



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

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Vol. 7, No. 8

Friday, February 7, 2014

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1. MESSAGE FROM ANA L. DROSCOSKI, ESQ.

Welcome back! I hope everyone's Spring 2014 semester got off to a great start.

For Pennsylvania residents:

Penn State Law recently announced the [Commonwealth Scholars Program](#). The Commonwealth Scholars Program provides a renewable \$20,000 per year grant (\$60,000 over three years) to Pennsylvania residents enrolling at Penn State Law in fall 2014. In addition to the \$20,000 per year grant, Pennsylvania residents will remain eligible for additional scholarships and need-based aid. This program may continue for additional entry years, so if you are a Pennsylvania resident and interested -- but not a current applicant -- keep it in mind for the future.

For those interested in other financial assistance options, your best bet is to check with the individual law school for their offerings, in addition to submitting your FAFSA application in a timely manner. Most schools offer a variety of scholarship and award options -- especially for those interested in pursuing a career in public interest work. In addition, there are usually school specific options and programs available to applicants and matriculants for a variety of reasons. To learn more, be sure to do your research on a law school's individual website!

Best of luck to those taking the February 8 LSAT.

2. LEGAL EDUCATION & THE LEGAL INDUSTRY IN THE MEDIA

"What do Law Students Think About Law School?" -- satisfaction rates vary, dependent on the year of the law student and the student service surveyed

<http://blogs.wsj.com/law/2014/01/28/what-do-law-students-think-about-law-school/>

“Law 2014: Paring Back at U.S. Law Schools Continues” -- *internal shifts continue at law schools in response to decrease in applicants*

<http://blogs.wsj.com/law/2014/01/02/law-2014-paring-back-at-u-s-law-schools-continues/>

“First-Year Law School Enrollment At 1977 Levels” -- *law school matriculation the lowest in 37 years*

<http://blogs.wsj.com/law/2013/12/17/first-year-law-school-enrollment-at-1977-levels/>

“Stop Whining About How Law School Ruined Your Life And Try Working Harder” -- *one non-T14 law school graduate’s take on the current legal job market*

<http://www.businessinsider.com/niki-fords-take-on-law-school-2013-12>

3. OPPORTUNITY: THE CHARLES HAMILTON HOUSTON SCHOLARS PROGRAM, UNIVERSITY OF BALTIMORE SCHOOL OF LAW

The Charles Hamilton Houston Scholars Program (CHHSP) helps under-represented college freshmen and sophomores develop the academic skills needed to improve undergraduate performance and enhance their opportunity for admission to and success in law school.

WHAT IS CHHSP?

CHHSP focuses on the challenges often faced by minority students who may not have had or have utilized the social, experiential and cultural capital that facilitates success and enhances confidence. Weekly workshops designed and conducted by legal experts help empower students to meet and overcome these challenges. The program focuses on reading comprehension, analytical and critical thinking, writing skills, life planning and how to overcome barriers to success.

Each scholar is mentored by a member of the Baltimore City legal community and experiences the practice of law through:

- "At the Bar Chats" consisting of round-table discussions with successful minority attorneys
- "Law Path Experiences" showcasing guest speakers from the legal profession
- Mini-internships at law firms and other legal institutions

WHO ARE CHHSP SCHOLARS?

CHHSP is looking for freshmen and sophomore college students who are like Charles Hamilton Houston. Students who:

- are interested in a legal career;
- have demonstrated academic ability and potential;
- are highly motivated;
- can benefit from a program of successful study skills and mentoring.

These students, following in Houston's footsteps, can enter the legal academy empowered and enriched.

2014 PROGRAM DATES: Monday, June 2 to Friday, June 13, 2014

APPLICATION DEADLINE: Friday, March 14, 2014

For detailed program information, visit:

<http://law.ubalt.edu/admissions/diversity/chhsp/index.cfm>

To apply for the program, visit:

http://law.ubalt.edu/admissions/images/2014_chhspapplication_FINAL.pdf

4. INTERVIEW: CATHERINE A. RIZZONI '12, PARALEGAL, HUGHES HUBBARD & REED LLP

Catherine (Cat) A. Rizzoni is a Paralegal with the Washington, D.C. office of Hugh Hubbard & Reed LLP. As a Paralegal in the Anti-Corruption and Internal Investigations group, she maintains an internal database of Foreign Corrupt Practice Act (FCPA) enforcement actions and disseminates weekly news alerts on relevant FCPA matters. In addition, she assists in document production by drafting motions and internal case memoranda; researches and drafts sections of client reports and her firm's annual FCPA report; presents on relevant SEC filing disclosures at monthly FCPA team meetings; and assists on a pro-bono family law case.

Cat graduated cum laude from Johns Hopkins University (JHU) in 2012, where she received a B.A. in International Studies and French Literature. Spring of her senior year at JHU, she was an intern in the Civil Rights Division of the U.S Department of Justice in Washington, D.C. The summer of her junior year, Cat was an intern with Amnesty International USA in Washington, DC, where she worked on the Death Penalty Abolition Campaign; the summer of her sophomore year, she was a Summer Investigative Intern with the Criminal Division of the Legal Aid Society in Brooklyn, NY. In January of her sophomore and junior year, Cat was an Intern with the Mecklenburg County Office of the Public Defender in Charlotte, NC.

