

CAREER PLANNING FOR THE EVENING STUDENT

**The George Washington University Law School
Law Career Development Office
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I. INTRODUCTION

As an evening law student, you may feel like there are not enough hours in the day to do all you have to do. You are not only involved with law school, but also with work, family obligations, friendships, household chores, civic activities. . . the list is endless. Usually, something has to give, and for a lot of part-time students, that “something” is often legal career planning. Some students believe that the decision to enroll in law school is enough of a start and that career planning can wait until substantially later in their law school career. Others feel that they don’t have the time or energy to deal with career planning. Whatever the reason, it seems that many evening students don’t give advanced planning the importance it requires to achieve a satisfying legal career. Those that put little time into evaluating their career objectives and designing their career strategy are often disappointed by the types of positions they are offered after graduation. With some thought and planning on your part, however, this need not happen to you. We have created Career Planning for the Evening Student as a guide to assist you in career assessment, acquaint you with the services of our office, help you plan job searching strategies, and assist you in developing a resume and cover letters. This booklet has been specifically designed for you, the evening student. We also encourage you to make use of our other handouts and resources that are available in our Resource Library.

II. SERVICES FOR THE EVENING STUDENT

The Career Development Office is sensitive to your schedule and time constraints and provides certain services to accommodate you. For example, the office and Career Resource Library have extended hours of operation. In addition, most of our programs are taped and are available in the Resource Library, in the event that you are unable to attend. There are also evening programs that are specifically designed to address your concerns and interests. Moreover, a career advisor has been designated to work with your section to help you with your career planning. Your advisor will be available for office as well as phone appointments. Our services are described in more detail below.

Hours: The Career Development Office is open during the semester from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. The Resource Library is open Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.; Tuesday and Thursday from 8:30 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.; and on Saturday from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Sheila Driscoll, an experienced career counselor, is assigned to work specifically with evening students and is available from 10am – 6:30pm, Monday through Thursday, and 9:00 am – 5:30 pm on Fridays. If you are unable to meet either in person or over

the phone during those hours, appointments can be made to start as late as 8:00 p.m. on Tuesday and Thursdays on an as needed basis.

Counseling: Start thinking about your future career objectives as early in your law school program as possible. Your section advisor works specifically with the evening division and can help you examine your job search, design or update a legal resume, draft a cover letter, and prepare for interviews. We encourage you to take advantage of telephone appointments as well as the fax machine and e-mail whenever possible. If, for example, you would like your advisor to review a resume or cover letter, you can send it as an e-mail attachment, or fax it, in advance and set up a phone appointment to discuss it. You can arrange appointments by calling (202) 994-7340. The fax number for the office is (202) 994-7352. Sheila Driscoll's email address is sdriscoll@law.gwu.edu.

Resource Library: The Career Development Office Resource Library maintains reference materials that are of particular interest to job seekers in legal and law-related fields. A complete annotated bibliography is available in the Resource Library and on the CDO web site (www.law.gwu.edu/cdo). Many evening students ask how they might combine their past work experience with their legal education. If you are considering this, you may want to examine some of our resources regarding career options. Check with the librarian in the Resource Library for materials that might be relevant to you.

Programs: Workshops are presented throughout the academic year to provide information on the job search and career planning, resume and cover letter preparation, and interview skills. There also will be other career-related programs, such as the "Brown Bag Lunch Series," which will provide students with an opportunity to listen to and meet with practicing attorneys in various specialties. Students find that not only do these programs provide a great deal of information about career possibilities, but they also improve interviewing skills by making students more informed interviewees. We try to present workshops and programs during lunch hours, late in the day or in the evening for your convenience. They are staffed by attorneys, usually alumni, and upper level evening students. If that is not possible, all presentations will be available in the Resource Library on videotape if you are not able to attend.

You will receive notice of upcoming programs through the law school web portal, email, Noteworthy, and your Stockton Hall mailbox. Information about these programs also appears on the CDO web site as well as on the bulletin board by the main floor Burns elevator.

