



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

\*Best viewed in HTML\*

**Vol. 9, No. 2**

Friday, September 25, 2015

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**1. MESSAGE FROM ANA L. DROSCOSKI, ESQ.**

Although you may be years away from applying to law school, it is not too early to start building relationships with professors, employers, and the like, so that you can one day request letters of recommendation (LOR). A good LOR from a professor will indicate that they know you on a more personal level -- beyond just as a student that received an "A" grade in their class. The more a professor can quantify you as between your current and past classmates, the better. For example, if they can say that you are in the top 10% of the class or one of the top 10 students they have ever taught, that language can be very persuasive to a law school admissions officer. To build relationships with your professors, be sure to attend office hours, speak up in class, etc.; do what you need to do to make yourself stand out from the crowd!

***Best of luck to those taking the October 3rd LSAT!***

**2. LEGAL EDUCATION & THE LEGAL INDUSTRY IN THE MEDIA**

Field, Kelly. "**Obama Takes Steps to Make Applying for Federal Student Aid Easier.**" *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. Web. 13 Sept. 2015. <http://chronicle.com/article/Obama-Takes-Steps-to-Make/233075/> reporting changes to the widely used Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA): "Starting in the fall of 2016, applicants will be able to file the form as early as October and prepopulate it using tax data from two years prior."

Stratford, Michael. "**FAFSA Reform.**" *Inside Higher Education*. Web. 14 Sept. 2015. [https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2015/09/14/obama-administration-unveils-shifts-fafsa?utm\\_source=Inside+Higher+Ed&utm\\_campaign=ec84d1f219-DNU20150914&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_1fcbc04421-ec84d1f219-197450729](https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2015/09/14/obama-administration-unveils-shifts-fafsa?utm_source=Inside+Higher+Ed&utm_campaign=ec84d1f219-DNU20150914&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_1fcbc04421-ec84d1f219-197450729) -- Inside Higher Ed noted that "the change will take effect for students and families seeking federal financial aid for the 2017-18 school year."

Gershman, Jacob. “**Scores on this Year’s Bar Exam May be the Worst in Decades.**” *The Wall Street Journal*. Web. 18 Sept. 2015. <http://blogs.wsj.com/law/2015/09/18/scores-on-this-years-bar-exam-may-be-the-worst-in-decades/> -- reporting that “Last year’s historic plunge in bar exam passage rates may not be an aberration but the start of a more serious trend, according to new data.” Law school deans argue that fault lies with how the exam was prepared and scored. Counter arguments include that the scores indicate that law schools are admitting less capable students than prior years, citing lower median LSAT scores as an example.

### **3. OPPORTUNITY: EXPLORE GOLDMAN SACHS BEYOND BANKING**

*A JHU alumna wrote in with this networking and informational opportunity, which she applied for and attended while a student. Attending the event led to her being recruited into an initial opportunity in the legal department of Goldman Sachs. The alumna continues to work at Goldman, now in the Investment Banking division. The invitation and details on the program are as follows:*

#### **Join us for Explore GS Beyond Banking**

**DATE:** October 16, 2015

**TIME:** 3:00pm – 5:30pm

**LOCATION:** Washington, DC

**APPLICATION DEADLINE:** October 9 by 11:59pm EST

At Goldman Sachs, we believe that our success is deeply rooted in the unique backgrounds, experiences and perspectives of our people.

We are excited to invite junior and sophomore undergraduates to apply for the Explore GS Beyond Banking event. This unique event brings diverse students together to experience our innovative and collaborative programs. Attendees will receive a comprehensive introduction to divisions beyond Investment Banking and Sales & Trading while developing their financial services acumen and interview skills through business overviews and best-in-class training, and networking opportunities.

#### **Eligible students should be:**

- Undergraduate juniors or sophomores
- Black, Hispanic/Latino, Native American, or female
- Any major

#### **How to apply:**

If you would like to apply to attend, please visit our events portal at [www.GoldmanSachs.com/careers](http://www.GoldmanSachs.com/careers) and search under ‘Diversity’ events to submit an application.

