



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

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Friday, February 17, 2012 – Thursday, March 1, 2012

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1. MESSAGE FROM ANA L. DROSCOSKI, ESQ.

For those of you that are interested in taking a GAP year before attending law school (recommended!), there are many options to consider. Remember, it is important to explore as many as possible.

At JHU, you have a resource in Dr. Kelly Barry, who advises on external, merit-based fellowship and scholarship opportunities. This spring there will be several information sessions, which you are encouraged to attend:

Nationally Competitive Scholarships General Information Session, Thurs/8 March, 5-6pm, Mason Hall Auditorium

Nationally Competitive Scholarships General Information Session, Wed/28 March, 5-6pm, Mason Hall Auditorium

Fulbright Information Session, Wed/18 April, 5-6pm, location TBD

Churchill Information Session, Thurs/19 April, 5-6pm, location TBD

Fulbright Information Session, Mon/7 May, 12-1pm, location TBD

Additionally, a series of spring programs have been scheduled that should be of interest to you, including: a DC-area law school admissions panel, a GAP year panel, and a recent law school graduate panel. Please see Section 5 for more details, and mark your calendars!

2. INTERNSHIP OPPORTUNITY: DOCTORS WITHOUT BORDERS

Doctors Without Borders/Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) now has a paid Internship Program.

Interns gain practical work experience and support the work of the Communications, Development, Program, Human Resources (both for the field and the office), and Executive departments. **Interns also gain a basic introduction to the field of international medical humanitarian aid and advocacy.**

All internships will take place in the **New York office** and will be paid at the rate of \$10.00 per hour.

Summer 2012 (May 29 to August 10) Internship Application Deadline: April 13, 2012

For more information, visit:

<http://www.doctorswithoutborders.org/work/office/internships.cfm?ref=main-menu>

3. MEDIA WATCH: “12 MORE LAW SCHOOLS SUED OVER EMPLOYMENT DATA”

On February 1, 2012, *The National Jurist* reported that 12 additional law schools have been sued over allegedly misrepresenting graduates' employment data. The plaintiffs allege that "employment figures for full-time legal jobs are closer to 40%, instead of the 68% reported by the National Association for Legal Placement (NALP)."

Lead plaintiff attorney, David Anziska, states: "We believe that some in the legal academy have done a disservice to the profession and the nation by saddling tens of thousands of young lawyers with massive debt for a degree worth less than advertised."

NALP Executive Director, James Leipold, counters that NALP data is sound: "We stand by our numbers. Our books are open and the data is good...[w]e have a 200-page report that documents this. These [plaintiffs' claim(s)] are assertions not based on fact."

Anziska intends to sue an additional 20 law schools and continues to seek plaintiffs.

To read the article in full, and see the new law school list/defendants, visit:

<http://www.nationaljurist.com/content/12-more-law-schools-sued-over-employment-data>

It will be interesting to see how this case resolves, and what -- if any -- burden and duties the court assigns to prospective law students and to law schools.

4. INTERVIEW: EMILY JASKOT (JHU '01), STAFF ATTORNEY, LONG TERM CARE ASSISTANCE PROJECT, MARYLAND LEGAL AID BUREAU

Emily Jaskot is a first year Staff Attorney at the Maryland Legal Aid Bureau in the Long Term Care Assistance Project. Originally from northeast Pennsylvania, she earned a B.A. in History from the Johns Hopkins University in 2001, where she was also a captain of the varsity swim team.

After college, she served as a Peace Corps Volunteer in El Salvador, working as a Rural Health and Sanitation volunteer in Rancho San Marcos, a 100 family community on the border of Guatemala, 10 kilometers from the Pacific Coast. Upon completion of her Peace Corps service, she worked for the Peace Corps at its headquarters office in Washington, D.C. There she helped organize the Agency's 44th anniversary celebration, and worked as Country Desk Assistant, liaising between the D.C. office and overseas posts in El Salvador, Honduras, and Nicaragua.

A May 2011 *cum laude* graduate of the University of Maryland School of Law, Emily was the co-president of Maryland Public Interest Law Project (MPILP), a student-run 501(c)(3) that provides summer grants to law students working in unpaid public interest internships, volunteered as an ambassador for the admissions office, and worked as a mediator in a year-long mediation clinic. She lives in the Patterson Park neighborhood of Baltimore with her husband, Jared, a Maryland Public Defender, and their two rescue dogs. She enjoys running, cooking, reading fantasy, and gardening.

Emily Jaskot is a member of the Maryland Bar.