On-Campus Interview Programs: Second-, third- and fourth-year evening students are encouraged to participate in our on-campus interview program. According to Law School policy and the National Association for Law Placement (NALP), first-year students should not participate until the second semester of the J.D. program. The on-campus interview program is an opportunity to meet prospective employers. These employers are seeking individuals for both summer and permanent positions, although the program generally attracts large firms seeking summer associates who will form the pool from which permanent associates will be chosen. Fall interviews are generally scheduled from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. beginning in late August and early September and continuing for about a total six week period, although the majority of interviews take place in the first week of the program (which is usually the week BEFORE classes begin). Employers also continue to come on campus to interview throughout the year. A further discussion of the on-campus interview process as a job search strategy appears in the “Job Search Strategies” section of this booklet. Fall interview policies and procedures will be provided by the Career Development Office to students participating in the interview process.

Job Listings: The Career Development Office receives about 3000 job postings a year for students and alumni. Full-time and part-time opportunities are searchable by practice area, job type, location and other criteria through the Symplicity online system. The CDO will email all first year students a Symplicity password in early November of their first year. The Resource Library also maintains hard copies of the job postings in binder form. The Office often receives listings for full-time employment during the academic year from employers seeking evening students.

Public Interest: George Washington, along with the Georgetown University, sponsors a public interest/public service interview program. This is held early in the Spring semester, usually in February. Information on participating employers will be available in early January. In addition, the Equal Justice Works (EJW) sponsors an employer fair each fall in the Washington, DC area. Information will be available regarding the EJW fair in September.

III. SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

As an evening student, it is important to consider some factors that will affect your career planning and future marketability. Although evening students come to law school with different levels of experience and goals, some generalizations can be made.

The first issue to think about regarding your legal career planning is whether or not to seek legal experience while in law school. For many evening students, this is a very real problem. Since the majority work full-time and are established in responsible, well-paying positions, either quitting or taking time off from their present job is a difficult decision. However, there is no doubt that legal experience while in law school increases your marketability and is an integral part of your legal education by helping you see law as it is practiced outside the classroom. Legal experience demonstrates to employers that you are definitely committed to pursuing a career as an attorney, that you have legal skills gained from such employment, and that you have references that can speak of your ability as a potential attorney. Students without legal work experience will be competing with those that have such experience, and therefore, the job search of the inexperienced graduate is more challenging.

However, you must weigh the costs of getting legal experience for yourself. Frequently, a legal position while in law school will be lower paying, may exclude fringe benefits (health insurance, life insurance, etc.), and will possibly give you little responsibility in comparison to your present position. There are many graduates of the evening division presently in rewarding attorney positions who were unable to pursue legal experience while in law school. Obtaining a rewarding job can be done with some long-range planning on your part.

If you decide not to seek legal experience while a law student, consider other ways of making yourself more marketable to future potential legal employers:

- Think about your present position. Is there a possibility that you can do legally related projects, perhaps with the legal department?
- Take courses that are interesting and marketable. Do research on practice areas to verify your interests and make good course decisions. Consult materials in the Resource Library on different practice areas and discuss with faculty teaching or writing in them to learn what courses to take and when; employers practicing in a particular area will want to see at least that you have taken at least the principal courses relevant to that area..
- When possible, participate in clinics.
- Join one of George Washington's law journals and/or write directed research papers of publishable quality and for academic credit on subjects that interest you (especially in areas in which you want to specialize later).
- Participate in Moot Court or Trial Court intra- and interschool competitions.
- Attend American Bar Association and local bar association meetings, especially those with meetings of specific practice area sections in which you are interested.
- Join law school and other legal organizations that may be helpful in developing further contacts.
- Consider doing special projects for attorneys and professors that will give you experience while the hours are flexible.
- Examine your skills and experience that are transferable to the practice of law, even if you are in a non-legal position; there are CDO handouts and library resources to help you with this task. While looking at your alternatives, do consider non-traditional positions that combine your past experience and education with the practice of law.

