



The Pre-Law e-Newsletter from Pre-Professional Programs & Advising

Best viewed in HTML

Vol. 4, No. 11

Friday, March 18, 2011 – Thursday, March 31, 2011

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1. MESSAGE FROM ANA L. DROSCOSKI, ESQ.

As some of you may already know, the 2012 edition of the U.S. News and World Report (USNWR) America's Best Graduate Schools issued this week. The top listings (1 to 14) are unsurprisingly consistent with those of previous years.

Malcolm Gladwell recently took a stab at the rankings game, and, specifically, law school rankings. To read his article, "The Order of Things: What college rankings really tell us," check out the February 14, 2011 issue of *The New Yorker* or, for subscribers, access it online thru the following link: http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2011/02/14/110214fa_fact_gladwell#ixzz1FN95eb2T. On February 17, 2011, *The Wall Street Journal's* "Law Blog" discussed Gladwell's article. It highlighted the "Gladwellian" law school list, calculated via 3 factors: the value for the dollar (40%); LSAT scores (40%); and faculty publishing (20%). The "Gladwellian" top 10 list is quite different from that of USNWR, with usual top 10 suspects UC-Berkeley dropping to 27th, NYU placing at 33rd, and Michigan at 43rd under Gladwell's ranking criteria. To see Gladwell's complete top 10, visit:

<http://blogs.wsj.com/law/2011/02/17/malcom-gladwell-ranks-the-law-schools-congrats-to-byu/>

The interview in this issue is with a JHU alum/recent law school graduate in her first year of practice. Read Section 4 below to learn more about how she fared as a young associate in the current legal market.

Have a wonderful Spring Break!

2. THE 2012 USNWR LAW SCHOOL RANKINGS

As soon as someone considers attending law school, inevitably, obsessing about law school rankings seems to be the next step. The U.S. News & World Report (USNWR) has been the go to -- and unfortunately, it seems, only -- reference for law school rankings and navigating one's law school applications and matriculation decision.

It is understandable for a prospective law student to consider the USNWR rankings, even in spite of various, glaring reasons why these rankings are somewhat arbitrary and very much fallible.

However, it can be just as important to focus on other factors when researching law schools. For those of you who already have practice areas/specialties in mind, USNWR Law School Specialty Rankings can be helpful to review. Programs/specialty areas listed include clinical training, environmental law, healthcare law, intellectual property law, and international law, etc.

Another important angle to remember: law school is three years; employment and your legal career is (potentially) the rest of your life! Be sure to weigh the location(s) of the law school(s) versus where you intend to practice upon graduation. The reputation of the law school, alumni contacts -- and therefore networking and employment prospects -- are likely optimal where the law school is located. So if you are interested in practicing in NY, it is a better idea to attend Fordham Law School (USNWR #30) than the University of Minnesota -- Twin Cities (USNWR #20), even though UMN ranks higher. To determine a law school's key legal markets, research individual law school websites and be sure to pop into the career services office of all law schools you are considering attending for further information.

Law school application and matriculation choices should be tailored to your plans and goals, taking into consideration specific and personal factors. Try not to let USNWR's annual list of best law schools dictate those choices for you!

To review the 2012 USNWR law school list, visit the following site:

<http://grad-schools.usnews.rankingsandreviews.com/best-graduate-schools/top-law-schools>)

3. INTERNSHIP OPPORTUNITY: SPECIAL ASSISTANT-DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS, ORGANIZATION FOR INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

The Organization for International Cooperation (OIC) focuses on supporting foreign policy decision makers, their advisors and negotiators, as well as officials of multi-lateral organization. Unprecedented breakthroughs in critical challenges are the goal.

OIC advocates the use of specialized ontology based consulting services proven successful for four decades, worldwide, throughout the private sector. Consultants support and expand diplomatic and foreign policy effectiveness beyond current expectations through specialized methods.

Internship Description

Special Assistants telephone and/or meet with U.S. and foreign officials to promote breakthrough foreign policy consulting resources. They also support membership and volunteer development.

Note that this position is continually available.

How to Apply

1. Visit: www.oicworldpeace.org
2. Send an e-mail to ak@oicworldpeace.org and request a volunteer audio
3. Call OIC at 856-596-6679 between 12 Noon and 2PM OR between 5PM and 8PM EST [NY time] for a 20-30 minute telephone interview.

4. INTERVIEW: MARIA R. CIRINCIONE, ASSOCIATE, FRIED FRANK

Maria R. Cirincione is an Associate at the Washington, DC office of Fried Frank Harris Shriver & Jacobson LLP, in the Securities Enforcement and Regulation group. Maria was a Summer Associate at Fried Frank in 2009, and began her current position in January 2011.

