



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

Best viewed in HTML

Vol. 6, No. 11

Friday, March 29, 2013 – Thursday, April 11, 2013

- ~~~~~
- 1. Message from Ana L. Droscoski, Esq.**
 - 2. Legal Education & the Legal Industry in the Media**
 - 3. Gap Year Opportunity: Research Associate Democracy Program, The Brennan Center for Justice at New York University School of Law**
 - 4. Interview: Christine Wozniak '11, University of Southern California Gould School of Law 1L**
 - 5. Upcoming Pre-Law Student Meeting & Program Announcements**
- ~~~~~

1. MESSAGE FROM ANA L. DROSCOSKI, ESQ.

I hope everyone had a great spring vacation!

For those of you that are curious about specific data for JHU applicants to law school, the latest LSAC Action Report is now available online, on our office website:

http://web.jhu.edu/prepro/law/your_jhu/2011.2012.law.school.action.Report.pdf

Next week there will be a program that should be of interest to everyone. We will have a panel of JHU alumni who 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. Panelists will also discuss the current, legal job market.

This program, *The Insider's Scoop*, will occur on Wednesday, April 3, 2013, from 5:30pm to 6:30pm, and will be held in Gilman 75. Hope to see you there!

2. LEGAL EDUCATION & THE LEGAL INDUSTRY IN THE MEDIA

Want to know how much law school is really going to cost you? Have a go at Michigan Law's Debt Wizard:

http://www.law.umich.edu/financialaid/debtwizard/Pages/default.aspx?goback=%2Egde_3276613_member_226251319%2Egde_3276613_member_226093861%2Egde_3276613_member_226251319

WHYY's March 21, 2013 audio program, *Rethinking Law Schools*, a "debate about what law school should be, and possible ways to reform it:"

<http://whyy.org/cms/radiotimes/2013/03/21/rethinking-law-schools/>

Forbes' March 14, 2013 piece by Jacquelyn Smith: "The Law Schools Whose Grads Earn The Biggest Paychecks:"

<http://www.forbes.com/sites/jacquelynsmith/2013/03/14/the-law-schools-whose-grads-earn-the-biggest-paychecks/>

3. GAP YEAR OPPORTUNITY: RESEARCH ASSOCIATE, DEMOCRACY PROGRAM, THE BRENNAN CENTER FOR JUSTICE AT NEW YORK UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF LAW

Research Associate, Democracy Program

The Brennan Center for Justice at New York University School of Law is a non-partisan public policy and law institute that focuses on the fundamental issues of democracy and justice. Their work ranges from voting rights to campaign finance reform, from racial justice in criminal law to presidential power in the fight against terrorism. A singular institution -- part think tank, part public interest law firm, part advocacy group, part communications hub -- the Brennan Center seeks meaningful, measurable change in the systems by which our nation is governed.

The Brennan Center's Democracy Program advances and defends core democratic values and includes projects dedicated to expanding the right to vote, improving the administration of our election systems, reducing the corrupting influence of money in politics, maintaining fair and impartial courts, and ending government dysfunction.

Position:

The Brennan Center seeks two (2) full-time Research Associates to work in the Brennan Center's Democracy Program. The Research Associates will be assigned primarily to their *Money In Politics* and *Fair Courts* teams. These programs work to reduce the power of money and special interests in our democracy, support fair and impartial courts to promote equal justice and the rule of law, and revitalize our systems of government. Research Associates are responsible for providing regular administrative support to these teams as well as assisting with substantive projects, aspects of administration, communications, and fundraising in support of the projects. Professionalism, reliability, flexibility, and willingness to work equally well on both substantive and administrative projects is a must.

