

The Pre-Law e-Newsletter from Pre-Professional Programs & Advising
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1. MESSAGE FROM ANA L. DROSCOSKI, ESQ.

For those taking the December 5th LSAT, best of luck tomorrow.

Good luck to everyone through studying/writing papers and for a strong finish to the Fall 2009 semester.

This will be the final Pre-Law e-Newsletter of 2009 -- have a wonderful holiday season!!!

2. THE "U.S. NEWS" EFFECT ON INCREASING LAW SCHOOL TUTION -- AND BEYOND

With response to the mandate in the Higher Education Opportunity Act, in October 2009 the Government Accountability Office (GAO) researched and issued a report entitled "Issues Related to Law School Cost and Access." The report analyzed, inter alia, factors that affect the cost of law school. On this item, the study concluded that the driving force of rising tuition was the race among law schools to boost their U.S. News ranking.

Two sociology professors co-authored a report which substantiated and further detailed this finding. In "Fear of Falling: The Effect of U.S. News & World Report Rankings on U.S. Law Schools," Northwestern University Associate Professor Wendy Espeland and University of Iowa Assistant Professor Michael Sauder found that rankings "affect so many aspects of legal education." This is because law schools require more tuition income to pay top faculty and offer courses that attract the best students, both of which factor into U.S. News rankings. Additionally, scholarship dollars increasingly funnel to merit scholarships, offered to those scoring high on the LSAT, which accounts for half of the law school's U.S. News selectivity score. This shift can often translate to less need-based scholarships, which can hurt student body diversity, as lower LSAT scores are often obtained by lower income groups.

Focus on and pressure resulting from U.S. News rankings can change the role of law school administrators and have a pervasive effect on a law school. The report concludes that, "...what rankings have done is create an incentive system that pressures administrators to make decisions directed toward improved rankings, decisions they might not otherwise have made had they relied exclusively on their professional judgment about what is best for their school."

Something to keep in mind when considering law school(s) and how heavily to rely on U.S. News rankings.

You can view the GAO's report in its entirety here:

<http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d1020.pdf>

For a good summary of "Fear of Falling: The Effect of U.S. News & World Report Rankings on U.S. Law Schools," visit the following link:

http://www.law.com/jsp/nlj/PubArticleNLJ.jsp?id=1202435994960&Research_documents_the_US_News_effect_on_law_schools&slreturn=1&hbxlogin=1

3. INTERNSHIP OPPORTUNITY: UNPAID STUDENT VOLUNTEER PROGRAM, INTERNATIONAL TRADE ADMINISTRATION (ITA), DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE (DOC)

Selected student interns are assigned to an office within one of the following 5 units within the ITA:

- 1) Import Administration (IA)
- 2) Market Access and Compliance (MAC)
- 3) Manufacturing and Services (MAS)
- 4) Trade Promotion and the U.S. and Foreign Commercial Service (US&FCS)
- 5) Executive Administration (ExAdmin)

Basic Qualifications

All applicants applying to participate in the Unpaid Volunteer Student Internship Program must meet the following requirements:

- Must be a United States citizen.
- Must be enrolled as a degree-seeking student in an accredited four year or graduate program
- Must be in good academic standing, maintaining a G.P.A. of 3.0 or higher
- Must have completed at least 60 hours in a four year program prior to entry on duty

In addition to meeting the basic qualifications required, applicants must also

- Work well in a team environment
- Have very strong communication skills, and be detail oriented
- Have a working knowledge of computer applications such as Microsoft Word or Microsoft Excel
- Have excellent writing, reading, and interpersonal skills
- Be able to organize a variety of assignments simultaneously and meet tight deadlines
- International experience (e.g., studying, travel, and working) strongly desired, but not required
- Ability to speak a foreign language desired, but not required.

How to Apply

A complete application will consist of the following three documents:

- Cover letter
- Resume
- Current unofficial or official transcript

Application materials should be forwarded to unpaidstudentinternship@mail.doc.gov or faxed to 202.501.6159 prior to the deadline.

Summer Deadline: February 26, 2010

For more information and a complete description,

visit: <http://www.ita.doc.gov/hrm/unpaidstudentinternships.pdf>

4. INTERVIEW: MICHELLE WILDSTEIN, ESQ., ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR, PCAOB

Michelle Wildstein, Esq. is currently the Associate Director of The Public Company Accounting Oversight Board (PCAOB). She joined the PCAOB staff in August 2005 as Assistant Director.