Maria received her J.D., *cum laude*, from the University of Maryland School of Law in 2010. While there, she was the Manuscripts Editor of the *Journal of Health Care Law* and published a Comment entitled *Maryland's Conscience Clause: Leaving a Woman's Right to a Health Care Provider's Choice*. Maria was also a student attorney in the Consumer Protection Clinic, a Rose Zetzer Fellow and an Academic Achievement Fellow. In January of 2008, Maria volunteered for a Katrina Relief Project, a criminal law trip that required her to interview detained, indigent clients in English & Spanish in preparation for bond hearings; the group received the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Diversity Recognition Award for achievements by a student group. Maria's first year summer, she was a summer associate in the Global Wealth Management group of the Legal department of Citigroup. Fall of 2008 Maria was a Judicial Intern in the U.S. District Court for the District of Maryland for the Honorable Susan K. Gauvey, and the fall of 2009 she was an Intern in the Office of the Attorney General for Maryland.

Prior to attending law school, Maria spent one year at Citigroup in Manhattan. While there, she served as a Finance Analyst in Global Fixed Income Currencies and Commodities.

Maria graduated from Johns Hopkins University in 2006, with a B.A. She was a double major in International Studies, where her senior thesis received honorable mention and she graduated *with honors*, and in Spanish; Maria minored in Economics. While at JHU, Maria was the National Spanish Honor Society President from 2005 to 2006, a member of the National Society for Collegiate Scholar from 2003 to 2006, and an Admissions Representative from 2005 to 2006. She is proficient in Spanish.

Maria R. Cirincione is admitted to practice in Maryland, and awaiting admittance in the District of Columbia.

Questions

1) Describe a day in the life of a First Year Associate.

I am a first year associate in a large, Washington DC law firm. A typical day for me begins around 9 AM and lasts until around 8 PM, depending on the matters on which I have been assigned to work. Often, I will have a training session or working lunch meeting to attend during the day. Trainings can be departmentally focused (a specific practice area group training) or can be administrative (new phone systems to learn). I work in a large group and, as a junior associate, I work with several people on any given matter. My day usually involves meetings with members of my group to discuss our respective tasks, review of work product, and discussions of new developments in a matter. The day is a mix of time spent on my own preparing a specific part of a matter, and time spent convening with others working on other parts of the same matter. I also contribute time during the day to a pro bono immigration case that I began in January. I recently attended a hearing for our immigration client and am scheduled to be back in court in a few weeks. In addition, it is common for the firm to sponsor social events for employees to attend.

2) What did you pursue during your law school summers and before beginning your current position? How did you go about researching these opportunities?

My first summer, I chose to work as part of a structured summer program in the General Counsel's Office at Citigroup in New York. I really wanted to see what working "in-house" for a large corporation would be like. I became aware of the opportunity because I kept in contact with employees from Citigroup after leaving my position there to attend law school. I learned a great lesson about maintaining relationships. My second summer I went through the standard interview process for applying for summer associate positions at law firms. My school called the process "OCI" ("on-campus interviews") but other schools have different names for the process. I interviewed with dozens of firms and was fortunate to have offers to choose from for my second summer. I asked a lot of questions and researched (mostly through contacts) in order to determine which firm would be the best fit for me.

3) What initially attracted you to your current field?

I was initially attracted to securities work through my previous work experience before attending law school. During my summer with the firm, I was also given the opportunity to work on several securities projects. Through that exposure, I realized that I had an interest in the practice area that I wanted to explore more.

4) How would you compare the reality of law school and the ensuing job search to the picture you had of it while an undergraduate?

I really had no idea about what law school and the job search was like before coming to law school -- although I thought I did. I think that is true for many people who come to law school. I assumed law school would be similar to college and that finding a job would be a natural and easy next step. For me, I found that my expectations were very different than the reality of law school and the job search process.

5) Describe a typical day as a law student at University of Maryland School of Law (UMD).

A typical day at the University of Maryland School of law is structured around each student's class schedule. Many students choose to arrive on campus in advance of their first class to allow for additional preparation time, while others choose to do their studying at home and come to the campus just for their scheduled classes. Similarly, some students choose to remain on campus between and after classes to do future reading and work assignments and prepare for upcoming classes. Others choose to leave after their class schedule is over and do all of their work at home. Between classes a student could attend a club/organization meeting, go on a job interview, contribute time working for a journal, leave campus for an internship, have lunch with friends in the outside courtyard, or work in one of the many student law clinics.

6) What was your favorite law school class, and why? How did you go about choosing classes after your first year of law school?

My favorite law school class was my first-year Contracts class. This was almost entirely because of my professor. He was very enthusiastic, funny, and simplified every concept so that the learning process was fun. I took the advice of many older students/graduates in selecting my classes after my first year. I chose classes that interested me and that balanced each other well. That plan worked well and I really enjoyed my second and third year selections.

7) What types of undergraduate opportunities did you pursue that led to your decision to apply to law school? Were there any experiences that you felt were particularly helpful in strengthening your application to law school?

