

# **Career Development & Opportunities Handbook**

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# **Chapter 1**

## **Introduction to The Office of Career Development & Opportunities**

# OUR MISSION STATEMENT

## *Our Mission is to ...*

- Educate students and alumni to develop necessary skills for locating and obtaining satisfying and meaningful employment
- Connect students and alumni with practicing attorneys in a variety of settings
- Facilitate employers' connections with students and alumni
- Assist alumni as they make job changes or transitions from law into alternative careers

## CONTACT US

**Office of Career Development & Opportunities**  
**University of Denver Sturm College of Law**  
**2255 East Evans Ave., Suite 223**  
**Denver, CO 80208-0620**  
**Phone: (303) 871-6124 (Main) Fax: (303) 871-6080**

**E-mail Address:** [careers@law.du.edu](mailto:careers@law.du.edu)

**Website:** <http://www.law.du.edu/career>

**Job Database:**

**DU Law Careers Online,** <https://law-denver-csm.symphlicity.com/students/>

**Blog:** [lawcareerblog.law.du.edu](http://lawcareerblog.law.du.edu)

**OFFICE HOURS: 8:30 am – 5:00 pm, MON – FRI**

**Our office schedules late hours (5:00 – 6:00 pm) by request only. Please contact the office to request any appointment outside of the office hours window.**

# FACTS ABOUT THE OFFICE OF CAREER DEVELOPMENT & OPPORTUNITIES

A broad spectrum of services and resources are provided, including but not limited to:

- **Career Consultation & Assigned Counselors** — The CDO provides one-on-one career consulting sessions during which we assist students in identifying career goals and mapping out job search strategies. Every incoming student is assigned to a Career Consultant for an initial meeting and follow up throughout their law school career. Our Career Consultant staff is also available to critique resumes and cover letters, as well as advise students and alumni regarding effective interviewing and networking techniques.
- **Jobs Database & Matching Opportunities** — Students and alumni can access *DU Law Careers Online* (DU Law's unique link with *Symplicity*) to identify and research specific job openings, post resumes, and apply for positions. For more information, see Chapter 11 on *DU Law Careers Online* or contact the CDO. The CDO also works with employers on non-posted positions to identify candidates who meet their criteria through use of this database, email outreach, and personal interaction with students.
- **Employer Outreach** – The CDO Staff continually reaches out to a wide variety of employers in both private and public sector to identify job opportunities, familiarize employers with our office and Denver Law, and learn helpful information to share with our students and alumni.
- **Resource Center** – The CDO maintains a Resource Center with numerous career development materials. Students are welcome to review these materials during office hours.
- **Alumni Volunteer Network (AVN)** – The Alumni Volunteer Network (AVN) provides a unique opportunity for alumni and students to make valuable connections with alumni to learn about specific areas of practice, various locales and/or alternative career fields. The AVN is an excellent resource to establish or enhance your professional network.
- **Career & Student Development Programs** – The CDO presents many helpful programs and workshops throughout the year addressing various aspects of career and student development. Representative programs include:

*Resume/Cover Letter Writing Workshop* – Students learn to prepare effective legal resumes and cover letters from Career Consultants in the CDO.

*Interviewing/Networking Workshop* – Students are instructed on how to develop successful interviewing and networking skills.

*Job Search Workshops* – Offered several times a year, these workshops provide various strategies and tips for each year of law school, and often include panels made up of our CDO Staff, outside attorneys and alumni, current upper level students, and legal research firms.

***Mock Interviews*** – In addition to the mock interviews our consultants conduct with students on an as-needed basis, our office presents Mock Interview Days in the fall and spring. This provides students with an opportunity to practice their interviewing skills with attorneys from the legal community.

***Fall Recruiting/On-Campus Interviews (OCI)*** – During the Fall Semester each year, legal employers visit our campus to interview students for summer associate/clerkship positions and permanent positions. Additional employers request our office to collect applications from students for their consideration. Prior to the Fall Recruiting/OCI season, our Career Consultants are available to assist students who choose to submit their materials. A smaller OCI is conducted during the Spring Semester.

***Government & Public Sector Employment*** – Programs provide students with an opportunity to hear from a variety of government and public sector attorneys about practicing law in the public sector. Past presenters have included the U.S. Department of Justice, Colorado Attorney General's Office, local District Attorneys' offices, Denver City Attorney's Office, U.S. Attorney's Office, Public Defenders Office, EPA, SEC, the Presidential Management Fellows program (PMF) and others.

***Private Sector / Corporate Employment*** – Our office coordinates many programs, panels, and networking events to connect students to attorneys in a variety of practice areas in the private sector, including Employers' Perspectives panel, Law Practice Specialty fair and panels, Practice Area Networking lunch/dinner, In-House Counsel panel, Employer Expo, and more.

***CU / DU Public Interest Career Fair*** – Students are provided with opportunities to explore careers in public interest law, including an annual career fair coordinated jointly by the law schools at DU and the University of Colorado. Held solely for government and public interest employers, the fair site alternates each year between DU and CU.

***Judicial Clerkship/Externship Workshops and Panels*** – These programs provide extensive information about the value of judicial clerkships (after law school) and externships (during law school) and the mechanics of applying and interviewing for these positions.

***Corporate Apprenticeship Program*** – The DU Law Corporate Apprenticeship Program (CAP), offered in the spring semester, allows 12-15 law students the opportunity to work as interns in the law departments of several companies in the greater Denver area. An integral part of this program is completion of four written assignments, discussed at four mandatory seminars led by adjunct professors and participating corporate attorneys, which highlight unique issues facing in-house counsel.

***Partners at Law (PALS) Dinner and Brunch*** – Co-sponsored with the Alumni Relations Office, these popular programs, held once in the fall and once in the spring, bring students and practicing attorneys together to enjoy informal on-campus dinners and brunches.

# **Chapter 2**

## **Career and Professional Development Requirement**

## **CPD REQUIREMENT BREAKDOWN**

Beginning in the fall semester of 2016, incoming first-year JD students (including 2016 summer start students), must complete seven experiences that qualify for Denver Law's Career & Professional Development requirement in order to graduate as described below.

### **1L Component (for 1L day and evening students)**

- Complete 5 qualifying career & professional development programs of your choice. Qualifying CPD programs will be designated on the CDO Blog, Denver Law Career Connection <http://lawcareerblog.law.du.edu/>
- You may replace up to 2 qualifying programs with individual career advising appointments in the Office of Career Development & Opportunities ("CDO")
- Additional programming for evening students will be provided through the evening division Lawyering Process course

### **Upper Level Component**

- Complete a minimum of 2 career advising appointments between 2L year and graduation
- Phone appointments are available

\*Students are responsible for checking into each career advising appointment and qualifying program by punching in their DU ID numbers on our i-Pad so that we can accurately track progress toward the CPD requirement.



## **The CDO Offers You . . .**

- Individualized career advising from knowledgeable and responsive legal career professionals
- Denver Law Careers Online (powered by Symplicity) – a robust and up-to-date job board for students and alumni
- Denver Law Career Connection – a blog dedicated to providing you with information on upcoming career programs, career tips and more.  
<http://lawcareerblog.law.du.edu/>
- A vast network of JD professionals for your benefit
- Our best efforts to help you find a job and build the skills necessary to succeed in your career

## **In return, you can do the following to build a strong professional reputation . . .**

- Devote significant time to your career & professional development
- Arrive 5 minutes early for all job interviews, informational interviews, mock interviews and career advising appointments
- If you must cancel an interview or appointment due to illness or other extenuating circumstances, please notify all parties who need to know as soon as possible
- Above all, treat your classmates, employers, alumni and law school employees the way you would like to be treated

# **Chapter 3**

## **Application Materials**

# **Part A:**

## **Resumes**

## Perfecting Your Resume

### Your Resume should:

- Be an individual expression of who you are.
- Make a *great* first impression—this is what determines whether you get an interview!
- Highlight qualities and experiences which set you apart from the rest of the crowd, while maintaining the traditional professionalism required in the field of law.
- Be formatted to look appealing on its face
- Highlight your *significant* accomplishments—this is not an autobiography
- Be different for each application--focus on the skills that this employer is looking for, for this position
- Be truthful—no exaggeration
- Be easy to read—no crowded pages or tiny fonts. 11 or 12 pt. font, reasonable margins.
- Be printed on high quality paper
- Be **one page** (unless you have *significant* work experience, e.g., career prior to law school)
- Be logically formatted for a 20-second (or less) review

### Wait...20-seconds?

- Yes. Research shows that many employers will look at your resume for 20 seconds or less. Your resume needs to present information in an easy to digest and “skimable” format.

### Your Resume should **NOT**:

- Have any typos! A typo can send you to the “no” pile. Proofread for accuracy, grammar, punctuation, correct phone number, etc.). Have two other people proofread for good measure.
- Include personal information (i.e. marital status, children, etc.)
- Include information that does not contribute to your presentation—if the information does not *significantly* contribute to the picture you are trying to paint for the employer to get the interview, leave it off.
- Include a photograph
- List references. Have a separate list of references available if requested (or send a separate list if references are requested as part of the application).

# Resume Format

1. **Heading** (name, address, email, telephone)
  - a. Use the same heading on your resume, cover letter, and any other application materials (writing sample cover page, reference list, etc.)
  - b. If you have a local address, you may want to use it to demonstrate your connection to the city where the employer is located (in addition to your law school address).
  - c. Use the best phone number to reach you—and make sure your voice mail is set up with a professional message. Employers will call the number you list to schedule an interview. Check your messages!
2. **Education/Honors/School-Related Activities** (in reverse chronological order)
  - a. List your law school and college—typically you do not go back farther than college
  - b. List names and locations of schools, your degree(s), and the year it was obtained or is expected
  - c. Include your GPA if 3.0 or higher, and class rank if in the top one-third
  - d. Under each school entry, include significant awards, activities, and honors. If you had an achievement or honors section on your resume prior to law school, those entries should now be listed under your school in the education section.
3. **Professional/Work Experience**
  - a. *Be specific!* Include your title, months and years of employment, name and location of employer.
  - b. Instead of simply listing job duties for each position, try to write more compelling “**accomplishment statements**” that single out and spotlight your major achievements. See more information on this below.
  - c. You may want to have one section called “Experience,” or you may want to have several section that highlight “Legal Experience” and “Other Experience,” or another relevant category like “Teaching Experience,” depending on the job.
  - d. Include your legal internships/externships. You can also include clinical experience in this section. *This may be your strong point!*
  - e. Volunteer experience can also be included.
4. **Interests**
  - a. You may want a “skills and interests” or “interests” or “certifications and skills” section. We recommend this section in the Colorado market.
  - b. This can include special skills (fluency in a foreign language, advanced computer skills beyond those expected (for example do not include Word or Westlaw), extracurricular activities, hobbies, etc.).
5. **Certificates/Licenses/Bar Admission(s)**
  - a. If you are admitted to the bar, list your admissions

# Professional/Work Experience: How to list your skills

## Identify Your Skills

- Ask yourself: “What special abilities have I developed which allowed me to perform successfully in my previous activities/jobs?”
- Ask yourself: “What special abilities have I developed which will allow me to perform successfully in THIS job?”
- Do not be concerned that you have little or no previous experience in legal jobs. **Job skills are transferable.** For example, the communications skills learned in a retail position will be useful in your future legal career for both business and client development.
- Consider these skills – all three categories are important and highly valued by employers!
  - **Technical/Professional Skills** – skills related to performing within a job and acquired by education, training, reading, and/or hands-on experiences (i.e., internships, clerkships, volunteer opportunities). These skills are often listed in advertised job postings: e.g., legal research abilities, legal writing skills, working knowledge of a certain area of law (e.g., Uniform Commercial Code).
  - **Functional Skills** – skills related to people, information, and things that are transferable from one field to another (e.g., organization, communication, management, multi-tasking, leadership). These abilities are easy to overlook or downplay, but are highly valued by prospective employers and crucial to successful workplace performance.
  - **Personal/Adaptive Skills** – skills often referred to as personality and/or character traits (e.g., patience, decisiveness, dedicated, team player, self-starter, quick learner, detail- oriented, work well under pressure).

## Write Accomplishment Statements

- Think in terms of baseball and ask, "What were my triples and homeruns in that job?" Once you identify the triples and homeruns, write out an explanation of what you did.
- It may be helpful to describe each experience using a **P-A-R (Problem-Action-Result)** formula. Describe the **Problem** (or challenge/responsibility) you faced in the position, **Action(s)** you took to reach an objective/goal, and the **Result** or accomplishment.

Contrast the effectiveness of these two statements:

### **Basic/Generic Description**

Performed legal research and drafted a response to a motion for summary judgment

### **Using P-A-R Formula**

Drafted successful opposition to pivotal motion for summary judgment in personal injury case involving more than \$10 million in damages

- List job duties where accomplishment statements are not feasible.
  - If you don't have any significant achievements in a particular job, it is perfectly acceptable to list your job duties and responsibilities.
  - It need not be an exhaustive list. Stick to the more significant duties that will be meaningful to the reader.
- Use **action verbs** to start each statement and omit personal pronouns (i.e., “I” or “my”). A list of action verbs is included below.
- **Quantify** number of people, products, profits involved (e.g., “Supervised 15-20 community volunteers”).

### Sample Job Duty Phrases

- Researched issues pertaining to pending motion to dismiss in complex civil litigation case
- Researched and drafted memoranda on discrete issues of law including ... (piercing the corporate veil, 1933 Act securities regulations, CERCLA, etc.)
- Assisted in discovery including drafting deposition questions, interrogatories and requests for production of documents
- Reviewed motions, researched relevant case law, prepared summaries of legal arguments and assisted in preparation of court rulings
- Prepared and filed documents in (dependency and neglect proceedings, probate case)
- Drafted complaint in complex contract case involving dispute over multi-million dollar parcel of real estate
- Prepared settlement agreement to resolve \$30,000 construction contract case between general contractor and property owner
- Successfully represented indigent, Spanish-speaking woman from Columbia in all aspects of a two-day asylum hearing before a federal immigration judge; client granted asylum as a result
- Obtained a sentence reduction for client in criminal case from one year to ninety days in jail
- Developed factual and legal premise to support dismissal of frivolous trespassing suit, saving client potential damages exceeding \$10,000

## **Action Verbs for Resumes**

A list of action verbs to assist you in describing your experiences and accomplishments:

accelerated	critiqued	implemented	raised
accomplished	decided	improved	recommended
achieved	defined	increased	recorded
acquired	delegated	informed	recruited
activated	delivered	initiated	reduced
adapted	demonstrated	instituted	rendered
adjusted	derived	instructed	repaired
administered	designed	interpreted	reported
advised	detected	interviewed	represented
allocated	determined	introduced	reproduced
analyzed	developed	invented	researched
annotated	devised	investigated	resolved
anticipated	directed	judged	responded
applied	distributed	led	restored
appraised	drafted	listened	retained
arranged	edited	maintained	retrieved
articulated	educated	managed	reviewed
assembled	effected	marketed	revised
assessed	elicited	mastered	rewrote
assigned	encouraged	measured	routed
authored	established	mediated	scheduled
balanced	evaluated	modeled	searched
briefed	examined	modified	selected
budgeted	executed	molded	served
built	exhibited	monitored	shaped
catalogued	expanded	motivated	shared
categorized	expedited	named	showed
chaired	experienced	negotiated	simplified
clarified	experimented	observed	solicited
cleared	explained	obtained	solved
coded	explored	operated	specified
collaborated	facilitated	ordered	spoke
compared	figured	organized	stimulated
compiled	financed	originated	structured
completed	focused	outlined	studied
composed	forecasted	oversaw	supervised
computed	formed	perceived	supported
conducted	formulated	performed	synthesized
consolidated	fostered	persuaded	targeted
constructed	founded	planned	taught
contacted	functioned	planted	tested
continued	generated	presented	trained
contracted	governed	presided	transferred
conveyed	grouped	printed	tutored
conveyed	guided	produced	updated
coordinated	helped	protected	utilized
corresponded	identified	provided	verified
counseled	illustrated	publicized	wrote
created	immunized	questioned	



## **Providing Substance to Your Resume**

**During your three or four years in law school, build up your resume through the following:**

- Participating in clinics and internship programs, including Student Law Office, Corporate Apprenticeship Program, Externships for Credit, other Clinical Programs
- Getting involved in student / volunteer activities, including student organizations
- Helping a professor as a Research Assistant
- Holding part- and full-time legal positions
- Concentrating on your grades
- Applying to writing competitions
- Participating in moot court competitions, such as Barrister's Cup and Negotiations
- Joining the American Bar Association (ABA), or the Colorado and Denver Bar Associations (CBA & DBA) as a student member. Attend section or committee meetings in the areas of law you are interested in practicing.
- Joining an Inn of Court: The American Inns of Court is a national organization whose members include judges, lawyers and a few law students. Inns meet once a month for dinner to hold programs and discuss matters of professionalism, ethics and skills. It is modeled after the English apprenticeship system for barristers. There are 7 Inns in Denver. *Please see the CDO for more specific information and visit [www.innsofcourt.org](http://www.innsofcourt.org).*
- Getting published
  - Write for a Law Journal
  - Interview an attorney about an interesting case or area of expertise; submit the resulting article to *The Docket* or *Law Week Colorado*
  - Write an article on a current legal issue and submit it to the newsletter of the appropriate bar committee for publication
- Joining a chapter of Toastmasters to improve public speaking abilities
- Attending bar sponsored continuing legal education (CLE) programs to meet local attorneys practicing in areas of interest

## **Resume Programs**

The Office of Career Development & Opportunities encourages you to either attend in person, or view the **streaming video** of a previous presentations on resumes and cover letters. The streaming video of past workshops is available on the CDO Events and Videos page. Contact the CDO for the login and password to view the streaming videos.

