

Law Career Development Office

# CAREER PLANNING HANDBOOK

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UNIVERSITY OF BALTIMORE  
SCHOOL OF LAW



**CONTENTS**

INTRODUCTION..... 1

RESUMES ..... 2

    Resume Examples ..... 15

COVER LETTERS ..... 23

WRITING SAMPLES ..... 30

REFERENCES..... 32

THANK YOU NOTES ..... 33

INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWING & NETWORKING ..... 34

SOCIAL MEDIA ..... 38

INTERVIEWING ..... 39

JUDICIAL CLERKSHIPS ..... 43

## INTRODUCTION

The Law Career Development Office is here to help you define your goals and achieve them. We concentrate on providing:

- Knowledgeable advisors who can tell you about the wide range of available opportunities, and help you develop your career plan. They can also help with resume and cover letter preparation, conduct a mock interview, and provide current market and employer information;
- Programming on practice area exploration, professional development, informational interviewing and job search strategies, federal hiring practices, and resume and cover letter drafting;
- Externship programs that develop your skills and contacts in legal workplaces;
- Hiring programs and career fairs that connect you with law firms, public interest organizations and government agencies;
- A comprehensive online job board via Symplicity;
- Networking opportunities with alumni and employers;
- Access to career planning resources; and
- Timely communications about job opportunities and events.

You will find comprehensive information on all of our services and programs, as well as externships and public interest resources, on the Law Career Development webpage, <http://law.ubalt.edu/career/>. You can find additional career planning resources in the Document Library under the Resources tab in Symplicity, our online career management service, including comprehensive judicial clerkship materials.

The Career Planning Handbook covers the following topics:

- Resumes
- Cover letters
- Writing Samples
- References
- Thank You Notes
- Informational Interviewing & Networking
- Social Media
- Interviewing
- Judicial Clerkships

We encourage you to take career planning seriously, as you are investing an enormous amount of energy, money, and time in your legal education. We encourage you to bring “a startup of you” spirit to your law school career, and focus as much on relationships as resume building.

## RESUMES

Your resume serves one purpose – to convince a potential employer to interview you. Thus an effective resume:

- Tells the “story of you,” a narrative of your academic and professional life reflecting your development over time;
- Highlights your accomplishments (which in turn display your talents and personal qualities such as dedication);
- Identifies your skills, abilities, and areas of knowledge;
- Demonstrates your professional and academic interests;
- Emphasizes the aspects of your background that qualify you for the job you want;
- Serves as an example of your writing and advocacy skills; and
- Proves that you possess the motivation and attention to detail required to draft a document *without any formatting, grammatical, or typographical errors!*

All of these objectives are equally important, and they work together to create a positive image of you in the mind of the reader as someone who has the necessary experience and skills for the job, and would fit in well at their organization.

You should think of your legal resume as a *living document*, one that you will revise, update, and edit many times over your law school career. So it is critical that you master the fundamentals of resume drafting, as it is a skill you will use often during law school and beyond.

### **Be sensitive to subtext.**

The four questions a person will ask themselves when reviewing applications are:

- Will they be happy at the job?
  - *Do they understand what it is that we do, and does it genuinely interest them?*
- Can they do the job well?
  - *Do they have the experience and skills needed to perform the job duties?*
  - *Does the resume show a track record of success? A strong work ethic?*
- Will they be pleasant to work with?
  - *Are they involved in activities that demonstrate they get along well with others?*
  - *Have they been promoted at prior jobs? Do they have a stable work history?*
  - *Do they have prior work experience that requires strong social skills, like bartending or working in retail?*

You want everything on your resume, as well as its collective impression, to lead the reader to answer yes to *all* of the above questions. It is not enough to demonstrate that you can do the job.

Of course, different people have different ideas as to what a “pleasure to work with” means, but there is a basic level of social intelligence all employers are looking for in job candidates. Participation in social extracurricular activities, playing team sports, community service, and such are very important to include on your resume for this reason.

## **Know your audience.**

The legal profession is different in many, many ways from the business world, and you must understand the key differences in order to create an effective legal resume.

### ***Format***

As you may already know, you cannot file a document such as a motion or brief unless it complies with the court's local rules, which often dictate the format of the document as well as type of font and font size, page length, and so forth.

Likewise, a legal resume must follow certain formatting rules if it is to be successful. These rules are reviewed in detail at the end of this section. The overarching principle to keep in mind is that you want your resume to look and read like a legal document. Formatting your resume is not an opportunity for you to express your individuality or creativity.

### ***Substance***

Many business resumes use interpretive language, e.g., "developed superior analytical skills," and focus on outcomes and accomplishments, e.g., "Increased sales by 500% in 6 months," without providing any substantive details of what the person actually did. Business resumes often use short phrases that are equally short on details, based on the reasonable assumption that no one in the business world will do more than briefly scan the resume.

Legal resumes are different. First, lawyers actually read resumes (and cover letters, writing samples, and transcripts), and they read them as carefully as they would a legal document. That is what most lawyers do all day. Careful reading is a habit that comes naturally to them. (Also know that looking for mistakes in other people's work is another habit that comes naturally to lawyers!)