Catherine A. Rizzoni is fluent in French and a dual U.S. and Italian citizen.

Questions

1) Describe a day in the life of a Paralegal at Hughes Hubbard & Reed in Washington, DC.

There is no one typical day in the life of a paralegal. Depending on what firm you work for and what type of work that firm does will have a huge impact on one's daily experience. Regardless of firm, you definitely need to be willing to be flexible and work late, since you are often waiting on attorneys to finish their work so that you can begin yours. I work in the DC office of a NY-based firm with the standard corporate and litigation distinctions. When I arrived, due to staffing, I was (fortunately) assigned as the paralegal for the firm's anti-corruption and internal investigations unit. Our unit does white collar criminal work as well as government-appointed monitorships of wayward companies who need to implement or strengthen their anti-corruption compliance programs. As such, my job consists of a lot of keeping track of enforcement actions against these companies and presenting on these issues when they arise and at monthly at team meetings. I also do a lot of research and writing for internal case memoranda, published firm alerts, court filings, and reports to clients - skills which will be invaluable when attending law school. You are definitely responsible for some administrative tasks, but the high profile substantive work for high stakes cases balance it out to keep it interesting. I have had several opportunities to work out of our Paris office, so that helps too!

2) What made you choose this particular position and has it met your expectations?

All of my legal internship experiences during college focused on human rights and criminal defense. Before making the decision to go to law school, I wanted to make sure I had a fuller picture of legal job opportunities out there, so I applied for paralegal positions at "BigLaw" firms. I have heard from other paralegals in similar situations - some love it, and some have found that it is not for them. What I have come to find is that one's enjoyment of being a paralegal has a lot to do with a firm's culture, so choose wisely. Of all my job interviews, I actually had fun at my firm's, where I met interesting people whose work they were genuinely excited about. I have very much enjoyed my two years here (paralegals can stay for one or two years). Paralegals are valued members of the firm and attorneys are always willing and available to talk to you about the case at hand or engage with you in a broader sense as mentors. In conclusion, I would say that being a paralegal can be an interesting and rewarding experience depending on the firm.

3) Did you pursue anything else during your interim years before beginning law school? How did you go about researching each of these opportunities?

I went straight from JHU to being a paralegal. If I had not been a paralegal, I was poised to take a development job at an NGO. I knew that I wanted to take a position at a law firm, as explained above, so I chose my current paralegal job over the NGO.

4) What do you think you have gained from the experiences and from taking time off before law school? Given the choice, would you do it again?

Yes, I am so glad that I joined my firm as a paralegal. Substantively, I have been able to get a head start on legal writing and research. However, the real benefit comes with the experience itself. While there are certainly some slow days at the office, and conversely, days that I don't leave the office until the next day, being a paralegal here has given my first hand insight into the lives and sacrifices of attorneys in BigLaw. That will be priceless knowledge down the road when deciding what type of law to practice, where, and in what environment.

As for taking time off before law school generally, law schools are increasingly taking a business school approach to applicants in the sense that they prefer applicants who have post-college professional experience. As such, I would say that it is generally a good idea to not go "straight through" if one can avoid it, in order to maximize chances of acceptance to the top tier law schools.

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

While I majored in International Studies, I knew prior to coming to JHU that I was interested in the law. My high school offered a sociology elective in which we participated early on in an experiment about social expectations, poverty, and crime. I'm not sure I should say this being a future lawyer (!!), but the ease in which my classmates and I could slip into potentially criminal situations given a set of unfortunate circumstances made me look at crime and criminals in a different, perhaps more public policy-oriented, light. I signed up with my home town's office of the public defender during intersession my freshman year and was immediately hooked. I proceeded to work there sophomore year intersession. I also participated in internships during the summers at Legal Aid Society in NYC and

Amnesty International in DC. I spent my spring semester senior year with the DOJ Civil Rights Division in DC. At JHU specifically, the classes I took with Steven Teles and Joel Grossman were additional catalysts for my decision to pursue a legal career. Seriously, if you are interested in the law even a little bit, take their classes!

In terms of strengthening my application to law school, I will repeat one comment I received from an interviewer: all of my legal experiences, while following the same basic constitutional rights/criminal defense theme, approached the theme from different angles - on the ground with the public defender, top down with the DOJ, and from the NGO side. To him, that demonstrated real commitment to the issue. So, from that I would say, if you are interested in something, think about taking on experiences that allow you to engage with it in a different way. You'll have more perspective and thus more to talk about.

Contact Information

If you would like to learn more about being a Paralegal, Hughes Hubbard & Reed LLP or would otherwise like to contact Catherine A. Rizzoni, you may reach her at the following email address:
crizzon1@jhu.edu.

5. UPCOMING PRE-LAW STUDENT MEETINGS & PROGRAM ANNOUNCEMENTS

Upcoming LSAT Administration

Location: Check with LSAC for testing locations.

Date: Saturday, February 8, 2014 / Monday, June 9, 2014

Time: Registration begins at 8:30 am for the February exam -- consult with LSAC for all controlling details.

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

Ana L. Drososki, J.D., Associate Director, Pre-Law Advisor, Pre-Dental & Pre-Med Advisor

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

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

Katie Cruit, M.S., Assistant Director, Pre-Med, 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.

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