



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

I hope everyone had a great Spring Break!

Recently, the US News & World Report (USNWR) released its 2016 graduate school rankings, including those for law schools: <http://grad-schools.usnews.rankingsandreviews.com/best-graduate-schools/top-law-schools/law-rankings?int=a1d108>. Because many defer to this list, it is important to note the methodology used for creating it: <http://www.usnews.com/education/best-graduate-schools/articles/law-schools-methodology?page=2>. For better or worse, the USNWR list can be influential when deciding where to apply and where to matriculate, but please note that so much more goes into an optimized law school “fit”, and, by extension, a successful legal career!

2. LEGAL EDUCATION & THE LEGAL INDUSTRY IN THE MEDIA

Weiss, Debra Cassens. **"Which law schools charge the most and least?"** *The ABA Journal*. Web. 21 Mar. 2016. <http://www.abajournal.com/news/article/which-law-schools-charge-the-most-and-least/> -- a look at the most and least expensive public and private law schools based on information published in the most recent US News law school rankings.

Bravin, Jess. **"High Court Rulings Give Glimpse of Post-Scalia World."** *The Wall Street Journal*. Web. 22 Mar. 2016. <http://blogs.wsj.com/law/2016/03/22/high-court-rulings-give-glimpse-of-post-scalia-world/> -- discusses a stack of opinions issued Tuesday “that signal the way things may look for a year or more -- as long, perhaps as the late Justice Antonin Scalia’s seat remains unfilled.”

Olson, Elizabeth. "Law Graduate Who Sued Her School Loses at Trial." *The New York Times*. Web. 24 Mar. 2016. -- "[a jury in San Diego on Thursday rejected claims by a law graduate, Anna Alaburda, that the Thomas Jefferson School of Law enticed her to enroll by using misleading graduate employment figures.](#)"

3. OPPORTUNITY: PARALEGAL/NONPROFIT SPECIALIST, HARMON CURRAN SPIELBERG & EISENBERG, LLP

For those of you interested in public sector/non-profit work and looking for a gap year opportunity, consider the following position:

Harmon, Curran, Spielberg + Eisenberg, LLP, a law firm in Washington, DC serving the nonprofit public interest community, is seeking a full-time Paralegal/Nonprofit Specialist. A successful candidate will have a bachelor's degree, a GPA not less than 3.5, excellent writing, research and organizational skills, experience with Microsoft Office, the ability to work both independently and as part of a group, strong attention to detail, and the ability to learn quickly and to balance multiple projects at once. Recent college graduates (or those planning to graduate in Spring 2016) with an interest in serving the progressive nonprofit community are strongly encouraged to apply. A paralegal certificate is not required.

The firm specializes in nonprofit tax, employment, environmental, and election law. Virtually all of the firm's clients are nonprofit organizations or individuals. The Paralegal will work under the direct supervision of the attorneys and will likely assist in each of the legal areas that comprise the firm's work.

Responsibilities include:

1. Drafting and filing legal documents with the appropriate government agencies;
2. Performing legal research;
3. Collecting and tracking documents for client projects;
4. Drafting correspondence to clients and government agencies;
5. Writing and copy editing articles for publication on the firm's website; and
6. Assisting with administrative tasks as needed.

The above describes general job duties and responsibilities and is not a complete listing of job duties. Incumbents may be required to perform additional tasks related to these duties.

Harmon, Curran, Spielberg + Eisenberg, LLP, is located in downtown Washington, DC and is easily accessible by public transportation. This is a full-time (37.5 hours per week) position with generous benefits and a start date of mid-June 2016.

How to apply:

Please apply with a resume and cover letter at <http://harmoncurran.jobscore.com/jobs/harmoncurran/list>. A brief (10 pages or less)

writing sample and transcript should be sent separately to jobs@harmoncurran.com. Applications will not be considered without all materials.

For complete details, please visit the following link: <http://www.idealist.org/view/job/JXF3k5hdGW4/>

4. INTERVIEW: MARIA ADEBAYO, 1L, UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, BERKELEY, SCHOOL OF LAW

Maria Adebayo is a 1L at the University of California, Berkeley, School of Law (UC Berkeley). She is a Yee Fellowship recipient, Boalt Hall Dean's Fellowship recipient, and MCCA Scholarship recipient – Microsoft Scholar. At UC Berkeley, Maria is also a Student Researcher for the International Human Rights Workshop, a 1L Representative for the Women of Color Collective, and a Member of the *Berkeley Journal of African American Law and Policy*. Before attending law school, Maria was a Volunteer with Child Advocacy and Women's Right International and an Assistant Paralegal with Fragomen, Del Rey, Bernsen & Loewy, LLP, both in Washington, DC.