► [\*\*Learn more about Goldman Sachs\*\*](#)

### **4. INTERVIEW: MARCELLA LUNN (JHU ‘14), UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON LAW CENTER 2L**

Marcella Lunn received her BA from Johns Hopkins University (JHU) in 2014 with general honors and having double majored in English and Spanish, as well as a minored in Theater Arts and Studies. She went straight from undergraduate to the University of Houston Law Center. After four years of winter in Baltimore, she was ready to return home to Texas and much less snow.

As an English major, Marcella often had many pages of reading to accomplish in a short period of time. She found that being able to absorb a lot of material very quickly was a particularly helpful skill in law school. While at JHU, Marcella was in the Witness Theater Group and an executive board member of Pi Beta Phi Fraternity. She spent two of her summers interning at law firm in Houston, working on employment and patent law matters.

As a law student at the University of Houston Law Center, she is the Vice Chair of Law students for Reproductive Justice and a tutor for her Contracts law professor. Marcella is also on Houston Law Review and a member of Phi Kappa Phi Honors Fraternity. This past summer, she interned with two different appellate judges. This Fall, she is a Legal Intern at the Museum of Fine Arts in Houston.

### **Questions**

#### **Describe a typical day as a law student at University of Houston Law Center.**

Starting my 2L year, I don't know that I have had a typical day. I have just completed OCI, on campus interviews and been accepted on the Law Review and have been tutoring and mentoring 1L students and working at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston Legal Department. However, the start of the year has calmed down some so I am starting to see what a typical day looks like. For example, Mondays I usually get to school early around 7:30 or 8 and refresh myself on the reading that was due that day. I have Federal Income Tax at 9 and then Evidence at 10:30. After those two classes I have an hour break for lunch and usually eat in the Law Review office with some of my fellow members. In the afternoon, I have Oil and Gas and Employment Law and finish up my class day at 4pm. After class, I have 3 hours of office hours for the contracts class I am tutoring where 1L students can come meet with me to discuss any questions they have about the class. I generally leave school around 7pm and go home to eat dinner and read for the next day of classes.

#### **To date, what has been your favorite law school class, and why? How have you been choosing classes after your first year of law school?**

My first year my favorite class was contracts, hands down. It felt very much like what I expected law school to be like, focusing on heavy case law with some statutory or code based learning. I went into law school thinking I wanted to be a transactional attorney, which is where you draft contracts and other documents, so contracts was especially appealing. My professor was also very engaging, and I think that really helps.

Choosing classes after first year I focused on a mixture of bar classes and classes I felt would be advantageous to me in my future career. This semester I am taking Federal Income Tax, Evidence, Oil and Gas, and Employment Law. Evidence and Oil and Gas are on the Texas Bar, Tax is extremely helpful to learn if you are interested in a transactional practice, and Employment Law is something I had some experience in from undergraduate summer experiences. Overall, I wanted a mixture of classes I needed to take, classes that were career focused, and generally interesting classes.

**What made you choose University of Houston Law Center? What do you see as the primary pros and cons of law school?**

I chose University of Houston because it was close to home, and I knew I wanted to practice in Houston. I was looking forward to being able to start networking with attorneys in the Houston area.

I think there are many pros of law school, but some of the most important are that it teaches you a really strong work ethic, you get to learn about interesting and unique things that are often actually applicable to everyday life, and developing the reading and analytical skills required to succeed in law school are invaluable in any aspect of life.

Some of the primary cons are that the legal market is very competitive, so it can be overwhelming when searching for jobs. Also, there is a very steep learning curve in law school, and sometimes the work can seem completely insurmountable.