Many lawyers bill by the hour in 6 minute increments. Their time is literally money so keep your resume to one page unless you have a substantial prior professional career that is directly relevant to the legal job. Be concise.

### **Show – Don't Tell.**

Given that your resume will actually be read, and read with attention, it must be detailed and substantive. Lawyers will not be persuaded by fluff. Interpretative language such as "developed superior analytical skills" will not be given any credence unless it is supported by facts. Just like judges, lawyers want facts, not conclusions.

Lawyers want to know what you actually did, and if you are describing legal experience, you need to provide *the details* about your work. Simply saying that you conducted legal research is not very helpful. Also, it is more interesting for the reader if you discuss your experience in the context of particular cases.

#### ***Example of detailed legal experience:***

Researched and drafted a motion for summary judgment in an age discrimination case arguing that the plaintiff was terminated as part of a corporate restructuring that did not have a disproportional impact on employees over 40.

Without the context, it is difficult to assess the sophistication of the work performed. Drafting interrogatories in a worker's compensation case where discovery is relatively standardized is quite different from drafting discovery requests in a complex breach of contract case.

### **General Resume Dos & Don'ts**

- Never use the personal pronouns I, me, mine, or my.
- Use a professional font – we recommend Garamond, though Times New Roman is an acceptable alternative. With the exception of your name, which should be 13pt or 14pt, your font should be 11pt,

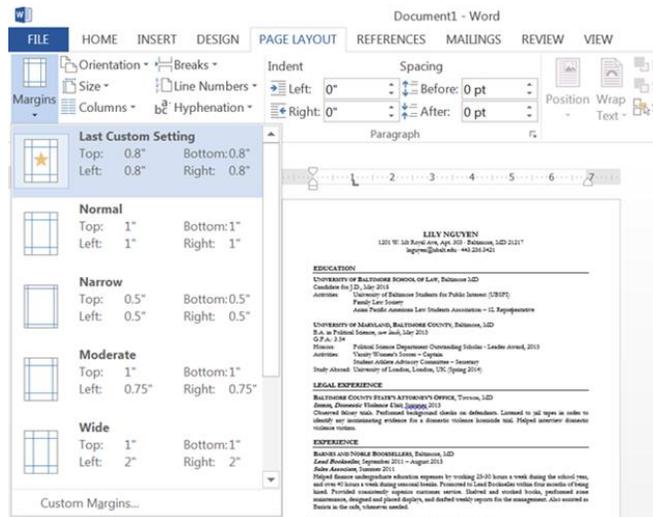
11.5pt or 12pt. Again, you need to decide what looks best for your resume given its content. Never go smaller than 11pt.

- Education and work experience is listed in reverse chronological order. Start with your most recent experience, and work backwards.

## Resume length.

As a law student, the general rule is that your resume should be limited to one page. If you had a substantial professional career prior to law school, talk with a career advisor. Under certain circumstances, a two-page resume may be recommended.

**Setting Margins:** If you need to adjust your margins, go to PAGE LAYOUT, and select Margins.



Before submitting your resume, always check that your resume fits on one page, and set appropriate margins so that your resume looks its best. If you have a lot of text, you can use .5” margins – but no lower! If you have less experience, use 1” margins. You can adjust your header so that your address and contact information are one line instead of two.

Do not make your font smaller than 11 pt.

If your resume does not fit on one page using these guidelines, then you will have to cut information, starting with college activities/honors and non-legal work experience and legal experience that is not relevant to the position you are seeking (individual entries can instead be summarized in one line and added to “Additional Information” or left off the resume completely.)

## Use proper grammar and usage.

Unfortunately, the standard grammar check available in Word is not very effective. It will not spot grammatical errors such as missing words and properly spelled but misused words. Do not rely upon it!

Other common errors include:

- Capitalizing words that are not proper nouns, or derived from proper nouns. (A proper noun is the name of *specific* people, places, organizations, and sometimes things.)
  - Practice areas (e.g., family law) and types of motions and discovery (e.g., interrogatories, appellate briefs) are not proper nouns, and thus are not capitalized.

- Misuse of contractions (you're) and possessive pronouns (your).
- Misspellings
  - Do **not** rely on spellcheck! It will not catch homophones – words that sound alike such as there and their, or to and two.
- Using the wrong tense, or switching tenses.
  - *If you are currently working in a position, use the present tense.* Use the present tense even if you are describing a project that has been completed, *e.g.*, Draft discovery. Conduct research.
  - If you are no longer working there, or your date of employment is terminal such as “Summer 2018,” use the past tense, *e.g.*, Drafted discovery. Conducted research.

Grammatical errors in your resume or cover letter *will* negatively impact your candidacy. Lawyers must be able to write well, and bring a high level of attention to detail to their work in order to excel at their jobs.

Print out your resume, and do a careful line edit. Read it backwards – that forces you to look at each individual word. Read it out loud. Then give it to at least two people you trust for another review.

We know that you are busy, but you *absolutely need* to take the time to create a flawless resume.

**Be consistent in your formatting.**

Whatever formatting decisions you decide to make, be consistent and demonstrate that you possess one of the most important aspects of effective lawyering: attention to detail!

**Resume action words.**

Your job descriptions should be written in the active voice, and begin with action verbs.