Typical responsibilities will include, but are not limited to:

Conducting legal and factual research and data analysis;
Drafting and editing publications, reports, newsletters, blogs and other public communications;
Performing a wide range of administrative, database, and paralegal support, and program management tasks, including making travel arrangements, copyediting, and checking citations, among others.
Organizing events;
Communications and coordination with ally organizations;
Working with the attorneys, fellows, and other research associates on project teams;

Qualifications:

A bachelor's degree (*This is an entry level position; lawyers and individuals with advanced degrees should not apply*);
Initiative, drive, and commitment;
Creativity and perseverance in seeking out information;
Excellent research, analytic, and writing skills;

Excellent organizational skills, ability to multi-task in a fast-paced environment, attention to detail, ability to meet deadlines, and ability to manage multiple responsibilities to completion;
Proficiency with standard office computer software and programs;
Paralegal experience or experience in statistical analysis preferred, but not required.

Salary:

\$35,000-41,000, commensurate with experience. Excellent benefits package.

Application Process

Deadlines: The application deadline is **April 15, 2013**, but applicants will be interviewed on a rolling basis and the position will be filled as soon as appropriate candidates are identified. Applicants are encouraged to submit their applications early. The anticipated starting date for these positions are mid-May or early June 2013 (with some flexibility as to a later start date), and a firm two-year commitment is required.

How to Apply: As one file, upload a cover letter, resume, writing sample of up to 10 pages, and contact information for three references online at www.brennancenter.org/employment. No phone calls, please.

If you have difficulty with uploading through the online system, after first registering with the online system, you may send your application by e-mail to: brennancenterjobs@nyu.edu with "Democracy Research Associate" in the subject line. *Please do not additionally send an email application if you successfully uploaded your application online.*

For more information on the Brennan Center for Justice, please visit: www.brennancenter.org

To view this listing online:

<http://brennancenter.theresumator.com/apply/QuibsO/Research-Associate-Democracy-Program.html?source=JHopkins>

4. INTERVIEW: CHRISTINE WOZNIAK '11, UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA GOULD SCHOOL OF LAW 1L

Christine Wozniak is currently a 1L at the University of Southern California (USC) Gould School of Law in Los Angeles, CA. She serves as a senator on the Graduate Student Government (which serves the entire university grad student population, a position she ran for at the beginning of the school year), is on the executive board of the Student Bar Association (SBA) (the law school's student government) as a member of the budget committee, and is a member of the Women's Law Association and Latino Law Students Association (at USC, all of the student groups on campus are open to everyone regardless of affiliation with a certain gender/race/ethnicity/religion, etc.).

Christine graduated Phi Beta Kappa from JHU in 2011 with a B.A. in Psychology and was a member of many leadership societies, including Order of Omega Greek Leadership Honour Society, Rho Lambda Sorority Leadership Recognition Society, Psi Chi International Honor Society in Psychology, and Golden Key International Honour Society. Additionally, she was in Delta Xi Phi Multicultural Sorority for 3 years, and served as the president her senior year. Christine was also on the Student Traditions Board and worked as a Building Monitor at Levering.

Christine is originally from New Canaan, CT, where she attended public school. She now lives in L.A., "Culver City to be exact." Christine has a 20 minute commute to and from school every day on a light rail that recently opened up ("L.A. has historically bad traffic and a dearth of public transportation, so to encourage use of the new light rail, USC subsidizes the cost of a semester-long unlimited metro pass, so it's only \$80/semester") and is "usually scrambling to finish her reading on it every morning." There is a See's Candy Factory across the street from her apartment, so she is "tortured by the smell of chocolate every day." Recently, she saw the Los Angeles Derby Dolls play the Charm City Roller Girls. She misses Baltimore a lot, so she encourages everyone to "try to enjoy its quirky charm while you're there."

Questions

1) Describe a typical day as a 1L at USC Gould School of Law.