Maria graduated from Johns Hopkins University (JHU) in May 2014, with a BA in International Studies and Sociology, with Sociology and International Studies Departmental Honors. She was a Bloomberg Scholar, received the James Coleman Sociology Award, was a Brown Fellowship Recipient, and received a DURA, where she investigated West African immigrant entrepreneur networks in Madrid, Spain. Maria also studied abroad in Madrid Fall of her junior year. While at JHU, Maria was an Immigration Legal Services Intern at the Esperanza Center, an Admissions Intern and Representative for JHU, a College Guidance Assistant thru Leadership Enterprise for a Diverse America (LEDA) in NYC, was a Tutor for the Incentive Mentoring Program, and a Student Law Advocate for the Homewood Education Advocacy Resource, among other things.

Maria Adebayo is a Member of the International Law Section of the State Bar of California, fluent in Spanish and proficient in Yoruba and Portuguese.

Describe a typical day 1L at UC Berkeley.

Each student is placed in a group or section called "mods" made up of 30 students and a "super-mod" made up of 90-100 people. Your first semester class schedule is determined by your mod. This holds true for your second semester class schedule, with the exception of one class elective. Most people take constitutional law as their second semester elective. Some mods have earlier classes and so they end around 3pm or 4pm, while other mods have later class and end their days around 5pm. After that, most students probably spend the rest of the day studying (which is just reading for class the next day). They are always lunch events from 12:45pm – 2pm with different firms or organizations in school.

To date, what has been your favorite law school class, and why? What classes are you looking forward to taking after your first year of law school?

My favorite class thus far has been Criminal Law, on the one hand because of my professor and, on the other hand, because I was so intrigued with the theories of punishment we prescribe to as a society and the implication of the activities we deem as criminal. Due to my interest in public and private international law, I am looking forward to taking International Law and International Human Rights Law. Since class schedules for first and second semester are fixed, I am looking forward to having the liberty to pick classes that truly interest me for the rest of my law school career.

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

I chose Berkeley because of its commitment to social justice. There was freshness about the alumnae I met that I knew described the general culture of Berkeley Law as a whole. I wanted to come to a place that does not shy away from controversial issues dealing with race and discrimination. Given the top ranking of its international law program, I knew that it would provide me with the resources (classes, clinics, alumni network, etc.) to pursue my passion in international law. In addition, having spent almost my entire educational career in Maryland, I was eager for a new experience.

Outside of the weather, I believe Berkeley truly has a collegial environment that allows students to excel without the overbearing pressure of competition. I have especially appreciated how much people have been eager to help others and even more, embrace the differences of other students. The mods have helped to create that community amongst the students. In addition, the daily lunch events give students the opportunity to learn more about legal fields that interest them and to meet highly esteemed professionals in those fields. Furthermore, I believe the University does a great job of listening to the concerns and ideas of the student body and eagerly endeavors to embrace each of them. One of the biggest changes that have taken place this year is that the amount need-based grants will remain consistent throughout law school despite changes in income.

The primary benefit of law school is the great intellectual exchange that happens in the classroom. Law school will allow you to talk and address certain issues you may not have come across before. It forces you to be respectful of differing opinions and teaches you how to articulate your thoughts in a cogent way. There are so many invaluable skills that law school, even just a few days in classes, teaches you that will give you the ability and confidence to approach certain issues and jobs in the future. The ability to think deeply and parse out arguments and ideas is vital one.

One con of law school, at least for the first year, is that you are taking almost all heavy doctrinal classes. These classes are litigation-type (concerning lawsuits) classes that may not give a student who is interested in corporate transactional work (concerning business deals) sufficient exposure to that kind of law. The biggest con or pro of law school is that it is a completely new and different experience for which nothing can really prepare you. It is a whole new way of learning and thinking. You are learning from reading court opinions and have to face the pressure of being called on to speak in class. It is a whole new world that you can only partly explore when you attend your first class. However, despite all of that, it is a very gratifying experience.

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?

My decision to pursue law school was actually fueled by my involvement in a summer program held at Princeton University called Leadership Enterprise for a Diverse America (LEDA). LEDA was geared towards giving leadership and academic training to high-achieving students of underrepresented backgrounds. Through our discussions on race and social structures, I became intrigued in the power of the legal system to remedy issues we see in our society. Due to that interest, I came to Hopkins intending to pursue a career in law, but specifically international and immigration law. As a result, I was a part of Homewood Education Advocacy Resource, Microfinance Brigade, and Incentive Mentoring Program. In addition, I received the DURA and Brown Fellowship grants to conduct independent research, for which I wrote my senior thesis. Though these activities were not all explicitly about the legal system, through my involvement in them, I saw the implications of law in the Baltimore inner-city school system for low-income and disabled students and in the marginalized village in Honduras.