Use dynamic verbs and sentence fragments: Developed strategy for; Analyzed; Independently authored; Conducted intake interviews; Performed due diligence review.

Avoid starting with “Responsibilities included...”

To spark your creativity, consider the following action words:

Accomplished	Contacted	Executed	Monitored	Reorganized
Achieved	Coordinated	Expanded	Negotiated	Reported
Acquired	Corresponded	Generated	Observed	Represented
Acted	Counseled	Formulated	Organized	Researched
Advised	Crafted	Identified	Oversaw	Resolved
Advocated	Created	Implemented	Participated	Responded
Aided	Determined	Initiated	Performed	Reviewed
Analyzed	Developed	Instigated	Persuaded	Revised
Applied	Devised	Interpreted	Planned	Scheduled
Briefed	Directed	Interviewed	Prepared	Solved
Collaborated	Discovered	Investigated	Presented	Supervised
Communicated	Documented	Launched	Produced	Supported
Completed	Drafted	Maintained	Recommended	Surveyed
Conducted	Edited	Managed	Reconciled	Trained
Constructed	Examined	Mediated	Reduced	Verified

## Focus on what matters most to lawyers: core competencies.

All legal employers are looking to hire students who possess the below core competencies.

### 26 LAWYERING EFFECTIVENESS FACTORS

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1. **Analysis and Reasoning:** Uses analytical skills, logic, and reasoning to approach problems and to formulate conclusions and advice.
2. **Creativity/Innovation:** Thinks “outside the box,” develops innovative approaches and solutions.
3. **Problem Solving:** Effectively identifies problems and derives appropriate solutions.
4. **Practical Judgment:** Determines effective and realistic approaches to problems.
5. **Providing Advice & Counsel & Building Relationships with Clients:** Able to develop relationships with clients that address the clients’ needs.
6. **Fact Finding:** Able to identify relevant facts and issues in case.
7. **Researching the Law:** Utilizes appropriate sources and strategies to identify issues and derive solutions.
8. **Speaking:** Orally communicates issues in an articulate manner consistent with issue and audience being addressed.
9. **Writing:** Writes clearly, efficiently and persuasively.
10. **Listening:** Accurately perceives what is being said both directly and subtly.
11. **Influencing & Advocating:** Persuades others of position and wins support.
12. **Questioning & Interviewing:** Obtains needed information from others to pursue issue/case.
13. **Negotiation Skills:** Resolves disputes to the satisfaction of all concerned.
14. **Strategic Planning:** Plans to address present and future issues and goals.
15. **Organizing and Managing (Own) Work:** Generates well-organized methods and work products.
16. **Organizing and Managing Others:** Organizes and manages others’ work to accomplish goals.
17. **Evaluation, Development, and Mentoring:** Manages, trains and instructs others to realize their full potential.
18. **Developing Relationships within the Legal Profession:** Establish quality relationships with others to work toward goals.
19. **Networking and Business Development:** Develops productive business relationships.
20. **Community Involvement and Service:** Contributes legal skills to the community.
21. **Integrity & Honesty:** Has core values and beliefs; acts with integrity and honesty.
22. **Stress Management:** Effectively manages pressure or stress.
23. **Passion & Engagement:** Demonstrates interest in law for its own merits.
24. **Diligence:** Committed to and responsible in achieving goals and completing tasks.
25. **Self-Development:** Attends to and initiates self-development.
26. **Able to See the World Through the Eyes of Others:** Understands positions, views, objectives, and goals of others.

## Formatting Your Resume – Getting Started

### Resume Heading

Use your full, formal name, not a nickname. However, if you go by a name that is very different from your full name, you may include it on your resume. If you have a gender neutral name, add the prefix “Ms.” or “Mr.” to assist recruitment coordinators in properly addressing correspondence to you.

- Your name should be centered. The font size for your name should not exceed 14 points; use **Bold All Caps**.
- Include your cell phone number. Be sure that your voicemail contains a brief, professional message in which you clearly identify yourself.
- Include your email address, preferably your University of Baltimore email address. If you use another account, be sure that your email address looks appropriate and professional.

You can use one, two, or even three lines for your address and contact information. Choose what looks best given how much space you have.

