

SKILLS AREA RESOURCE SERIES

UPDATING YOUR RESUME

SELLING YOUR SUMMER EXPERIENCE

The beginning of fall semester presents you with an opportunity to "put your best foot forward" to employers considering GW Law School candidates for employment. **Your resume is the initial means employers use to select whom to interview. Therefore, the importance of accurately and effectively reflecting academic performance and job experience on your resume cannot be overstated.**

All summer legal employment is valuable for the knowledge and experience it provides you. You acquired knowledge about the legal process whether you worked for a law firm, judge, professor or obtained temporary legal work. Typically, the majority of a student's time is spent conducting legal research and drafting memos/briefs. Because the hiring system fosters conformity of experience, it is difficult to portray a summer experience as unique. The most effective way to express your summer experience is to be straightforward about the functions you performed.

The following guidelines and samples will assist you in updating your resume. Please contact a CDO counselor to review your resume and to answer any of your questions.

DESCRIBING SUMMER LEGAL EMPLOYMENT

Research Skills: Enhance a statement about conducting research by briefly explaining the areas of law that you researched or the purpose of research.

Writing Skills: These are key to your future success and should be highlighted on your resume. Be specific about the type of documents you prepared and, if possible, elaborate on their use. Be cognizant of confidentiality while writing your descriptions. Details about cases can be disclosed only if a case is of public record.

Interpersonal Skills: Always mention client contact of any sort, as it implies the employer trusted your judgment and your interpersonal communication skills.

Meaningful Descriptions: In each description, first list your substantive experience and significant accomplishments. Most employers scan resumes quickly for skills most relevant to job openings. Draw the reader's attention to the experience that makes you most marketable.

Keep job descriptions of summer legal employment brief, but descriptive and thorough enough to allow the reader to envision the type of position you held and to assess the depth of knowledge you possess. Lengthy descriptions are acceptable in cases of unique opportunities of responsibility.

Nature of Employer: The legal field is broad. Potential employers are not always familiar with every law firm/organization. Briefly describing the nature of your summer employer can be helpful and put your experience in the proper context. For example: Write that you did a certain task in a bullet point and add “for 10 attorney business litigation boutique firm that represents small and medium businesses in Pittsburgh area.” An example for non-profits may say: “Researched new education laws for national non-profit organization dedicated to expanding educational opportunities for urban youth.”

Study Abroad Programs: If you participated in a summer study abroad program, it should be represented in the Education section of your resume within your law school information.

Example:

Study Abroad: The University of Oxford and The George Washington University, Joint Programme in International Human Rights Law, Oxford, England (Summer 2003)

Internships and Part-Time Positions for the Fall: Many students supplement their legal experience with internships or part-time employment during the school year. You may secure positions prior to the beginning of the semester, but you probably will not have an opportunity to begin work prior to the Fall Interview Program (FIP). Nonetheless, this experience may be legitimately represented on the resume you use for FIP. See **Sample Job Descriptions** below.

You may use either the present or future tense for job descriptions, and they need not be specific. Much of the information will pertain to the nature of the organization's practice and anticipated functions. By the time some FIP interviews occur, students will have already started their jobs and will be better able to discuss job duties. Resumes should be updated after beginning fall jobs and brought to each interview during FIP.

SAMPLE JOB DESCRIPTIONS FOR SUMMER POSITIONS

FRIED, FRANK, HARRIS, SHRIVER & JACOBSON, New York, NY

Summer Associate

Summer 2003

- Researched and analyzed corporate law, banking law, securities regulation, government contracts, and real estate law
- Drafted legal memoranda, including an analysis of the Sarbanes-Oxley Act, impact of new state banking laws on client's proposed bank acquisition, and review of recent SEC regulations
- Met with clients to review issues arising from various real estate transactions, including zoning matters for development of \$150 million condominium complex in Pennsylvania