# Daniel R. Firstyear

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93876 S. University Blvd., Denver, CO 80222 ▪ (303) 999-1666 ▪ donel15@law.du.edu

## EDUCATION

**University of Denver Sturm College of Law, Denver, CO**  
J.D. Candidate, May 2015

**Northeastern State University, Tahlequah, OK**  
B.S., Criminal Justice w/ Paralegal option, May 2012  
Minor: English

- *Magna Cum Laude*, GPA 3.X
- Dean's Honor Roll

## PROFESSIONALEXPERIENCE

**Center Cinemas, Grove, OK** May 2009–August 2012  
*Theater Manager*

- Implemented a weekly cleaning and storage procedure, further reducing film scratches
- Repaired Digital Theatre Sound System by reseating problematic sound boards, which restored audio quality
- Motivated employees and supervised employee training in furtherance of company principles and efficiency

**Applebee's Restaurant, Muskogee, OK** November 2008–May 2009  
*Dishwasher*

- Maintained outstanding restaurant appearance, while accomplishing daily food preparation goals and dishwashing duties

**Center Cinemas, Grove, OK** January 2007–August 2008  
*Concessionist*

- Adapted to varying customer occupancy while streamlining customer service
- Resolved customer complaints by mediating disputes and finding common ground
- Recommended the implementation of written closing procedures to further increase employee productivity

## SKILLS/INTERESTS

- General computer knowledge with minor networking experience and system implementation
- Electronics, health and fitness, criminal law

# Jane Experienced Firstyear

2222 S. Highend Street • Denver, CO 80210 • (303) 555-9999 • james15@law.du.edu

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## EDUCATION

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### University of Denver Sturm College of Law, Denver, CO

Juris Doctor expected May 2015

- GPA: 3.XX; Class Rank: Top X%
- Robert Neil Barry Native American Scholarship
- Sturm College of Law General Scholarship
- Vice President, Public Interest Law Group

### Northern Arizona University, Flagstaff, AZ

Bachelor of Science, Environmental Science - Policy and Administration, May 2009

- GPA: 3.XX; Dean's List (6 of 8 semesters)
- AmeriCorps Service Scholarship

## EXPERIENCE

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### The Bertram Law Firm, Kansas City, MO

March 2012 – July 2012

#### *Legal Assistant*

- Gathered and organized clients' medical data for plaintiffs' Vioxx consortium; drafted memoranda relied upon to select top consortium cases
- Extensively researched potential clients' medical records and drafted internal memoranda used by attorneys to determine clients' claims status
- Conducted potential new client intake phone interviews; prepared internal memoranda relied upon by attorneys to evaluate claims
- Worked closely with attorneys to prepare claim status letters for thousands of class action members; answered phone calls and questions on claims for class members

### Coconino Rural Environmental Corps, Flagstaff, AZ

August 2010 – January 2012

#### *Supervisor*

- Supervised AmeriCorps volunteer crews conducting various environmental forest restoration projects throughout back country of Arizona
- Conducted chainsaw, fire prevention, and environmental education training for new Coconino Rural Environmental Corps volunteers
- Worked closely with project partners from numerous government agencies to achieve environmental restoration goals

### AmeriCorps, Flagstaff, AZ

June 2009 – August 2010

#### *Volunteer*

- Worked with partnered fire agencies to reduce potential forest fire fuels, mitigate bark beetle outbreak, and provide heating fuel for Navajo Reservation
- Worked closely with crew members to restore thousands of acres of pronghorn habitat
- Participated in bark beetle mitigation at the Arizona Snowbowl in extreme environmental conditions
- Completed over 500 hours of community service

## INTERESTS

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Fishing, Hiking, Backpacking, Rock-climbing, Music, Skiing, Sports

## Roger Secondyear

1234 Evans Ave • Denver, CO 80210 • 303-123-4567 • rsecondyear18@law.du.edu

### EDUCATION

#### **University of Denver Sturm College of Law, Denver, CO**

J.D. Candidate, May 2018; GPA: 3.12/4.0

- Scholarships: Provost's Merit Scholarship (two-thirds tuition)
- Certificates: Certificate in Basic Legal Research
- Memberships: National Trial Team, ranked top 6 in the country by *U.S. News and World Report*
- Awards: Advocates Cup, 3rd place in category of "Best Advocate" out of 64 competitors, 2016;  
Hogan & Hartson CU-DU Cup (top 10 teams from each school), 2015
- Advocacy: Trial Practice I - Intensive (invitation only); Trial Practicum (invitation only); Experiential Evidence

#### **Indiana University, Bloomington, IN**

Bachelor of Arts, May 2014; GPA: 3.5/4.0

Major: Political Science; Minors: Criminal Justice, Sociology

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### EXPERIENCE

#### **Appeals Intern**

*Office of the District Attorney First Judicial District*

*Sept. 2015-Dec. 2016*

- Analyzed court transcripts, trial evidence, defense motions and briefs
- Researched legal issues including driver's license revocations, speedy trial rights, sex offenses, the Establishment Clause, body cameras, and joinder of criminal defendants
- Drafted response briefs on behalf of the Chief Appellate District Attorney for filing with the court

#### **Legal Intern**

*U.S. Office of Housing and Urban Development, Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity*

*June-August 2015*

- Wrote a 23-page Determination of Reasonable Cause in a disability discrimination case involving 2,427 apartment units
- Drafted a discovery request in a disability discrimination case
- Analyzed Respondent documentation to determine if Respondent complied with a conciliation agreement

#### **Technical Consultant**

*Indiana University, Bloomington, IN*

*Nov. 2012-June 2014*

- Identified and resolved technical problems affecting networks, computers, mobile devices, software, and university systems for over 200,000 Indiana University and Ivy Tech students, staff, faculty, and alumni
- Assisted users with clarity, expedience, and empathy while remaining in compliance with federal privacy law and best security practices

#### **Member**

*Standards and Ethics Board, Sigma Alpha Epsilon, Bloomington, IN*

*January-May 2013*

- Served as one of seven fraternity members elected to determine the guilt or innocence of, and the punishment for, a member accused by the Executive Council of violating fraternity law

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### COMMUNITY SERVICE

**Crestmont Boys & Girls Club, Bloomington, IN** (August 2013-January 2014)

- Tutored children for two hours weekly

**Bell Trace Retirement Community, Bloomington, IN** (September 2012-January 2014)

- Led a weekly one-hour seminar on brain health; visited retirees weekly

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### INTERESTS

Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu (purple belt), Wrestling (2x high school state finalist), Judo

**Insert Samantha Thirdyear**

# **Part B:**

## **Cover Letters**

## **The Importance of the Cover Letter**

The cover letter may be your first (and only) opportunity to personally engage a prospective employer. It is a key marketing tool to convince the employer to look at your resume. Think of it as “bait” you are using to “hook” the reader. Attorneys and hiring managers will look for a reason to dismiss your application. Don’t give it to them by writing a cover letter that is rambling and poorly written, or that contains typos or grammatical errors.

The primary purpose of your cover letter, when combined with your resume, is to get an interview. The second purpose is to communicate “the intangibles” not readily apparent from the factual content of your resume. It should be direct, to-the-point, and convey enthusiasm.

### **Five Rules to Keep in Mind:**

#### **1. Stay Employer-Focused: Imagine Yourself as the Employer**

Remember who your audience is and why you are writing to them. Quickly and clearly answer the employer’s unspoken questions:

- *Who are you?*
- *Why are you interested in this position? [Something unique/targeted about employer]*
- *Why should I be interested in meeting you? [What makes you different than the others in my resume stack?]*

To answer these questions, do some research on the employer. An effective cover letter:

- Highlights skills and abilities of most interest to the specific employer reading your letter based on your knowledge of their needs; and
- Demonstrates you are familiar with the firm or organization and what they do.

#### **2. Don’t Re-State Your Resume**

Your cover letter should **not** re-hash your resume. It is an opportunity to demonstrate how the skills you have developed previously (and are strengthening in law school) will be beneficial to this employer.

- *Briefly* describe the specific examples from your background that demonstrate you can meet the employer’s needs.
- Remember you are a law student building your legal career on a solid academic and practical foundation. Avoid phrases such as “*I’m the perfect candidate for this position because...*” or “*I am confident I will exceed your expectations in every way.*” Statements like these come across as egotistic and unsubstantiated.
- Make plausible claims and support them with credible/accurate accounts from your experiences, such as awards or commendations from employers or professors.

### 3. Style: One-Page and Concise

A successful cover letter is short (well under one page), concise, quickly absorbed, sounds genuine and rings sincere.

- **Demonstrate confidence and competence through use of simple, straightforward language.** Avoid complex, convoluted sentences, or obscure words that will make you come across as pompous and insincere.
- **Convey enthusiasm by providing specific examples** from your background that show a demonstrated interest and good fit for the position. Limit the use of flowery language to convey enthusiasm (e.g. “I am passionate about...”; or “this would be an unparalleled experience”).
- **Use active voice.** Passive voice is plodding and drags your presentation down. Active voice conveys a stronger, more positive impression (i.e. “I initiated the project” rather than “the project was initiated by me”). Active voice also demonstrates you are the “excellent writer” you claim to be.
- The **primary theme** of the letter should be about what you can contribute to the employer – your skills and strengths – not what the employer can do for you.
- Print your cover letter on the same paper as your resume. It will work against you to deviate significantly from the traditionally conservative legal style and format.

### 4. Lying – DON’T!

Don’t manufacture a story, or embellish an experience or credential, to impress a prospective employer. ***Integrity is critical in this profession.*** You want to begin developing a reputation for being trustworthy and honest *now*.

### 5. Avoid Typos and Grammatical Errors

Proofread your work, then have your CDO Career Consultant or a friend do it again!

- Sentence structure, punctuation and spelling should be flawless. Don’t give the employer an easy reason to toss your application in the “reject” pile.
- Address your letter to the specific contact or person responsible for legal hiring, not simply “Hiring Partner” or worse yet, “To whom it may concern”.
- Confirm the spelling of the recipient’s name and his/her gender and title (check website or LinkedIn, call the office, or check with the CDO).

These things may seem intuitive, but many qualified candidates are immediately rejected for seemingly “minor” errors. Attorneys will cut you no slack for a simple typo or, even worse, letters that are sloppy, reflect poor editing or proofing. Don’t wait to the last minute and rush to get them out or prepare letters when you are too tired to catch mistakes. Take the extra time, do the job well, and you will receive a better response to your letters.



## **Cover Letter Outline:**

Use our **COVER LETTER CHECKLIST / WORKSHEET** included in this section to outline your relevant points and guide you in drafting your cover letters.

### **1. Introductory Paragraph:** Answers the questions:

- “Who are you?”
- “Why have you contacted me?”
- “Why should I be interested in meeting you?”

This paragraph establishes your employment interest *and* generates interest in you. If you have a mutual acquaintance, or someone referred you to the individual to whom you are writing, use that in your opening paragraph: *[Name of referring party] recommended I contact you.*

Follow this with an explanation of what you are seeking, for example: *As a first-year law student at the University of Denver Sturm College of Law with a strong interest in natural resources law, I am very interested in pursuing a law clerk position with your office.*

Or, something along these lines: *[Referring party] has described your practice in the area of intellectual property as “cutting edge.” As a first-year law student at the University of Denver Sturm College of Law with a technical background and strong interest in patent law, I am excited to submit my application to clerk for your firm.*

If you don’t have a mutual acquaintance or referral, draw on something you learned from your research to explain why you are writing to this particular employer.

### **2. The Body of the Letter – One or Two Paragraphs**

In the words of Kimm Walton, author of *Guerrilla Tactics for Getting the Legal Job of Your Dreams*, this section of the letter is where you “wheel in your big guns.” You are answering the employer’s unspoken question: *Why should I meet/hire you?*

- Highlight items of relevance to this employer and the position.
- Describe specific training, achievements or experiences, before or during law school, that highlight your strengths and abilities and demonstrate the value you can bring.
- Establish a theme for these paragraphs using strong topic sentences. For example, “*My demonstrated interest in trial work and my strong research and writing skills make me a good fit for the Denver District Attorney’s office.*” Then, support this theme with specific examples from your background.

### 3. The Final Paragraph – Closing

- Thank the addressee for his/her time and consideration and indicate you look forward to meeting about the position. Example:

*I would welcome the opportunity to meet with you in person to further discuss this position and my background. I look forward to hearing from you and appreciate your consideration.*

- If appropriate, provide an opportunity for meeting or follow up (this is where you can let the employer know you will be in their area, or what you will do in terms of follow up, for instance reaching out within a week or so). Example:

*I would appreciate the opportunity to meet with you to discuss the possibility of summer employment with your firm. I will be in Kansas City during my holiday break, December 15-31. Would you have a few minutes to meet with me, at your convenience, during this timeframe? Thank you for your consideration.*

**A BEFORE and AFTER draft cover letter is included at the end of this section by way of example. (Note: If you are writing cover letters for judges, refer to the section on clerkship applications in the chapter on Judicial Clerkships.)**

## Cover Letter Checklist/Worksheet

	<b>Overall Appearance:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One page; 3-4 paragraphs</li> <li>• Use resume heading (your name and contact info) at top</li> <li>• Unique to Employer (does not look mass-produced)</li> <li>• Targeted to Position</li> <li>• Error free (spelling, grammar, format)</li> <li>• No one-sentence or extra lengthy paragraphs</li> <li>• Clear, simple sentences</li> <li>• Tone is assertive, confident, humble (not arrogant)</li> </ul>
	<b>Address Section and Salutation:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Letter addressed to an individual (not to whom it may concern)</li> <li>• Name spelled correctly with correct salutation (Mr. or Ms.)</li> <li>• Full company/firm address included</li> <li>• Dear Mr. Smith: (last name only on Dear line; colon, not comma)</li> </ul>
	<b>Opening Paragraph:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Position and employer identified (how you found out about position)</li> <li>• If someone referred you or you've met someone at employer, mention here</li> <li>• Your class year and reason you are interested in position/employer</li> <li>• A few key strengths; something unique about you that makes you a great candidate or fit</li> </ul>
	<b>Middle Paragraph(s): One or two paragraphs</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At least three relevant accomplishments, experiences or characteristics (not a restatement of your resume)</li> <li>• Include quantifiable results if applicable</li> <li>• Use action verbs and key words (relevant to position)</li> <li>• Experiences are not exaggerated</li> <li>• Can break into pre-law school and during law school; or by theme</li> </ul>
	<b>Closing Paragraph:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thank the reader for his/her consideration</li> <li>• Indicate you look forward to the opportunity to meet to discuss position</li> <li>• Note any enclosures/attachments if applicable</li> </ul>

## COVER LETTER DRAFT – *BEFORE EDITS*

Lauren H. Taylor  
5 Memory Lane  
Denver, CO 80555  
303-123-4567 ltaylor@law.edu

January 21, 2019

Clerkship Program  
Colorado Public Defender  
1506 Broadway  
Boulder, CO 80302

Re: Summer 2019 Internship Position

To Whom It May Concern,

I am a 2L student at the University of Denver Sturm College of Law, writing to apply for a summer internship with your office. My observations of the systematic injustices suffered by those without means who are charged with crimes prompted me to attend law school in order to become a public defender.

I believe I am the ideal candidate for this position. I am able to work with people from all walks of life after teaching in an inner city school. I have strong legal research and writing skills, and have practiced my trial skills in law school and in my externship with the Denver Municipal Public Defender.

I would welcome the opportunity to prove my sincere commitment to contributing to and enhancing the important work performed by the Colorado Public Defender. Jerilyn DeCoteau highly recommended that I contact you regarding my substantial interest in criminal defense. I have enclosed my resume and references.

Sincerely,

Lauren H. Taylor



# **Part C:**

## **Thank You Letters**

## **When to Write a Thank You Letter**

One of the first questions students and alumni ask is whether it is **imperative** to write a thank you note following an interview with an attorney. Will it *really* be the deciding factor in whether they hire you or someone else? The answer is: Possibly.

The same standards apply to a thank you note as they do to the cover letter. If it contains grammatical or typographical errors, is poorly composed, or reflects poor judgment, it may well immediately eliminate you from the race.

Conversely, even if it is perfect, it will not ensure you get the job. Your objective is to reinforce an affirmative decision made during the interview to offer you the job.

Thank you notes should be sent immediately after meeting with an attorney for any reason: an informational interview, a job interview, lunch or even coffee. It is important to acknowledge the information, as well as the gift of time, the person has given you.

As reflected in the samples attached, a thank you note need only be 3 short paragraphs. It should convey the following sentiments:

- Your gratitude for the time they set aside for you to discuss X.
- Summarize a few key points discussed and what you gained from hearing their perspective if it was an informational interview;
- If it was a job/clerk interview, reiterate in 1-2 lines why you maintain a strong interest in joining their law firm/organization and what you bring to the position;
- Conclude by reiterating your appreciation and state a plan-of-action if there is one discussed during the meeting, such as:
  - *[I look forward to hearing from you when a decision has been reached on my candidacy; or I will keep in touch with you during law school as we discussed; or I will follow-up with XYZ as you suggested.]*

How should I send my thank you note? Is email acceptable or should it be hand-written or typed? Again, everyone (literally: every person you ask) will have a different opinion.

Handwritten notes, (used only if you have attractive penmanship), are perceived by some as more personable, but due to space limitations, they do not allow you to reiterate much from the interview or your qualifications for the position. Use small note stationery for hand-written notes and bond printing paper for typed ones.

Emailing thank you notes depends on your impression of the attorney and the time-frame involved. Short of asking their secretary or the attorneys themselves how they prefer to be contacted if you have any questions after the interview, the decision must be based on your impression of the attorney and time frame involved.

If you learn that the decision will be made within days of the interview, for example, an emailed thank you would be perfectly acceptable. If it is a person you know well, a hand-written note works well, assuming your penmanship is attractive.

If you email your thank you, it should be in a traditional business letter format written in the body of the email. Do not attach it as a Word document.

**Gillian Filmore**  
2345 Lawyerly Street  
Aurora, CO 12345 (303) 555-1234

March 22, 2012

Linda Tompkins  
Hiring Partner  
A-Z Law Firm  
444 Water Street  
Denver, CO 80219

Dear Ms. Tompkins:

It was a pleasure to meet you yesterday to discuss a [summer clerkship/externship position/associate position] at the A-Z Law Firm. My interest in your firm was significantly strengthened after visiting with you and learning more about the firm.

I also enjoyed meeting and talking with Mr. Thompson, Ms. Shear and Ms. Whitcomb about their respective practices in employment, commercial and real estate law with refreshing candidness. I appreciated their honesty about the rigors of practicing law in a small firm. Working under pressure and juggling different projects will not be new to me! As my resume reflects and we discussed in my interview, I held a full-time job while in college and maintained a strong B-average. Moreover, my commentaries on current political issues were frequently featured in the campus newspaper, *The Bull Ship*. Currently, I am a staff editor for the Transportation Law Journal, participate in Moot Court, and am a member of the Doyle Inn of Court.

A-Z Law Firm is exactly the type of organization I have envisioned myself joining: a small, general practice law firm where I will have hands-on experience early in my career. I understand that you are still interviewing other candidates and that a decision will not be made until the end of the month. Thank you for considering me for the associate position and I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

*Gillian Filmore*

Gillian Filmore



**Samuel (Sam) C. Student**

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1234 Colorado Blvd. Aurora, CO 80015  
303-666-5555 sstudent07@student.law.du.edu

October 26, 2012

Jennifer Beam, Esq.  
1278 Havana Street  
Aurora, CO 80202

Dear Ms. Beam:

Thank you very much for the time you spent with me last Friday describing your family law practice. I genuinely appreciate the opportunity to gain advice from experienced attorneys such as you and am eager to contact the other family law practitioners whose names you shared with me.

Learning about the course of your career path as a law student was very instructive, especially your emphasis on thinking of the first day of law school as the first day of my legal career. Additionally, I see how the internships you chose and your subsequent clerkships enabled you to improve your research and legal writing abilities, as well as your knowledge about the issues inherent in domestic law matters.

Thank you, as well, for affirming my “career electives” as you so aptly called them. I have thoroughly enjoyed being a student member of the Rhone–Brackett Inn of Court, interning for the Honorable Michael Martinez in the Family Court Division of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Judicial District, and currently, my participation in the Child Advocacy Law Clinic of the Rocky Mountain Children’s Law Center. I hope they will illustrate my sincere commitment to the practice of family law after graduation (and passing the bar exam)!

As I mentioned, I would be honored to help you with some spot research if the need arises in the future. Again, thank you for your helpful advice and words of encouragement. I will keep you apprised of my law school career and will check in with you periodically. I have enclosed another copy of my resume for your convenience.

Sincerely,

**Sam Student**

Sam Student

Enclosure

***Jane Student***  
***123 Pontiac Denver, Colorado 80220 (720) 657-3843***  
*jstudent07@ student.law.du.edu*

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October 16, 2012

Gayle Joyce  
First Assistant Attorney General  
Colorado Attorney General's Office  
1525 Sherman Street; Floor 5  
Denver, CO 80203

Dear Ms. Joyce:

I enjoyed meeting you yesterday and wish to thank you for talking with me about your career in criminal law. As I mentioned, I am meeting with attorneys who are practicing in areas of law that interest me. Your perspectives on the national and regional trends in criminal prosecution, as well as qualities you look for in a potential employee, were extremely informative.

I appreciated your candidness about the importance of gaining as much practical experience as I can during law school, e.g. participating in moot court, writing competitions, or one of the many clinics here at the law school. Your advice to me to give serious thought to the type of work environment that I would enjoy, as well as setting long-term goals (to be modified as I gain experience and clearer preferences), was most helpful. After hearing about how you "built" your resume, I understand the importance of thinking about these issues as I begin my career.

Additionally, I enjoyed hearing about your own experience as a student intern in the Attorney General's Office and how that helped lead you to your current position. I was unaware of the fact that the Attorney General's Office rarely hires recent graduates. That alone is a strong argument in favor of interning in the office during law school in order to get to know the attorneys in the legal department.

I know how busy you must be, and I am sincerely grateful for the time you gave to me. I will keep you posted on developments in my law school career and subsequent job search.

Sincerely,

**Jane Student**

Jane Student

## Sally Smith

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1234 Colorado Blvd. Aurora, CO 80015  
303-674-8490 ssmith08@student.law.du.edu

September 6, 2012

Arthur Quinn  
Attorney General's Office  
620 Sherman Street  
Denver, CO 80222

Dear Mr. Quinn:

I wanted to drop you a note of thanks for coming to the University of Denver Sturm College of Law last week to speak to us about your area of practice. I thoroughly enjoyed having the opportunity to hear you, along with the other panelists, talk about the opportunities available in state government. As I begin my career, I am cognizant of the importance of building my resume with experience that will ultimately lead me to a position such as yours. To that end, I would appreciate the opportunity to come and meet with you in your office to discuss the particulars of your career path. I have enclosed my resume for your information.