Your schedule depends on your super section. Basically the first year class of around 190 people is split into 15 'sections' (this year they're alphabetically labeled A-O, I am in section H) of about 12 or 13 people each. You take your year-long legal writing class with your small section only. Your doctrinal classes (for first year: contracts, civil procedure, torts, then constitutional law, criminal law, and property) are taught in 'super sections', which are larger groups consisting of 5 sections, or around 63 people. 1Ls start class between 8:30am and 11:00am and end between 12:15 and 4:45pm. You have 1-4 classes a day and everyone has the same lunch break; 12:15-1:25pm. Lunch is when a lot of student groups hold their meetings or sponsor speakers. There are always lunch programs going on. They range from Career Services doing a talk about how to write an interest letter to a firm or a thank-you letter after having an information interview, to representatives from LexisNexis and Westlaw (the two main subscription legal databases) bringing us food and showing us how to research (they have a stake in converting law students to be part of their user base early so in the future their firms will pay for their services) to the Art Law Society sponsoring a walking trip to a museum on campus. Most, if not all, 1Ls have class on Fridays both semesters (but upperclassmen rarely do). The school is good about ensuring that if one super section has early classes first semester, their classes will start mid-morning second semester.

At night some people stay on campus, bring dinner (we have fridges and individual lockers in our building) and study in the law library until 7 or 8 and then head home. The second group leaves school right after their last class and then studies at home. I am in latter group; I have never been a big library studier. Sometimes there are activities in the afternoon or evening. Perhaps it's a student activity for grad students (i.e. this week is Grad Student Appreciation week so last night there was a Relax Fair type set-up with wine and massages for grad students, last week there was a research poster symposium). Some people play on the law school's intramural teams at night. There also might be law school-related events at night, too (i.e. local attorneys from area movie studios discussing in-house counsel entertainment law, happy hours sponsored by big law firms, an opportunity to volunteer at a local citizenship clinic, etc.). Last week career services held a networking mixer for students and attorneys from small to mid-sized firms. Today at lunch the Sports Law Society brought in the general counsel for the Lakers (he is a USC law alumnus and randomly brought a championship ring that we got to try on). More socially, the SBA social chairs organize a weekly "bar review" on Thursday nights where we all go to a bar around L.A. and there are drink specials and no cover, which is nice because L.A. bars are way more expensive than Maxie's or CVP. Sometimes we'll even have a co-bar review with USC's MBA students or another law school (most law schools have this tradition of bar review on Thursday nights). Also during football season the law school puts on pretty epic tailgates with kegs and catered barbecue.

2) To date, what has been your favorite law school class, and why?

Definitely criminal law. I elected to take a special section that meets three times per week instead of the usual two so we are able to go slower and review exam-taking strategies. I've only taken one set of exams thus far but I found that the study habits I relied on at Hopkins did not translate into wild success on a 3-hour essay test in which you must spot as many legal issues as you can and maniacally type at the speed of light (your whole grade in the class is based on the final exam). So I need to improve my approach. My professor for Crim is very down-to-earth and methodical which I find is much more effective in helping me understand the substantive legal rules, as opposed to some of the other professors I've had who are much more cerebral, theoretical and go off on tangents of which I often can't understand their relevance. The other day he brought in his favorite graphic novels, so he could recommend his favorites. Plus, the textbook for his class has pretty big print so doing the reading doesn't give me a headache. Always a plus.

3) What made you choose USC? What do you see as the primary pros and cons of law school?

I applied to over 25 law schools across the country, because I was procrastinating on making a big decision about where I wanted to be and what I wanted to do. To be honest, I chose USC because I wanted to stay in L.A. for personal reasons (to be close to my boyfriend). I also chose USC because they had a more collaborative atmosphere than some other area schools that seemed more cutthroat (often the top schools can be cutthroat because of the self-selecting nature of the applicant pool, but, in this economy, even not so highly ranked schools can be incredibly competitive because only the top 10 or 15% of the class are getting decent jobs upon graduation). The other main factor besides location was the fact that they gave me a generous scholarship.