*Example:*

**LILY NGUYEN**  
1201 W. Mt Royal Ave., Apt. 303 - Baltimore, MD 21217  
lnguuyen@ubalt.edu - 443.236.3421

### Section Headings

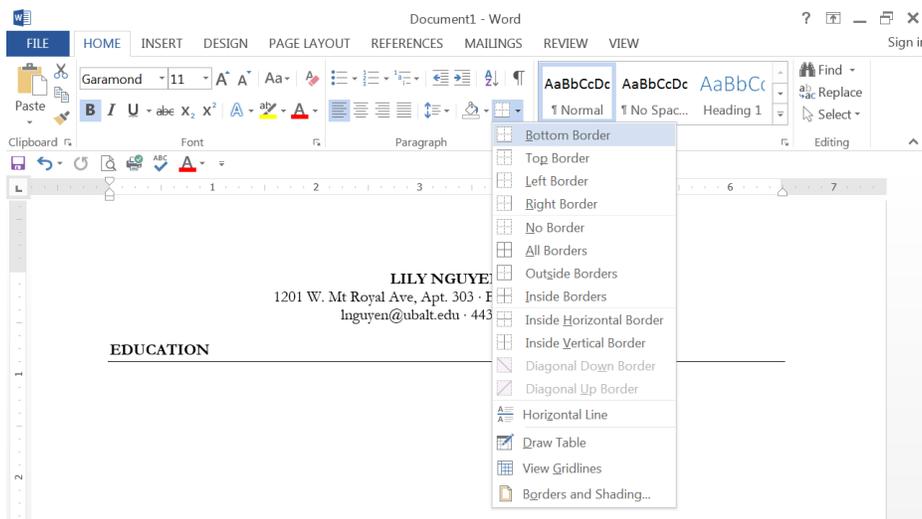
Your resume should have three to five sections depending upon your experience and space considerations.

These section headings are in **BOLD ALL CAPS**.

*Formatting Tips:*

**Bottom Borders:** To make your resume look better, include a “bottom border” (a thin line that runs from margin to margin), under your section headings.

First, highlight the section name, then click on the border icon, under the paragraph icon, see below, and select “bottom border”:



## The Education Section

As you are currently attending law school, the education section comes first. (Once you graduate, the education section will move to the bottom of the resume.) If you attended a community college, even if you received a degree, you may choose to list only your bachelor's degree from a four-year college.

Nothing on your resume should date back to before college. (You can add that you are an alumnus/a of particular high school in the "Additional Information" section if you wish to establish ties to particular location that is not otherwise clear, or if the affiliation may prove helpful with networking.)

The name of the schools are **Bold**, followed by the location, city and state. Education is listed in *reverse chronological order*: first, law school, then college.

Aim to keep your resume as clean and direct as possible by using abbreviations for your degrees and state locations, e.g., Candidate for J.D., instead of Candidate for Juris Doctor. Less is often more.

The second line in your entry should describe your degree and the date that it was or will be received, as well as any Latin honors such as *cum laude*, which should be in italics, and not capitalized. (As a general rule, you do not have to provide information about undergraduate minors or coursework.)

The third line is G.P.A. and Class Rank, if you choose to provide it.

*Example:*

### EDUCATION

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#### **University of Baltimore School of Law**, Baltimore, MD

Candidate for J.D., May 2019

G.P.A.: 3.31; Class Rank: Top 33%

Honors: *University of Baltimore Law Forum* – Articles Editor  
Law Scholar, ILS/Civil Procedure  
Royal Graham Shannonhouse III Honor Society – Distinguished Scholar  
Phi Delta Phi

Publications: *Rivera v. State*, 46 U. Balt. L.F. 146 (2018)

Activities: Family Law Society – President  
University of Baltimore Students for Public Interest (UBSPI)  
Center for Children, Family and the Courts, Truancy Court Program – Mentor  
Baltimore County Bar Association – Student Member

#### **University of Maryland, Baltimore County**, Baltimore, MD

B.A. in Political Science, *cum laude*, May 2016

G.P.A.: 3.54

Thesis: *The Idea of Liberty in David Hume's Moral Philosophy*

## Grades and Class Rank

If your G.P.A. does not positively reflect your abilities, you may want to omit it. Many legal employers, especially public interest employers, do not weigh academic performance very strongly when making hiring decisions. However, some legal employers, such as large business law firms, do grant a candidate's G.P.A. considerable weight. So whether you include your G.P.A. will depend on whether it enhances your candidacy and whether the employer requires it. If you do include class rank or G.P.A. on your resume, it must be accurate.

- ***You cannot round your G.P.A. in a way that improves it.*** A G.P.A. of 3.19 is not a 3.2.
- Class rank is determined by the Registrar's Office each summer. Your rank from last year becomes invalid immediately upon publication of the new class rank. You may use only class

rank and G.P.A. from the most recent information available for the current year. ***You cannot round your class rank in a way that improves it.*** For example, a class rank of Top 10.6 % is *not* Top 10%, it is Top 11%.

### **Honors – Law School**

Even if you have only one entry under that category name, you should use the plural “Honors.” Honors should be placed in order of priority, starting with the most recognized or prestigious. Membership on a journal always leads, followed by Moot Court.

Law school activities that are considered “Honors”: Journal Membership; Moot Court Teams & Moot Court Board; Honor Board; Law Scholar; Highest Grade Awards; Phi Delta Phi, and Royal Graham Shannonhouse III Honor Society. Law school activities that are considered “Activities”: Teaching Assistant, student affinity and interest groups, and pro bono work.

### **Honors – Undergraduate**

Employers will be most interested in your law school activities as they point to your legal strengths and areas of professional interest. Your undergraduate achievements and activities will become less important as you become more active in law school and gain more experience. Even if you are a recent graduate, please limit this section to *significant* scholastic, leadership, athletic activities, and service awards. (If you have a strong G.P.A., there is no need to take up room with Dean’s List and other scholastic honors (such as honors societies in your majors)).

### **Publications**

#### *Undergraduate Thesis*

If you completed a thesis, you should add it to your resume under your college as “Thesis” and provide the full name, in italics. Always keep your thesis on your resume, as it demonstrates strong research and writing skills and is a great discussion topic for interviews.