IV. GETTING LEGAL EXPERIENCE

If you decide to seek legal experience in conjunction with your education, remember that this is a different job market than you have been exposed to before. Review job search strategies that have worked for you in the past. Read the detailed descriptions of legal search strategies in this booklet and in our other resources. Legal positions while in law school will fall into one of two categories: either full-time or part-time law clerk positions during the academic year and/or summer, or summer associate positions. Several different timing options are available to you in gaining legal experience. The first one is discussed above; that is, to graduate without legal experience and still obtain a rewarding position directly after graduation. The others are outlined for you below:

#2: Graduate without legal experience. Take the next several months after graduation to work as a law clerk before seeking a permanent position. Many do this while waiting for bar exam results.

#3: After the first year of law school, obtain a full-time law clerk position and keep it for the next three years. (This can be especially attractive for students with technical degrees who want to pursue an Intellectual Property/Patent jobs, many IP firms have full time “student associate” positions.)

#4: After the second year, obtain a full-time law clerk position and keep it for the next two years.

#5: After the third year, obtain a full-time clerk position and keep it for the next year.

#6: After the first year of law school, obtain a full-time law clerk position and keep it for the next three years but work the summers after your 2nd and 3rd years for different legal employers. Thus, you will graduate having worked for three different legal employers.

#7: After the second year, obtain a full-time law clerk position and keep it for the next two years but work the summer in between your 3rd and 4th years for different employers.

#8: After the third year, obtain a full-time clerk position and keep it for the next year but work the summer prior to your 4th year for a different employer.

#9: Do not obtain full-time clerking positions during academic years, but take two sabbaticals from current job to clerk the summers after your 2nd and 3rd years of law school.

#10: Take a sabbatical from your current job to clerk the summer after your 3rd year of law school.

V. JOB SEARCH TIMETABLE

While other positions certainly exist (such as working part-time at any point), these tend to be the options most used by evening students. You may be wondering what the “best” option might be. Your own circumstances will play a large role in determining what is best for you. Although many students do obtain law clerk positions for their second year, as far as lawyers are concerned, your third year of law school is a good time to begin a law clerk position as an evening student. Most employers believe that first-year students have not had enough law school course work to enable you to handle the duties involved in a clerk’s position. Thus, after the completion of at least one year of law school

would be the best time to seek such a position. Beginning in early August, the CDO Office receives many postings for part-time and full-time law clerk positions for the academic year.

As far as summer employment is concerned, the most advantageous time to have such a position is the summer after your third year. Since many summer positions lead to permanent employment, many employers prefer to employ students who are entering their final year of law school. However, some evening students receive summer positions after their second year. Begin seeking a summer position in the fall of your third year (or your second year, if you so choose) through on-campus interviews, resume collections, and specific job listings received by the Career Development Office. Also, don't forget to use your own contacts and to develop a targeted search plan for direct contact of legal employers who practice in areas of interest to you. CDO counselors can help you develop and implement such plan.

There are some predictable times of the year when employers interview for academic year law clerks, summer positions, and permanent positions. A brief look at this timetable by size and type of employer may be helpful in planning the transition from your current job to the legal field:

ACADEMIC-YEAR LAW CLERKS (P/T and F/T)	SUMMER POSITIONS	PERMANENT POSITIONS
<p>Most employers seek law clerks beginning in early to mid-August through mid-to-late September. Smaller employers (under 20 attorneys) seek law clerks whenever the need arises throughout the academic year, but still consider late summer to early fall as the height of hiring time. Most law clerk positions are with law firms. Nevertheless, government agencies, associations and public interest organizations also hire law clerks.</p>	<p>As a general rule, the larger the firm, the earlier they interview and hire students for summer positions. Large law firms (more than 50 attorneys), some medium-sized law firms (20-50 attorneys), federal and state government agencies, corporations, and a few public interest organizations complete most of their hiring in the fall. The other organizations, including most public interest employers, associations, federal and state agencies, some medium-sized and most smaller law firms, and corporations, tend to hire during the spring semester. Judges hire summer interns starting in January through March/April. Internships on Capitol Hill also become available later in the academic year.</p>	<p>The hiring timetable for permanent positions for after graduation is very similar to the one for summer jobs. Keep in mind that large law firms hire the vast majority of their entry level associates from their summer associate pool, and only a very limited number of entry level associates are hired who were not previously summer associates. In addition to the fall and spring semesters, many small law firms, some corporations and government agencies, hire recent graduates after they have taken a bar exam, usually from late August to early November.</p>

VI. JOB SEARCH STRATEGIES

The strategies below are effective for legal job search, including law clerk and permanent positions.