NATIONAL LABOR RELATIONS BOARD, Washington, DC

Legal Intern, Division of Advice, Office of the General Counsel

Summer 2003

- Researched and analyzed unfair labor practice cases submitted to Division of Advice from NLRB regional offices
- Presented recommendations to Associate General Counsel; drafted legal memoranda authorizing regional offices either to proceed with or to dismiss cases

SUPERIOR COURT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, Washington, DC

Judicial Intern, The Honorable Ronald Wertheim

May-August 2003

- Researched civil and probate law
- Drafted case summaries and recommendations for Judge's use in ruling on motions

THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY LAW SCHOOL, Washington, DC

Research Assistant, Professor Jack Friedenthal

Summer 2003

- Researched, analyzed, and summarized Supreme Court cases involving equal protection, due process, and separation of powers issues
- Assisted in researching and analyzing constitutionality of War Powers Resolution
- Researched and composed answers to constitutional law bar exam essay questions

MARYLAND PUBLIC DEFENDER'S OFFICE, Baltimore, MD

Legal Assistant

Summer 2003

- Investigated cases, interviewed clients and witnesses, conducted legal research, wrote motions, and participated in all phases of trial preparation
- Observed and assisted in trials including a 10 day drug conspiracy case for cocaine trafficking involving 8 defendants, several misdemeanor cases, and grand-theft larceny matter

LEGAL ASSETS TEMPORARY SERVICE, Boston, MA

Paralegal/Law Clerk

Summer 2003

- Worked with various law firms and corporate legal department
- Reviewed and categorized documents for antitrust case
- Researched state laws for telecommunications firm
- Reviewed, analyzed, and summarized documents for lawsuit involving large hospital
- Assisted attorneys in small law firm with taking witness depositions and with preparing for criminal trial

SMITH, SMITH & JONES, Rockville, Maryland

Law Clerk

Summer 2003

- Drafted and filed motions; prepared documents for production; analyzed depositions for 15 attorney labor and employment boutique firm representing management
- Drafted motion for summary judgment in federal district court for national retail chain defending Title VII racial discrimination claim filed by store manager
- Conducted discovery for Rockville Public School system defending against benefits claim brought by terminated teacher

WORLDWATCH INSTITUTE, Washington, DC

Legal Intern

Summer 2003

- Researched environmental law, including CERCLA, Superfund laws, and Endangered Species Act, for premier non-profit research and publishing organization; focused on global environmental, economic, and social issues
- Drafted portion of policy paper discussing U.S. policy on global warming published in WorldWatch's newsletter distributed to over 50,000 donors and activists

SAMPLE JOB DESCRIPTIONS FOR INTERNSHIPS
AND
PART-TIME POSITIONS IN THE FALL

COHEN, MILSTEIN, HAUSFELD & TOLL, P.L.L.C., Washington, DC

Law Clerk

Fall 2003

- Will begin employment in antitrust, securities, and labor departments for plaintiff-side law firm in September 2003
- Job duties will include legal research and drafting motions, briefs, and memoranda

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE, Washington, DC

Legal Intern

Fall 2003

- Accepted into Antitrust Division Fall 2003 Internship Program
- Will prepare litigation materials for formal civil investigations and grand jury proceedings

D.C. LAW STUDENTS IN COURT, Washington, DC

Student Trial Attorney

Fall 2003

- Will represent indigent persons in D.C. Superior Court, primarily in landlord-tenant actions, as well as in small claims, negligence, and other civil matters
- Will handle all aspects of litigation under supervision of clinical instructor
- Job duties will include interviewing witnesses, preparing pleadings, engaging in settlement negotiations, and conducting investigations, motions, hearings, and trials

LEGAL AID SMALL BUSINESS CLINIC, Washington, DC

Legal Fellow, The George Washington University Law School

Fall Semester 2003

- Will assist small businesses and non-profit organizations in drafting partnership agreements, incorporation documents, contracts, commercial leases, and in resolving disputes