1) Describe a day in the life of a Staff Attorney in the Maryland Legal Aid Bureau Long Term Care Assistance Project:

Legal Aid provides free civil legal services to low income Marylanders for a variety of legal issues. Most of my clients are older adults or people with disabilities who live in nursing homes or assisted livings or receive long term services and supports in the community. My typical cases involve a nursing home trying to discharge a resident against her will or a person receiving a denial of her Medicaid benefits. (Medicaid pays for at least a portion of the bill for about 75% of Maryland nursing home residents. The average cost of a month in a nursing home is \$6800.)

Because my clients often aren't very mobile, I speak with them on the phone or go to visit them where they live rather than having them meet me at my office. About twice a week I'll visit clients in nursing homes or assisted livings. It has been really eye-opening to see the range of facilities that exist. There are very small three bedroom assisted livings tucked into normal neighborhoods and 150 bed nursing homes

attached to major hospitals. Some seem pleasant enough and some are surprisingly dirty and depressing. With the baby boomer generation starting to retire, long term care is a growing industry and area of law.

Most weeks I do a lot of letter writing and talking on the phone in the course of investigating cases. In the two months since I've been sworn in as a lawyer, I have done two hearings on my own. That's a lot for a brand new attorney, though overall I'm not in court very often.

Since I'm still new, I spend some time each week learning about the area of law. I watch trainings or webinars online and do a lot of reading on advocacy sites and journals. I attend stakeholder meetings on behalf of Legal Aid at the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene and the Department of Aging. There is something different to do each day, which I like a lot.

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

After my first year of law school I worked in the Office of University Counsel at the University of Maryland Baltimore Campus. It's a small office of four lawyers and two paralegals that handles all the legal matters for Maryland's professional schools (Medicine, Dentistry, Pharmacy, Social Work, Law, and Nursing). They work on a wide variety of projects: employment disputes, real estate, parking contracts, student discipline, act as legal advisors on boards and working groups on issues like Stem Cell research... It was great to get exposed to so many types of law. I got the job through the Dean of Student Affairs at the Law School. She knew I was looking for a summer position and recommended me for the position. Networking is key. Professors, Staff, and Administrators at law school are there because they want students to succeed. The same is true at JHU. Take advantage of their expertise and connections. Get to know them, and let them know how they can help you.

Networking/connections were how I got my job at Legal Aid, too. After my second year of school, I was really ready to have more direct client interaction. I knew I wanted to work for Legal Aid or another legal services organization. I had worked with the law school's Career Center on some events during the year, and they knew that was the type of position I was looking for. When Legal Aid advertised for a law clerk through their office, they told me about it and sent my resume to Legal Aid and offered to be a reference for me.

I continued to work at Legal Aid as a law clerk part time during my third year of law school. Then, after I took the bar, I came on in a temp position. A full time position opened up and I was hired as a staff attorney after I passed the bar. It was very important that I showed consistent interest in the program and worked hard for them for a year and a half. Though it's not a guaranteed way to get a job, I think most offices are more likely to hire an intern who has demonstrated that he or she is hard-working, competent, and easy to work with rather than someone who has just sent in a resume and cover letter.

3) What initially attracted you to your current field?

I have always wanted to work in the public interest. I feel very privileged to have gone to an elite undergraduate institution and to a great law school, and I see it as my responsibility to give back. I have a deep love for Baltimore and want to be part of making it a better city. And I get immense personal satisfaction from helping people.

I became interested in elder law and long term care after seeing two relatives develop dementia and need in-home caregivers or nursing home care. It was something that my family was pretty unprepared for, even the second time around. In my position at Legal Aid I can sometimes educate individuals and their families about their options for long term care and surrogate decision-making before they end up in a crisis situation. Again, I like helping people.

Lastly, long term care is also a big part of health care reform, so it's a growing and changing area of law, which makes it exciting.

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, and in the years following?

I hadn't really considered law school while I was an undergraduate, so I'm not sure how to answer this question. I graduated into a difficult job market, so I feel very fortunate to have a job at all and especially lucky to be working for an agency whose mission I wholeheartedly believe in, doing work I'm passionate about.

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

I actually enjoyed most of my law school classes. I think that was partly because I stepped back and looked at the big picture occasionally. When I did, I realized that I wasn't just learning about torts and contracts; I was gaining a better understanding of how the whole world works. The law is part of everything.

My most favorite class was my yearlong mediation clinic. I was trained and successfully mediated and co-mediated disputes in a number of settings: landlord/tenant cases in District Court, Child Custody cases in Circuit Court, truancy mediations in local elementary schools, and an EEOC case (employment discrimination). I liked the clinic because I think Alternative Dispute Resolution is really important. The litigants/participants often know a lot more about what will work for them in resolving a dispute than a lawyer or a judge knows. Also, I really like working with clients, and that's what law school clinics are about.