Contacts

Contacts are your **most effective** job search tool. Think about people you know within the field in which you are seeking employment. For example, you might consider friends, relatives, and fellow alumni/ae of your undergraduate institution. If you think that you have exhausted your contacts, create new ones through the use of: the law school's Alumni Career Advisor Network available through the CDO - these are GW Law School alumni who agree to serve as informational contacts for students; your professors, many of whom are/have been practitioners in the area in which you have an interest; members of organizations relevant to your interests; and practitioners in specialties or locations of most interest to you as listed in resources such as Martindale-Hubbell (available on Lexis and at <http://www.martindale.com>). The best way to approach most of these individuals is to ask them for their advice and insight on how you can make yourself more attractive to prospective employers and what organizations you should contact. Start developing your contacts at the beginning of your program. Keep in touch with these individuals so that they will remember you if they hear of any possible job openings.

Specific Job Openings

Job openings are advertised in a variety of locations. The Career Development Office maintains job listings on-line through the Symplicity system. Over 6000 positions are listed each year. Other online resources and job search sites are linked through the CDO website at www.law.gwu.edu/cdo. Go to the Internet Links section for further job links. Other resources available in the Resource Library which you will find useful include: *The Legal Times of Washington*, *The National Law Journal*, *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, and *Federal Career Opportunities*. Also, consider using local newspapers, state and federal bar newsletters, and any daily or weekly legal newspapers for the geographical locations in which you have an interest. Some evening students have answered advertisements for part-time positions and successfully negotiated more hours, creating 30-40 hours per week positions. Some have also negotiated benefits, even where the employer did not offer them initially.

The on-campus interview program also presents specific job openings. You are limited in the number of employers to whom you can apply through the on-campus interview program, so we recommend that you directly write to employers that you were unable to apply to and offer to interview at their offices if they are local employers. For non-local employers, if you are planning a trip to the location of any of these employers, suggest a meeting with them at that time. Furthermore, some interview schedules are not completely filled during an employer's visit to George Washington. Review the procedures for walk-ins in the On-Campus Interview materials provided to you by our office. Take advantage of this "walk-in" system.

Targeted Mailings

A mail campaign can be an effective job search strategy if you have compiled a **targeted**

mailing list of employers. This list should be limited by several criteria, including: geographical location, type of employer, size of organization, practice specialties, hiring history (have they hired attorneys from George Washington and a variety of other law schools?), and diversity of attorneys (do they have individuals with backgrounds similar to yours?). You can use the Nalpdirectory (access the directory from the special link via the portal under “Law School Resources”) to download names and addresses of hiring partners at most large law firms across the country to use in a mail merge for free.

You can identify other firms through sources such as Martindale (www.martindale.com), the West Legal Directory (choose “WLD” on Westlaw), and the *Legal Times Directory of Metro D.C. Law Offices* (available in hard copy and in electronic format in the CDO Resource Library). In choosing an individual to whom you will address your letter, try to send it to the Hiring Partner, by name. If you cannot find out the name of that individual, then address your letter either to the recruiting coordinator, by name, if the employer has such a position, or if there is no such a position, to a partner who shares your interest in specific areas of practice or who has a background similar to yours, as indicated by ABA section memberships, publications or continuing legal education. Use alumni of GW Law School or your undergraduate institution primarily for informational interviewing unless they are the only partner working in your area of interest. Otherwise, they may feel you are relying on the old school tie and be unresponsive to your application. The more targeted the mailing is in both selection criteria and content, the more successful it is likely to be.

