Darius Mehrabi - Northwestern Pritzker School of Law J.D. application (LSAC)

Chicago, IL · darius.mehrabi.test@example.com · Applying to: Northwestern Pritzker School of Law J.D., 2026-27

Darius Mehrabi is a fictional applicant written for this sample. His employer, his family's restaurant, the help desk and every person named here are invented.

At a glance

- **LSAT:** 163 (January 2026) and 168 (June 2026)
- **Undergraduate GPA (LSAC):** 3.46
- **University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign:** B.A., Economics, minor in Spanish, May 2022
- **Work since college:** four years full-time at a freight brokerage
- **Languages:** English (native), Spanish (professional working), Farsi (conversational, spoken at home)
- **Interview:** Kira video interview, completed October 2026

Resume

EXPERIENCE

Prairie Line Freight (truckload freight brokerage, about 140 employees), Chicago, IL *Carrier Compliance Lead*, March 2024 - present - Lead a team of three analysts who vet roughly 1,100 active carriers, most of them owner-operators with one to five trucks. We check their insurance, operating authority and safety records. - Designed and rolled out an automated insurance-expiration check after a lapsed-policy loss in 2023 (see below). Since launch, no loads have gone to an uninsured carrier, and manual review time has fallen by about 9 hours a week. - Wrote the 22-page carrier onboarding guide. Translated the guide and the dispute-intake form into Spanish.

Carrier Compliance Analyst, July 2022 - February 2024 - Reviewed carrier certificates of insurance and rate confirmations, and handled payment disputes with carriers. - In August 2023 I cleared a carrier whose cargo policy had lapsed two days earlier. A $41,000 load of refrigerated produce was lost, and the company absorbed most of the claim. I reported the error to my manager the same morning.

Mehrabi's Kabob House (family restaurant, 40 seats), Peoria, IL *Cook, cashier, and eventually the person who read the paperwork*, summers 2015-2021 and spring 2020; about 30 hours/week in spring 2020

EDUCATION

University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign - B.A., Economics, minor in Spanish, May 2022. GPA 3.46; major GPA 3.61. - Senior paper: *"Rent Relief That Never Arrived: Small Restaurant Leases in Central Illinois, 2020-2021."*

ACTIVITIES - **Intake Volunteer, Kedzie Avenue Business Help Desk**, Chicago (Oct 2024 - present), 3 hours/week: I do intake for small-business owners, mostly in Spanish, before they meet volunteer attorneys. I summarize their leases, licenses and vendor contracts. About 70 intakes so far. - **Peer Tutor, Spanish 200-level, UIUC Language Center** (2020-2022), 6 hours/week, paid. - **Club soccer, UIUC** (2018-2022). Equipment manager in my senior year. - **Bar trivia team captain**, Logan Square (2023 - present). We have won twice in three years.

INTERESTS: Matthew Desmond's *Evicted*, which I read the summer after my father nearly lost the restaurant; Persian cooking; slow-pitch softball.

Personal statement

In April 2020, my father handed me a 38-page commercial lease and said, "You're the one in college." The governor's order had closed dining rooms. Our landlord had emailed to say the full $4,200 for April was still due, plus a late fee. My father had signed that lease in 2016 without a lawyer, because, as he puts it, lawyers are for people who have already lost.

I was twenty and an economics major. I had never read a contract longer than a phone plan. Over three nights at the restaurant's back table I went through the lease twice with a highlighter. I found a force majeure clause. It was narrower than I hoped, because it excused the landlord's obligations and not ours. I also found a clause allowing rent deferral "by mutual written agreement," which gave me something to ask for. I called a volunteer attorney through a free county bar program. She spent forty minutes telling me what I had understood correctly and what I had not. Then I wrote the landlord a one-page proposal: half rent for four months and the remainder repaid over a year. He signed it.

That semester my grades fell, which I explain in the addendum. The restaurant survived 2020. It did not survive its 2023 renewal, when the new owner of the building doubled the rent. By then I knew enough to see that my father had nothing to negotiate with, and that was harder to watch than the first crisis.

At Prairie Line Freight, my job is reading the fine print on other small businesses: insurance certificates, operating authority and rate confirmations for carriers that are often one man and one truck. I came in assuming owner-operators were careless with paperwork. Then I spent two years on the phone with them. Most were exactly my father: working seventy hours a week, signing documents written by bigger parties, and hoping.

In August 2023 I was the careless one. I cleared a carrier whose cargo insurance had lapsed two days before a load, and $41,000 of produce spoiled on I-55. I told my manager that morning. I did not sleep much that week. Over the following two months, mostly on my own time, I mapped every point where an expiration date could slip past a human reviewer. I then worked with our IT contractor to build a daily automated check against insurers' records. A senior dispatcher, Ray Kowalczyk, thought the new process was busywork that would slow his loads. I sat with him for two shifts and timed it. It added

about ninety seconds per carrier. He became the person who reminds new hires to run it. In March 2024 I was promoted to lead the team.

I want to be the lawyer my father did not think he could afford: a transactional attorney who negotiates leases, structures small businesses and reads contracts before they are signed rather than after they fail. On Thursday nights at the Kedzie Avenue help desk, I see what forty minutes with a volunteer attorney can do. I want to be the one giving those forty minutes.

Optional essay: Why Northwestern Pritzker

I have lived in Chicago for four years, and every business I care about is here. Northwestern's emphasis on applicants with work experience matters to me. I learn best when the material connects to something I have already gotten wrong. The Donald Pritzker Entrepreneurship Law Center in the Bluhm Legal Clinic is the clearest reason I am applying. Students there represent early-stage businesses under supervision, and that is the practice I want. I also value the school's focus on teamwork. My best work at Prairie Line came from persuading a skeptical colleague rather than overruling him. From law school I expect two things. The first is the formal training to do correctly what I have been doing by instinct. The second is a network of Chicago lawyers who take small clients seriously.

Addendum: Spring 2020 grades

My spring 2020 GPA was 2.71. When classes moved online, I went home to Peoria. I worked about 30 hours a week running takeout and handling the lease negotiation described above. I received a C+ in Intermediate Microeconomics, a course I should have dropped. I did not ask for help early enough. In my remaining four semesters I averaged 3.68 while tutoring six hours a week.

Addendum: LSAT

I scored 163 in January 2026. I had studied around my work schedule mostly by taking timed tests, without reviewing why I missed questions. For the June test I kept an error log and spent two months on Logical Reasoning flaw questions. My score rose to 168.

Recommenders

- Monica Feld, Director of Carrier Relations, Prairie Line Freight (my manager since 2022)
- A UIUC economics faculty member who advised my senior paper