Your career in the Natural Resources and Environmental Section of the Attorney General's Office sounds fascinating and is exactly the type of career that I'm interested in pursuing. My undergraduate degree in Environmental Sciences, coupled with my recent intern experience at the EarthJustice Environmental Law Clinic, has strengthened my interest in pursuing a career in environmental law.

Again, thank you for your participation in the Office of Career Development & Opportunities program last week. I will follow-up with your office next week to see if we can arrange a convenient time to meet.

Yours truly,

*Sally Smith*

Sally Smith

Enclosure

## **Maura Wiggins**

1200 S. Broadway, #123  
Denver, Colorado 80111 (303) 555-3333

March 30, 2012

Constance C. Talmage, Esq. Colorado Lawyers Committee  
1875 Lawrence Street, Suite 200  
Denver, Colorado 80202

Dear Ms. Talmage:

I enjoyed speaking with you last week at the University of Denver Sturm College of Law Career Fair. I sincerely appreciated your special consideration of my application for the Hill & Robbins Fellowship despite my being a first year law student. I am confident that my background and experience in public interest law would be useful to the Colorado Lawyers Committee.

Your comments gave me a good understanding of the mission of the Colorado Lawyers Committee, as well as your expectations for the fellowship position you are seeking to fill. As we discussed, my experience as an intern at the ACLU of Pittsburgh taught me the enormous impact that public interest groups can have. Because I am interested in working toward beneficial systemic changes in my new community, I know that interning with the Colorado Lawyers Committee would certainly assist me in achieving this goal.

Thank you for your consideration of my application and I will plan to contact you in a week to ten days to determine your interest. I look forward to speaking with you further about my candidacy in the near future.

Sincerely,

*Maura Wiggins*

Maura Wiggins

## **Sample Thank You Email Letter**

Dear Ms. Jones,

Thank you so much for meeting with me this morning. I really enjoyed getting to know you and learning more about your firm. I specifically am intrigued by the work the A-Z firm does in \_\_\_\_.

I also enjoyed meeting and talking with Mr. Thompson, Ms. Shear and Ms. Whitcomb about their respective practices in employment, commercial and real estate law with refreshing candidness. I appreciated their honesty about the rigors of practicing law in a small firm. Working under pressure and juggling different projects will not be new to me! As my resume reflects and we discussed in my interview, I held a full-time job while in college and maintained a strong GPA. Currently, I am a staff editor for the Transportation Law Journal, participate in Moot Court, and am a member of several Student Organizations.

A-Z Law Firm is exactly the type of organization I have envisioned myself joining: a small, general practice law firm where I will have hands-on experience early in my career. I understand that you are still interviewing other candidates and that a decision will be made by the end of the week. Thank you for considering me for the associate position and I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

Theresa Lawson

# **Part D:**

## **References**

## **References**

Employers may request a list of references from you at any point during the job application process. Here are a few suggestions regarding references:

- Provide a separate “References” document rather than listing your references on your resume.
- Provide at least three (3) names of individuals who can attest to your work product, professionalism, work ethic, and/or good character.
  - As a law student, it makes sense to include at least one law professor among the list of names.
  - Other recommended references include current or former employers and supervisors of volunteer work you have performed.
  - Friends and family members are not ideal references.
- Ask the individuals you plan to use as references for their blessing before you list them on your references sheet. This will provide your references with advanced notice that an employer may contact them in the near future so that they are not caught off guard.
- Note whether the employer has requested a list of references or a letter of recommendation (these are different).
- Unless otherwise requested, wait for the employer to ask for your list of references before you provide them.
- Below is a sample references document. The header for this document should match that of your resume. Include a name, title, company/institution, phone number, and e-mail address for each reference. Also include a short sentence about how each reference knows you.

**Jane Lawstudent**  
**1234 Main Street, Denver, CO 80208 | 303-123-4567 | lawstudent@law.du.edu**

---

## **REFERENCES**

Professor Albert Einstein  
Acme University School of Law  
123 University Boulevard  
Denver, CO 12345  
303-123-4567  
pplum@acme.edu

Professor Einstein was my Civil Procedure professor and also served as my academic advisor.

John Doe, Director  
Food Bank of the Rockies  
10700 E 45th Avenue  
Denver, CO 80239  
303-555-1234  
john\_doe@foodbankrockies.org

John Doe is the director of Food Bank of the Rockies where I have volunteered the last five years.

Steve Jobs, Founder  
Apple Inc.  
1 Infinite Loop  
Cupertino, CA 95014  
408-555-5555  
steve.jobs@apple.com

Steve Jobs was my direct supervisor at Apple, Inc. from 2000-2003.



# **Part E:**

## **Writing Samples**

## **Writing Samples for the Job Search**

*K.K. DuVivier, Assistant Professor & Director, Lawyering Process Program, 2006*

### **I. Traditional Writing Samples**

#### **Initial Considerations**

- Remember that the sample represents you, and readers will form an impression of you based on whatever you send.
- Employers frequently use writing samples to eliminate candidates that they initially felt were qualified.
- Generally, do not send a sample with your cover letter and resume; wait until the employer asks for one.

#### **Purpose**

- The employer is trying to get a reliable measure of your abilities as a writer.
- Most legal employers want a sample that articulates traditional legal analysis, so legal memos or briefs are generally best.
- Employers are looking for well-articulated facts, distinct issues, and thorough analysis to support a conclusion.
- Your sample also should try to exhibit good research skills through well-explained and accurately cited authorities.

#### **Format**

Employers are looking for something succinct.

- It is ideal to edit down a longer piece to only 5-7 pages; you always can offer to send more.
- Make it impeccable—especially the first page.
- Your sample should be clear on the first reading.
- Avoid any typos or grammar errors.
- Remember, in addition to content, consider visual impact.

#### **Special Concerns**

- Do not set yourself up for failure by sending something that is heavily edited or of a quality that you could not replicate.
- If your sample was edited, mention this in the cover sheet for the sample.
- Try to avoid sending a group product, but if you feel it is your best work, try to edit it or otherwise indicate what portion is your work alone.
- If using a memo you prepared for a client, it is best to ask permission and be careful not to expose confidential information.
- Be aware that some employers may ask applicants to prepare a writing sample on the spot during the interview process.

### **II. Stealth Writing Samples**

#### **A. Cover letters**

- First impressions are critical.
- Review it even more closely than the writing sample to make it flawless.
- Make your tone appropriate: sell yourself without being arrogant.

- It is OK to name drop, but be accurate. Spell names correctly, and if they are someone you just met, do not exaggerate. Misrepresentations can hurt you.
- Unless the employer asks for more, the letter should be one page in length with only 3 to 4 paragraphs.

B. Thank you notes

- It is always a good idea to write a thank you after an interview; it sets you apart from the pack in a positive light.
- Spell the names correctly: look them up or check with the firm receptionist.
- Use the thank you to send some follow-up information such as a writing sample or letter of recommendation.

C. Emails

- If your audience is comfortable with computers, it is good to show you can respond quickly by emailing your thank you.
- Make sure the email uses standard writing conventions and avoid informal devices such as acronyms (BTW) and emoticons (;-)).

*Sample cover sheet for writing sample excerpt:*

**Writing Sample for Sheila Smith**

This writing sample is an excerpt from a memo I submitted for my first-year legal writing course. My professor critiqued a previous draft of this assignment, and this version incorporates those suggestions.

I worked with a partner on this assignment, so I have included only the portion of the Discussion section that represents my individual work. Please let me know if you would like to see the entire assignment or additional writing samples.

*Background facts:*

The defendant, Paula Edwards, recently left Front Range Waters, a whitewater rafting company that provides corporate trips on rivers in Colorado and Utah. While at Front Range, Ms. Edwards worked as the head guide and developed a computer database of client addresses and trip preferences. When Ms. Edwards left Front Range Waters to create her own whitewater rafting company called Waterwomen, her previous employer threatened to enforce the covenant not to compete that Ms. Edwards signed when she joined the company. This analysis focuses on whether the customer list is a trade secret under Colorado Revised Statutes § 8-2-113(2).

***Chapter 8 contains tips on preparing writing samples for judicial clerkship applications. Professor Robert Anderson's spring workshops are streamed on the CDO's Events and Videos page of the website. Please also contact Kate Stoker, Associate Professor and Writing Advisor, for additional help at [kstoker@law.du.edu](mailto:kstoker@law.du.edu) or 303-871-6428.***

# **Chapter 4**

## **Networking and Informational Interviewing**

# **The Importance of Networking**

## **What Is Networking?**

- Connecting and interacting with others through informal meetings or informational interviews for the purpose of:
  - exchanging information
  - acquiring advice and referrals
  - assistance in achieving ultimate job search goals - interviewing and offers

## **Why Bother to Network?**

- Networking is a proven method of finding a position in all professional fields
  - It is an essential component of any job search due to the decentralized nature of the job market (both the advertised and hidden markets)
- The advertised job market has limitations
  - It probably represents no more than 10-15% of actual job openings
  - It tends to represent positions at the extreme ends of the job spectrum
    - Low paid, unskilled or highly paid, highly skilled jobs
  - Many positions are filled prior to being advertised
- The hidden job market is enormous
  - 85-90% or more of the job opportunities are found here, despite the fact this market lacks a formal structure.
  - Networking provides an organized system or structure to penetrate the hidden market place
- Networking is a multi-purpose skill you will use throughout your career
  - Initial job search - to get that first internship or paid position
  - Lateral job search - to make a lateral move as an experienced attorney, or to explore another field to pursue an alternative career path
- Client development -to procure and retain clients
- Community service, politics, and other extracurricular activities
  - To obtain a seat as a member of a Board of Directors; judicial or political appointments, and community leadership positions

## **How to Start Developing a Network**

- **Identify the Members of Your Current Network**
  - Make a “contact list,” identifying the people with whom you feel comfortable talking
    - Friends
    - Neighbors (past and present)
    - Social acquaintances (including group and club members)
    - Classmates (college and graduate school)
    - Career Development & Opportunities staff
    - DU Law School faculty
    - Local alumni

- Relatives
  - Clergy
  - Politicians (local, state and national)
  - Trade and bar association members
  - People you have met at conferences or conventions
  - Speakers you've admired at meetings, conferences and law school programs
  - Professionals from various fields with whom you have an on-going relationship (e.g. doctor, dentist, therapist, lawyer, real estate agent, stock broker, travel agent, hairdresser)
  - Previous employers and co-workers
  - Your contacts on social networking websites (e.g., Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, etc.)
- **Rank your contact list**
    - Those individuals who are in influential positions or have hiring authority
    - Those likely to have job leads
    - Those most likely to refer you to others
- **Establish a system for keeping track of your contacts**
    - Consider setting up a file, notebook, or Excel spreadsheet to record the following information for each contact:
      - Name, address, e-mail and phone numbers
      - How and when you met this contact
      - The individuals to whom this contact referred you
      - Correspondence you've had with this contact
      - The contact's specialty, unique interests, etc.
      - Topics discussed during the meeting (ranging from professional topics to informal conversations)
  - Select no more individuals to contact from your list than you can reasonably manage properly; e.g. researching their areas, meeting with them, writing thank-you notes. Consider arranging them into groups of five, so you aren't stretched too thin.

### **Make New Networking Contacts in the Legal World**

- Take advantage of the different forums available to you:
  - Join the Colorado Bar Association (CBA) at [www.cobar.org](http://www.cobar.org) and the local bar association (e.g., the Denver Bar Association) as a student member. Membership is free for current students.
  - Attend meetings and conferences sponsored by the bar associations. The CBA has sections in many areas of practice such as business law, environmental, criminal, construction, etc. There is no better way to meet and interact with attorneys in a specific practice area than joining their respective section.
  - Additionally, students interested in the specialty bars (e.g. Asian Pacific American, Hispanic, Sam Cary, Indian, Lesbian and Gay, Women's) can join and participate in the mentoring programs offered by these groups.
  - Join one of the many Inns of Court
- Attend networking events sponsored by the Office of Career Development & Opportunities:
  - PALS (Partners at Law) - this hugely popular event is held in the fall and spring at the law school in conjunction with the Alumni Office. The dinner and/or brunch forum provides an informal setting for students to talk with attorneys from a diverse

range of practice areas and to hear stories about the trials and tribulations of their career development.

- DU/CU Public Interest and Government Career Information Fair held in November brings more than sixty employers from all parts of the public sector (DA offices, Public Defenders, government, and non-profit organizations) to the law school to meet with students on an informal basis. This is a great way for students to make initial contacts and to apply for Spring and Summer Externships/Volunteer Opportunities with a wide variety of people in the public sector legal community.
- Speaker Meetings - the CDO and various student groups co-sponsor lunchtime programs featuring practitioners speaking on a wide variety of topics. Students are encouraged to take the initiative to contact the speakers following the workshop for additional information.
- Join community organizations where you will meet professionals, even if they are not lawyers.
- Volunteer! There are many opportunities to volunteer within the legal community where you can perform meaningful legal work and meet attorneys who are also volunteering their time. Examples include Metro Volunteer Lawyers, Colorado Legal Services, and Towards Justice.
- Take advantage of the Alumni Volunteer Network. This must be done after an appointment with a Career Consultant who will then submit a request to obtain names of alumni in the city and/or practice area of your choice.

## **Building and Expanding Your Network**

### **How to Initiate Contact:**

- Call or send emails to the people you consider the most likely to help launch your job search in your immediate network. (Start with the list of contacts you identified in the section described above on creating your network.)
- Let them know you are contacting attorneys in their area of law in order to expand your *existing* knowledge of the area of law and the local climate. In order to demonstrate having conducted sufficient due diligence on these topics, you'll need to have completed your own preliminary online research. Be clear that *you are only seeking information and advice at this time -- not a job*. Ask them for a few minutes of their time to discuss your information needs. See the sample networking letters below.
- The laws of probability apply: the more people you contact, the more information and advice you'll acquire, and the more potential job leads you will receive. But don't be overly ambitious; following through properly with each communication you send is critical in establishing yourself as a professional in the legal community.
- The process will likely yield a series of small networks that began with your original contact. Write thank you notes or emails to everyone you meet with, and continue to stay in touch with those people with whom you genuinely felt a rapport. People truly appreciate being told what happened as a result of their help. (See the chapter on Thank You Letters.)
- Don't ask for a job directly – always ask for *information, advice and referrals*. Be sure you are prepared with at least 10–15 questions before you meet with the attorney. Consider questions relevant to learning more about the attorneys' practice areas, the local legal market from their perspective, how they conducted a job search at the start of their careers, and what characteristics they look for in a new attorney. (See the sample informational interview questions listed below.) It is certainly acceptable to take notes.
- Telephone vs. Email Approaches

- Use the telephone as the initial form of contact only to reach people in your network whom you already know.
- For people you do not know, write an email and follow up with a telephone call.
- Key Elements of the Approach Letter (see following sample letters):

### ***An appropriate opener***

#### For referrals:

Say you are considering a career in his or her area of expertise (be specific). His/her name was given to you by \_\_\_\_\_, who suggested he/she might be in a good position to talk to you more fully about the practice of \_\_\_\_\_.

#### For “coldcalling” (no referral) approaches:

Try subtle, yet honest flattery; e.g., state you are aware he/she has been a leader or expert in the field of \_\_\_\_\_, or whatever is both truthful and appropriate for the situation.

### ***Make the request***

Demonstrate thoughtfulness and courtesy by acknowledging the attorney’s busy schedule. Reassure him/her you would like no more than 20 minutes to discuss specific questions relating to their area of practice.

### ***Body of email***

Provide a brief “infomercial” or summary of your professional or academic career, emphasizing key strengths/functional skills that will be relevant to the reader. Describe your career objectives or areas of interest as determined thus far.

Reiterate in your email that, while the purpose of your meeting is to gather information and advice, you are enclosing your resume solely to provide him/her with knowledge of your background.

### ***Closing the letter:***

Mention that you will call the person at a stated date/time to determine whether an appointment can be arranged. You must take the initiative and follow up the letter with a telephone call; this is your responsibility, not the attorney’s.



## Sample Approach/Networking Email

**Audrey Alum**  
123 University Way  
Denver, CO 80209

March 25, 2012

Ms. Jane Smith  
Good, Better & Best, LLP  
1700 17<sup>th</sup> Street  
Suite 2400  
Denver, CO 80202

Dear Ms. Smith:

Matilda Jones, a former associate with your firm, suggested I contact you regarding my experience and interest in litigation. As a recent graduate of the University of Denver Sturm College of Law, I am greatly interested in a career as a prosecutor, and would like to meet with you to seek your advice and to talk with you more fully about the practice of law and litigation.

While working at the Denver City Attorney's Office in the employment law division, I gained extensive experience in litigation. Through drafting various motions and interviewing clients, my legal skills improved dramatically. Xavier Duran, my supervising attorney, was very pleased with my performance and encouraged me to pursue a litigation career. I am confident the skills I gained while working under his direction will provide a solid foundation as a new associate.

As a student attorney for the Student Law Office, I have represented five clients in criminal-related matters. This experience allowed me to excel in all aspects of client representation, including: interviewing and counseling clients, developing and maintaining client relationships, and researching and writing both pre-trial and post-trial motions and briefs. Consequently, I have successfully argued three motions before Denver District Court Judges. Trial advocacy is my passion and I am excited to begin my career in this area.

I have enclosed my resume for your review and information. I would like the opportunity to speak with you about breaking into the Denver legal community, and ways I might gain experience as a litigator. I will call you next Wednesday afternoon to request a time to meet. I know you are very busy; therefore, I will make sure to be completely flexible with your schedule.

Meanwhile, please feel free to email or call me if you have any questions. Thank you for your consideration of my request, and I look forward to talking to you next week.

Sincerely,

*Audrey Alum*

Audrey Alum  
Enclosure

## **Conducting Informational Interviews**

- Keep focused on your agenda to do the following:
- Advice and information about what practitioners do on a daily basis in their area of practice; what skills are required and how best to develop expertise in the area.
- To expand your network by obtaining one or more names of additional contacts who may provide further information (or job leads!).
- To make a favorable impression so that you will be remembered in the future, should they become aware of a potential opportunity.
- Interview Format:
- Plan to cover your questions in 30 minutes or less.
- Do research on the organization/firm/attorney. Sources of information include Google searches,
- [www.martindale.com](http://www.martindale.com), the library, firm brochure, and annual reports.

Begin the interview by emphasizing your appreciation, e.g.:

*Thank you for taking time to see me today. I appreciate your willingness to take time out of your busy schedule to speak with me about my career plans.*

Ask probing questions to elicit information about the nature of the area of law, e.g.:

*I am extremely interested in \_\_\_\_\_ law and am talking with attorneys, like yourself, who have a great deal of experience in \_\_\_\_\_. I am particularly interested in learning about how to break into this market and the future outlook for this area of law. I'm also interested in hearing candidly from someone in your position what types of skills and backgrounds are necessary to successfully practice in this area. I'd greatly appreciate any advice you may have.*

Be able to discuss each item on your resume – thoroughly! If you choose to put it on your resume, it is fair game for the reader to ask questions about it. Anticipate questions that may be asked and have one or two examples readily available in your mind that illustrate your different skills and strengths.

Focus on “how” and “what” questions concerning specific jobs or careers:

- What special skills or expertise does one need to work in this area of law?
- What are some of the advantages and disadvantages of this practice area?
- In your opinion, what is the future outlook in this area of law?

Solicit advice for developing a successful job search strategy. You may want to know their ideas on how to:

- Acquire the required skills for the position you seek
- Market yourself in the particular practice area
- Identify both advertised and unadvertised job vacancies
- Develop new job leads
- Identify/resolve prospective employers' possible objections to hiring you

## Sample Informational Interview Questions

- What is a typical day on the job like for you?
- What percent of your time do you spend each day in various activities of your work? (this can be tailored to the individual attorney's practice)
- What types of pressures or problems do you contend with?
- What do you consider to be the most satisfying and most frustrating aspects of your work?
- What types of promotions/professional development opportunities are available to you?
- What courses or internships should I be doing to prepare myself for this type of work?
- If you could start all over again in launching your career, what steps would you take?
- Have you ever practiced or considered practicing in another field/area of law? Why?
- Do you have an opinion/information about the job market for attorneys in your field?
- Do you have any suggestions as to other attorneys I could contact to talk about what it is like to practice \_\_\_\_\_ law?
- My research has turned up the following firms as leaders in the field: x, y, and z. Can you refer me to anyone in these offices? Can you suggest additional firms in the Denver area that have a reputation for quality legal work in this area of law?