Tips for a Successful Job Search

1. Remember that your job search is a year-round activity. Many students consider the fall the most important job market time. This is not always the case; many students frequently acquire their jobs during the second semester of the academic year. Therefore, do not allow yourself to “burn-out” during the fall semester. Maintain your motivation throughout the search by pacing yourself.
2. Be realistic about Washington, D.C., New York, and other large firm markets. Know that these are the most competitive areas in which to locate employment. If you are interested in these markets, do not hesitate to apply for positions, but think about alternatives if you are not successful within these markets.
3. Be as flexible as possible. Consider different geographic locations, areas of practice, and types of organizations (law firms, corporations, non-profit organizations, academia, government, public interest organizations).
4. Promote your past experience. Use your cover letters, resume, and interviews to market your transferable skills from non-legal and legal employment. Demonstrate the relevancy of your experience to the needs of the employer. Stress “world of work” skills, i.e., time management, meeting deadlines, getting along with others to get your work done, personal discipline, etc..
5. Your resume can make or break an interview opportunity for you. Take the time to make sure that it is not only an accurate reflection of your education and experience, but that it is an effective marketing tool for you.
6. Develop as many personal contacts as possible. The more people you know and include in your job search network, the greater number of possible opportunities for you.

7. Check the Career Development Office job listing on-line via the Symplicity system regularly.
8. Use your professors as one of your greatest resources of information.
9. Be sure to follow up any application that you have sent out. If you have not heard from an employer within two weeks of your initial application, call him or her to inquire about the status of your application.
10. If you are job hunting outside of the Washington, D.C. area, plan an interview trip to that city and let employers know you plan to visit the area. It demonstrates a commitment to that geographic location.
11. "Regularize" your job search. Decide when and how much time you will devote to the search, and set specific time aside. This will insure that you are working toward your career goals and will take pressure off of you the rest of the time when you concentrate on work, studies, and other activities.
12. Devote some time to speaking with your section advisor in the Career Development Office. As each job is different, so is each evening student. You have your own experiences, interests, skills, and needs. Let your advisor assist you in assessing your objectives and in designing a job search strategy that is appropriate for you.

VII. DESIGNING OR UPDATING YOUR RESUME

Your resume should reflect you as an individual and should certainly highlight the items that make you a qualified candidate for the types of positions you are seeking. We provide a handout that includes resume samples to give you an idea of the information to be included in a legal resume. To start with, your resume should include the following:

*Education listed in reverse chronological order, including your present J.D. program.

*Experience listed in reverse chronological order, emphasizing relevant and transferable skills, and major accomplishments.

Education should be listed first on the resume because you are marketing the fact that you are in law school. Other items you might want to list, especially if it will increase your marketability in your areas of interest, include: course emphasis, if you have one for your J.D. program; foreign languages; publications or relevant papers; professional memberships; community activities; and personal interests. Be sure your resume has no typographical errors and that it leaves a positive impression.

One question that is frequently asked by evening students is whether they must limit their resume to one page. While keeping in mind that your resume should be concise and easily readable, you should not feel constrained to one page if you feel you are omitting relevant information about yourself and your background. Indeed, because of the experience many evening students have

acquired, it is difficult for them to adequately convey their relevant qualifications in one page. Keep in mind, however, that it is desirable to keep your resume to the point and that it should not be unnecessarily lengthy.

Another related issue that arises with evening student resumes is how detailed a description should be given regarding past or present non-legal employment. Remember to consider your audience. Most likely, the person ultimately reviewing your resume for a legal job will be an attorney. Try to make your descriptions comprehensible to someone who works outside your area of expertise, being sure to include sufficient descriptions of transferable knowledge and skills you have acquired. However, if you are targeting attorneys in a specific area of law relevant to your past experience (such as Environmental or Intellectual Property), more detailed descriptions might be appropriate. The goal is to portray yourself and your experience as positively and clearly as possible.

If you have any questions or concerns about your resume, we encourage you to consult with your section advisor.

VIII. COVER LETTERS

Cover letters are an important part of your application. Always send out a resume with a cover letter accompanying it. Your letter can highlight a part of your background which is most relevant to the needs of the organization to which you are writing. Also, be sure to include information that may not be on your resume such as specific courses you have taken or projects on which you have worked.