*Example:*

Thesis:     *The Idea of Liberty in David Hume’s Moral Philosophy*

#### *Comments or Case Developments*

If your comment or case development is selected for publication, then you should add a new entry after “Honors” called “Publications” and provide the name of the publication, and its citation.

*Example:*

Publications:     *Rivera v. State*, 46 U. Balt. L.F. 146 (2017)

### **Activities**

List first the activity that is of greatest interest to the employer, e.g., Family Law Society if applying to a family law firm. Thereafter, activities should be listed in order of the importance of your role (i.e., if you have a leadership position), or the length and degree of your involvement. As a general rule, you do not have to include dates. Membership on athletic teams, including club teams, should be highlighted, as legal employers value this experience highly. Other relevant activities include memberships in student organizations, volunteer work, community service, and serving as a teaching or research assistant.

As a law student, you should join and be active in local bar associations, and add your memberships to your resume as activities.

### Community Service/Volunteer Work

If you have a substantial amount of community service experience, and you are interested in a public interest career, then you should consider adding a separate section called “Community Service” to describe your volunteer work just like work experiences. If you wish to highlight certain accomplishments and provide a level of detail but don’t have room for a separate section, you can add your experience to “Additional Information.”

### Study Abroad

You can include a study abroad experience as a one-line entry “Study Abroad” (following “Honors” or “Activities”) under the appropriate school. If you are interested in international law, or are applying to a position that requires international experience, you can add your study abroad under education as a separate entry, just as you would for an advanced degree.

### Example:

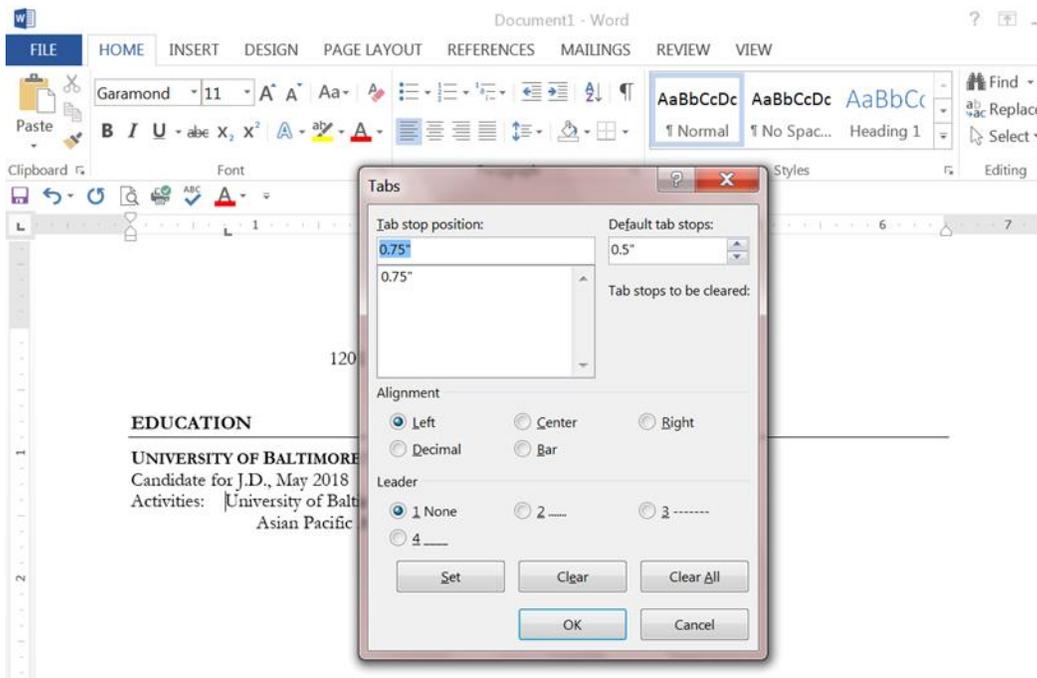
Study Abroad: University of Aberdeen, Scotland, UK, Summer 2018

### Formatting Tips:

As a general rule, honors, publications, activities, and study abroad are listed on the resume under the relevant educational institution.

Allocate one line for each entry, and align using the “Tab” key.

**Inserting tabs:** Insert a tab by *double clicking on the top ruler* where you would like the tab to be placed.



## The Experience Section

### Non-Legal Experience

Do not automatically assume that non-legal experience is not of interest to legal employers. Review the 26 *Lawyering Effectiveness Factors* for a summary of transferrable skills. Consider which of the effectiveness factors you developed in that role, and highlight them. If you are a first-year law student without significant work experience but you had a highly demanding college extracurricular activity that can demonstrate transferrable

skills, such as serving as a resident advisor, a newspaper editor, or a student government leader, then add it as experience.

If the employer is not easily identifiable, include a reference to the organization that describes it, such as “Managed budget for a non-profit organization supporting child and maternal health.”