## Concluding Your Meeting

Finally, end the interview with requests to be *referred* and *remembered*. For example:

*Thanks so much for all of your help. I have learned a great deal today. I would like to ask one more favor. I am trying to talk with several attorneys in this area. Do you know a few other attorneys who might be willing to meet with me, as you have today?*

Don't make your networking prospects uncomfortable by asking them directly for a job or job lead. Remember they agreed to meet with you because your stated purpose was to discuss career information, gain their advice and possibly some referrals. If they know of any open positions, they will tell you. Don't ask directly.

*I would appreciate it if you could keep me in mind if you learn of any openings. Please feel free to pass my name or resume on to anyone you feel might be interested in my background. With your permission, I will check in with you periodically to keep in touch. (Don't expect they will call you – you should calendar to email them or call them monthly).*

## Follow Up After the Meeting

Always write a thank you letter or email within two days of the informational interview. Express your gratitude for the person's time and advice, referring specifically to a point of your conversation you found particularly helpful, and reiterating your wish to be remembered and referred.

The letter/email should be typed and sent out within a day or two of your meeting. You may send a thank you letter via email. (See the chapter on Thank You Letters).

## Other Considerations

### Business Cards

Business cards for students are a practical and easy way to provide your contact information to people you meet. You will often find yourself in a situation where you meet someone who says, "How can I get in touch with you if I hear about a job?" Instead of tearing off a piece of paper and writing down your name and number, it would be impressive if you could say, "Let me give you one of my cards!" Include your complete contact information, including your email address. Be sure your cell phone and/or voice-mail messages are professional if you include your telephone numbers.

**Business Card Styles:** Make sure your business cards are simple, formal and conservative. Cards should not have graphics, excessive color, or slogans. This is a time to be formal and conservative.

### General Rules for Networking Success

Look for a job that is a fit for you, rather than try to fit yourself into an available position.

Target your job search toward specific positions, organizations and individuals; most approaches that do not have a focus, tend to be ineffective.

Conduct a prospecting campaign to continually expand your network and replenish contacts that lead to more contacts and informational interviews. If you hit a plateau, you need to substantially increase your prospecting activities, as well as the number of informational interviews you are conducting.

**Always send a thank you letter or email to** those who take the time to talk to you. Thoughtful people are remembered.

Find and *actively participate in* activities and organizations that are easily accessible to you and provide ample networking opportunities, for example:

- Publish an article on the area of law that interests you.
- Write a "fan letter" to the author of an article in the local bar journal.
- Work as a research assistant for a professor.
- Join local bar associations, such as the Colorado and Denver Bar Association(s) as a student member and attend programs and activities.
- Attend Career Development & Opportunities programs and conferences at which outside practitioners will be speaking. Introduce yourself following the program and follow up with a note of appreciation and request to come to their office to talk further.
- Attend alumni receptions and programs and introduce yourself to alumni!
- Take a non-paying job or internship doing whatever your dream job is.
- Participate in mock interviews sponsored by the Office of Career Development & Opportunities.
- Join lawyers' sports teams (e.g., football, basketball, softball).

Look for opportunities to do favors for other people (e.g., share job leads, make introductions, and give useful information back to your networking contacts). Networking involves give and take! Don't just think short-term! If you help others, they will be more willing to help you – now and in the future.

Keep track of everyone you meet on a “Networking Worksheet,” as follows either on Excel or hard-copy:

### NETWORKING WORKSHEET

<b>Contact Name and Address</b>	<b>Phone</b>	<b>Referred By</b>	<b>Date of Approach Letter</b>	<b>Follow- Up Date</b>	<b>Meeting Date</b>	<b>Thank You Sent Date</b>	<b>Comments/ Referred To</b>

# **Chapter 5**

## **Interviewing**

## **Mock Interviews**

Just as a good lawyer should not appear for a court hearing without first preparing answers to possible questions from the judge, an interviewee must prepare for possible questions for the interviewer. And, interviewing is like anything else you have learned to do well; it is a skill you improve with practice. Schedule a mock interview with one of our Career Consultants and participate in our fall or spring Mock Interview Days. Solicit the mock interviewer's candid feedback and discuss ways to improve your performance.

By knowing what to expect in the interview setting, you will feel more comfortable and confident.

## **Research the Employer**

Research the company, law firm or agency you are interviewing with and the interviewer or interviewers you will meet. You can call your contact a few days before the interview to learn the names of the attorneys you will meet. Skimming the firm's website five minutes before the interview is NOT sufficient. If the interviewer concludes that you know little about the firm/company, s/he is likely to dismiss you because of your apparent lack of interest.

The Office of Career Development & Opportunities has many reference materials that may be helpful to you, including reference files on many local law firms and corporations, the NALP Employer Directory (also available at <http://www.nalpdirectory.com/>) and public interest and government agency directories. The Internet is also an ideal place to research prospective employers. Every federal agency has a home page, as do nearly all law firms and corporations. Seek out recent newspaper and magazine articles about the employers as well. Ask the Career Consultants in the Office of Career Development & Opportunities, other students, faculty and alumni what they know about the firm. Also, research the employer on Lexis, Westlaw and Bloomberg. Another websites with useful information about law firms and lawyers nationwide is [www.martindale.com](http://www.martindale.com),

The research you do will better prepare you to converse comfortably with your interviewer and to articulate intelligent, thoughtful questions about the firm and the practice opportunities it offers. Do *not* feel compelled, however, to work into your interview every bit of information you have uncovered. Use your research, but use it judiciously.

## **Key Elements to Prepare for the Interview**

1. **List of Accomplishments:** After carefully reviewing the employer's information, make a list of accomplishments and job skills that make you attractive to this particular employer.
  - a. You must be able to articulate your qualifications thoroughly. Evaluate your strengths and make a list of specific examples from your resume that

substantiate them. (See the chapter on Resumes for a list of skills.) Don't limit yourself to past legal job experiences. Most skills developed in non-legal jobs, as well as volunteer work, are transferable to the legal profession. It is not sufficient to say you are a hard worker; give specific examples for each assertion you make about yourself - i.e., when you put in extra hours to complete a project by a deadline. If you are a team player, emphasize the time you pitched in and completed a co-worker's project when she was hospitalized unexpectedly.

- b. One area frequently overlooked by law students is an employer's need to generate new business. If you haven't done so already, create a notebook for networking contacts (see the Networking Worksheet in the Networking chapter). It will support your efforts to expand your connections in the legal world, a key step in developing future business. Some of the most successful rainmakers in private law firms keep notebooks listing every contact they have ever made. Mention your ability and willingness to develop this critical part of practicing law during your interview.

**2. Plan Your Agenda:** Develop an agenda and practice your points.

- a. Prepare a five-point agenda before you go to the interview, highlighting key points about yourself that you want the interviewer to remember. Your agenda might include:
  - Your writing skills; (give specifics, i.e. your high grade in Lawyering Process, the writing award you won, the winning brief you authored last summer, the
  - article you wrote that was published),
  - A foreign language skill (if relevant to the employer)
  - The marathon you ran last year (which demonstrates drive and discipline)
  - Your ability to work with little supervision (give a specific example from past work experience), and
  - The fact that you are committed to living in the city being discussed (family ties, previous work experiences in that city, etc.).

**3. Your Resume:** Know your resume *cold* and be prepared to answer questions about anything included on it.

- a. Be prepared to talk in depth on legal issues you researched in previous positions.
- b. Evaluate your resume for weaknesses and gaps. Be prepared to deal with these issues.
  - Avoid lengthy conversations about any weaknesses or negative job experiences. Acknowledge the issue but try to put a positive spin on any situation (what it taught you, for example) and never badmouth a previous employer.
  - Be ready for questions like "Why didn't you get an offer from the firm you worked for last summer?" or "Why didn't you work last summer?"



- If your grades are not the best, be prepared to deal with this issue in the interview. You can explain by saying, "My grades aren't as high as I expected given my high achievement in college, but my GPA has gone up each semester."

4. **Prepare Answers to Common Questions Before the Interview:** Consider how you would respond to the following frequently asked questions by writing down answers to each one:

**a. Personal (Attitudes, Attributes)**

- How would you describe yourself?
- Why should we select you for this position over the other applicants?
- What do you consider your greatest strengths?
- What are your weaknesses? (Be candid and acknowledge a weakness but "spin" it into a positive by demonstrating how you are working on that weakness).
- Use three words to describe yourself.
- Why do you think you will succeed as a lawyer?
- What quality or attribute will most contribute to your career success?
- What motivates you to put forth your best effort?
- What are you looking for in a firm/corporation/nonprofit?
- Do you prefer to work independently or with supervision?
- Do you work well under pressure?
- What has been your most rewarding accomplishment?
- Describe a situation that required a number of things to be done at the same time. How did you handle it? What was the result?
- How do you determine priorities in scheduling your time? Give examples.
- What is the greatest obstacle you've faced in your life?
- What did you learn from dealing with this obstacle?
- How would you describe yourself in terms of your ability to work as a member of a team?
- Describe a time when you were faced with problems that tested your coping skills.
- Describe a situation when you had to think on your feet.
- Describe a time when you had to use your written communication skills to get an important point across to someone.
- Give me an example of one of your successful accomplishments.
- Give me an example of a time when you creatively and successfully solved a difficult problem.
- Describe a situation where you were able to use persuasion to successfully convince someone to see things your way.
- Describe how you feel and how you react when others pressure you for deadlines.

- Describe how you feel about taking direction from others and having them monitor your work.
- Describe the ideal way to change a situation not to your liking.
- What community or extra-curricular activities have you found rewarding?
- What do you like to do for fun?
- How do you maintain a well-rounded life?

**b. Law School**

- Why do you want to be a lawyer?
- What influenced you to choose this career?
- Why did you choose the University of Denver?
- What was your favorite class? Least favorite?
- Who is your favorite professor? Why?
- Should we be concerned about your grades/class rank?
- Why didn't you pursue Law Review/Moot Court?
- What activities did you participate in?
- Are you involved in any activities outside of law school?
- How have you managed your time between law school and work?
- Have your ideas about being a lawyer changed since you started law school?

**c. Previous Jobs**

- How would a previous employer describe you?
- How did you get your last job?
- What did you gain from that experience?
- How do you function in a fast-paced work environment?
- Describe the ideal supervisor/characteristics of a successful manager.
- Describe the least effective supervisor.
- What problems have you encountered in previous jobs?
- Describe a time when you were not very satisfied or pleased with your performance. What did you do about it?
- Tell me about a major problem you recently handled. Were you successful in resolving it?
- What is the most interesting job you've ever had?
- What do you consider to be a positive work environment?
- Have you ever worked with a difficult person? How did you handle the situation?

**d. Commitment**

- Have you decided which city you would ultimately like to settle in?
- Why did you sign up for an interview with us?
- What do you know about our firm?
- Who else are you interviewing with?
- Why do you want to live in \_\_\_\_\_?

- To what extent would you be willing to travel?
- What practice area do you see yourself in?
- Are you interested in doing pro bono work?
- What are your salary expectations?
- What is more important to you, the job itself or the salary?
- Why do you want to work at this firm?

**e. Leadership**

- What do you think makes a good leader? A good lawyer?
- Describe a situation where you assumed a leadership role.
- Tell me about someone you consider a good leader and why.
- Have you ever been in a situation where a good/bad leader caused success/failure?
- Describe your leadership attributes.

**f. Goals**

- Where do you see yourself in 5, 10 or 20 years?
- What personal goals are you seeking through a legal career?
- What steps have you taken toward attaining your career goals?
- What do you think it takes to be successful as a lawyer?
- How do you determine or evaluate success for yourself?
- What are your standards of success in school? What have you done to meet these standards?
- If you weren't in law school, what would you be doing right now?
- What long-term satisfaction do you expect to obtain from a legal career?
- How do you expect to balance work and personal life?

**g. Ethics**

- How do you feel about lawyers advertising or soliciting clients?
- Is there any type of work you would not feel comfortable doing at our firm?
- How do you think your ethical standards compare with others in your law school class?
- What do you consider to be the most difficult ethical challenge lawyers face?
- What would you do if an employer made a decision with which you strongly disagreed?

**h. Public Interest/Government Jobs**

- How do you expect to manage your loan burden?
- Can you commit X years to this organization?
- Are you interviewing in the private sector?
- How committed are you to serving the poor?
- Are you fluent in X language?
- What hours do you expect to work here?

- What are your long term plans?

5. **Prepare Questions to Ask the Interviewer:** Come into the interview with questions that are appropriate for this stage in the interview process. (Your questions at an initial screening interview should be more general than from those asked at a second, “call- back” round of interviews.) Your questions should reflect your knowledge about the firm, and should be phrased in such a manner that you come across as a curious and authentic professional, and not just for the sake of showing that you researched the firm.

You should also communicate sincere interest in the interviewer’s response to your questions. Remember, the interview is also your opportunity to screen employers. While they size up your credentials, personality and potential, try to learn as much as you can about their work environments, management style and business goals. You want to know whether this employer is a good fit for you. Will it offer you what you need to achieve your career goals at this point? Remember, enthusiasm is a characteristic you want to convey about yourself. Consider asking the following:

- What characteristics does it take to succeed in this firm?
- Tell me why you decided to work at firm XYZ?
- What is the culture like at this firm?
- What was the most satisfying project you worked on this year?
- What do you like best about this firm?
- How will my performance be evaluated?
- Who will supervise my work?
- Does the summer program have a mentor program?
- How are assignments distributed during the summer?
- Do summer associates/new associates rotate among departments?
- What percentage of summer clerks is typically offered positions with the firm/organization/corporation?
- How fast are you growing?
- How are new associates assigned to practice groups? Is there a rotation system?
- How is work allocated to new associates?
- How does each department develop new work?
- What kind of projects will I typically be working on?
- At what point in an associate’s career do you expect them to bring in clients?
- Does the firm provide training in how to develop new clients for new associates?
- What training opportunities are offered to new associates? Is there a formalized training program for new attorneys?
- Is there a mentor program?
- How are associates integrated into the firm?
- How soon does a new attorney have direct client contact?

- How soon does a new attorney get experience taking depositions/appearing in court?
- Are some areas of your practice growing more than others?
- What are the criteria for advancement?
- Are attorneys involved in outside activities (bar committees, pro bono work, charities)?
- Does the firm have a pro bono policy? What is it?
- How would you describe the firm/organization/ and the people who work here?
- How is the firm/organization/company structured? Is there a management committee?
- Who is on that committee?
- Do new associates participate in committees within the firm?

6. **Dress to Get the Job:** Your appearance is extremely important. You want to convince the employer you will be a good representative of the firm/organization/company. You'll never go wrong if you dress conservatively. If you dress unprofessionally, the interviewer will assume you will not look professional when you meet with clients or appear in court. No pierced jewelry except small earrings for women.

Guidelines for Men: Good quality suit (dark colors are preferable), white shirt, conservative tie, polished shoes, neat hairstyle, no strong cologne and no jewelry other than a watch.

Guidelines for Women: Good quality suit (dark colors are preferable), medium to low-heeled shoes (no sandals or open-toe shoes), neat hairstyle, toned-down make-up, no strong perfume, low key jewelry.

## **Tips for the Interview**

Keep in mind the interview begins the moment the employer calls you to set up a time for the interview. Be polite and enthusiastic on the phone. Also, don't forget you are still interviewing if you go to lunch with the employer. The employer will be observing your behavior under all circumstances.

- **Tips for Interview Day**
  - Be early.
  - Be nice to *everyone*, including support staff.
  - Be a courteous driver in parking lots, etc. You never know who you might see.
  - Bring extra copies of your resume.
  - Walk into the office with confidence and a friendly demeanor.
  - Use a firm handshake.
  - Be sure to turn your cell phone off when you enter the law firm.

- **Tone**
  - Let the interviewer set the tone.
  - Make the most of the first few minutes of small talk. Strive to make a connection with the interviewer.
  - Be professional. Remember: even though the interviewer may be close in age to you, this is not the time to let your guard down. Keep your comments professional. An answer to questions like “Tell me what you did for the year in between college and law school” should not be “Had a lot of fun!”
  - Be a good listener.
  - Never respond with only a “yes” or a “no.” Your replies should lead to a dialogue.
  - Answer the question being asked directly. Don’t hedge.
  - Show enthusiasm.
  - Show respect.
  - Thank him/her at the end, shake hands and ask, “Where do we go from here?”
- **Thank You Notes/Emails**
  - It is always a good idea to write a thank you after an interview; it sets you apart from the pack in a positive light. Email thank you notes can be an effective and immediately way to communicate after an interview, and everyone loves a hand-written note!
  - Spell the names correctly: look them up or check with the firm receptionist.
  - Use the thank you to send some follow-up information such as a writing sample or letter of recommendation.

## **How to Use Nonverbal Communication to Impress**

When interviewing for employment you could be thinking that if you are the candidate with the best answers to interview questions, you'll get the job. In fact, that isn't typically the case.

Nonverbal communication is as important, or even more important, than verbal communication. The evaluation of your nonverbal communication will start as soon as you walk into the company's lobby, and will continue until the interview is finished.

### **Nonverbal Communication Matters**

If you come to an interview reeking of cigarette smoke or chewing gum, you will already have one strike against you. Talking on your cell phone or listening to an iPod while waiting to be called for the interview may be your final strike. Before you leave your home for the interview, make sure you are dressed professionally (understated dress is always better than flamboyant fashions), neatly groomed, and your shoes are polished. You should not wear any perfume or aftershave. Many people have allergies to perfumes/cologne and you wouldn't want to cause an attorney to have an asthma attack! What is important, when interviewing, is to appear professional and attentive throughout

the full interview process.

### **What to Bring to an Interview**

Bring a portfolio or pad holder with extra copies of your resume and any other application materials submitted to the employer.

### **What Not to Bring to an Interview**

- Cell phone
- iPod
- Gum
- Cigarettes
- Candy
- Soda or coffee
- Scuffed shoes, messy and/or not-so-clean clothes

### **While You Wait**

The way you greet the receptionist, the posture you assume as you sit in the lobby, and the way you greet the interviewer will all have an impact on whether you are going to be considered for the job. Be friendly and pleasant, but not overbearing. If you need to wait, sit (don't slouch) quietly (no phone calls) and patiently. Shake hands with the interviewer. Your handshake should be firm - not sticky or wimpy. To avoid sweaty palms, visit the rest room, wash your hands, and run them under cool water prior to the interview. Keep your palms open rather than clenched in a fist and keep a tissue in your pocket to (surreptitiously) wipe them.

### **Nonverbal Communication during the Interview**

- Make eye contact with the interviewer for a few seconds at a time. Share eye contact uniformly in panel interviews with each interviewer.
- Smile and nod (at appropriate times) when the interviewer is talking, but don't overdo it.
- Don't laugh unless the interviewer does first.
- Be polite and keep an even tone to your speech. Don't be too loud or too quiet.
- Don't slouch (hint: do not let your back touch the back of your chair).
- Do relax and lean forward a little toward the interviewer so you appear interested and engaged.
- Don't lean back. You will look too casual and relaxed.
- Keep your feet on the floor and your back against the lower back of the chair.
- Pay attention, be attentive and interested.
- Listen - don't interrupt!
- Stay calm. Even if you had a bad experience at a previous position or were fired, keep your emotions to yourself and do not show anger or frown.
- Not sure what to do with your hands? Hold a pen and your notepad or rest an arm on the chair or on your lap, so you look comfortable. Don't gesture wildly when you're making a point.

Your verbal communication is important too. Thank the interviewer for taking the time to meet with you. Don't use slang. Speak clearly and definitely.

Most importantly, remember the image the interviewer has of you when he or she first meets you is the one that is going to last. If you're slouchy, too informal in your demeanor or not professionally dressed, it won't matter how well you answer the interview questions. You are not going to get the job. When practicing for an interview, work on your nonverbal communications as well as your other interviewing skills. It could be what clinches the job offer for you.

