

Pre-Law eNewsletter

Vol. 2, No. 1

Monday, September 15, 2008 – Sunday, September 21, 2008

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1. MESSAGE FROM ANA L. DROSCOSKI, ESQ.

To the freshmen – welcome! To returning students – welcome back! I hope that everyone had a great summer – productive and restful.

Please be sure to review the upcoming pre-law meetings and program announcements section, as many have been confirmed for September and October. Try to attend as many as possible. One of the bigger upcoming events sponsored by this office is JHU's 17th Annual Law Fair on Monday, September 22, 2008, from 11a to 2p, followed by a Mock Admissions Panel from 2:30p to 3:30p. The Law Fair is a great way to learn more about law schools you may be interested in and to potentially make an influential connection with a law school representative.

IMPORTANT NOTE: We need two students in the morning and four students in the afternoon to help with setting up and breaking down the law fair. There will be two shifts, one in the morning from 8:45a to 10:45a, and one in the evening from 2p to 4p. Each 2 hour shift pays \$20; work both shifts and earn \$40! If you are interested in working one or both of the above shifts, please email me at: adrosco1@jhu.edu.

Finally, remember to review the "Law Professions Advising" section of the office website, if you have not done so already and prior to scheduling an appointment with me. Information on the website may answer some of your questions - and generate some more!

<http://web.jhu.edu/prepro/law/index.html>

2. INTERNSHIP OPPORTUNITY: THE JOHNS HOPKINS SUSTAINABILITY INITIATIVE

If you are interested in pursuing a career in environmental, conservation and/or energy law, there is a great internship opportunity on campus. The Johns Hopkins Sustainability Initiative intends to make the university a model of sustainability. To that end, Sustainability Interns work on cutting edge issues of sustainability through research, project development and communications as members of the Sustainability team.

For more information on the Initiative, the Internship and how to apply, visit: <http://www.sustainability.jhu.edu/internships.html>

3. PRACTICE AREA FOCUS: ENVIRONMENTAL LAW

Environmental and natural resources law was born out of widespread public and professional concern about the fate of our natural resources. Lawyers in this field may tackle legal and regulatory issues relating to air and water quality, hazardous waste practice, natural gas transportation, oil and gas exploration and development, electric power licensing, water rights, toxic torts, public land use, marine resources, and energy trade regulation. They may work directly for governmental agencies that address

environmental problems or represent corporations, public interest groups, and entities concerned about protecting the environment.

4. INTERVIEW: JENNIFER BEVAN-DANGEL, ENVIRONMENTAL ATTORNEY

Jennifer Bevan-Dangel (JHU Class of 2002, International Studies major) obtained her Juris Doctor from the University of Maryland School of Law, graduating with an environmental law concentration. While in college, she interned with Greenpeace and was president of Students for Environmental Action, and while in law school, she interned for Congressmen Maurice Hickey and at the Chesapeake Bay Foundation. Since graduating from law school, Ms. Bevan-Dangel has served as Staff Attorney for Environment Maryland, and the Executive Director of Patuxent Riverkeeper. She currently serves as the Deputy Director of 1000 Friends of Maryland.

Ms. Bevan-Dangel was admitted to the Maryland Bar in May 2005.

Questions

Describe a day in the life of a Deputy Director:

The best part about this kind of work is there is no typical day in the life. Deputy Director is a broad title, which can mean anything depending on the organization you work for. In my short history I have been staff attorney, Director of Advocacy, Deputy Director, and Executive Director. All those titles, in the end, meant generally the same thing – I work extensively on policy and legislation, building the advocacy networks required to make positive change. The rest of my time is spent strengthening the organization I work for. The only difference between the titles is the percent of time spent on each half of the job. Right now I am fortunate enough to have a position that allows me to use my degrees and really focus on the fun parts – making legislation happen.

My job runs on an annual cycle set by the legislative session. Maryland's legislature meets January through April, and those months find me in the State House in Annapolis almost exclusively. Lobbying legislators, providing written and oral testimony, and frantic meetings with colleagues fill my time completely. The effort is intense, but immensely rewarding. There is something both gratifying and fascinating about watching legislation form, change, and (hopefully) pass; while many say it is like watching sausage get made, you are making it with the help of hundreds of people, many of whom are good friends and all of whom are intensely interesting to work with.