**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?**

I had two positions with law firms over the summer when I was experimenting with the idea that I wanted to be a lawyer. I worked for a large firm in Houston and a smaller personal injury firm in Baltimore. I think both experiences were invaluable and really helped cement the idea that I wanted to go to law school. I think it is also a good idea to try to get some experience and figure out what it is like to actually practice the law and if that is something that actually interests you.

**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?**

This past summer I worked at the 1st and 14th courts of appeals in Houston. These are two state courts of appeal, and I interned closely with the judge and staff attorney in their chambers. I found these opportunities through working with my career counseling department at UH. They were very interesting opportunities to see how a court room functions. Even though I was not interested in litigation, I enjoyed seeing how cases come through the justice system and how judges decide cases.

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

I think law school is definitely a lot harder than I anticipated it being. The classes are a lot more demanding than undergraduate coursework. In addition, extra-curricular activities like journals, OCI, and student organizations take a lot of time, so I feel like I have been consistently busy throughout the semesters even though there was only one exam in each class at the end of the semester.

One thing I didn't realize was how systematic the job search was for your second summer, especially if you are interested in working at a big law firm. OCI is on campus interviewing, where you participate in many screening interviews and receive call back interviews at different firms for summer offers. You then work at the firm the next summer and get an offer for full time employment after graduation contingent on your work.

## **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?**

I think getting the best LSAT score you can is really helpful in setting yourself up for your career in law school. In a tight legal market, making yourself into a desirable candidate from the beginning is really important. Pursuing course work that has a hefty reading and writing load can also help prepare you for the work of law school. Unfortunately, legal writing and analysis is quite different from anything else, so it is hard to completely prepare yourself. I did a pre-law course through one of the major bar review companies and found that to be very helpful in preparation.

The best advice I can think to give is the old adage that the first year of law school they scare you to death; the second they work you to death; and the third they bore you death. It is important to make sure you keep yourself grounded and look at law school in perspective. It is really easy to get overwhelmed but just make sure you have a good support system.

### **Contact Information**

If you would like to learn more about the University of Houston Law Center or have additional questions for Marcella Lunn, you may reach her via email at: [marcella.lunn@gmail.com](mailto:marcella.lunn@gmail.com).

## **5. UPCOMING PRE-LAW STUDENT MEETINGS & PROGRAM ANNOUNCEMENTS**

### **Columbia Law School Information Session**

**Location: Sherwood Room, Levering Hall**

**Date: Monday, October 12, 2015**

**Time: 12pm to 1pm**

**Description:** An admissions representative from Columbia Law School will present an information session and answer questions.

**Personal Statement Workshop**

**Location:** Alumni Board Room (#102), Mason Hall

**Date:** Monday, October 12, 2015

**Time:** 5pm to 6pm

**Description:** Admission Officers from University of Richmond School of Law, Seton Hall Law School, Tulane University Law School, and UC Hastings College of Law will take a workshop-style look at the personal statement, with multiple examples for attendees to read. Obtain suggestions and tips on how to draft your best personal statement, and learn more about this “sleeper” in the admissions process!

**Baltimore Regional Law Fair**

*Hosted by the University of Baltimore School of Law*

**Location:** John and Frances Angelos Law Center, 1401 N. Charles St., Baltimore, MD 21201

**Date:** Tuesday, October 13

**Time:** Admissions Panel -- 6pm; Law Fair -- 6:30 to 8pm

**Description:** An anticipated 70+ law schools from across the country -- from California to Massachusetts -- will be represented at the Baltimore Regional Law Fair. No R.S.V.P. required -- walk-ins welcome. For more information, including a list of participating law schools, visit [http://law.ubalt.edu/admissions/regional\\_law\\_fair/](http://law.ubalt.edu/admissions/regional_law_fair/)

**Upcoming LSAT Administration**

**Location:** Visit <http://www.lsac.org/jd/lsat/testing-locations> for testing location information.

**Date:** October 3, 2015 / December 5, 2015 / February 6, 2016

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

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Please visit our website <http://web.jhu.edu/prepro/> for additional information.

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