Interested in how interviewers evaluate candidates based on nonverbal communication? Take a look at [How Employers Use Nonverbal Communication in Hiring](#). "Awareness of nonverbal communication and the messages job searchers send does influence your evaluation of job candidates – and it should."

### **Handling Improper / Illegal Interview Questions**

According to a survey by FindLaw, one in five people have been asked improper or inappropriate job interview questions. Although there are no federal or state laws either prohibiting or requiring certain questions during an interview, an applicant may have a legal claim against the employer if the information gleaned from an improper question is used to make the hiring decision.

Improper interview questions are those that ***do not pertain to the nature of the job or to the applicant's ability to perform that job***. In other words, questions during an interview should be based solely on information needed to judge the applicant's qualifications, level of skills and overall competence for the job. Questions also may be improper if they are ***not asked of every candidate***. For example, the question "are you able to work nights or weekends?" may demonstrate a bias against caregivers if asked only of female applicants.

Due to affirmative action and equal employment opportunity legislation, most interviewers know what they can and cannot ask applicants. However, if you are confronted with a question you think improper, keep in mind that most interviewers have good intentions, but may not be aware of how they sound or even realize the question is one they should not be asking.

With this in mind, there are a several ways you can respond to an improper question. Your response may depend a great deal on how interested you are in the job, and when and how the question is asked.

First, although you may consider the question offensive, you may answer it and proceed with the interview, especially if you are particularly interested in the position and/or the firm or company. Answering directly may be appropriate when the applicant has "opened the door" to the question. For instance, if the applicant apologizes for the stain on his shirt, explaining he just left his son who accidentally spilled his juice, the interviewer might ask, "Oh, how old is your son?" In a case like this, the applicant should simply



answer and move on with the interview.

Second, you may wish to ascertain the intent of the question by asking something to the effect of, “Could you elaborate on why you ask that?” or “I wasn’t expecting that question; could you please tell me how it relates to the job?” It truly may be a lack of thought, rather than evil intent, which motivated the question in the first place.

Finally, the most recommended method for handling improper questions is to respond to the underlying issue directly. For example, if asked “are you a U.S. citizen?,” you may respond by saying, “If you’re wondering whether I can prove my eligibility to work in the U.S., I assure you that I can, and that I will work very hard for your firm/company.” Turning around the improper question allows you to present your credentials and make your case without divulging irrelevant information.

The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (“EEOC”) provide guidance as to which questions may be improper if used to procure information about prohibited criteria for making hiring decisions. See [www.eeoc.gov/laws/practices](http://www.eeoc.gov/laws/practices).

**Subject: Name**

- **Improper Inquiries:** Any inquiries about name which would divulge marital status, lineage, ancestry, national origin or descent. “If your name has been legally changed, what was your former name?”
- **Proper Inquiries:** Whether an applicant has worked for the company or a competitor under another name, and if so, what name.

**Subject: Residence**

- **Improper Inquiries:** Names or relationship of persons with whom the applicant resides, and whether the applicant owns or rents a home. “Do you live in town?”
- **Proper Inquiries:** Questions about address for purposes of contacting applicant. Also, questions related to ability to arrive by job start time. “Will you have problems getting to work by 9:00 a.m.?”

**Subject: Relatives/Marital Status**

- **Improper Inquiries:** Whether the applicant is married, divorced, separated, engaged, widowed, etc. “With whom do you reside?” “Do you live with your parents?” “How old are your children?”
- **Proper Inquiries:** Whether a relative works for the company or a competitor.

**Subject: Family**

- **Improper Inquiries:** Questions concerning spouse or spouse’s employment, spouse’s salary, child care arrangements, or dependents. “How will your husband

feel about the amount of travel time in this position?” “What kind of childcare arrangements have you made?”

- **Proper Inquiries:** Whether the applicant can meet specified work schedules or has activities or commitments that may prevent him or her from meeting attendance requirements. “Can you work overtime?” “Is there any reason why you cannot be on the job at 7:30 a.m.?” Remember, these questions must be asked of both male and female employees.

**Subject: Sex**

- **Improper Inquiries:** ANY question related to sex such as, “Do you have the capacity to reproduce?” “What are your plans to have children in the future?” “Do you wish to be addressed as Mr., Mrs., Ms., or Miss?”
- **Proper Inquiries:** None.

**Subject: Pregnancy**

- **Improper Inquiries:** All questions related to pregnancy and medical history concerning pregnancy. “Do you plan on having (more) children?”
- **Proper Inquiries:** Questions regarding duration of stay in a job or anticipated absences which are made to both males and females. “Do you foresee any long term absences in the future?”

**Subject: Physical Health**

- **Improper Inquiries:** Any general questions that would tend to divulge disabilities or health conditions which do not reasonably relate to fitness to perform the job. “Do you have any disabilities?” “Have you ever had any serious illness?” “What is the prognosis of your illness/disability?”
- **Proper Inquiries:** Questions that relate to the job at issue. “Do you need any special accommodations to perform the job?” “Can you lift 40 pounds?” “How many days did you miss from work (school) in the past year?”

**Subject: Age**

- **Improper Inquiries:** Any questions that tend to identify applicants over the age of 40. “When do you plan to retire?”
- **Proper Inquiries:** “Are you at least 18 years old?” “If hired, can you furnish proof of your age?”

**Subject: Citizenship**

- **Improper Inquiries:** Whether an applicant is a U.S. citizen. Any question requiring a birth certificate, naturalization documents or baptismal certificate. Any question into citizenship which would tend to divulge applicant’s or applicant’s family’s lineage, descent, national origin, etc. “Are you, your parents, or your spouse naturalized or native-born U.S. citizens?”

- **Proper Inquiries:** Whether the applicant is prevented from being lawfully employed in the U.S. because of visa or immigration requirements, and whether the applicant can provide proof of citizenship after hiring. “If you are not a U.S. citizen, do you have the legal right to remain permanently in the U.S.?”

**Subject: National Origin/Ancestry**

- **Improper Inquiries:** Most any question related to national origin or ancestry. “How did you acquire the ability to speak, read or write in a foreign language?” “What language is spoken in your home?” “What is your mother tongue?”
- **Proper Inquiries:** If based on a job requirement, the interviewer may ask which languages the applicant speaks, reads or writes fluently.

**Subject: Race or Color**

- **Improper Inquiries:** Any question that relates directly *or* indirectly to a race or color.
- **Proper Inquiries:** None.

**Subject: Religion**

- **Improper Inquiries:** Any question that relates directly *or* indirectly to a religion. “What religious holidays do you observe?”
- **Proper Inquiries:** If based on a job requirement, the interviewer may ask whether the applicant can work on Saturdays or Sundays.

**Subject: Education**

- **Improper Inquiries:** Any question asking specifically the nationality, racial or religious affiliation of a school.
- **Proper Inquiries:** Questions related to academic, vocational or professional education of an applicant, including the names of the schools attended, degrees/diplomas received, dates of graduation and courses of study.

**Subject: Organizations**

- **Improper Inquiries:** “To which organizations, clubs, societies and/or lodges do you belong?”
- **Proper Inquiries:** Questions which relate only to the applicant’s *professional* qualifications. “To which *professional* organizations do you belong?” (Exclude those whose names or character indicate the race, religious creed, color, national origin, or ancestry of its members.)

**Subject: Military**

- **Improper Inquiries:** Type or condition of military discharge, or request for discharge papers. Applicant's experience in military forces other than the U.S.
- **Proper Inquiries:** Questions concerning education, training or work experience in the armed forces of the U.S.

**Subject: Height & Weight**

- **Improper Inquiries:** Any questions about height and weight that are not related to job requirements.
- **Proper Inquiries:** Questions about the ability to perform a certain job. A certain height and weight will not be considered a job requirement unless the employer can show that no employee with the ineligible height and weight can do the work.

**Subject: Arrests & Convictions**

- **Improper Inquiries:** All questions related to arrests. "Have you ever been arrested?" (Remember: arrests are *not* the same as convictions – an innocent person can be arrested.) **Proper Inquiries:** None related to arrests. Proper questions about convictions include "Have you ever been convicted of a crime? If so, when, where and what was the disposition of the case?" It is permissible to ask about convictions for acts of dishonesty or breach of trust, since they relate to fitness to perform the job at issue.

## **Interview Strategies Workshop**

As part of your preparation for an Interview, the CDO encourages you either to attend in person, or to view the **streaming video** of a previous presentation of the workshop on "Interview Strategies". If you cannot attend, watch the streaming video available on the CDO Events and Videos page: <http://www.law.du.edu/forms/career-development/restricted/login-videos.cfm> Please contact the CDO for the login and password to view the streaming videos.

# **Chapter 6**

## **Career Strategies** **Tips and Advice for** **Every Year of Law School**

## **1L / 1LE / 2LE Students<sup>1</sup>**

### **FALL SEMESTER:**

Given the unique demands of law school, we recommend fully focusing on your academic coursework for the first two months of law school. With limited exceptions (e.g. the FBI's internship program) legal employers do not begin taking applications for summer positions until after December 1, so you have plenty of time to build a solid academic foundation. On October 15, we begin meeting individually with every first year law student. That said, we encourage 1Ls to regularly attend our career programs from the beginning of the semester. For example, programs in our Friday Series count toward SCOL's Career & Professional Development Requirement ("CPD Requirement") and will help you build a solid foundation of job search skills. We offer other valuable programs regularly as well.

#### **August – September**

- Focus on your coursework.
- Attend Friday Series programs to build a foundation for your career planning. Programs are advertised on [Denver Law Career Connection](#).
- Go to other programs offered by the CDO each week.
- Participate in the Denver Law Professional Mentoring Program.

#### **October – November**

- Continue attending career programs as noted above.
- Schedule your initial CDO appointment for any time between October 15 and the end of the semester.
- Work with the CDO to develop a process to identify your long-range goals and discuss summer opportunities that would be useful stepping stones.
- Set up your profile on Symplicity, providing as much information on your background and interests as you can.
- Ask the CDO, your Professional Mentor and/or your professors to help you identify professionals to meet with for "Informational Interviews" in the coming months. Informational interviews are a great way to learn about different career paths, identify career options that appeal to you and to build professional relationships.
- Work with the CDO to perfect your resume.

#### **Winter Break**

- Take some time to relax.
- Start doing informational interviews and continue this practice throughout law school.
- Meet with the CDO to refine your career plan and set your summer goals.
- Identify any early application deadlines and work on applications as necessary.
- If interested in Federal Government Honors positions, review Arizona Government Honors

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<sup>1</sup> While these timelines provide a useful guide for your career planning, they are not one-size-fits-all nor are they completely comprehensive given the wide range of opportunities available to law students. You should meet regularly with our office to create a career plan that best fits your interests.

Handbook (on your Symplicity Home Page) for 1L programs and deadlines.

- Mark [deadlines](#) to set up externships. Typically, the deadlines are as follows: Summer – last day of spring classes; Fall – early August; Spring – last day of Fall classes.

### **January – February**

- If you haven't already, meet with the CDO as noted above.
- Do a mock interview with the CDO or through the mock interview program. (Schedule more mock interviews throughout law school as needed).
- Check in with the CDO as to whether a prestigious postgrad judicial clerkship might be a good fit for you and if so, develop a plan of action.
- Begin submitting applications for summer positions and be sure to have the CDO review *at least* one of your cover letters.
- Continue attending career programs, and arranging informational interviews all semester.

### **March – April**

- Continue applying for summer positions if necessary.
- Once you have finalized your summer plans, start thinking about fall opportunities to gain experience through paid positions, externships and clinics.
- Prepare for success in your summer job by meeting with the CDO and attending related programs.
- Attend info session on the On-Campus Interviewing Program which starts over the summer (a/k/a "OCI") and meet with the CDO to discuss OCI and other options.

### **June – July**

- Meet with the CDO to check in on your career planning and to determine if the OCI program is of interest to you. Be sure to identify a range of alternatives for your plan.
- If participating in OCI, work with the CDO on your applications, which are due in July.
- If interested in Federal Government Honors positions, review Arizona Government Honors Handbook (on your Symplicity Home Page) for 2L programs and deadlines.

### **August**

- OCI interviews begin in early August.
- Meet with the CDO to check in on your career planning and networking.

## **2L / 3LE Students**

### **August – September**

- If interested in Federal Government opportunities, review Arizona Government Honors Handbook (on your Symplicity home page) to find application timelines.
- Meet with the CDO to check in on your long-term career plan and to work on your spring and summer job search.
- If you are interested in pursuing a postgraduate judicial clerkship meet with the CDO to learn about the process, timelines and how you can make yourself competitive.

### **October – November**

- Continue to do informational interviews, mock interviews and meetings with the CDO.

### **December – February**

- If you haven't already done so, this is a great time to step up your summer job search. Be sure you are checking Symplicity, the externship database and other job boards daily and keep in regular touch with the CDO so we can assist you.

### **March – April**

- Meet with the CDO to start working on your search for opportunities during your final year of law school and for postgraduate jobs.

### **May – July**

- Check for OCI opportunities for 3L and 4LE students. While employers focus more heavily on 2Ls and 3LEs in the OCI process, there are some OCI opportunities for students entering their final year of law school.
- Check the Arizona Government Honors Handbook (on Symplicity) if you are interested in post graduate opportunities with the federal government.

## **3L / 4LE Students**

### **August – September**

- Meet with the CDO to establish a postgrad job search plan to work on weekly. Put the same amount of time into your job search as you would for a class.
- Lay a strong foundation for your postgrad search by taking the following steps:
  - Update your Symplicity (DU Law Careers Online) profile.
  - Upload the newest version of your resume on Symplicity.
  - Make a list of all of your mentors, professors, career advisors, supervisors and other professional contacts and start scheduling meetings with them to get information, advice and referrals to other people who may be helpful in your search.

### **October – December**

- Continue all of the above.

### **January – March**

- Continue all of the above.
- Do a mock interview with the CDO to ensure your interview skills stay sharp.

### **April – May**

- Do your Exit Interview with the CDO and, if you are still seeking postgraduate employment, use your Exit Interview as an opportunity for us to help you with your job search plan.

### **May – July**

- Focus on the bar exam, but keep your ear to the ground for opportunities.

### **August and beyond**

- Take some well-deserved time to unwind after the bar, but if you are still on the job hunt, meet with the CDO and stay in touch. We are here for you as long as you need us!



## **Special Advice for Evening Students**

The CDO is sensitive to the unique needs of our evening students. We offer after-hours appointments for evening students upon request, and we are available to help you with counseling needs via e-mail and phone.

On a periodic basis, we make career-related presentations to evening students during the first-year lawyering process course. And, we encourage you to keep an eye on our blog, [Denver Law Career Connection](#) for information on upcoming CDO programs you might like to attend. Alternatively, most of our programs are videotaped and available on our [website](#) (username and password: careersites).

As an evening student, you must think about how you will seek legal experience while you are in law school. Because a number of evening students are employed full-time this 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 you are serious about pursuing a legal career, you have acquired the necessary skills to practice, and you will have references who can speak to your ability as an attorney. If taking a full or part time internship is not an option for you, please consider other options:

- Explore the possibility of working on law-related projects in your present position.
- Get to know your professors and perform research for them if possible. These positions are often very independent and often have flexible hours.
- Participate in moot court, write for a law journal, apply to writing competitions and join legal organizations so you can make contacts.
- Whenever possible, participate in clinics on campus.
- Seek 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.
- Meet with your assigned Career Consultant to strategize about other ways to build your resume while in law school.

# **Chapter 7**

## **Applying for Jobs Out of State**

## **Advice for Students Seeking Employment in Another City and State**

- **Contact the bar admission agency in the state**  
The ABA website <http://www.abanet.org/legaled/baradmissions/bar.html> contains a nationwide directory of bar admission offices. Information about the bar exam, MPRE and other admission requirements are available from this site.
- **Join the state bar association and the local bar association** in the city where you want to practice as a student member. Student memberships are frequently free or discounted. Sign up to receive the monthly local bar publication and/or section newsletter and peruse the scholarly journal for articles of interest. Send an email with your attached resume to the attorneys involved in activities or writing articles on areas of interest and request getting together at their convenience to discuss your career-related questions. Be sure you have a list of them prepared before you meet!
- **Join substantive law sections of the local and state bar associations.** Certainly join the Young Lawyers Division or a subcommittee in your practice area and attend meetings to connect with the leaders of these committees. If you have not moved yet, send them an email or snail mail letter with your resume. Your approach should always be in the traditional professional form: a cover letter and resume describing your interest in learning about the legal community.
- **Attend Continuing Legal Education classes** at the Colorado Bar Association ([www.cobar.org/cle](http://www.cobar.org/cle)) in Denver in practice areas in which you are interested and network with as many people attending as possible. Why is this useful even if you plan to leave Denver? Because people have connections all around the country and could possibly know practitioners in other states. Find out if student discounts are available for the CLE by contacting the CBA a week prior to the event with the exact CLE title, date and time.
- **Contact DU law alumni through the Office of Career Development & Opportunities** The CDO can provide you with the names of alumni through the Alumni Volunteer Network (AVN) following a meeting with a career consultant. Guidelines for contacting DU Alumni are provided in the chapters entitled *Networking and Informational Interviews*. Once you make some contacts, try to schedule a visit to the city/state where you plan to move and make appointments to meet these people face-to-face for a more in-depth “informational interviews.”
- **Establish reciprocity with a local law school so** you can access their local job listings as if you were a student attending that school. First look on their website to determine their reciprocity policy. If you wish to establish reciprocity with them, contact our CDO office coordinator with the name and email address of the staff person responsible at your chosen school and we will make the request on your behalf. There is generally a three- month limit from the time you are granted reciprocity privileges, so time your request for access to that school’s resources

carefully. You don't want to apply for it before you will physically be on site to use it (unless they allow you access to their password-protected job database).

### **USEFUL WEBSITES FOR FINDING OUT ABOUT JOBS IN OTHER CITIES/STATES INCLUDE:**

- **Region specific information**  
<http://www.statelocalgov.net/state-co.cfm>  
This site provides national information on statewide offices, the legislative, judicial, and executive branches, boards, as well as regional, county, city and municipalities.
- **Subscribe to the local newspaper or legal bulletin**  
Subscribe to local legal publications (e.g. Law Week Colorado, *Chicago Law Bulletin*) and refer to the Lexis NEWS directory to research business and legal trends in the area, salaries and even changes in local laws and procedures. Local law libraries will also have them available to read.
- Recent graduates should identify the local chapters of the **American Inns of Court** in their new home city. Through their monthly dinner meetings, you will increase exponentially your access to experienced attorneys as well as recent graduates in all areas of practice. Log on to <http://www.innsofcourt.org> to learn about membership applications for local Inns around the country.
- **www.findlaw.com**  
Search for legal positions in other cities/states.
- **www.wetfeet.com** – legal job listings
- **www.nalpdirectory.com**  
Search employers across the country
- **www.linkedin.com**  
Connect with firms and firm employees you know, as well as those you would like to know.

### **Westlaw Jobs Online**

- If you are a currently enrolled law student with an active Westlaw password, you may access the Law Student Jobs Online resource at [www.lawschool.westlaw.com](http://www.lawschool.westlaw.com). This service allows you to search for summer associate positions, internships, clerkships, honors programs and other employment opportunities geared toward law students and attorneys with less than 1 year of experience. Click on "Career Resources" at the top of the page to access these materials. For other job search websites, click on "On-Line Career Resources" on the CDO's home page.

### **The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS)**

- [www.bls.gov/home.htm](http://www.bls.gov/home.htm). The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) is the principal fact- finding agency for the Federal Government in the broad field of labor economics and statistics for national, state, local governments, business, and labor. The BLS also serves as a statistical resource to the Department of Labor.

# **Chapter 8**

## **Judicial Clerkships**

# **Judicial Clerkships: Questions and Answers**

## **1. What is a judicial clerkship?**

A judicial clerkship is a one to two-year position where you perform legal research, writing and other duties for a particular judge. Typically, judicial law clerks review motions and briefs, research the law, and draft opinions.