Direct your letter, if possible, to the attorney in charge of hiring, usually referred to as the Hiring Partner in a law firm. If this information is not available, the letter may be addressed to an attorney who has a similar background or similar interests to yours. Preferably, the individual you select should be someone with some seniority in the organization, i.e. a partner. Use GW and undergraduate alumni for informational interviewing unless they are the only senior lawyer working in your area of interest. Otherwise, they may feel you are playing on the old school tie and be unresponsive to your application. For more information on to whom to address your letter, see Section VI, supra, "Targeted Mailings."

For further assistance in writing your cover letter, pick up the job correspondence handout at the Resource Library and/or make an appointment with your section counselor.

IX. INTERVIEWING

In addition to the suggestions regarding preparation for interviews in other resources in the Resource Library, you as an evening student, should be prepared to answer some specific questions about your situation and future plans. Below are some questions to be considered:

***ABOUT LAW SCHOOL:**

-Why did you decide to attend law school?

Some employers may wonder why you have decided to switch careers for fear that you are

a “career hopper,” searching for the “ideal” field. This is especially true if you have already had more than one professional position. The other possible fear is that you are a “perpetual student,” especially if you have already earned a graduate degree before your J.D. Have a concise explanation for pursuing your law degree. Be confident about your choice to pursue the degree.

-Why are you enrolled in the Evening Division?

Another way of phrasing this question might be, “Are you serious about law school?” Most individuals attending law school on a part-time basis are more than serious about getting their law degrees, but have other obligations that preclude them from attending school on a full-time basis. Explain your dedication to the interviewer while also directing them to what you hope to achieve once you have earned your law degree (i.e. what your legal career goals are).

-Why are you not participating: on law review? in more law school activities? etc.?

Most evening students find that time constraints do not permit them to become involved in out of class activities, especially for the first two years. Let the interviewer know what your schedule is like and why you have made certain choices regarding the activities in which you can and cannot participate. If you are involved in any community activities, indicate this.

Many in the legal profession believe that law journal participation is an indication of the type of writing skills you possess. If you are not on one of the law journals, think about what in your past or current experiences has allowed you ample opportunity to develop and refine your writing ability. Participation in Moot Court or Trial Court where you have to write a brief, and writing directed study papers and seminar papers in your area of interest can help too.

-Why haven't you worked in a legal position to date?

This question is really an issue for those who decided not to gain legal experience while in law school and are now interviewing for a permanent position. (See section on “Special Consideration” in this booklet.) Point out examples of skills gained in your past experiences that are marketable to legal employers. Also explain why you made the choice not to work in a legal setting while attending law school. For many, this is an economic choice.

-Are your grades indicative of your ability? -or- Why are your grades not better?

Generally this question only gets asked when the grades are not so hot. Acknowledge that your grades are not what you wanted them to be and then focus on the positive - classes that you did excel in, the great experiences and skills you bring, the fact that you are attending law school and working full-time. Just be sure that you are providing explanations instead of excuses. Let them know that your grades are not necessarily indicative of your ability and then tell them what positives you have that are indicative of your abilities.

***ABOUT YOUR EXPERIENCES AND PREVIOUS EDUCATION:**

-What in your prior education or experience will benefit you in the practice of law?

Think of your prior education and experience as a basis on which law school builds. What

special knowledge and/or skills have you acquired from these experiences? Because of your prior education and experiences, you have qualities that others do not. Be able to verbalize what these experiences are and how you can use them in your legal career.

-What are your transferable skills?

As in the question above, you possess skills gained from your experiences that are transferable to the legal profession. These skills might include: advising, analyzing, writing, editing, advocating, lobbying, research--just to name a few. Think about what skills would be useful in the practice of law and then examine your own.

***ABOUT YOUR FUTURE GOALS:**

-Why do you want to practice law?

This is similar to the question regarding your reason(s) for attending law school. If you are talking to a legal employer, he or she wants to know that you **do** want to practice law. Before any interview, you should think about your future career goals. This does not mean that by your second year of law school you will know exactly where and what type of law you will practice. But it does mean that you have a clear idea of why you enrolled in law school and what your general career goals are.

-Have you looked at non-legal alternatives?

Again, the basic question is, "Are you serious about practicing law?" Legal employers want to know that you are thinking of them in terms of long-term employment. State your legal career goals in a confident, articulate manner.