Prior to joining the PCAOB, Ms. Wildstein was an Associate at the Washington, D.C. law firm of Thompson Hine LLP. While there from 2003 – 2005, she practiced outbound international trade law, advising both U.S. and non-U.S. clients on the application of U.S. export control and economic sanctions laws and other laws with extraterritorial effect. Prior to that, she was with Baker and McKenzie, in Washington, D.C. as an Associate from 1998 to 2001 and as a Research Consultant to Ambassador Stuart E. Eizenstat from 2002 to 2003, for his book relaying his experience as Special Representative for the President and Secretary of State on Holocaust issues.

Ms. Wildstein earned her J.D. in 1998 from The Catholic University of America, Columbus School of Law. While in law school, she was the Jessup Cup Moot Court Competition Best Brief Writer in 1996, the Best Oralist in 1997 and a Member of the Jessup Cup National Team. She was also in the International Law Society and served on the Legal Career Services Advisory Board. Additionally, Ms. Wildstein spent

several months with the Office of the General Counsel of the United States Trade Representative, assisting attorneys representing the United States in disputes before the World Trade Organization. Prior to attending law school, Ms. Wildstein spent eight months as an intern with the U.S. Department of State at the U.S. Mission to the European Union in Brussels, Belgium and worked as a paralegal at the U.S. Department of Justice, in the Antitrust Division.

Ms. Wildstein earned her B.A. in International Relations in 1993 from The Johns Hopkins University. While there, she studied abroad for one academic year, from 1991-1992 in Paris, France. Ms. Wildstein is admitted to practice in the District of Columbia and Georgia.

Questions

2) Describe a typical day as an Associate Director in the Public Company Accounting Oversight Board's Office of International Affairs.

The Public Company Accounting Oversight Board (PCAOB) was created by the Sarbanes-Oxley Act of 2002 (the "Act") in the wake of the Enron and WorldCom scandals to protect investors and the public interest in the preparation of informative, fair and independent audit reports on the financial statements of public companies and other issuers. The Board began operations in 2003, shortly after the Act was signed into law. Today, the PCAOB registers the auditors of public companies and oversees them, and performs inspections of them in order to ensure compliance with the Act, the Rules of the Board, and professional standards.

The PCAOB inspections of registered non-U.S. firms often raise special considerations. The PCAOB's Office of International Affairs (OIA) represents the PCAOB in working with non-U.S. governmental authorities to enable the PCAOB to perform inspections. OIA enters into bilateral discussions about auditor oversight with respect to non-U.S. inspections with many countries, which enables the PCAOB to finalize cooperative arrangements with the auditor oversight authorities in those countries, and to strengthen established arrangements in other countries.

As an Associate Director in OIA, my responsibilities include representing the Board in discussions with non-U.S. regulators, assisting in the development of the Board's international policies and providing legal advice regarding the oversight of non-U.S. audit firms that operate in U.S. capital markets. I travel abroad frequently to hold meetings with our non-U.S. counterparts and to represent the PCAOB in multilateral meetings of audit regulators from around the world. Although OIA is not a part of the PCAOB's Office of General Counsel, we use our lawyering skills - writing, analyzing and negotiating - every day. Because part of the job involves learning about the auditor oversight arrangements in other countries, work often feels like a comparative law course. The job also requires us to find creative ways to solve legal conflicts that occur across jurisdictions, which provides a great sense of accomplishment and satisfaction.

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

When I started my legal career, I had no idea I would end up working for the U.S. regulator for accounting firms. In fact, I had little experience with corporate and accounting issues. What I did have was experience with outbound international trade issues - the complex U.S. trade regulations governing exports that also apply outside the United States. After I wrote a paper in my junior year abroad in Paris about transnational environmental pollution on the Rhine River, I wanted to work on issues that originate in one jurisdiction but have an effect in another. I became fascinated by the difficult issues that arise in connection with the extraterritorial application of U.S. law.