At the appellate level, a law clerk's duties involve a great deal of research and writing. Appellate law clerks commonly draft memoranda analyzing the issues in cases before the court and making recommendations on how the court should rule. Clerks also attend oral arguments in cases on which they have assisted their judges.

Judicial law clerks working at the trial court level manage cases, draft opinions, and perform extensive legal research to resolve written motions (e.g., motions to dismiss, summary judgment). These positions involve considerable exposure to pre-trial and trial practice and to members of the bar. At the state level, in addition to performing legal research, law clerks for trial judges sometimes act as deputy clerks or bailiffs, assisting in scheduling hearings and trials as well as managing jury panels.

Other types of clerking experiences are Staff Attorneys, Pro Se Law Clerks and clerkships in administrative courts. Various courts at both the federal and state levels hire staff attorneys who serve as law clerks for the entire court. Pro se law clerks are common in the federal courts. Generally, they handle matters filed by unrepresented individuals such as prisoner habeas corpus petitions, civil rights complaints, employment discrimination complaints, and social security disability appeals. Administrative law clerks perform clerkship duties for Administrative Law Judges.

## **2. Why should I clerk?**

- **Prestige:** Clerking at a state or federal court is universally viewed as a valuable and prestigious position. Clerking opens doors!
- **Perspective:** You will have the opportunity to view the justice system from the other side of the bench. Unless you become a judge, you will never again have this opportunity.
- **Intellectually Stimulating:** For many new graduates, clerk positions are often more intellectually stimulating than associate positions at firms.
- **Experience:** This is an intensive period of post-graduate learning. By observing how the judicial decision-making process works, you will learn practical information about how to draft briefs and present cases effectively. Legal employers know that as a judicial clerk, you will have honed your research and writing skills.
- **Enhance job prospects:** Most law clerks meet many prospective employers during their clerkship. Legal employers highly value judicial clerkships.
- **Reference and contact:** You will have an extremely useful recommendation and contact. When you approach an employer with: "Judge so-and-so suggested I contact you," you'll grab their attention!
- **Mentorship:** Judges often become life-long mentors to their law clerks. This kind of relationship can be very valuable—both personally and professionally.

- **Self-Assessment:** A clerkship gives you additional time to decide what career path to pursue. Judicial clerks are exposed to a wide variety of practice areas and often rethink long-term goals during their clerkships.
- **Great Job:** In a survey of law clerks conducted by the National Association for Law Placement (NALP), 97% stated they would gladly clerk again.

### **3. I want to practice in Colorado. Should I look for a clerkship in this state only?**

Geography is an important consideration. Generally, a clerkship in the state where you plan to practice is advantageous because of the contacts you make while clerking. You should not, however, limit your search based on this factor alone. Clerking is prestigious regardless of where you do it. This is especially true of federal clerkships. You should be competitive for positions in the Denver area after clerking for a federal judge anywhere in the country.

### **4. Do I have to be in the top 10% and on law review?**

No. The clerkship market is highly competitive, so if you have these credentials, it will be an easier road for you. However, if you are not in the top 10% and/or not on the law review, you might still find a position -- you just need to go for another angle. Let your personality shine through in your cover letter. Sometimes a judge will consider you just because you have something in common with him/her or you have something unusual in your background.

Make sure you have all the "human interest stuff" on your resume. Include things like overseas travel, language skills, volunteer commitments, raft guide experience, hobbies, etc. Also, in order to get over the law review issue (i.e., you're not on it), you need to submit a great writing sample.

Other ways to stand out in the crowd: intern for judges; take upper level courses where you do a lot of writing and really edit the sample until it is perfect; work for a law professor as a research assistant; compete in writing competitions and moot court competitions; take advantage of every opportunity to meet judges (e.g., join an Inn of Court ([www.innsofcourt.org](http://www.innsofcourt.org)), attend the CDO's judicial clerkship events, join the Colorado Bar Association and the Judiciary Committee, and let us connect you to current and past clerks). Consult with the faculty on the Judicial Clerkship Committee or the CDO Office for help with creating a great cover letter for your judicial clerkship applications. We recommend that you develop a theme for your cover letter that will "sell" you to the judge.

### **5. To what kind of court should I apply?**

Any kind of clerkship is generally a great experience but you may want to give some thought to whether you would prefer working for a trial court or an appellate court. There are significant differences between the two. In general, a position with a trial court exposes you to "everyday litigation" at the pretrial and trial phase whereas appellate clerkships primarily involve research and writing to support your judge in making decisions on appeal.

Next, consider the level of the court. If you are interested in an area of law that is practiced exclusively in the federal courts, you should actively pursue clerkships in the federal court system. Similarly, if you are planning to practice family law, for example, a federal clerkship



might not be as useful as a clerkship with a state court judge.

You should also take into consideration the level of competition involved. While all clerkships are highly competitive, federal clerkships and state Supreme Court clerkships tend to be most competitive.

## **6. How do I choose a judge?**

While it is helpful to cast a wide net in your clerkship, you should also select the judges to whom you apply carefully. It is generally best to apply to a number of judges you have researched in advance and the CDO can suggest a variety of resources for your investigation. Ideally, you should decide if you would definitely work for a particular judge before you send an application, because judges look unfavorably on those who turn down a job offer.

Learning more about a judge before you apply will also give you an advantage over other applicants because you can be more specific in your cover letter, you can tailor your resume, and you might be able to select a writing sample with more appeal to a particular judge. Having detailed knowledge about a judge is also key if you are selected to interview.

## **7. What are the procedures for applying for a judicial law clerk position?**

In general, your application should include a cover letter, resume, writing sample, a copy of your unofficial transcript, and 3 letters of reference. Please note, however, that some judges have different requirements. For federal judges participating in the Online System for Clerkship Application and Review (“[OSCAR](#)”) this information is included in that database. The resources below provide specific judicial clerkship application requirements and timing guidelines for a wide range of jurisdictions.

- **Federal Courts Nationwide:** [OSCAR](#) Rising second-year law students can register for an OSCAR account beginning on July 1.
- **Federal Courts within the Tenth Circuit:** Every year, the CDO contacts each judge’s chambers within the Tenth Circuit to determine which judges will be hiring and what procedures candidates should follow. We compile this information into a spreadsheet, which is typically available late in the fall semester. Please note that the Tenth Circuit has a [law clerk information page](#) that may be helpful as well though the information posted may not be followed in all cases.
- **Colorado Supreme Court:** Each justice publishes judicial clerkship hiring procedures on the [Colorado State Judicial Branch Website](#). Please note that actual procedures may vary so it may be helpful to apply earlier than a justice’s posted time frame.
- **Colorado Court of Appeals:** Each judge publishes judicial clerkship hiring procedures on the [Colorado State Judicial Branch Website](#). Please note that actual procedures may vary so it may be helpful to apply earlier than a judge’s posted time frame.
- **Colorado District Courts:** These positions are posted under the Careers tab on the [Colorado State Judicial Branch Website](#).
- **State Courts outside Colorado:** The CDO subscribes to the Vermont Law School Guide to State Court Judicial Clerkships, which provides information on applying to state court clerkships in all 50 states. Contact us for login information.

As a last resort, call the judge's chambers to get clerkship application information.

## **8. When is the deadline for applying?**

There is no single deadline for every judge. There are, however, ideal time frames to apply for judicial clerkships at different levels of court and in different geographic areas. The websites listed under question 7 above provide much of this information. More broadly, following the suggested timeline below will help you optimize your clerkship search:

### **Ideal Timeline**

**\*\*Special Note Regarding Timing for Federal Clerkships\*\*** Recently, there has been a trend in the federal courts toward early hiring. Therefore, if you are considering applying for federal clerkships, we recommend that you meet with the CDO in the spring semester of 1L year or in the summer after 1L year at the very latest. For example, judges on the Tenth Circuit Court of Appeals may hire as early as the summer after 1L year and judges on the United States District Court for the District of Colorado may hire as early as the fall semester of 2L year, though most are more likely to hire in the spring semester of 2L year through the summer after 2L year. Other jurisdictions may vary so we encourage you to meet with us as soon as possible to identify optimal timelines for your applications.

**Throughout 1L and 2L Year** – meet as many judges as possible by participating in events or activities such as:

- Attend judicial panels and other judicial events at Denver Law
- Intern with a judge (ideally in summer after 1L year or in the fall of 2L year)
- Consider taking an elective course in the 2L year, taught by a judge
- Network your way to personal introductions to judges and clerks (the CDO can help you get started)
- Join an Inn of Court (contact the CDO for more information)

Build relationships with your professors so they will be able to write detailed letters of recommendation for you.

**Early Fall Semester of 2L Year** – Meet with a member of the CDO Judicial Clerkship team to plan your clerkship search. Use this meeting to identify which courts you plan to apply to, determine your timeline, discuss application materials and get referrals to current and former judicial clerks who can provide firsthand information about their judges and courts. Note that this timeline focuses on judicial clerkships in Colorado. Out-of-state procedures vary, so talk with the CDO about out-of-state application processes. As noted above, meeting with the judicial clerkship team in the fall of 2L year is appropriate for most clerkships, but if you are interested in federal clerkships, consider meeting with us in the late spring/early summer of 1L year.

You should also meet with at least one member of the faculty judicial clerkship committee (the CDO can help you identify these professors)

**Fall Semester of 2L Year** – Begin to Compile Letters of Recommendation; Writing Sample and Transcripts

## **Letters of Recommendation**

Students need at least 3 letters of recommendation from professors and/or employers and should ask ideally by November of the 2L year. To request letters from Denver Law Faculty, follow the protocol described at <http://www.law.du.edu/index.php/faculty-support-team/recommendation-letter-request-protocol>

**Best option:** Get letters from your recommenders in sealed envelopes to include in your packet. NOTE: If letters are given to you unsealed, include as given (don't seal)

**Alternatively:** Recommender can mail letters directly to judges to whom you are applying in which case you should offer to provide postage and envelopes.

**Addressing letters of recommendation:** 3 options

1. Send recommenders a spreadsheet with addresses/titles for a mail merge resulting in letters personally addressed to each judge
2. Get a Word copy of the letter from recommenders and insert all address and titles yourself
3. Have your recommenders address all letters to "To Whom It May Concern" (last resort)

## **Writing Sample**

Ideally, use a non-1L work product from a job, externship or upper level writing class. Most judges prefer a memo or a brief written in the IRAC format. Sample should ideally be 5-7 pages + cover sheet. For more info on writing samples generally, click [here](#).

Generally, it is best not to use law review/journal article or academic paper (but a published article may serve as a good supplemental sample)

Utilize Denver Law's Writing Clinic, Kate Stoker [kstoker@law.du.edu](mailto:kstoker@law.du.edu), and professors if you would like a substantive review of your writing sample.

## **Transcripts**

For most judges, an unofficial transcript is fine but you may want to request an official transcript ahead of time just in case. For information on Denver Law transcripts, see our [Registrar's web page](#).

Most judges do not require undergrad transcripts but it is a good idea to request them well in advance, just in case you need them.

**Dec/Jan (as soon as you get your first semester grades) of 2L Year** – Assemble All Application Materials and begin applying to federal judges (if you haven't already), Colorado Supreme Court Justices.

**Spring Break – June of 2L Year** – start applying to the Colorado Court of Appeals Judges

Have your 8.5" x 11" manila envelopes and address labels ready with the following materials

1. Cover Letter on nice resume paper (personalized to each judge) – use the CDO to edit
2. Resume on nice resume paper – use CDO counselors to edit
3. 3 letters of rec (unless they're being sent under separate cover)
4. Writing Sample – on regular paper
5. Transcripts

**June/July after 2L Year** – Supplement pending applications with an updated transcript, ranking information and updated

**Special Note regarding applying for Federal Clerkships using OSCAR** – While a number of Colorado Federal Judges prefer to receive paper applications, many other Federal Judges prefer to receive applications through OSCAR. Speak with a member of the CDO Judicial Clerkship Team regarding OSCAR procedures.

**November/December/January of 3L Year** – begin looking for Colorado state district court openings

Boulder District Court is the only state trial court in Colorado that hires on a cycle—usually posting in December.

Other courts hire as needed and those positions often arise after graduation

All positions will be posted on the Judicial Home Page [“Career” site](#)

The Denver Law Judicial Fellows Program is a great springboard into these jobs and for more information on the program, click [here](#) or see any of us.

**\*\*\* You should submit all of the above application materials for State District Court applications, even though the website only asks you to fill out a State of Colorado application.\*\*\***

## **9. Etiquette for Responding to Judicial Clerkship Offers.**

There are specific rules of etiquette for responding to judicial clerkship offers. While individual situations may involve more nuances, which you should discuss with the CDO and/or Denver Law Faculty on the Judicial Clerkship Committee, here are some things to keep in mind:

- It is generally expected that a judicial clerkship candidate will accept the first clerkship offer they receive. In fact, a small number of judges even make “exploding offers,” which expire if they are not accepted on the spot. Therefore, you should apply only to judges from whom you would accept an offer. On rare occasions, a candidate may receive more than one offer at a time. In that case, immediately contact the CDO if you need advice on how to address the situation.
- If you determine that a clerkship with a particular judge would be a poor fit based on your experience in an interview, it is appropriate to contact chambers afterward and politely withdraw your application.

- When you accept a judicial clerkship offer at any level of court, you are conveying a final decision. It is widely known in the legal profession that reneging on an accepted clerkship offer is unacceptable. Not only does revoking an acceptance place the judge in a bind, but it will also have a detrimental effect on the law school, future Denver Law applicants, and on your reputation. It is even possible that the judge or other employer who made the second offer you accepted will rescind that offer if they learn about your revoked acceptance.
- After accepting an offer, you should notify other chambers where your application is pending that you have accepted an offer and that you are therefore withdrawing from consideration.
- Finally, we ask that you notify the CDO and the professor you have been working with as soon as you accept any judicial clerkship.

## **10. Preparing for a Judicial Clerkship Interview**

If you are selected for an interview, we recommend immediately notifying the CDO and any faculty or other individuals advising you in the process for tips on preparing.

Above all, keep in mind that judges are people. They want a law clerk with whom they will enjoy working. Sheer ability in terms of job skills is required, but not enough. Personality and interpersonal communication skills are important in the interview.

1. Realize your interview begins when the judge's assistant calls you to make an appointment for the interview. Everyone with whom you come in contact, such as judicial assistants, court bailiffs, and court reporters will have an opinion about you. Treat these people with respect. Any person on the judge's staff who has a less than ideal interaction with you can cause your application to be rejected.
2. Be prepared to speak intelligently about the law, your classes and why you selected them, the substance of your past work experiences, your writing sample, and your plans for the future.
3. Read a representative sampling of the judge's opinions. Be familiar with recent opinions as well as noteworthy opinions. Pay attention to dissents and concurring opinions. These are opinions the judge felt strongly about and will be more likely to remember and discuss.
4. Research the judge. There are a variety of resources for finding out additional information about judges available online, through databases such as Lexis, Westlaw and Bloomberg Law and in the library. The CDO and/or Denver Law professors may also be able to connect you with alumni who have clerked for the judge with whom you are interviewing. Finally, the CDO collects interview feedback forms from successful clerkship candidates and may have one for your judge.
5. As part of an interview, judges often have candidates speak to their current clerks. Take this seriously. Judges are often influenced by their current clerks' comments.
6. Prepare questions! Demonstrate you know something about the judge and the court.
7. Read the Interview Chapter in this Handbook. There are dozens of interview questions you should carefully consider before you interview with any legal employer. Spending time answering these questions beforehand will greatly enhance your interview performance.
8. Schedule a mock interview with the CDO.
9. Send a personalized thank you note to everyone who participated in your interview.

# Addressing Cover Letters to Judges

## Federal Courts

Addressee	Address on cover letter and envelope	Salutation
<b>U.S. Supreme Court</b>		
The Chief Justice	The Honorable (full name) Chief Justice of the United States The Supreme Court 1 First Street, N.E. Washington, D.C. 20543	Dear Chief Justice (last name):

Associate Justice	The Honorable (full name) Associate Justice The Supreme Court 1 First Street, N.E. Washington, D.C. 20543	Dear Justice (last name):
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<b>U.S. Court of Appeals</b>		
Chief Judge	Honorable (full name) Chief Judge United States Court of Appeals for the (X) Circuit Address	Dear Judge (last name):
Senior Judge	Honorable (full name) Senior Judge United States Court of Appeals for the (X) Circuit Address	Dear Judge (last name):
Judge	Honorable (full name) United States Court of Appeals for the (X) Circuit Address	Dear Judge (last name):

<b>U.S. District Court</b>		
Chief Judge	Honorable (full name) Chief Judge United States District Court for the District of (X) Address	Dear Judge (last name):

Senior Judge      Honorable (full name)  
Senior Judge  
United States District Court  
for the District of (X)  
Address

Dear Judge (last name):

Judge      Honorable (full name)  
United States District Court  
for the District of (X)  
Address

Dear Judge (last name):

**U.S. Magistrate Judge:**  
Judge      Honorable (full name)  
United States Magistrate Judge  
United States District Court  
for the District of (X)  
Address

Dear Judge (last name):

**U.S. Bankruptcy Judge:**  
Chief Judge      Honorable (full name)  
Chief Judge  
United States Bankruptcy Court  
for the District of (X)  
Address

Dear Judge (last name):

Judge      Honorable (full name)  
United States Bankruptcy Court  
for the District of (X)  
Address

Dear Judge (last name):

## Other Federal Courts

Chief Judge      Honorable (full name)  
Chief Judge  
Name of Court  
Address

Dear Judge (last name):

Judge      Honorable (full name)  
Name of Court  
Address

Dear Judge (last name):

## State Courts

**State Supreme Court:**  
Chief Justice      Honorable (full name)  
Chief Justice  
Supreme Court for the State  
(or Commonwealth) of (State)  
Address

Dear Chief Justice (last name):

Justice	Honorable (full name) Supreme Court for the State (or Commonwealth) of (State) Address	Dear Justice (last name):
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**State Court of Appeals:**

Chief Judge	Honorable (full name) Chief Judge Court of Appeals for the State (or Commonwealth) of (State) Address	Dear Judge (last name):
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Judge	Honorable (full name) Court of Appeals for the State (or Commonwealth) of (State) Address	Dear Judge (last name):
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**District Courts:**

Chief Judge	Honorable (full name) Chief Judge District Court for the State (or Commonwealth) of (State) (X) Judicial District Address	Dear Judge (last name):
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Judge	Honorable (full name) District Court for the State (or Commonwealth) of (State) (X) Judicial District Address	Dear Judge (last name):
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# **Judicial Clerkship Sample Cover Letters**

**Emily P. Jones**

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1234 Any Street ♦ Denver, Colorado 80000 ♦ 303-555-1234 ♦ ejones15@yahoo.com

[DATE]

Honorable John D. Doe  
United States District Court  
for the District of Colorado  
901 19<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Denver, Colorado 80294

Re: Judicial Clerkship Application for [INSERT TERM – e.g. Term Beginning Fall 2017]

Dear Judge Doe:

We met recently at the Business Law Society meeting at the law school when you came to speak about commercial litigation. I am interested in becoming a litigator and learned a great deal from your remarks. I never realized that juries view commercial cases from a tort perspective while the clients think only in terms of contract. This insight is one I will remember throughout my career. I am sure that your remarks about commercial litigation represent just a small fraction of the practical and valuable information I could learn while clerking for you.

A good lawyer communicates well in writing. I have sought out many opportunities to improve my research and writing skills. As a first year law student, I received the highest grade in my legal writing class and was selected as a finalist for the Hartje Writing Award. During my second year, I worked as a research assistant for two professors at the law school, researching and drafting chapters for their respective casebooks. This past summer, I clerked for the Denver firm of Able & Able. There, I wrote twelve memos and three briefs concerning a wide variety of issues. These experiences should provide me with the tools to succeed as a judicial law clerk in your chambers.

I have enclosed a resume, transcript, and writing sample consisting of one of the briefs I wrote this summer. Also enclosed are letters of recommendation from Professors Johnson and Smith, as well as from Mr. Mike Able, my previous employer.