I also took a wonderful class on Baltimore's Environmental History. I ended up doing a big research project and paper on why Baltimore's primary form of public transportation changed from trolleys to buses in the 1940s and 50s. I was a history major in college, so that was really interesting to me. While I didn't learn any new substantive law, I learned a lot about Maryland and Baltimore politics and the Public Service Commission in the first half of the Twentieth Century. I find that historical context very useful as a citizen of Baltimore and Maryland.

In general, I choose classes after my first year based on what interested me. And I took Evidence because it's really important.

6) 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? What other career paths did you consider?

My decision to go to law school came from what I did after I graduated from Hopkins. From 2002 to 2004, I lived and worked as a Peace Corps Volunteer (PCV) in El Salvador. I learned to speak Spanish fluently, learned a lot about myself, and, as the only PCV for many miles, expanded my ability to work independently under a variety of conditions. I then worked for four years at the Peace Corps Headquarters in Washington, D.C., as a liaison between the agency's headquarters offices and overseas posts in Central America. In that role I corresponded and interacted with senior members of the U.S. and foreign governments, gave dozens of presentations and trainings to Peace Corps staff and volunteers, and worked closely with two co-workers on a daily basis as part of a three-person team. After working for several years in international development, I decided to focus on the needs of communities closer to home. I went to law school because I saw it as a direct way to gain powerful skills and tools to reach people in need.

7) What made you choose University of Maryland Law School (UMD), and did it meet your expectations? What do you see as the primary pros and cons of law school?

I chose Maryland for two main reasons. First, it required all full time students to go through a clinic. I saw this as a commitment to teaching students some of the concrete skills we would need to work as lawyers. Also, because student lawyers are free lawyers, it showed me that the school was committed to having students get to know the issues of and work for underserved populations.

Second, I wanted in state tuition. Law school is very expensive. Even though I was in state, I still accumulated tens of thousands of dollars of law school debt. Fortunately, Maryland offers a loan repayment plan to graduates who work in public interest jobs. I'm benefitting from that program right now.

8) 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 attorney?

For me it was really important that I took my time deciding to go to law school. I learned a lot about myself and gained a lot of self-confidence by living overseas and working in a professional setting for several years. I would not have been ready to take on the responsibility of handling peoples' legal problems when I was 24 years old. I was also able to take school much more seriously by having taken a break after college. On the other hand, I went to law school with plenty of fantastic students who had gone straight through or taken a year or two off.

My other main piece of advice is to network. It isn't necessarily synonymous with "schmoozing." If you volunteer to work on a committee or a project, the people you work with will get to know you and how great your work is. In the future, you'll have a shared professional experience to talk about which makes it much more natural to ask about other professional opportunities.

Contact Information:

If you would like to learn more about the University of Maryland School of Law, Legal Aid, or Peace Corps or if you have additional questions for Emily Jaskot, you may contact her by email at emilyjaskot@gmail.com.

Additionally, Emily recommends and frequently utilizes the following websites:

Shriver Center on Poverty Law: <http://www.povertylaw.org/>

National Academy of Elder Law Attorneys: <http://www.naela.org/>

National Health Law Project: <http://www.naela.org/>

Center for Medicare Advocacy: <http://www.medicareadvocacy.org/>

5. UPCOMING PRE-LAW STUDENT MEETINGS & PROGRAM ANNOUNCEMENTS

Pre-Professional Student Study Abroad Panel

Co-sponsored by the Office of Pre-Professional Programs & Advising and the Office of Study Abroad

Location: TBD

Date: Wednesday, March 7, 2012

Time: 5:00pm to 6:00pm

Description: JHU pre-professional students will discuss their study abroad experiences.

DC-Metro Area Law School Admissions Panel

Location: Mason Hall Auditorium

Date: Wednesday, March 15, 2012

Time: 12:00pm to 12:55pm

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

Post-Bacc Opportunities/GAP Year Panel: Peace Corps, City Year & Teach for America

Co-sponsored by the Office of Pre-Professional Programs & Advising and the Career Center

Location: Mason Hall Auditorium

Date: Thursday, March 15, 2012

Time: 5:30pm to 6:30pm

Description: Learn more about GAP year options including Peace Corps, City Year, Teach for America, and DOJ's paralegal program(s).

The Insiders Scoop: Recent Law School Graduates/Young Associates

Location: TBD

Date: Wednesday, April 11, 2012

Time: 5:00pm to 6:15pm

Description: JHU alumni will discuss what it was like to be a law student at their respective schools, summer experiences while in law school and what it is like to be an associate at a large firm, in a federal government agency, and counsel for an insurance company. They will also discuss the current, legal job market.

Upcoming LSAT Administration for 2011/2012

Location: Check with LSAC for testing locations (next on campus/JHU LSAT administration – Monday, June 11, 2012).

Date: Monday, June 11, 2012

Time: Registration begins at 11.30a for the June exam – consult with LSAC for all controlling details.

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

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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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