I worked for a law firm for two years while I was a student at Hopkins. It was a very small firm that did alternative dispute resolution. I had a great relationship with a lawyer there, and he really inspired me go to law school. I also gained exposure to what working for a firm, even a small one, would feel like. I think it's really important to get some experience in the legal world before or during law school. That kind of experience really gives a good idea for what life after law school could be like and also can help direct you down the right path. That being said, I think my time at Citigroup helped my application to law school. Law schools really appreciate work experience. Also, I really felt like I had an advantage coming with the experiences I brought from working. I have always felt like my work experience gave me a special perspective on law school and achieving goals as a law student. I don't think there is any specific type of experience that you need to have, but any kind will improve your application.

8) What made you choose UMD, and did it meet your expectations? What do you see as the primary pros and cons of law school, and, particularly, UMD?

I chose the University of Maryland because I had a chance to get to know the school while I was still in college. Even before applying, I had been to the law school and had the opportunity to meet with students there. I became interested in the programs and developed a connection to the school. I also am from the Baltimore area and liked the idea of going to school close to where my family lives.

9) Did you participate in any clinics or other large scale optional program (journal, trial advocacy, etc.) while in law school? If so, how do you think it/they impacted your law school experience and/or employment prospects?

I served on the Journal for Health Care Law and Policy. I also participated in the Consumer Protection Clinic. Both were really great learning experiences and were very helpful during the job search process. My law school required participation in a clinical program (or equivalent), but I would have chosen to be a part on one regardless of the requirement. The clinical experience was the best I had in law school. Most competitive candidates have some combination of journal, trial team or moot court (or the various equivalents). Some have all three. That being said, having one or more is not required to get a good position, it just makes you that more competitive. You should choose programs based on your interests and decide to participate in the ones that give the most practical experience. In terms of large firms, having more of these kinds of activities on your resume is beneficial. Some firms make having one or more a base-level requirement for interviews. I've seen that more and more as the market has become increasingly competitive. I also did an externship with a federal magistrate as well as an externship with the Consumer Protection Division of the Attorney General's Office. Both of these experiences gave me excellent exposure. I would highly recommend taking any opportunity to work with practicing attorneys or judges, or to participate in a program that allows you to learn through experience.

10) Do you have any advice for an undergraduate interested in pursuing law school and a career in law given your experience in today's legal market and now as a first year associate?

My biggest piece of advice is to apply to law school with a goal in mind. I think so many people go to law school because they don't know what else to do or because they need to take "the next step." I think it's perfectly normal not to know exactly what kind of law you want to practice or where exactly you expect to work. I do think, however, that you should have a solid reason for wanting to learn how to be a lawyer, and a realistic idea about what life as a lawyer is like. The more realistic your expectations the more likely you will enjoy your experiences in law school and be prepared to face the job search process.

Contact Information

If you would like to learn more about being a young associate at a large firm, Fried Frank, or have additional questions for Maria Cirincione, you may reach her via email at: Maria.Cirincione@friedfrank.com

5. UPCOMING PRE-LAW MEETINGS AND PROGRAM ANNOUNCEMENTS

Upcoming LSAT Administration for 2011

Location: Check with LSAC for testing locations (next on campus/JHU LSAT administration – Monday, June 6, 2011)

Date: Monday, June 6, 2011

Time: Registration begins at 11:30am for the June exam -- consult with LSAC for all controlling details.

DC-Metro Area Law School Admissions Panel

Location: Mattin 162

Date: Wednesday, April 13, 2011

Time: 12:00pm to 1:00pm

Description: Admissions representatives from George Washington University Law School, Georgetown University Law Center, University of Baltimore School of Law, University of Maryland School of Law and American University, Washington College of Law will be discuss their law school and application strategies.

The Insiders Scoop: JHU Alums/Current Law School Students & First Year Associates

Location: Sherwood Room (Levering)

Date: Thursday, April 14, 2011

Time: 5:30pm to 6:30pm

Description: JHU alumni will discuss what it is like to be a law student at their respective school, summer experiences while in law school and what it is like to be a first year associate at a large firm.

Bridge Year Panel

Location: Glass Pavilion

Date: Thursday, April 21, 2011

Time: 12:00pm to 1:00pm

Description: Representatives from the Peace Corps, the China Education Initiative and -- tentatively -- the NIH fellows program, the Fund for Public Interest Research Group, City Year and/or Health Corps will be on hand to discuss opportunities for the bridge year(s) between undergrad and graduate/professional school.

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**STAFF IN THE OFFICE OF PRE-PROFESSIONAL PROGRAMS AND ADVISING**

Ana L. Droskoski, J.D., Assistant Director, Pre-Law Advisor & Pre-Dental Advisor

David Verrier, Ph.D., Director, Pre-Health Advisor

Ellen Snyderman, M.S., Pre-Health Advisor

The Administrative Coordinators are available to answer questions regarding your file:

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For students whose last name begins with A-L, contact Mrs. Krause.

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Please feel free to use the resource library between 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. every day or visit our website <http://web.jhu.edu/prepro/> for additional information.

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