

Career Tips for First Year Students

The National Association of Law Placement (NALP) has developed guidelines regarding your job search. Law school career services offices may begin offering services to 1L students after November 1. In addition, first year students may not contact any legal employers for summer employment prior to December 1; and legal employers may not approach you until December 15. These guidelines are in place in order for you to be able to concentrate on your studies during this crucial time.

You can best spend your time studying as hard as you can and getting involved in law school activities in order to “position” yourself within the law school community. Good grades are always important, especially for certain legal employment markets.

We will be offering orientation sessions for all first years regarding resumes and cover letters after November 1st. Please check the CSO (Career Services Office) website calendar for exact dates and locations. At the same time, you will be instructed on how to access our job bank online (see the chapter on DULawCareers.net). These sessions are a wonderful way to introduce you to the first steps in the job search process.

You should also begin to attend programs to meet practicing attorneys in Denver. These programs can help you determine which practice areas may be of interest to you. Check the calendar often, and come to as many programs as possible. CSO programs spotlight metro area attorneys who are happy to talk with students after the program or in their offices at a later time. Participate in PALS (our networking brunch and dinner) and join the Colorado Bar Association as a student member (www.cobar.org). Join any clubs, student organizations, or other activities that interest you. You should also try to get a legal job during the summer after your first year -- an internship for credit, volunteer position, or a paid position -- to gain practical experience.

SUMMARY:

- ✓ Study hard!
- ✓ Attend career orientation sessions
- ✓ Participate in PALS, join the CBA, and get involved!
- ✓ Attend CSO programs such as specialty series to learn about the law.
- ✓ Get a paid, volunteer or for credit legal internship or paid for next summer.
- ✓ Make an appointment to see a CSO Career Consultant for help with resumes, job search strategies, cover letters, etc.

Career Tips for Second Year Students

The summer between your first and second year should be spent working as a law clerk on a voluntary or paid basis and/or working as a research assistant for a professor.

Although it can be difficult to get a paid position this early in the game, working as an intern for credit (or unpaid and not for credit) is also an excellent way to gain valuable experience. Working as an intern is a wonderful way to determine if you would be interested in working for this organization, and being an intern early can open the door to a permanent position later for you in your career. As an intern, an attorney may take you under his/her wing and let you experience pieces of the job that you would not be exposed to as a paid clerk. For example, as a paid clerk, your supervisor may not bring you to court to watch a hearing or let you sit in on client meetings because you are not adding value to the bottom line. However, as an

intern, you would often be invited to participate in these types of activities. (See the Internship chapter for more details.)

During the fall semester, the Career Services Office administers on-campus interviewing. (Please see the chapter about on campus interviewing for more details.) Participating law firms screen (select) the candidates they wish to interview. You are welcome to participate in this event, but remember these firms are usually very grade driven. Do not despair. This is not the way most people get their jobs after graduation. Most people find permanent employment through networking and interning. In addition, some judges begin accepting applications for judicial clerkships in the summer after your second year, which would begin the year after you graduate. Attend the judicial clerkship workshops in the winter and spring of your second year, read the Judicial Clerkship chapter and speak with professors such as Jay Brown, Alan Chen, Marty Katz and Fred Cheever; Career Services Consultant Kathleen Nalty; or Public Service Director Norma-May Isakow (all former judicial clerks).

If you do not secure summer employment through OCI, begin networking and informational interviewing. (Read the Networking chapter). Attend CSO programs to meet practicing attorneys and learn more about different practice areas and environments.

SUMMARY:

- ✓ Consider whether OCI is right for you.
- ✓ Consider applying for a judicial clerkship.
- ✓ Attend CSO programs to meet practicing attorneys.
- ✓ Obtain a legal position for the summer after your second year, whether it is paid, volunteer or an internship.
- ✓ Make an appointment to see a CSO Career Consultant for additional help with resumes, job search strategies, cover letters, etc.

Career Tips for Third Year Students

As a third year, you should continue to work as a law clerk or intern in an area of practice that interests you. This should not be the time to begin your search for permanent employment; rather you should be continuing your search. You should have a substantial list of contacts through your networking efforts by now. Keep up the good work. Remember, networking never ends!

Many firms will be coming on campus to interview again through OCI, but the opportunities are more limited for third year students. Keep checking the on-line job postings, and keep in touch with your networking contacts. Let everyone you know, lawyer or not, that you are looking for permanent employment after graduation.

Sign up for a mock interview to hone your interviewing skills. Get involved with clinical programs to gain more practical experience. Attend CLEs and other events to continue to network. Make sure you follow up with everyone you meet.

Keep your eye on the DULawCareers.net on-line job postings. These change daily. Make sure your resume and cover letter are in perfect condition. Take a look at your networking efforts and refine them as needed. For instance, you may need to redefine the target group you have identified. Keep writing and meeting with attorneys regarding advice and information. Follow up with people you have not spoken with in a while, and draft a new letter for more informational interviews. (See chapter on networking for more specific details.) Most people get their permanent jobs through someone they know, so get out there and start “knowing” some people! Attend career fairs and other CSO programs and apply for jobs that are interesting to you.

SUMMARY:

- ✓ Now is the time to reap the benefits of a strong network foundation!
- ✓ Participate in mock interview programs.
- ✓ Check DULawCareers.net religiously for job postings that appeal to you.
- ✓ Attend CSO career fairs.
- ✓ Make an appointment to see a CSO Career Consultant for additional help with resumes, job search strategies, cover letters, etc.

Career Tips for Evening Students

The Career Services Office is sensitive to the unique needs of our evening students. We offer extended hours during the academic year. Please check our website for an updated listing of our hours. We are available to help you with counseling needs via e-mail, fax and phone also. Please check our calendar in advance so you can make the appropriate arrangements. In addition, most of our programs are videotaped. Most are available as streaming videos on the Career Services website. Others are available in our Resource Center in the event you are unable to attend.

As an evening student, you must think about how you will seek legal experience while you are in law school. The fact that a number of evening students are employed full-time in responsible, well-paying positions can pose a challenge. However, it is important to recognize that acquiring legal experience while you are in law school definitely increases your marketability. Legal experience demonstrates that you are serious about pursuing a legal career, that you have acquired the necessary skills to practice, and you will have references who can speak of your ability as an attorney. Please understand, a clerking position will be lower paying, may exclude benefits such as health insurance, etc. and will offer little responsibility compared to your present position. If this is not an option for you, please consider other options:

- Explore the possibility of working on law-related projects in your present position.
- Be sure to get to know your professors and perform research for them if possible. These positions are often very independent and would allow you to perform the work in your spare time.
- Participate in moot court, write for a law journal, apply to writing competitions and join legal organizations so you can meet contacts.
- Whenever possible, participate in clinics on campus such as: Student Law Office, Rocky Mountain Children's Law Center, or EarthJustice.
- Try to get legal work on a project basis where you can work at home in the evenings and on weekends for a solo practitioner or small firm.
- Make an appointment with the Career Consultants in the CSO who can assist you in strategizing about other ways you can build your resume while you're in law school.