As you gain legal experience, you will begin removing non-legal experience from your resume. If you had a prior professional career that has direct relevance to your future legal career, then you should keep it on your resume as “Additional Experience.” If the experience is not relevant to your legal career, but you need to account for time between college and law school or wish to demonstrate that you worked your way through college, add a sentence in the “Additional Information” section providing a brief synopsis of your experience, *e.g.*, “Worked for two years as a child care specialist prior to law school.” or “Financed college expenses by working 30 hours per week as a bartender while maintaining a full academic schedule.”

### *Legal Experience*

Even as a law student, you want to describe your experience the same way lawyers do, and with the same language. The more you sound like a lawyer, the more confidence the reader will have in your experience. For example, lawyers always *draft* documents, they do not *write* them.

- Conducted legal research on a wide range of matters including . . . (*lawyers generally refer to cases as “matters”*)
- Researched and drafted memoranda (*not memorandums*)
- Researched and drafted dispositive motions (*dispositive motions dismiss the case if they are granted – failure to state a claim, summary judgment*)
- Researched and drafted discovery motions (*such as a motion to compel discovery*)
- Drafted pleadings (*pleadings are complaints, answers, etc.*)
- Drafted and reviewed contracts
- Interviewed clients
- Observed proceedings

Your descriptions of your major projects need to be detailed: you should identify what type of case it was, what issues it presented, and what type of work product you produced. For example: “Researched and drafted a memorandum on the standard for establishing personal jurisdiction over an international bus manufacturer in a strict liability class action involving an accident allegedly caused by one of its buses.”

However, you should *never* reveal the name of any client or any information that would constitute confidential attorney-client work product. Always comply with your employer’s wishes regarding confidentiality, which in some cases may be more extensive than attorney-client privilege. Ask your supervisor to review your description if you have any concerns or questions.

Clinics should be added as work experience, just like a job or internship.

### *Example:*

#### **Bronfein Family Law Clinic**, Baltimore, MD

*Student Attorney*, August 2018 – Present

Represent low-income clients in child custody, domestic violence, and divorce disputes. Interview clients, conduct extensive fact investigation, and develop case theories and strategies. Draft and file pleadings and correspondence. Prepare and present arguments at protective order hearings and appeals.

Research assistant positions should be added as work experience as well. (If you are short on space, and the experience is unrelated to your area of interest, then add a research assistant position as an activity.)

*Example:*

**Prof. Nancy Modesitt, University of Baltimore School of Law**, Baltimore, MD  
*Research Assistant*, Summer 2018

Researched and summarized case law regarding the causation standard for various torts in each of the fifty states as part of a larger project scrutinizing employee whistleblower rulings.

*Formatting tips:*

Like education, your experience should be listed in *reverse chronological order*, the most recent experience comes first. The name of the employers are in **Bold**, followed by the location, city and state.

The second line provides your job title in *Italics*, below the employer name, (not above the employer, as in business resumes) and should be followed directly by your dates of employment (months and years) in plain font, (not right justified, as in business resumes).

### **Distinguish currently held positions from past positions.**

If you currently hold the position, then your dates of employment should read your start date to the “Present,” e.g., *September 2018 – Present*. In addition, your job description should be written in the present tense instead of the past tense, e.g., *draft* not *drafted*, *research* not *researched*.

If you have accepted a summer associate position, internship, or judicial clerkship, and the job has not yet begun, put it first with title and date (e.g., Spring 2019), but without a description.

### **Tailor your resume to the job. Create separate sections to highlight specialized knowledge.**

An employer should not have to hunt through your resume to discern your interests and find your relevant experience. There are a number of strategies you can employ to make it easier for your reader.

- Create a separate section to highlight your specialized experience, e.g., “Family Law Experience,” and have another section titled “Additional Experience” or “Litigation Experience” as appropriate for your other experience. It makes a strong first impression, and brings your most relevant experience to the center of your resume where the eye naturally falls.
- Do not include all your experience on your resume. A third-year law student may have 6 – 9 different law-related experiences. More is not necessarily better – what counts is *relevant experience*. If you have unrelated experience, then leave it off and create more space to go into detail about the work that interests your future employer. (You can also add unrelated experience to the “Additional Information” section, e.g., “Interned for the Maryland Office of the Public Defender in the Summer of 2017.”)
- Rewrite and restructure your job descriptions to place your most relevant experience at the start of the paragraph, and go into greater detail, as applicable to the job you want. For example, if you are applying to an environmental enforcement agency, and you happened to work on an environmental case as a summer associate, that should be the first thing mentioned in your summer associate job description.
- If you are interested in two or three types of positions, you should have two or three different resumes.

*Example (a 3D highlighting specialized experience):*

## **IMMIGRATION LAW EXPERIENCE**

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**U.S. Department of Justice, Executive Office of Immigration Review**, Baltimore, MD

*Law Clerk, Baltimore Immigration Court, Fall 2018*

Researched and drafted decisions on questions of removability and requests for relief for asylum, withholding of removal, protection under Article 3 of the Convention Against Torture, and cancellation of removal.

**U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Office of the General Counsel**, Washington, D.C.

*Legal Intern, Immigration Law Division, Summer 2017*

Conducted legal research and drafted memoranda on a range of immigration and nationality law issues including removal, arrest and detention authority, national security matters, unaccompanied minors and victims of human trafficking, and international human rights. Observed court proceedings.