-What are your salary expectations?

If you have been in a position that pays more than the current job for which you are interviewing, there is a fear that you will expect more money than other applicants. If this is the case for you, just make it clear to the interviewer that you know you are beginning again in a new field and that you realize you may have to take a temporary salary cut. If you have done some research about salaries, you may have found that the salary in the legal field you are entering will eventually catch up to and surpass your current salary level. Let the interviewer know that you see this as a long-term commitment and that salary is only a short-term factor.

-Are you willing to be a first year associate?

Or "Are you willing to start over again?" If you have already held a position of responsibility in your last profession, you may not be willing to start off at the bottom. Think carefully about this issue. There may be legal positions that combine your previous experience and law degree in such a way that you will not have to begin at the bottom.

-How do you feel about being supervised by someone who graduated from college after you?

Again, this is an issue of starting over again in a new field which may mean reporting to someone who is younger than you are. Indicate to the interviewer that you make judgments about individuals based on their abilities and how they treat you -- not by chronological age. Tell the interviewer that you have worked and attended law school with people who are both

younger and older than you, and that age has never been an issue.

If you have a difficult time answering any of the questions above, if there are other issues specific to your situation that could cause difficulties in the interviewing process, or if you just have general questions about the legal interview process, please do not hesitate to speak with your section advisor to discuss interview strategies.

X. SCHEDULING A PLAN OF ACTION

The following pages are a compilation of the information provided in the previous pages and presented in a chart format. The chart will be useful for those who like to have a “plan” regarding their job search. Remember that all items may not apply to your situation and you may have some items to add as well.

SCHEDULING A PLAN OF ACTION

Below are suggestions for planning your job search strategy. Remember that every job seeker's situation is different. Therefore, all of the general guidelines below may not pertain to you. Use these as a base in formulating your own individualized plan of actions.

A. Preliminary Items - Recommended for completion before actual job search begins. These are items about you - what are your needs, wishes, desires? What are your skills, strengths, weaknesses, values? Remember the old adage -- You have to know where you're going before you can get there! It is important to have a clear idea of who you are before beginning the job search. Even if you are not looking at a major career change, this information is helpful in the job search process. You will use it in designing your resume and cover letters, formulating answers to interview questions, evaluating potential employers, and negotiating job offers.

1. Collect information about yourself. Review your strengths, weaknesses, skills (including transferable skills), values, personal job satisfaction needs, motivating factors, likes and dislikes about past and present positions.
2. Collect information about the job market. If you are changing careers, research areas of interest. If you are considering starting your own practice or business, read about the process. If you are changing locations, collect information on the new area.
3. Review your decision-making process. How have you made major decisions in the past? If you had them to do over again, would you make the same choices? Why or why not? Are there some fears hindering your present job search?
4. Goal-setting. Use the information about yourself to formulate short and long-term goals. Where do you want to be in six months, one year, five years, and even ten years? In answering these questions, you should then decide upon your immediate job search objectives.
5. Informational interviewing. If your career goals include changing to a new area of practice, practice setting, geographic location, or career alternative to the law, you may want to explore

these items through informational interviewing. Informational interviewing should not be used for job interviewing. Most of these are simply interviews in which you collect information.

6. Establish a time schedule. When do you want to be in a new position? How much time can you spend on job hunting each week? If possible, try to schedule a specific time each week when you will work on the process. (Regularize your job search.)

B. Planning the Job Search - Now that you have set your goals and established a time schedule, it is time to prepare for the actual job search. This includes designing resumes and cover letters, organizing a job search file, putting together a bibliography of resources, developing lists of contacts and potential employers, preparing answers to difficult interview questions, and making arrangements for word processing assistance.

1. Prepare your resume. Depending upon your circumstances, you may want to have more than one resume.
2. If you will be applying for a federal government position, prepare any necessary application forms.
3. Organize a job search system. You should keep records of potential employers, contacts, expenses.
4. Make a list of contacts. Include anyone that may be of assistance to you - lawyers and non-lawyers.
5. Make a list of job opening resources - i.e. local newspapers, bar association newsletters, law school placement office binders, professional and trade association newsletters, etc. You can get most of this information in the Resource Library.
6. Prepare cover letters. Remember to send them to specific individuals - not "Dear Hiring Partner."
7. Prepare for interviews. Think about your qualifications. Think about transferable skills. Prepare answers to difficult questions. Practice with someone or participate in CDO sponsored mock interviews.