Moreover, I interned at the Esperanza Center the summer of my sophomore year, as well during the spring semester of my senior year for my Spanish Language Practicum course. As an intern, I had the privilege to work with real clients on real work. This was particularly helpful and an experience that I believe highlighted my interest in law because it gave me the opportunity to become accustomed to the idiosyncrasies of the American legal system, and more specifically within the immigration context. I drafted personal statements for court hearings, conducted country research, and translated documents from English to Spanish, and vice versa. I held an essential role to help lawyers prepare for their cases. While at the Esperanza Center, I also attended various training sessions and even hosted an event for the local community about the DREAM Act. Most importantly, I conducted all internship duties in Spanish, which I thought was very useful in connecting with clients. This internship was fairly similar to our Student-Initiated Legal Services Project (SLP) here at Berkeley. Through SLPs, current students offer various legal services to different groups in the community for free and while under the leadership of lawyers. Additionally, I believe that my being an Admissions Representative and an Alumni Student Ambassador showed admission counselors my speaking ability.

The important thing to keep in mind is that schools want to make sure that they cater to the interests you pursued while in school. They want to know that you will become involved and add to the character of their school in a similar way that you did in undergrad. However, ultimately, it does not necessarily matter that you did not fill your resume with legally related work, but rather, that you pursued and committed to activities that genuinely interested you and that could add insight to the ever-increasing picture of law.

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?

Upon graduation, I volunteered at Child Advocacy and Women's Rights International, which is a fairly new non-profit organization in Washington, D.C. geared towards creating sustainable development ideas for women in marginalized communities. I was lucky to find this position simply by searching for "international law volunteer positions in DC" on Google. As a volunteer, I prepared all materials for women's development projects abroad, corresponded with other domestic and international affiliate organizations, and compiled research to create development projects in Nigeria. I also had the privilege to represent our organization on Capitol Hill at the Africa Policy Breakfast event. After doing that for almost two months, I dedicated the rest of the year to studying for the LSAT, which I took in December. After completing and submitting my law school applications, I worked at Fragomen, Del Rey, Bernsen & Loewy, LLP as an Assistant Paralegal. There, I drafted filed application for works visas to the Department of Labor. After meeting with one of the partners from Fragomen's Boston office during my Perspectives on Globalization intersession class, I sent him my resume, which he forwarded to the D.C. office during my junior year. It just so happened that they were able to contact me during the summer after I graduated and offered me a position in February after the all the application mayhem.

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

The job search was definitely not what I thought it would be. I thought things would come fairly easy, which they actually did in the end. However, at first it seemed quite contradictory that society encouraged us to get a job after graduation, however, almost all employers wanted us to have previous job experience before applying for a job.

Law school was definitely not what I pictured it would be. To some extent, I knew it would be like "How To Get Away With Murder," though without the drama, however, I did not think it would be that hard. It is challenging in that it is just a completely new way of learning and thinking that you cannot really anticipate by taking a certain class or pursuing a certain major. Nevertheless, what I truly appreciate about the path to law school is that it embraces diversity in people's educational backgrounds. Unlike other pre-professional tracks, pre-law solely signifies your intent to pursue law school and not what classes you must take to prepare you to apply to law school. It is that freedom that welcomes diversity and thus more enriching conversations in class.

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?

My advice would be to pursue what interests you most. You want to bring who you are to law school, not who you think admission counselors want you to be. By doing that, you are able to put your energy towards classes that you genuinely like. In that way, you are more likely to perform well academically in those classes. This is important for schools to see your ability to grasp and master concepts. In addition, more than just burdening yourself with an array of leadership roles, you want to show schools that you had meaningful experiences in the organizations in which you took part. If you are involved

in many activities and have leadership roles in a few, that's great. But if you are only interested in a few things, and have hold leadership positions in them, that's great also. In addition, it is essential to make connections with 3-4 professors who can genuinely vouch for your interest in law, as well as your character as a person. This is sometimes a part of the application that some students overlook but that holds very great weight on your application. Outside of the undergraduate context, it is very important for students to set aside sufficient time to study for the LSAT. To some students, that might just be three months in solitary confinement, but to most that might be six months to a year. This is very important factor to take into account when planning out when to apply to law school or when or what type of job or internship to pursue while still in school or after graduation, if you still want to study during those times. All in all, if law is truly what you want to do, go for it! Do not allow the economy to dictate your destiny. It will all work out if you are dedicated to it. Good luck!

Contact Information

If you would like to learn more about being a UC Berkeley, or have additional questions Maria Adebayo, you may reach her via email at: madebay1@berkeley.edu.

5. UPCOMING PRE-LAW STUDENT MEETINGS & PROGRAM ANNOUNCEMENTS

Upcoming LSAT Administration

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

Date: June 6, 2016

Time: Registration begins at 12:30 pm for the June 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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