The rest of the year is much more relaxed, and this is when the real work happens. Maryland's environmental community works closely together, and we spend the summer developing policies and legislation, crafting our message, building citizen support for change, and floating our ideas past legislators and administrative officials. Summer is also the time to focus on regulations, track important court cases, or get involved in local activities. And, of course, to write the grants and build the membership support that is essential to keeping our organizations alive!

If there is a typical day, it involves a lot of meetings, a lot of emails, and a lot of time spent trying to figure out how to fix critical problems in our State. It's also a lot of fun!

What initially attracted you to this field? What are some of the rewards of this area of law?

The best reward, for me, is waking up every day excited to go to work. I love that I am making a difference and making Maryland a healthier, greener place to live. I love the people I work with, who are some of the most energizing, interesting people out there. And I love that my job is different every day. At the end of the day, I get paid for talking to people about an issue I care deeply about. What could be better?

I knew I wanted to work with animals or the environment since I was a child. My mother took me to my first rally when I was seven; something about that evening has stayed with me my entire life. I entered Johns Hopkins thinking I would do international environmental law, but, through my internships and experiences in Maryland and DC, I realized that Annapolis – the town where I grew up – was where I wanted to be.

I am not sure when I decided law school was the right way to get there; sometime in my junior year, I suppose, I made the commitment. A law degree seemed the best way to give me a deeper understanding of the legislation I wanted to work on. That J.D. also seemed to give me an advantage both in getting a job and as a lobbyist. While you could do the work I do with a Masters in Public Policy, I am grateful for the extra edge the law degree gives me in both regards.

What are some of the downsides of this area of law?

The biggest downside is the pay. Non-profits generally do not pay much, and most cannot pay what a law degree makes you worth. I earned under \$30,000 a year my first two years out of law school! However, there are a lot of loan-forgiveness programs you can apply for – and you can also qualify for a lot of free coffees from family and sympathetic co-workers.

The other difficulty is finding a position. First, the ideal organization or position probably won't be open right when you graduate. Second, non-profits can take a long time to finalize their internal hiring processes. Patience – and determination – definitely pays off.

Do you have any advice for an undergraduate interested in pursuing this body of law?

Volunteer, volunteer, volunteer. Surveys find that roughly a third of the students entering law school want to work for a non-profit organization when they graduate. Only a sixth of students actually stay true to that intent. The difference? Students who have volunteered, interned, or worked for non-profits during their years at law school stay true to their calling, while those who intern or work for corporate firms slide into the corporate track.

The other benefit of volunteering is that you make the connections you need to place a job after graduation. The scariest part of taking a non-profit job is that students on the corporate track often have their jobs locked in before their third year of law school even starts. Non-profit employees, however, generally aren't hired until the end of their last semester or even the summer following graduation. Making contacts while you are still in school will not only help you land a job on graduation, it may help you confirm a position before your resolve runs out.

Finally, really ask yourself why you want to get a law degree and what you hope to achieve with it before starting law school. Do you want to step into a courtroom, verbal guns blazing? Do you enjoy writing legal briefs? Do you want to work for a legislative or policy group, passing new laws and regulations? Whatever you want to do, pick internships and classes that will get you there – a commitment that takes some guts, because it means a very different track than your corporate-bound classmates.

I went to law school even though I knew I never wanted to practice law. I knew I wanted to work the legislature, and also knew that I wanted to work on environmental issues. I focused fully on environmental law classes, passing by a lot of typical options – I chose internships over moot court, Clean Water Act over Business Law seminars. By staying focused, I was positioned to get a great advocacy position out of school and have been able to work my way to my dream job within just a few years.

Contact Information

If you would like to learn more about environmental law, or have additional questions for Jennifer Bevan-Dangel, you may contact her directly at 1000 Friends of Maryland via email at

Jennifer@FriendsofMD.org. INTERVIEWEE NOTE: 1000 Friends of Maryland takes on interns each semester and over the summer. Positions are unpaid but can be done for credit.

5. STUDY ABROAD OPPORTUNITY: UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH PARLIAMENTARY INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

University of Edinburgh's Parliamentary Internship pairs students with Members of Scottish Parliament for unparalleled access to political life in Scotland.