After about five years into private practice, I learned about the PCAOB through two former law firm colleagues who had been a part of the handful of staffers who opened the doors of the PCAOB. Over a casual lunch with them, I heard about the PCAOB's international work and that the Director of International Affairs was looking to hire another lawyer. I realized a unique opportunity when I saw one. Because the PCAOB was still in start-up mode, I realized that I could come here to work on brand new international regulatory issues that had not before been done. Because of my growing interest in "making a difference" in my job, it sounded even more perfect.

I have been at the PCAOB now for four years. When I started, the Office of International Affairs had two lawyers. We now have six. It is extremely fulfilling to be a part of a team that combines working in the public interest with cutting edge international issues. The interactions I have with my colleagues from across the globe have also provided an unparalleled education in how other cultures work and think, and has provided me with a comparative study in international business. My job at the PCAOB is the perfect example of how networking and keeping an open mind can lead to an extremely satisfying legal job.

4) What are some of the downsides of this area of law? How would you compare the reality of your profession to the picture you had of it while in school?

The downsides to legal jobs that involve international issues are few, in my opinion. But if I had to choose something, I'd say that the biggest downside can be the international travel and working across time zones. Although it sounds glamorous, the travel is often terribly exhausting. Flying to Asia and back for meetings within 3 days may sound like fun to some, but for me it is just a test of stamina, and not one that I am any good at!

It's true that the reality of practicing law, at least in a large law firm, is different from the picture everyone gets in law school. Not much in law school prepares you for the reality of private practice, which is what many people think the profession is all about. The reality is that there are so many jobs out there that lawyers do – even underneath the "international trade" umbrella -- that use different skills. As a law student how would you know that the international trade lawyers who represent clients in antidumping and countervailing duty cases are acting more like litigators than are the lawyers who are advising clients on compliance with U.S. export control laws?

The reality of private practice is simple. Your life is driven by the client's needs, and it is not until you are actually representing a client that you can understand what is required to advance a client's objectives. It is both extremely demanding and extremely rewarding. In law school, I imagined that as an international trade lawyer, I would be off traveling around the world. But in reality, because the nature of my practice required that we represent clients before U.S. Government agencies that regulate international trade, I needed to be in Washington, D.C. where those agencies are located. In my present job at the PCAOB, however, I am often on a plane traveling to Europe, Asia or the Middle East. Also, in private international trade practice, the reality was that there was less need to use my negotiating and interpersonal skills, which are my personal strong suits. In my current job, I use these skills a lot more frequently. The point is that until you do your research and start asking questions to get beneath the surface, you may not entirely understand what a particular job involves.

5) Do you have any advice for an undergraduate interested in attending law school and, specifically, pursuing this body of law?

The best piece of advice I can give students who want to go into the law is to learn as much as you can about yourself before you choose a legal job. I think that one of the secrets to long term job satisfaction is to know yourself and your strengths, and choosing a position where those strengths are in demand. If you are an introvert and don't like interacting with people that much, you may love being the kind of lawyer who sits in his or her office every day reading statutes and regulations and analyzing and writing about them. By contrast, if you are an extrovert (like I am), you may prefer a job that gets you out in front of people more. It may take doing what you don't like in the beginning of your career to wind up in a job where you are happier and can thrive, but it will be well worth it once you get there. Ultimately you will be happiest if you put in the time to find out what is important to you and how those elements can be a part of your daily life at work. Call Hopkins alumni who are in the field and ask them to speak with you or meet you for coffee if you are in their area. We are all happy to help. A couple of great resources I used in learning about international legal jobs and how they are different are the American Bar Association's *Careers in International Law*, 2nd Ed., Mark W. Janis and Salli A. Swartz, Eds., and Kimm Walton's *Guerilla Tactics for Getting the Legal Job of Your Dreams*.

Contact Information

If you would like to learn more about the Public Company Accounting Oversight Board, their Office of International Affairs, or have additional questions for Ms. Wildstein, you may visit www.pcaobus.org or contact Ms. Wildstein directly via telephone at 202.207.9100.

5. UPCOMING PRE-LAW MEETINGS AND PROGRAM ANNOUNCEMENTS

Upcoming LSAT Administration for 2009/2010

Location: Check with LSDAS for testing locations. The next LSAT administration on campus will be in June 2010.

Date: Saturday, December 5, 2009 / Saturday, February 6, 2010

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

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

Kirsten Kirby, M.S.Ed., Assistant Director, Pre-Health Advisor

Ellen Snyderman, M.S., 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.