It would be an honor and a privilege to clerk for you. Thank you for your consideration of my application. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

*Emily P. Jones*

Emily P. Jones

Enclosures

# Neal Matthew Fletcher

101 S. Harrison Street, Unit 207 Denver, Colorado 80209 ▪ (303)999-9999 ▪ nfletcher06@law.du.edu

[DATE]

Honorable Percy Anderson  
United States District Court for the Central District of California  
163 United States Courthouse  
312 North Spring Street  
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Re: Application for Judicial Clerkship beginning [INSERT TERM – e.g. Term Beginning Fall 2017]

Dear Judge Anderson:

In law and life there is no substitute for good writing. I learned this fact early on and have availed myself of many opportunities to hone my writing abilities.

I developed my writing skills pursuing a major in English literature as an undergraduate at Cornell University. At the University of Denver Sturm College of Law, the Law Review has been the main outlet for my legal writing. During the summers, I have capitalized on my employment opportunities, gaining substantial practical writing experience. While interning for Denver District Court Judge Gloria Rivera, I worked on numerous orders of the court and interacted directly with Judge Rivera, fine-tuning my writing with a special focus on the brevity and clarity required when composing judicial orders. This past summer, I applied my writing skills to various research projects that I completed while working at the Denver law firm of Hill & Robbins as well as the Colorado Attorney General's Office.

As my resume details, I was a member of a volunteer fire department during my final three years of college. The leadership and teamwork skills that I gained at the fire department translate well to situations in which interpersonal communication is required. Working for Judge Rivera, I realized that one needs to be a responsive colleague in order to operate successfully in the close-knit atmosphere of a judge's chambers.

Recently, I was elected to a position on the College of Law Honor Board. Integrity and professionalism are qualities that I strive to achieve. I am committed to maintaining a high ethical standard among the student body at my school, as well as in all of the work that I do. I will carry this high level of professionalism into each situation that I encounter in your courtroom, irrespective of whether I am speaking with victims, litigants, jurors or attorneys.

Thank you for considering my application. I have enclosed my resume, transcript, letters of recommendation, and writing sample. I would greatly appreciate an opportunity to meet with you to discuss the skills that I would bring to your chambers and to answer any questions you might have.

Respectfully,

*Neal M. Fletcher*

Neal M. Fletcher

Enclosures

**Timothy R. Erickson**  
2100 S. Marion Street  
Denver, CO 80210  
(303)123-4567    terickson08@law.du.edu

[DATE]

Honorable XX  
Address  
City, State Zip

Re: Judicial Clerkship for [INSERT TERM – e.g. Term Beginning Fall 2017]

Dear Judge \_\_\_\_\_:

I have always looked for new and exciting opportunities. At age thirteen, I left home to pursue a career as an international ski racer. I traveled between the northern and southern hemispheres so that I could compete in endless winters. During this time, I learned a great deal about discipline, perseverance, and time management. For example, while competing for the University of Colorado, I excelled academically and earned a 4.0 GPA despite missing one-third of my classes due to my competition travel schedule.

The invaluable life skills I acquired as a competitive athlete, coupled with my academic achievements, would allow me to excel as your judicial law clerk. I am confident my research, writing, and organizational skills will deliver consistent quality work product to your chambers. My confidence arises out of the experiences I have had teaching legal research and writing skills to first year law students as well as my work this summer with the Colorado Attorney General's Office.

I have developed a passion for litigation while working for the special litigation group in the Colorado Attorney General's Office. My greatest desire now is to understand the inner-workings of the courtroom from behind the bench. I truly wish to learn about litigation and judicial decision-making from a judge's point of view.

I am motivated, enthusiastic, and possess an unparalleled work ethic that I will use on a daily basis in your chambers. Attached please find my resume, writing sample, and letters of recommendation. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,  
**Timothy R. Erickson**

Timothy R. Erickson

**Jack M.  
Sandoval**

1234 Somewhere  
Lane Denver,  
Colorado 80044  
(303)999-7777

[DATE]

Honorable Peter T. Johnson  
United States District Court for the District of Wyoming  
123 South 3<sup>rd</sup> Street  
Cheyenne, Wyoming 12345

Dear Judge Johnson:

Born and raised in Colorado as a fourth generation resident, in a Mexican-American household, my family has always stressed the importance of community well-being, personal integrity and the highest personal achievement. These values have allowed me to succeed as a law student at the University of Denver Sturm College of Law. These same values motivate me to seek a position as a judicial law clerk in your chambers beginning in the fall of 2005.

In law school I have spent countless hours in leadership positions, mentoring law students, and promoting community development. As a Co-Chair for the 8<sup>th</sup> Annual National Latino Law Student Association Conference in Denver, I oversee numerous committees in preparing for a national conference that will bring to the forefront issues facing minority communities as well as the means to address and overcome such issues. As the Chair of the Honor Board, I help ensure that the highest standards of professional conduct are upheld at the Law School. In my role as a tutor to incoming law students, I help foster students' development in the importance of community respect for our system of justice.

While contributing significantly to my law school community, I have continued my commitment to academic excellence. I am in the top 6% of my law school class. I was also selected as a Senior Staff Editor on Law Review. Through my law review experience, I have learned the importance of attention to detail and significantly improved my editing and proofreading skills. In addition, I have worked hard to enhance my research, writing, and oral advocacy skills by serving as a member of the ABA National Appellate Team for DU, as well as writing motions and briefs as a member of the Tenth Circuit Clinic on behalf of prisoners.

Enclosed please find my resume, transcript, letters of recommendation and writing sample, which I wrote as a summer associate at Baker & Hostetler. It would be an honor and a privilege to clerk for you. Thank you for considering my application. I look forward to hearing from you regarding this position.

Very truly yours,

*Jack M. Sandoval*

Jack M. Sandoval

# **Chapter 9**

## **On-Campus Interviews (OCI)**

## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT ON-CAMPUS INTERVIEWS (OCI)**

### **What is OCI?**

On-Campus Interviewing (OCI) is the fall recruiting program through which some law firms and government employers hire summer associates, interns, and, not as commonly, first year associates. A much smaller round of on-campus interviews may be held in the spring.

### **What OCI is NOT:**

It is important to recognize that OCI is not the only way to get a job. Please know that most of you will not obtain your job through the OCI process. Indeed, approximately 90% of students experience job search success through externships, networking, informational meetings, job fairs, and not through the OCI process.

### **What if I am not in the top 10 - 25% of my class?**

As a rule, grades play a very important role to most OCI employers. However, many OCI employers are interested in more than just class rank. These positions are extremely competitive, so please keep this in mind. If you are having trouble deciding whether or not to participate in OCI, please make an appointment to speak with a Career Consultant.

### **Who can participate in OCI?**

OCI is open to all continuing students (2L, 3L, 3LE, 4LE & LLM) at the Sturm College of Law. If you have any questions regarding your eligibility, please make an appointment to speak with a Career Consultant.

### **What should I do to prepare for OCI?**

Check the CDO blog at the end of the Spring Semester and over the summer for specific instructions and deadlines; check CDO website; update your Symplicity account and profile online; attend all OCI related programming/events during the Spring and early Fall semesters; participate in Mock Interview Day; and visit the Office of Career Development & Opportunities (Suite 223) to review resources or talk to a Career Consultant for advice on updating your resume, drafting your cover letter and preparing other materials. You will need to have your resume, cover letters, references, and writing sample ready by mid-summer. Some employers request a list of references, so determine who you will want to list and contact them ahead of time for permission. Your Statement of Grades (unofficial transcript) should be prepared as soon as your grades and class rank become available (late June).

### **Do all students get an initial interview?**

No. Employers will select students online to interview. It will be important to check your student Symplicity account and the blog each day to receive the most updated information.

### **How should I prepare for an interview?**

The best preparation is to participate in Mock Interview Day, as well as attend other OCI-related workshops. A Mock Interview Day sign up link will be posted on the CDO blog toward the end of summer and may be emailed to you as well. Mock Interview Day is open to all students, even if you choose not to participate in OCI. You should carefully research each employer as well as the individuals with whom you will interview (when known) and make notes for potential questions to ask as well as connections you may have.

**Where will the interviews take place?**

All interviews will be held in the Sturm College of Law Building, mainly in the second floor study rooms.

**Can any of these employers discriminate against me?**

Participating OCI employers have signed our Equal Employment Opportunity statement. If you have reason to believe that an employer is not complying with this policy, please contact our office.

**OCI can be stressful and can involve tough decisions. Where can I go for advice?**

The Office of Career Development & Opportunities staff is always available to help you in your career search. Whether it is OCI or any other questions or concerns, please feel free to make an appointment online, by emailing [careers@law.du.edu](mailto:careers@law.du.edu), or by calling (303) 871-6124.







# **Chapter 10**

## **Job Database:**

**DU Law Careers Online  
(Simplicity)**

## **DU Law Careers Online**

The Office of Career Development & Opportunities utilizes DU Law Careers Online, a recruiting software system from Symplicity's Career Services Management (CSM) system, available to DU law students and DU alumni job seekers. Our office will set up your account in October of your first year. 1L Day students can begin using this system as of **November 1** of their 1L year. 1L Evening students can begin using the system earlier in their first year as needed (contact our office to get registered early). DU Law Careers Online can be found online at <https://law-denver-csm.symplicity.com/students>.

### **Why Should You Use DU Law Careers Online?**

**DU Law Careers Online provides our office with important information to connect students and alumni with specific employers and also helps us to provide greater continuity of counseling and follow up during and after law school.** This system is also used for On-Campus Interview applications and interview selections in the Fall and Spring semesters. We strongly encourage you to utilize this system so you do not miss out on any opportunities through job postings, OCI, and other programs. Plan to join over 7,000 students/alums and over 4,000 employers currently registered.

As a registered student or alumni user, DU Law Careers Online allows you to:

- Search the database of jobs posted with the Office of Career Development & Opportunities;
- Search the database of employers registered with the Office of Career Development & Opportunities;
- Upload resumes, cover letters, writing samples, references and other relevant documents to apply online for posted jobs, to allow employers to examine your resume if you elect to do so, and to participate when eligible in recruiting programs conducted through the Office of Career Development & Opportunities;
- Enlist the help of the **SEARCH AGENT** feature, which automatically sends you an email message linking you to newly posted jobs in the system that meet the job preference criteria you've selected.

We encourage you to log on to DU Law Careers Online as soon as possible, so that you can become familiar with its features and take advantage of all of the benefits it has to offer.

### **EXISTING USERS:**

#### **ACCESSING YOUR DU LAW CAREERS ONLINE ACCOUNT**

1. Go to <https://law-denver-csm.symplicity.com/students/>
2. Enter your username and password.

#### **QUESTIONS ABOUT YOUR USERNAME AND PASSWORD**

If you do not remember your password, click on the "Forgot Password" link. A newly generated password will then be emailed to you. If you cannot remember your username, please contact the CDO office to obtain your username.

## **NEW USERS (Usually Alumni of the class of 2011 or before):**

### **TO CREATE A NEW ACCOUNT**

1. Go to <https://law-denver-csm.symplicity.com/students/>
2. Click on Register to start creating your new account.
3. Fill out the registration information and submit.
4. After you have been approved, you will receive an email that includes your NEW temporary password information. You will be able to change your password once you log on the first time or anytime thereafter.

### **INCOMING 1L AND 1LE STUDENTS**

NOTE: Our office will automatically create a new account for all 1L and 1LE students in their first semester. Watch for emails from our office on how and when to access.

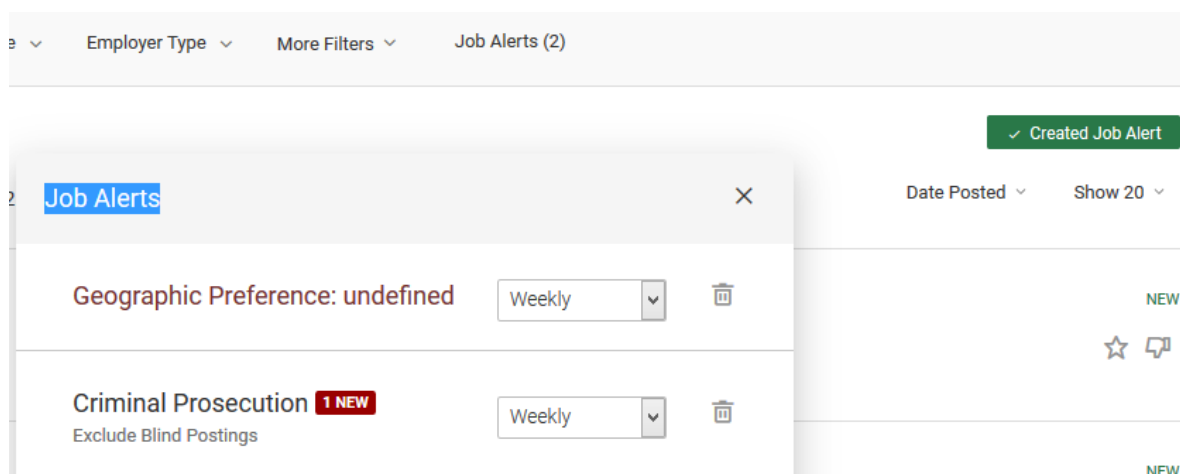
### **TIPS:**

#### **SEARCHING FOR JOBS**

After you have logged into your account, you can begin searching for positions by selecting the tab for Jobs and Resume Collection.

#### **CREATING A SEARCH AGENT**

- To setup a search agent, first go to 'Jobs Postings' and click the 'See All Jobs' button.
- First proceed to select the criteria that the search agent will be based on using the Position Type, Employer Type and More Filters options then click on 'Apply'. Your search results will be listed.
- Now click on the '+ Create Job Alert' button to make your new alert.



- Click on the Job Alerts link to see all of your job alerts, change their names and alter how often you get the alerts mailed to you.

If you have any questions about our services, please contact us at [careers@law.du.edu](mailto:careers@law.du.edu) or call (303) 871-6124.

# **Chapter 11**

## **Externships for Credit**

## **Externships**

### **Contact:**

For more information on externships for credit please contact the Externship office by email at [externships@law.du.edu](mailto:externships@law.du.edu) , by phone at 303.871.6486, or in person in suite 359.

### **Website:**

Please visit the externship website for more resources and information at <http://www.law.du.edu/index.php/legal-externship-program>.

### **Externship Handbook:**

The externship handbook is located on their website and can be accessed at the following link. <http://www.law.du.edu/documents/legal-externship-program/StudentExternshipHandbook2016.pdf>

# **Chapter 12**

## **Legal Career Options**

# **Part A:**

## **Private Sector**



## **LAW FIRMS**

### **Large Firms**

Typically, these firms offer clients a full range of services. Their legal departments can range from 150 to over 2,000 attorneys; they may have additional offices in other cities and countries; and they may have a list of high profile corporate clients. Because these firms typically pay the highest salaries, they have highly competitive hiring processes that usually focus on students in the top 5-10% of their class. Most of the large Denver firms come on campus every fall to participate in On-Campus Interviewing (OCI). (Please see the OCI chapter and our website for more details.) Be aware that attrition in such firms can be high due to the pressure resulting from the billable hour requirements. Associates must work long, hard hours in order to move up the partner track. Some law firms have a single partnership level whose members share in the firm's equity. Others have two or three levels of partnership, with only the top level conferring equity. Hiring in these firms takes place during OCI only for law students and entry-level attorneys. Expect a range of \$90,000-\$160,000.

### **Medium and Small Firms**

There is little that can be generalized about small and medium size firms. Sometimes these firms have spun off of a large firm and other times these firms simply started out as “boutique” firms. The practice areas can be very generalized or very specialized. The best way to join a small or medium size firm is by networking or by working there part-time during law school. Benefits to working in this environment may include more autonomy, more hands-on practical experience early on, client contact early on, and earlier partnership. Possible cons may include a lower salary at the beginning, the expectation you will bring in clients early in your career, being asked to perform more administrative tasks, and less sophisticated clients. Salaries range all over the board in this type of firm. Expect a range of \$45,000-70,000.

## **IN-HOUSE COUNSEL**

Many companies have a legal department that advises them on day-to-day business activities and oversees work performed by big firms (outside counsel). Typically, but not always, companies prefer to hire transactional attorneys with three or more years of specialized experience in, for example, securities law or contracts. The salaries here are usually fairly competitive, but the hours can be generally better. One of the benefits is that there is only one client. In private practice, you are typically working on many deals or cases for many different clients. As an in-house attorney, you will work on many projects, but will always be working for the same client. The other important benefit is the lack of a billable hour requirement. Students interested in in-house positions should talk with one of our CDO Career Consultants and consider participating in the Corporate Apprenticeship Program (offered only in the Spring Semester).

# **Part B:**

## **Public Sector**

## **Career Tips for a Public Interest Career**

Many students enter law school with the dream of making a difference in the world through public service. Sometimes that dream is derailed before graduation. Mounting debt and limited employment opportunities in general may lead you to the conclusion that a position in the private sector is your only option. To help you stay on track for a public interest career, the CDO offers a number of opportunities for you to explore career options in non-profit organizations and government agencies. In addition to your classes, the law school hosts seminars, workshops, volunteer events, law student groups and career fairs that can continue to spark your interest. Beyond the walls of DU, opportunities exist throughout Denver, Colorado, the U.S. and the world. Consider an internship in Washington, DC or overseas the summer after your first or second year. Hone your networking skills by joining an Inn of Court or a professional organization in your area of interest. The CDO provides materials about public service loan forgiveness, income-based loan repayment options and how you can qualify upon graduation.

### **Checklist:**

- Look for externship opportunities in your field of interest. If your interests are broad, get firsthand experience in several areas through externship opportunities. Not sure about what opportunities exist? Check out the PSLAWnet.org website for government and non-profit internship and job listings at: <http://www.pslawnet.org/>. This website will also e-mail listings to you as they become available. Also check [www.idealists.org](http://www.idealists.org).
- Satisfy your Public Interest Practicum (PIP) in a field that interests you. If you don't see a PIP you like, create your own. Offer to help a local organization with a project that interests you or offer to work remotely on a project for a national organization or international organization.
- Attend the Public Interest Career Fair in Washington, DC that is sponsored by Equal Justice Works and is held each October. For more information, see: <http://www.equaljusticeworks.org/events/ccf/general>. Or stay closer to school and attend DU's own career fair. Stop at a variety of tables and learn more about other fields of law.
- Learn more about summer internship grants and public interest fellowships available after your graduate at <http://law.du.edu/index.php/public-interest-office/summer-grant-post-graduate-fellowship-opportunities>.
- Concerned about how you can pay back your loans on a public interest law salary? Check out the loan forgiveness and repayment information at the CDO or watch a speaker on the CDO video link. We recommend the Spring 2010 video entitled "Student Debt Relief Presentation" from February 8, 2010 at: <http://law.du.edu/forms/career-development/restricted/videospring2010.cfm>.

## **Federal Government**

The secret is out about federal jobs. Federal, state, and local governments employ thousands of lawyers. One major employer is the Department of Justice, which hires lawyers to prosecute cases on behalf of the federal government. The pay is pretty good, the work is typically very interesting, and the hours are reasonable. Also, no billable hours! But, as it is often very difficult to break into these jobs directly out of law school, interning at an agency during law school is generally the best avenue to follow. Additionally, plan to attend the CU/DU Public Interest Career Fair in the fall and various career panels that feature government agency attorneys.

Many federal agencies hire entry-level attorneys through their Honors Program, which is not always based on a cumulative GPA. For detailed information on government honors programs please see [www.law.arizona.edu/career/honorshandbook.cfm](http://www.law.arizona.edu/career/honorshandbook.cfm). Other agencies may advertise their attorney positions at [www.usajobs.opm.gov](http://www.usajobs.opm.gov) or at [www.avuecentral.com](http://www.avuecentral.com). Opportunities also exist within regulatory agencies, such as the Securities and Exchange Commission and the Commodities Futures Exchange Commission — and in the military, with the Judge Advocate General Corps, as well as every other cabinet-level agency.

## **State and Local Government**

The Attorney General's Office, the District Attorney's Offices, the Public Defender's Office, the City Attorney's Office, and County Attorney's Offices are often wonderful places to work and pay fairly well. Attorneys working in these environments report a high degree of job satisfaction. You will get a significant amount of job responsibility early and do not need to worry about "rain-making" or billable hours. Again, these jobs are difficult, but not impossible, to get. Get out and intern or volunteer early. These agencies like to hire people they already know. <http://www.statelocalgov.net/state-co.cfm>. This site provides national information on statewide offices, the legislative, judicial, and executive branches, boards, as well as regional, county, city and municipalities.