The program provides intensive courses in government and politics, an opportunity to pursue independent research, study space in the MSP's office and a base in the University of Edinburgh's Unit for the Study of Government in Scotland.

*Note that if you are interested in this program for Spring 2009, please apply as quickly as possible as limited spaces are available.

Visit the Office of Study Abroad, Levering Hall, Suite 04B, for more information and to apply.

6. UPCOMING PRE-LAW MEETINGS AND PROGRAM ANNOUNCEMENTS

Testifying as an Expert: Credibility, Believability and Finding the "Truth" Sponsored by the Civil Engineering Department, Whiting School of Engineering

Location: Maryland Hall, Room 110

Date: Wednesday, September 17, 2008

Time: 12:00p – 12:45p

Description: Paul G. Leiman, JD, of KeyWitness Consulting and adjunct professor of Business and Leadership Ethics at JHU's Carey Business School, will explore some basic elements of expert testimony.

2008 Johns Hopkins Constitutional Forum Celebrating the Signing of the Constitution in 1787

Location: 110 Hodson Hall

Date: Thursday, September 18, 2008

Time: 8:00p

Description: Speaker Jeffrey Toobin, lawyer, staff writer at The New Yorker, a senior analyst for CNN, and the author of five books, will speak on "The Election and the Supreme Court." Mr. Toobin will discuss how the presidential election is likely to affect the future of the Court and the Constitution.

JHU's 17th Annual Law Fair Sponsored by the Office of Pre-Professional Programs & Advising

Location: Glass Pavilion, Levering Hall

Date: Monday, September 22, 2008

Time: 11:00a – 2:00p

Description: Meet with law school admission representatives from around the country.

Mock Admission Panel

Location: Sherwood Room, Levering Hall

Date: Monday, September 22, 2008

Time: 2:30p – 3:30p

Description: Law school representatives from American University Washington College of Law, Vanderbilt University Law School, UCLA School of Law, Brooklyn Law School & NYU School of Law will discuss application strategies.

Personal Statement Workshop

Location: TBD

Date: Wednesday, September 24, 2008

Time: 5:15p - 6:15p

Description: Robert Condlin, Professor of Law, University of Maryland School of Law, will offer a general overview of the "sleeper" in the law school application process. Obtain suggestions and tips on how to draft your best personal statement.

Yale Law School Info Session

Location: TBD

Date: Tuesday, October 7, 2008

Time: 5:15p – 6:15p

Harvard Business School Info Session

Location: Sherwood Room, Levering Hall

Date: Wednesday, October 7, 2008

Time: 5:00p – 6:00p

Harvard Law School Info Session

Location: TBD

Date: Monday, October 20, 2008

Time: 12:00p – 1:00p

LSAT Administration for 2008

Location: On campus, Hodson 110 - check with LSDAS for additional testing locations

Date: Saturday, October 4, 2008 & Saturday, December 6, 2008

Time: Registration begins at 8:30a - consult with LSDAS for all controlling details

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

Ana L. Droscoski, J.D., Assistant Director, who advises Pre-Law students:

Walk-ins: Monday/Thursday 10:00a - 11:30a

Appointments: Monday/Thursday 2:00p - 4:00p

Wednesday 10:00a - 11:30a & 2:00p - 3:00p

David Verrier, Ph.D., Director, who advises Pre-Health students:

Walk-ins: Wednesday/Friday 10:00a - 12:00p

Kirsten Kirby, M.S.Ed., Assistant Director, who advises Pre-Health students:

Walk-ins: Tuesday 10:00a - 12:00p & Wednesday 1:30p - 3:30p

The Administrative Coordinators are available to answer questions and schedule appointments:

Lena Harding, Administrative Secretary, lhardin7@jhu.edu 410-516-6743

For students whose last name begins with A-G, contact Ms. Harding.

Carolyn Mae Krause, Administrative Coordinator, ckrause@jhu.edu 410-516-6744

For students whose last name begins with H-O, contact Mrs. Krause.

LaTonia Sanders, Administrative Coordinator, ladytee@jhu.edu 410-516-4140

For students whose last name begins with P-Z, contact Mrs. Sanders.

Angie Decker, Office Manager and Staff Supervisor, [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. everyday or visit our website <http://web.jhu.edu/prepro/> for additional information.