## **The Additional Information Section**

The “Additional Information” section is primarily to serve as the “kitchen sink” for information that does not readily fit into the other categories, such as language skills, additional work or volunteer experience, a notable high school, unusual travel, or hobbies. It is presented in paragraph form. Again, do not use the word “I” in this section. Interests that you include in this section must be activities you can discuss at length, and with knowledge and enthusiasm. *This section should only include items that you would like to talk about in an interview, and that can help you establish a personal connection with the interviewer.*

Be selective about including certain information on your resume. For example, membership or participation in certain organizations may reveal information about your political or religious affiliations, or parental status. If you include them on your resume, then the employer can ask questions about it, even if those same questions would otherwise be illegal.

If you are fluent or proficient in a foreign language, add it to this section.

A well-crafted “Additional Information” section is important for the on-campus interviewing (OCI) program.

*Examples from 2D resumes submitted for the OCI program:*

## **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

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Fluent in Spanish. Financed majority of undergraduate educational and living expenses working as a server and bartender at a popular pub. Alumna of Park School. Enjoy long-distance running, and participating in road races.

## **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

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Worked as a day care provider and nanny for two years prior to attending law school. Volunteer as a dog walker and animal handler at the Baltimore Animal Rescue and Care Shelter (BARCS), and have fostered multiple cats. Completed 40 hour Mediation Training.

## **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

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University of Maryland Shock Trauma volunteer. Trained Emergency Medical Technician. Volunteer with Special Olympics. Play in a soccer league, and enjoy playing racquet sports.

## **Bar Admissions and Memberships**

Immediately upon graduation from law school, you will add a new section to your resume, typically at the top of the resume after the header. This section will detail your bar admissions as well as your bar memberships and participation in professional associations. This is very important to signal to employers that you have business development potential and the necessary dedication to the profession required for success.

All graduates should be members of:

- Maryland State Bar Association, and any sections related to your practice area(s);
- Your county's bar association, e.g., Baltimore County Bar Association;
- The Maryland Association of Justice, if you are interested in representing plaintiffs;
- Professional networking associations, such as the Defense Research Institute, representing the defense bar, or local Inns of Court; and
- An affinity bar association, as applicable, such as the Women's Bar Association.

*You took the bar, but you are waiting for results:*

### **BAR ADMISSIONS & MEMBERSHIPS**

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Sat for the Maryland bar, July 2018; awaiting results. Member of the Maryland Association for Justice and the Baltimore County Bar Association.

*You passed the bar exam, but you have not yet been sworn in:*

### **BAR ADMISSIONS & MEMBERSHIPS**

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Sat for the Maryland bar, July 2018; admission pending. Member of the Maryland Association for Justice and the Baltimore County Bar Association.

*Once you have been sworn in:*

### **BAR ADMISSIONS & MEMBERSHIPS**

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Admitted in Maryland, November 2018. Eligible for waiver into the District of Columbia. Member of the Maryland State Bar Association, the Maryland Association for Justice, and the Baltimore County Bar Association.

## **Final Resume Tips.**

***Every time you edit your resume, conduct a thorough check for formatting and typographical errors.***

As it is easy to make formatting errors that could harm your job prospects, always take a few moments to perform a final check of your document before submitting it. Print your resume out and review it carefully, line by line, from the bottom up.

Then have someone you trust review it for spelling, grammatical and formatting errors. Do not rely on spell check alone. Legal employers assume that your resume is representative of your absolutely best effort, so if they find errors, then they will conclude that you don't have what it takes to succeed as a lawyer.

Always have a current, carefully proofed resume available as you never know when you might want to give it to a networking contact or apply for an opportunity.

**SELINA MEYER**

1201 W. Mt Royal Ave., Apt. 303 - Baltimore, MD 21217  
selina.meyer@ubalt.edu - 443.236.3421

**EDUCATION**

---

**University of Baltimore School of Law, Baltimore, MD**

Candidate for J.D., May 2018

Activities: University of Baltimore Students for Public Interest (UBSPI)  
Women's Bar Association – 1L Representative  
Family Law Society

**University of Maryland, Baltimore County, Baltimore, MD**

B.A. in Political Science, *cum laude*, May 2015

Honors: Political Science Department Outstanding Scholar - Leader Award, 2015

Thesis: *The Idea of Liberty in David Hume's Moral Philosophy*

Activities: Varsity Women's Soccer – Captain  
Student-Athlete Advisory Committee – Secretary

Study Abroad: University of London, London, UK (Spring 2014)

**LEGAL EXPERIENCE**

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**Baltimore County State's Attorney's Office, Towson, MD**

*Intern, Domestic Violence Unit*, Summer 2015

Observed felony trials. Performed background checks on defendants. Listened to jail tapes in order to identify any incriminating evidence for a domestic violence homicide trial. Helped interview domestic violence victims.

**EXPERIENCE**

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**Barnes and Noble Booksellers, Baltimore, MD**

*Lead Bookseller*, September 2011 – August 2015

*Sales Associate*, Summer 2011

Promoted to Lead Bookseller within four months of being hired. Provided consistently superior customer service. Shelled and stocked books, performed zone maintenance, designed and placed displays, and drafted weekly reports for the management. Also assisted as a barista in the cafe, whenever needed.