The pros are the insanely tight Trojan alumni network, USC's strong reputation in the Los Angeles legal community, our relatively small class size (but not too small to be stifling) and the gorgeous campus in a great, central location. The cons would probably be the law building itself (not very pretty), the fact that East Coast firms don't really recruit here (you can get an East Coast job, you just have to be more proactive because career services has fewer relationships in those legal markets), and perhaps the sketchiness of the area surrounding campus, although I've never felt unsafe. The grading system is probably a pro and a con. All classes are letter-graded and on a pretty strict curve. I was considering some schools that didn't have grades (for example UC Berkeley has something like High Honors, Honors, Pass, Substandard Pass and No Credit) and I think if I went there I would've been less neurotic and more focused on learning the law instead of learning how to take an exam. But on the other hand, maybe I would have been less motivated if I knew that employers wouldn't see letter grades. One thing I wish I could change would be the way legal writing is graded; right now it's letter like all our other classes, but I wish it was pass/fail because of the completely subjective nature of the material, the fact that each small section has a different adjunct professor creating a lack of uniformity, and the fact that we're being graded on a curve against only 12 other people. Upperclass students can take some classes pass/fail, similar to the Hopkins policy.

4) 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?

Once I decided that I didn't want to get any further education in psychology (my major), I realized that I needed to start to brainstorm my post-grad options, because, at the time, even coming from a great school like Hopkins, I felt like I wasn't qualified for many jobs that I couldn't have just started right after high school...so I decided somewhat on a whim to take the October LSAT of my junior year. I did well enough that I felt like I could probably get a decent legal education for a relatively inexpensive amount, and even if I didn't end up using my law degree, it would be worth it to get one as it opens opportunities in many occupational fields. Honestly after taking the LSAT I did kind of feel pressured to apply to law school because of that "why not" mentality, and then after getting in I kind of decided to go because of that same mentality. So I would think long and hard about going to law school even before taking the LSAT because I don't know of very many people who take it, do okay, and don't end up going to law school.

Because of my complete ambivalence about going to law school (and even considerable trepidation and dread; I thought I literally wouldn't be able to get through the case reading because it would be so boring I would drift off, which luckily rarely happens because the cases are kind of fun in a voyeuristic way in reading about other people's lives and problems) I didn't have many activities that could outright be deemed as strengthening my law school application so I kind of had to spin them as such (many law school application supplements will ask what kind of law you're thinking of practicing or why you want to go to law school, not to mention the ubiquitous personal statement). For example I took a criminal justice class at Hopkins that required a 20-hour internship, so I referenced my experience with the Baltimore Innocence Project (attorneys taking criminal appeal cases pro bono that have a chance of being overturned on evidence recently made available by the advance in DNA technology). I also had a summer internship during undergrad in my home state of Connecticut testing local rivers for harmful bacteria, so I framed this in a way that made it seem like I'm interested in environmental law.

5) What did you pursue during your interim year(s)/before beginning law school, while in law school and during your law school summer(s)? How did you go about researching these opportunities?

During my gap year, I did a whole lot of random things. Luckily my boyfriend's dad has a solo law practice in East L.A. so I worked part-time billing for his family-law prong (divorces, child custody, etc) which mainly entailed calling clients and trying to get them to pay their fees (often speaking in Spanish which I am so glad I took for 3 semesters at Hopkins). I learned that I definitely don't want to have my own practice because I would not want to deal with the headache of collecting from clients, dealing with hiring new paralegals if any quit, and advertising. I want a job where someone sends me a regular paycheck so the experience was useful in that way.

In law school, second year is when students start really getting involved with groups and take on leadership positions because first year is really about acclimating to the workload and the Socratic method that professors use to encourage dialogue in class. In fact, the American Bar Association (ABA), the accrediting body for U.S. law schools, doesn't allow 1Ls to hold a job to ensure continued focus on only academics. For that same reason they also don't allow first years to be in contact with their school's career services office until November 1st, and potential employers until December 1st. That being said, this semester I was able to find time to volunteer in an Elder Law Clinic. Law students are paired with residents in a low-income housing development for seniors downtown, and I was able to help an older woman create (fill out) a power of attorney and advanced health care directive. That has been one of my favorite activities thus far because amid the constant studying and legal theory it's nice to use your skills to actually help people. At the end of this year I will try out for Moot Court and maybe participate in the journal write-on (a two-week period after finals end during which 1Ls do a huge writing and cite-

checking assignment) although I find legal writing pretty boring and too out of touch with the practice of law. At USC, you actually get credit for doing Moot Court or being on a journal; they are called Honors Programs (this isn't true of all schools).