## **Judicial Clerkships**

See Chapter 8 for a comprehensive discussion of this legal career option.

## **Public Interest Law**

"Public Interest Law" is a broad category that can include work for federal, state, and local governments as well as non-profit organizations. Partners and associates working for law firms can also work on behalf of the public interest by taking on pro bono cases. The type of 'public interest' law you may wish to practice will be dictated by your personal passions, be they an interest in child welfare, gay and lesbian rights, criminal prosecution, or any number of other social issues. "Public interest" jobs are too varied to be meaningfully summarized, although competition for many positions is often intense and, again broadly speaking, the pay is not as high as work in the private sector. In applying for a job that addresses a particular social ill, the organization will often be looking for a demonstrated commitment to the issue or clients they serve, in addition to other employment criteria such as research and writing skills. Internships are often a fabulous way to both gain experience and develop connections in a particular area or organization.

# **Part C:**

## **Alternative Careers (JD Advantage)**

## **ALTERNATIVE CAREERS**

Many of you may have come to law school knowing that you did not want to practice law. Others may have decided during law school that practicing law is not for you. Now the question is: what else can you do with a law degree?

Make an appointment to talk with one of our Career Consultants. We can suggest extensive resources to help you make this transition. We facilitate self-introspection that helps you decide what your interests are, your values, your strengths and weaknesses and ultimately what type of work environment you would enjoy. We also offer the Myers-Briggs Type Inventory (MBTI) in working to explore suitable career options.

### **Suggested Web Resources**

NALP, The Association for Legal Career Professionals at [www.nalp.org](http://www.nalp.org) has a wealth of information on determining if an alternative career is right for you, job resources to consult in your employment search, finding a career coach and how to handle tough interview issues.

[http://www.nalp.org/uploads/AltCareersWebsites\\_rev2010.pdf](http://www.nalp.org/uploads/AltCareersWebsites_rev2010.pdf)

[http://www.nalp.org/assets/317\\_exploringcareerchanges.pdf](http://www.nalp.org/assets/317_exploringcareerchanges.pdf)

[http://www.nalp.org/assets/320\\_toughinterviewissues.pdf](http://www.nalp.org/assets/320_toughinterviewissues.pdf)

*NALP also maintains a job data base for positions in the areas of law school career counseling and law firm recruitment at:*

<http://www.nalp.org/jobs?s=alternative%20careers>

*JD Preferred: 400+ Things You Can do With a Law Degree (Other Than Practice Law),*

<http://www.law.siu.edu/career/PDF/tradandnontradlawjobsweb1.pdf>

### **Suggested Readings**

*What Can You Do With A Law Degree? A Lawyers Guide to Career Alternatives Inside, Outside & Around the Law*, by Deborah Arron. Paperback, Niche Press, 5<sup>th</sup> Ed. 2004.

*Lawyer's Career Change Handbook: More Than 300 Things You Can Do With A Law Degree*, by Hindi Greenberg. Paperback, Collins, 2002.

*Turning Points- New Paths and Second Careers for Lawyers*, Published by ABA

*Breaking Traditions: Work Alternatives for Lawyers*, Published by ABA.

*The Road Not Taken: A Practical Guide to Exploring Non-Legal Career Options*, by Kathy Grant and Wendy Werner. Published by National Association for Law Placement.

*Discovering Your Career in Business*, by Timothy Butler and James Waldroop (Directors of MBA Career Development Programs at Harvard Business School). Paperback, Addison-

Wesley Publishing Co., Inc., 1997.

*Do What You Are- Discover the Perfect Career for You Through the Secrets of Personality Type*, by Paul

D. Tieger and Barbara Barron-Tieger. Paperback, Little, Brown & Co., 3<sup>rd</sup> Ed. 2001.

## **INTERNATIONAL LAW**

A career in international law could cross over many of the areas listed above. International lawyers work for their home governments (in the U.S. that would be at, inter alia, the Department of State, World Bank, US AID, the Department of Homeland Security and the Department of Justice), public policy institutions, overseas development agencies, international NGOs (non-governmental organizations), and international organizations (such as UN agencies, international courts, regional bodies (such as the OAU), for trade associations (such as the ABA's Rule of Law Initiative) and in private law firms and companies which conduct international business. Some of these careers require attorneys to reside abroad and rotate to new positions every few years. Others are located within the U.S. and travel abroad is infrequent. Students interested in a career in international law should look for internship and study-abroad opportunities during law school. It is also helpful to meet with law professors specializing in international law for advice. Many positions in international law require one or two years of experience. This initial experience is often difficult to obtain and students should consider the possibility of unpaid internships after graduation or signing up as a UN Volunteer, which pays a livable stipend (see: [www.unv.org](http://www.unv.org)), upon graduation. Some DU law students choose to do a dual degree and obtain a Masters in International Studies from the Josef Korbel School of International Studies, an MBA in International Business from the Daniels College of Business or an MA from the Conflict Resolution Institute. Law school also might be the ideal time to sharpen your language skills, as knowledge of a foreign language is often a plus in landing an international law position, and many opportunities exist at DU to study and improve your knowledge of another language.

## **LEGAL PUBLISHING**

An often overlooked area, but one ripe with opportunities for recent law graduates and seasoned professionals, is the legal publishing field. Think of all of the legal treatises, loose-leaf services, books, manuals, magazines, newsletters, websites, and legal research sites which lawyers, judges, and law students access on a daily basis to stay up to date on the latest legal news and trends. Someone has to write, edit and maintain all of that information and that someone could be you. Career opportunities abound at mammoth companies such as West (Thomson Reuters) and LexisNexis, as well as small legal publishers.

## **ACADEMIA**

For those with a passion for teaching and research, a career in academia is an excellent choice. Often law professors have graduated at the top of the class, served as an editor on law review or other legal journal and have published or written law review articles, comments or

notes. Individuals interesting in teaching at a law school who have graduated from schools that are not in the top ten or twenty ranked schools should consider obtaining an LL.M. in their field of interest. Law schools hire new professors and visiting professors on an annual basis. An often overlooked area, but one ripe with opportunities for recent law graduates and seasoned professionals, is the legal publishing field. Think of all of the legal treatises, loose-leaf services, books, manuals, magazines, newsletters, websites, and legal research sites which lawyers, judges, and law students access on a daily basis to stay up to date on the latest legal news.



# **Part D:**

## **Law Specialty Areas**

## **LAW SPECIALTY AREAS**

Included here is a list of some specialty areas in which you can practice law. (\*Note: Not all specialty areas are included.)

Environmental	Admiralty law
International	Bankruptcy
Civil Litigation	Aviation law ERISA
Criminal Law Tax Law	Immigration Law Legal Aid
Patent Law	Medical Malpractice Military (JAG Corps
Appellate Practice	Products Liability Municipal law
Trusts and Estates	Civil Rights
Alternative Dispute Resolution	Health Law
Sports Law Corporate/Securities	Worker's Compensation Transportation
Employment law Insurance Defense	Law
Elder Law Intellectual Property	Constitutional Law Education Law
Family Law	Agriculture Law
Real Estate	

In determining which area you would like to focus on, be sure to attend the many CDO programs and panels where attorneys from various specialties speak about their practice. In these programs, we invite two or more attorneys in a practice area to come and speak to students on the basics of their practice area and how to pursue careers in that area. Many of these programs are videotaped and are available to view on our website. In addition, our staff is trained to help you identify and make these decisions. For additional career development information, see:

[http://www.americanbar.org/resources\\_for\\_lawyers/careercenter.html](http://www.americanbar.org/resources_for_lawyers/careercenter.html).

# **Chapter 13**

## **Job Offers and Negotiation/Salary Information**

## **What are the best ways to handle salary discussions?**

Salary discussions during an interview center around what you have made in prior positions and/or what you are seeking to earn in your next position. (The rules are different if you're responding in writing to a written request for a salary history or requirements from an advertised position.) A salary discussion is *not* a salary negotiation. It can, however, lay the foundation for a salary negotiation.

Employers ask salary questions to see if a close match exists between the salary likely to be offered and your expectations. Naturally, the closer you are to the employer's salary range, the more likely you will accept an offer and remain with the company.

Be prepared to disclose your salary history when asked. If your salary history differs significantly (higher or lower) than your current expectations, you must be prepared to address these differences at the same time. Keep in mind you need to consider the total compensation package including benefits, local and national bar association memberships, attorney registration fees, and CLEs.

Often a significant difference in salary occurs when making a change in career, industry, type or level of position, geographical area, or when starting a new career. Without knowing the appropriate salary range for the type of position you are seeking, you may not be able to address variances in your salary history. In this case, you need to conduct prior research as to salary ranges for someone with your experience and skills for the type of position in the industry and geographical area in which you are interviewing. For salary resources, see <https://www.glassdoor.com/Salaries/index.htm>. Another site with a handful of salary advice sources is <http://www.careerperfect.com/content/topics-salary>.

You may also be asked directly regarding your salary expectations. For example, the employer may ask: "What do you want to earn in your next position?" This is different than asking for historical facts like your salary history, so you have latitude in answering. In general, you should use a range rather than a specific figure when discussing numbers at this stage.

Keep in mind this is *not* the time to negotiate salary — you are simply answering the employer's interview question. When handled appropriately, a salary discussion can lay the foundation for negotiating the best salary later.

## **Evaluating a Job Offer**

Once you receive a job offer, you are faced with a difficult decision and must evaluate the offer carefully. Fortunately, most organizations will not expect you to accept or reject an offer immediately.

There are many issues to consider when assessing a job offer. Will the organization be a good place to work? Will the job be interesting? Are there opportunities for advancement? Is the salary acceptable? Does the employer offer good benefits? If you have not already figured out exactly what you want, the following may help you to

develop a set of criteria for judging job offers, whether you are starting a career, reentering the labor force after a long absence, or planning a career change.

### **The Organization**

Background information on an organization can help you to decide whether it is a good place for you to work. Factors to consider include the organization's business or activity, financial condition, age, size, and location. If possible, speak to current or former employees of the organization as they can offer valuable insight into the culture of an organization.

The National Association of Law Placement <http://www.nalpdirectory.com/> maintains valuable data on law firms that are members of the National Association of Law Placement.

Stories on an organization in magazines and newspapers tell a great deal about its successes, failures, and plans for the future. Employers' LinkedIn.com webpages and publications such as the *Denver Business Journal* provide topical information about the local business community.

National, State, and metropolitan area data are available from:

- Bureau of Labor Statistics, Office of Compensation Levels and Trends, <http://www.bls.gov/ncs/> Data on earnings by detailed occupation from the Occupational Employment Statistics (OES) Survey are available from: <http://www.bls.gov/oes/>.
- The Colorado Department of Labor maintains a website specific to Colorado job markets and industries: <https://www.colmigateway.com/vosnet/Default.aspx>. This site can target specific geographic areas for labor market information (e.g., Jefferson County market information only).

### **Salaries and Benefits**

Wait for the employer to introduce these subjects. Some companies will not talk about pay until they have decided to hire you. In order to know if their offer is reasonable, you need a rough estimate of what the job should pay. You may have to go to several sources for this information. Ask your professors and the CDO staff about starting pay for positions like the one you've been offered.

If you are considering the salary and benefits for a job in another geographic area, make allowances for differences in the cost of living. Take into account that the starting salary is just that—the start. Salary should be reviewed on a regular basis; many organizations do it every year. How much can you expect to earn after 1, 2, or more years?

## **Web Sources on Salary Negotiations and Job Offers**

For the University of Denver Sturm College of Law's new graduate employment and salary data, see <http://law.du.edu/index.php/career-development-and-opportunities/employment-statistics>

For information on attorney compensation in Colorado, ask the CDO for information from the Colorado Bar Association's Economic Survey. CBA members may obtain their own copy of the survey by contacting the CBA directly. [www.cobar.org](http://www.cobar.org)

For national salary data, see the National Association of Law Placement's research & statistics page at <http://www.nalp.org/research>

### [SalaryNegotiationGuide](#)

An excellent guide from Susan Ireland, covering the process from picking the best time to approach your boss to signing contracts.

# **Chapter 14**

## **Survival Tips for New Attorneys**

Now that you have a job, here are some tips about surviving (and thriving!):

## 1. Master Your Writing Skills

We can't emphasize enough the importance of producing clear, concise written materials. To create superior pieces:

- Proofread, proofread, proofread!
- Treat a request for a "rough draft" as a request for a final draft.
- Check your facts. Don't assume anything.
- Do not turn your assignment into a lengthy historical analysis of case precedent unless you have been explicitly directed to do so by your assigning attorney.
- Analyze the law as it relates to your fact pattern and avoid rambling about unrelated issues. Your ultimate goal is to solve the client's problems. Turning the project into a law review article is not the most efficient or effective way to address your client's needs.

## 2. Be Smart with Your Time

Get as many facts and as much clarification from the assigning attorney as possible, **before** you even leave his/her office.

- Find out background information about the case and make sure you understand how your assignment fits into "the big picture."
- Determine when your project needs to be done and how much time the assigning attorney believes you *should* take to complete it. (Beware: new associates will often need three to five times longer than the assigning attorney estimates!)
- Ask the assigning attorney to suggest a source where you can begin your search. Find out if there are internal forms or memo files to explore so you don't "reinvent the wheel."

While everyone recognizes new attorneys are on a learning curve, it is important not to spend hours or days researching projects you don't understand. Check in with the assigning attorney as you progress with your project to make sure you are still on the right track. You don't want to spend days on an assignment only to find out that your work was useless because you made incorrect assumptions, or got bogged down researching irrelevant issues, or the issue was modified and no one told you (it's *your* job to confirm with the assigning attorney that nothing has changed since your initial conversation)!

## 3. Seek Feedback and Accept Criticism

New attorneys commonly complain about the lack of feedback they receive regarding their work performance. Don't fall into this trap: accept responsibility for your own professional development and seek feedback from assigning attorneys. Though they might be busy and hard to reach, be assertive and persistent in asking for their opinions about your work.



The best time to ask for feedback is after completing a draft, but before finishing the project. Don't be defensive about criticism if you do receive it. Your draft may be returned with more red than black ink, but use this as an opportunity to learn about this attorney's style and to improve your own writing skills.

#### **4. Be Flexible**

Every attorney has different criteria for a "good" work product. Try to conform to the specific demands of each assigning attorney. Review the memos your assigning attorney has written to get an idea of his/her style. Knowing your audience is the first step to finding success.

#### **5. Be Friendly to Everyone -- from Senior Partners to Paralegals**

Meet and stay in touch with all the senior attorneys with whom you are working. Some will encourage regular contact and will make it easy. Others may seem unapproachable and you will have to work harder to communicate with them. It is in your best interest to make the effort – don't expect them to.

Get to know younger and mid-level attorneys. They often know the ropes and can be invaluable sources of information. Treat them as professional colleagues, mentors and sounding boards.

Treat members of the administrative/clerical staff with respect. Introduce yourself to them immediately and learn their names! The quality and timeliness of your work product is often in their hands, so be sure you treat them as the professionals they are.

#### **6. Stay Out of the Gossip Mill**

Office politics are complicated. If you embroil yourself in political and/or personal conflicts, you may get burned. Be professional and steer clear of conversations about other employees. If you do, you will earn trust and respect from everyone.

#### **7. Get Your Hands Dirty**

Treat every assignment as a challenge. Dive in and become an expert on the matters entrusted to you. By doing so, you will become indispensable and will be positioned to receive more prestigious and interesting assignments down the road.

#### **8. Enjoy Work *and* Life.**

During your first few years of practice, the learning curve will be tremendous as will, at times, your stress level. Find outlets to cope with on-the-job stress and the discomfort you may feel as you grow in your professional development and face more responsibilities and higher performance expectations. If you don't learn how to really relax your mind now, you will pay for it later in life.

- Did you run or lift weights to cope with the stress of law school exams? Keep up your exercise routine as you begin practice.
- Read fiction or listen to music to unwind.
- Do volunteer work that interests you.

Strive to maintain balance in your life. You will be a happier, healthier lawyer and a well-rounded person for it. This will benefit you and your employer as well!

*Kimm Walton, Esq., author of What Law School Doesn't Teach You... But You Really Need to Know, provides excellent tips regarding career survival as a summer clerk or new associate. Full Disclosure, The New Lawyer's Must-Read Career Guide by Christen Civiletto-Carey, Esq. is an equally fine resource.*

# Chapter 15

## Resources

## **A Sampling of Additional Useful Websites**

*Here are additional websites for those interested in business, government work, general job searches or going solo. More are available on the CDO Blog under Resources at:*

<http://lawcareerblog.law.du.edu/resources/>

### **Government Jobs**

- **2011-2012 Federal Legal Employment Opportunities Guide**  
<http://www.law.asu.edu/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=bfNbH9KWjsY%3D&tabid=1136>
- <http://www.usajobs.gov/> (If you check only one site for government jobs, make it this one!)
- <http://www.firstgov.gov/>
- <http://www.house.gov/cao-hr/>
- <http://bestplacetowork.org> (Rankings by federal employees of the best places to work in government agencies)
- <http://www.hhs.gov/careers> (Health and Human Services home page)
- [www.senate.gov/pagelayout/visiting/h\\_multi\\_sections\\_and\\_teasers/employment.htm](http://www.senate.gov/pagelayout/visiting/h_multi_sections_and_teasers/employment.htm) (Senate and committee jobs plus legislation and records )
- <http://www.ourpublicservice.org/OPS/programs/calltoserve>  
[www.gpoaccess.gov/plumbook/2008/index.html](http://www.gpoaccess.gov/plumbook/2008/index.html)  
(lists over 7,000 Federal civil service leadership)
- [www.bls.gov/home.htm](http://www.bls.gov/home.htm)  
The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) is the principal fact-finding agency for the Federal Government in the broad field of labor economics and statistics for national, state, local governments, business and labor. The BLS also serves as a statistical resource to the Department of Labor.

### **Legal and General Job Search Sites**

<http://www.americanbar.org>

The ABA site has a wealth of information on career resources for lawyers. Be sure to explore the Career Counsel section.

[www.findlaw.com](http://www.findlaw.com)

A mini-law school comprised of links to substantive legal information, pending cases and access to legal positions in other cities/states. FindLaw's database helps you locate practice-specific area information. It also allows you to search current news, legal analysis, case law and attorneys nationwide.

[www.wetfeet.com](http://www.wetfeet.com)

A comprehensive resource with information sorted by industry with salaries and job listings.

<http://www.hound.com>

Access provided to employers' websites for members. Ranked in the top 20 best job search engines.

<http://www.indeed.com>

A comprehensive site that searches job sites, associations, companies and newspapers by key words.

<https://www.careeronestop.org>

Search for salaries, growing markets and current positions by national, state, local and county levels.

<http://www.hg.org>

Hieros Gamos is another worldwide internet portal to anything legal: national, international law, associations and employment for both the law student and attorney.

### **Westminster Library Research Sites**

Westminster's blog at: <http://westminsterlawlibrary.blogspot.com/2011/05/legal-job-search-guide.html>;

Westminster's research guide on starting your own law office at <http://libguides.law.du.edu/solo>

<http://libguides.law.du.edu/law-librarianship>

This guide provides a resource for library school or law school students interested in law librarianship as well as newer law librarians.

Other job search research guides that are very useful include:

<http://www.libguides.law.du.edu/careers>

Hoover's on-line company database provides histories, financial information, and profiles of worldwide public & private companies. Also allows searching by individual or business type. Go to <http://www.law.du.edu/site/code/library/internaldb.php>, select Business in the drop down menu and scroll down to Hoover's.

### **Video Library/Streamed Videos**

Most of our programs are accessible on-line as archived streaming videos for each semester. Previous programs are categorized by semester and include seminars on a wide range of topics including writing your resume, practicing in specific areas of law, networking, and interviewing tips, log on to:

<http://www.law.du.edu/forms/career-development/restricted/videos.cfm>

For the username and password for the archived videos, please check the Password Protected Site Guide under <http://www.law.du.edu/index.php/career-development-and-opportunities/student-resources/online-career-resources> or contact the CDO Office at 303-871-6124 or [careers@law.du.edu](mailto:careers@law.du.edu).