C. Initiation of Job Search - Now that you know yourself, the job market, and potential employers, and have prepared your resume(s) and cover letters, it's time to start the actual job search process.

1. Notify your contacts and make new ones. Telephone or send a e-mail or letter to these individuals asking for advice regarding your job search. If you send a e-mail or letter first, follow up within a week to set a convenient time to discuss your search.
2. Review job opening resources on a regular basis.
3. Send out cover letters and resumes to potential organizations that you chose for your targeted

mailing.

4. Follow up your initial correspondence within 10 days to 2 weeks after you mailed your letters. A call asking the status of your application or for a decisional timetable is appropriate.
5. Before any interview, research the organization thoroughly. Prepare questions about it that you wish to have answered during the interview. If you can obtain the name of the interviewer, research that individual as well. Use www.vault.com for information on a firm's culture.
6. Write a "thank-you" note after interviews. The note need only be sent to one individual even if you met with several. Usually you will write to the most senior individual in the hiring process you met with. You can convey your thanks to any of the other staff members in that letter, so make sure you get all the names
7. When receiving an offer, evaluate it thoroughly. Does the organization meet the criteria that you established in Part I? What are the salary, benefits, working conditions, work values, responsibilities of the position? Is this an organization of which you can be proud to be a part. After reviewing the job offer, decide if certain terms should be negotiated and do so. Remember that this should be a give and take situation on both the part of the employer and prospective employee.
8. Even though you will probably accept the offer of employment verbally, you should follow-up with a letter, keeping a copy for your records.

XI. LEGAL AND NONLEGAL EMPLOYMENT OPTIONS

Individuals with law degrees are in a variety of legal, legally-related, and nonlegal jobs. Most lawyers employed in legally-related or nonlegal positions find that often the law degree, coupled with prior experience, education, and knowledge facilitates the entrance into a particular field. Below is a partial list of possibilities of employment in both the private and public sectors. Further information regarding types of employment can be found in the Resource Library.

Law Firms

Attorneys
Firm Administrators
Recruitment Coordinators
Law Librarians

Corporate Counsel
Government Relations (Lobbying)
Regulatory and Compliance Work
Management Consulting
Legal Search Firms

Business (cont)

Academic Institutions

Teaching Administration
University Counsel
Law School Career Counselor
Law Librarians

Litigation Management
Accounting Firms
Management
Sales (especially law-related products)
Investment Banking
Public Relations/Marketing
Banking Attorney
Labor Relations & Employment (HR)

Business

Government Contracts
Real Estate
Mediation/Arbitration
Bar Association Administration
Trade Association Admin/Legal Counsel

Legal Publishing/Journalism

Editing
Researching
Writing/Reporting

Government

Attorney-Advisor
Legislator
Legislative Assistant
Military Attorney - JAG Corps
Consumer Affairs
Prosecuting Attorney
City Attorney
Law Enforcement
Administrative Law Judge
Compliance Investigator
FBI Agent
Policy Advisor/Analyst
Regulatory Drafting/Enforcement

Trade Representative

Judicial System

Judicial Law Clerk
Motions Clerk
Judge
Court Administrator

Public Interest/Non-Profits/Foundations

Legal Aid, Legal Services Attorney
Public Defender
Community Organizer/Activist
Lobbyist/Government relations
Fund-raising/Development
Manager/Director
Fellowships
Legal Clinics
Foundation Director
Communications Specialist
Public Relations

XII. THE HOUR GLASS

Finally, a note about finding enough time in your day for all of the programs, activities, and tasks we have been discussing. You may at times believe that there is not time enough to complete everything. However, if time constraints and the multiple demands on your energy become too stressful, keep in mind that your section advisor and other experienced counselors in our office are available by phone or in person to help you organize and prioritize your job search and law school experience. To arrange an appointment, call (202) 994-7340.

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