This summer I am working at the Los Angeles City Attorney's Office in their Real Property/Environmental division (again I talked about that old water-testing internship in my interview). I have no idea what to expect because I feel like I don't know any practical law, but it isn't paid so there are no expectations, and the attorneys in the practice group are really nice and expecting to dedicate time to help me learn. The division represents the city in real property disputes (like if someone sues the city because their driveway got damaged from a truck that was paving an adjacent city road), manages the purchasing and leasing of property, and makes sure the city is in compliance with environmental regulations. Unless you qualify for paid diversity fellowships that law firms offer, most jobs for 1Ls are unpaid because we really don't know enough law to contribute in a way that brings in money. But annoyingly they are still called 'jobs' because they are pretty competitive and selective. The most popular ones for post-1L summer are:

a) Externing for judges (helping them read the briefs that attorneys submit, doing legal research to find relevant case precedent, helping the judge's law clerks draft opinions, etc). This is a good option because applications for these are due in December before your first finals so they aren't contingent on your first year grades PLUS you don't have to deal with the stress of job-hunting second semester.

b) Public interest jobs (working for a legal non-profit helping provide legal services to specific populations that can't afford it; mainly doing client intake, filling out legal forms and doing research). Some popular examples in L.A. are: Mental Health Advocacy Services (helps mentally disabled patients access health care and other resources), Cancer Legal Resource Center (helps cancer patients with employment discrimination claims), Maintenance Cooperation Trust Fund (helps janitorial workers in wage disputes), and more general-interest organizations like Public Counsel that do everything from landlord-tenant disputes to Holocaust reparations to debtors' rights. These jobs are nice because though they are unpaid, you can usually qualify for grant-funding for the summer which ranges from \$1,000 to \$7,000. Many bar associations (groups of attorneys with something in common, whether it be a geographic area - Beverly Hills Bar Association -- or race -- Asian Pacific American Bar Association), firms, and various interest groups sponsor these. Most law schools also have a Public Interest Law Foundation (PILF) that fundraises during the school year to give grants to qualifying students.

c) Government-sector jobs (i.e. working for the district attorney helping do legal research for prosecution, working on civil cases for the city attorney which is what I'm doing, working in the legal department of an administrative agency like the IRS or EPA dealing with regulatory law). These have the benefit of being pretty well-regarded on a resumé but the horrible drawback of not being paid AND not being public interest-grant eligible. I will probably have to get a part-time job this summer bartending or something to have an income.

d) Working for the law school in some way (i.e. many schools have live-client clinics -- we have Immigration, IP & Tech, Post-Conviction and Small Business -- that upper-class students work with for credit during the school year, but they are staffed for pay by students over the summer, or professors will hire research assistants for the summer to help with legal research if they are writing a book or law review article).

The judicial externship application process is run through our career center and is done via mailed applications and in-person interviews. Public interest and government-sector jobs are often found

through alumni networking events, direct application through websites, or, more commonly, on-campus interviewing (OCI). For two days in February we had about 20 government and Public interest attorneys (and around 3 small firms) come to a hotel next to our school and interview students. Interviews are obtained through an online lottery system and most people got all the interviews they wanted. Some positions required transcripts and writing samples, others just required a cover letter and resume. Then, most organizations selected people from those interviews to come to the office and have a second interview. This is how I got my position at the City Attorney's office. There is a MUCH more intense, week-long OCI for rising 2Ls in late August before school starts with many more employers. These interviews are granted through 70% lottery and 30% pre-screening of resumes and grades by employers. This is how people get the private firm jobs for their second summer (which ideally turn into an employment offer at the end of the summer contingent upon graduation and passing the bar, so these are extremely competitive).

