial eligibility.
- Across the types of supports administered to J.D. students, Extended Time on Exams appeared as a universal standard (100%). The high frequency of Class Recordings (95.9%) and Semi-Private Testing Space (94.5%) reflects the primary focus on staff resources.
- Survey participants reported high levels of concern about institutional resources, with 90.3% of respondents expressing moderate to extreme concern. Notably, nearly half (47.2%) identify as "extremely concerned," highlighting a widening gap between increasing accommodation demands and current administrative staffing or infrastructure.

CONCLUSION

- Administrative Mismatch: 67% of schools outsource eligibility decisions to non-law units, applying general academic criteria to a specialized professional J.D. context.
- The Licensing Cliff: Despite 100% institutional accommodation prevalence, administrators cited the "disparity" between law school and State Bar standards as a primary systemic concern.
- The Skill Deficit: Data reveals a preference for procedural "fixes" over pedagogical growth. While 100% of schools accommodate, the vast majority offer no law-specific services to build independent competency, relying instead on generalized campus resources.

Synthesis: To ensure long-term success, the process for accommodations must include context-driven decision-making informed by the person's academic and professional goals.

REFERENCES