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

Not everyone who graduates from a Top 20 school is getting a big-firm (1000+ attorneys in several U.S. offices) job, with a starting salary of between 120 and 160k. My estimate would be you need at least a 3.4 to even get an interview for those jobs. USC doesn't formally publish a list of student rank but employers can generally figure it out based on transcripts and the top 10% GPA cutoff, which is published. I am now starting to realize that the 60-80k jobs are much more common, either in business, academia, smaller firms or public interest. This is definitely something to consider when taking out loans. I've heard that you shouldn't take out more loans than you expect your starting salary to be, although there are various loan-repayment options (for example loans are forgiven after 10 years of people who have qualified public-interest jobs). That being said, all these recent doom and gloom editorials about the market being saturated with lawyers and law school not being a sound investment are a bit dramatic and usually not true if you go to a decent school. The economy is improving and firms are hiring (they just aren't wining and dining to recruit students anymore because they have the upper-hand). I would just recommend considering "alternative JD careers" before you apply, knowing you might not be able to go the big-firm route.

7) 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 current law student?

First, make sure you have something to put on your resume during your interim year. It doesn't look good to have gaps in your resume (you have to explain them in an addendum on your application if you do) and you might be asked about the gap during interviews for summer jobs. Not to mention all your classmates will also ask.

Second, definitely do some sort of volunteering, if possible with clients, during your first semester so you have something to talk about during interviews for summer jobs second semester. Even if you only did it once or twice, a great anecdote about helping a student fill out a Visa application or filling out a Temporary Restraining Order for a battered client sounds great in interviews because most employers really value direct client-interaction.

Third, do as well as you can on your LSATs because it will put you in the best position possible to get good scholarships. A \$1,200 Kaplan course is well worth it if you can get above a 165 and save possibly 20-40k/year. ALSO leverage your scholarships. This might feel weird or awkward but it is crucial and

most people do it; sending a polite letter to a school that didn't offer you a scholarship or not enough of one detailing that a similarly ranked school offered X amount more than them might change their minds. I did this with USC and it worked. Make sure to emphasize that you would attend the school if they are able to match the amount (but only do this if you mean it).

Finally, don't worry about visiting all the law schools you want to apply to before you apply because many will pay for you to visit after you get in. Law schools want to have the highest yield possible because it looks good for them if they can fill their class without going to the waitlist, so they often have stipends for prospective students to come and visit (covering airfare or gas) and will usually pay for a hotel or find a current student to house you during your stay. I didn't know this before I applied but I visited Tulane, Washington & Lee, Vanderbilt, WashU in St. Louis, Chicago-Kent and Berkeley this way. Luckily, I could take a bunch of weekends to do this, so I would plan for that during March and April, if you can.

Contact Information:

If you have any questions regarding being a 1L, USC Gould School of Law or for Christine Wozniak generally, you may email her at cwozniak@gmail.com. Christine “remembers so well the application process and would love to be of any help” that she can.

5. UPCOMING PRE-LAW STUDENT MEETINGS & PROGRAM ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Insiders Scoop: Recent Law School Graduates/Young Associates

Location: Gilman 75

Date: Wednesday, April 3, 2013

Time: 5:30pm to 6:30pm

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

Location: Check with LSAC for testing locations (next on campus/JHU LSAT administration – Monday, June 10, 2013).

Date: Monday, June 10, 2013

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

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

Ana L. Droscoski, J.D., Associate Director, Pre-Law Advisor, Pre-Dental & Pre-Health Advisor

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

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

Katie Cruik, M.S., Assistant Director, Pre-Nursing & Pre-Health Advisor

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

Carolyn Mae Krause, Administrative Coordinator, [ckrause@jhu.edu](mailto:ckrause@jhu.edu) 410-516-6744  
For students whose last name begins with A-L, contact Mrs. Krause.

LaTonia Sanders, Administrative Coordinator, [ladytee@jhu.edu](mailto:ladytee@jhu.edu) 410-516-4140  
For students whose last name begins with M-Z, contact Mrs. Sanders.

Angie Decker, Office Manager, [decker@jhu.edu](mailto:decker@jhu.edu)

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.