**University of Maryland, Baltimore County, Baltimore, MD**

*Research Assistant, Political Science Department*, September 2013 – May 2015

Assisted Professor Lisa Vetter with research on political theory and the origins of American feminism, specifically the writings of Lucretia Mott and other early women's rights activists.

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

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Active volunteer at My Sister's Place Women's Center, assisting staff in the daily operation of the Samaritan Center which provides eviction prevention and utility assistance to residents of Baltimore City. Play club soccer and currently training for a 10K race. Extensive travel through the U.K. in 2014, including a three week backpacking trip in the Scottish highlands. Helped finance majority of undergraduate education expenses by working 25-30 hours a week during the school year.

**SELINA MEYER**

1201 W. Mt Royal Ave., Apt. 303 - Baltimore, MD 21217  
selina.meyer@ubalt.edu - 443.236.3421

**EDUCATION**

---

**University of Baltimore School of Law, Baltimore, MD**

Candidate for J.D., May 2018

G.P.A.: 3.21; Class Rank: Top 33%, as of July 2016

Honors: *University of Baltimore Law Forum* – Staff Editor  
Law Scholar, Criminal Law

Activities: University of Baltimore Students for Public Interest (UBSPI) – Treasurer  
Homeless Persons Representation Project – Expungement Intake Volunteer  
Women’s Bar Association – 1L Representative  
Family Law Society

**University of Maryland, Baltimore County, Baltimore, MD**

B.A. in Political Science, *cum laude*, May 2015

G.P.A.: 3.54

Honors: Political Science Department Outstanding Scholar - Leader Award, 2015

Activities: Varsity Women’s Soccer – Captain

**LEGAL EXPERIENCE**

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**Women’s Law Center of Maryland, Baltimore, MD**

*Legal Intern, Protective Order Advocacy and Representation Project*, Summer 2016

Completed client intake interviews in person and by phone. Drafted motions to extend and modify protective orders and completed follow-up and pre-order expiration surveys. Assisted in filling out grant applications. Updated resource guide for legal services to be provided to clients.

**Hon. Julie L. Glass, Baltimore County Circuit Court, Towson, MD**

*Judicial Intern*, Summer 2016

Observed hearings, trials, and chamber conferences. Conducted research and prepared bench memoranda and opinions for a range of family, criminal, and civil law matters. Drafted post-conviction relief opinion regarding the issue of advisory-only jury instructions. Drafted a verdict sheet and prepared jury instructions in a civil negligence trial.

**Baltimore County State’s Attorney’s Office, Towson, MD**

*Intern, Domestic Violence Unit*, Summer 2015

Observed felony trials. Performed background checks on defendants. Listened to jail tapes in order to identify any incriminating evidence for a domestic violence homicide trial. Helped interview domestic violence victims.

**COMMUNITY SERVICE**

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**My Sister's Place Women's Center, Baltimore, MD**

*Volunteer, Samaritan Center*, Fall 2013 – Present

**Center for Children, Family and the Courts, Truancy Court Program, Baltimore, MD**

*Student Mentor*, Spring 2106 – Present

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

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Helped finance undergraduate education expenses by working 25-40 hours a week at Barnes and Noble Bookseller.

**SELINA MEYER**

1201 W. Mt Royal Ave., Apt. 303 - Baltimore, MD 21217 - selina.meyer@ubalt.edu - 443.236.3421

**EDUCATION**

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**University of Baltimore School of Law, Baltimore, MD**

Candidate for J.D., May 2018

G.P.A.: 3.31; Class Rank: Top 33%, as of July 2017

Honors: *University of Baltimore Law Forum* – Articles Editor

Law Scholar, ILS/Civil Procedure

Royal Graham Shannonhouse III Honor Society – Distinguished Scholar

Publications: *Rivera v. State*, 46 U. Balt. L.F. 146 (2017)

Activities: Family Law Society – President

University of Baltimore Students for Public Interest (UBSPI)

My Sister's Place Women's Center – Volunteer

Center for Children, Family and the Courts, Truancy Court Program – Mentor

**University of Maryland, Baltimore County, Baltimore, MD**

B.A. in Political Science, *cum laude*, May 2015

G.P.A.: 3.54

Activities: Varsity Women's Soccer – Captain

**EXPERIENCE**

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**Bronfein Family Law Clinic, Baltimore, MD**

*Rule 16 Student Attorney*, August 2017 – Present

Represent low-income clients in child custody, domestic violence, and divorce disputes. Interview clients, conduct extensive fact investigation, and develop case theories and strategies. Draft and file pleadings and correspondence. Prepare and present arguments at protective order hearings and appeals.

**Adelberg, Rudow, Dorf & Hendler, LLC, Baltimore, MD**

*Law Clerk*, Summer 2017

Conducted legal research related to divorce, equitable distribution of marital property, child support, and custody. Organized and prepared clients' financial statements. Drafted and edited pleadings, including complaints, motions, and discovery requests. Formulated legal arguments, and prepared memoranda recommending litigation strategies.

**Magistrate Hope Tipton, Baltimore City Circuit Court, Baltimore, MD**

*Judicial Intern*, Fall 2016

Created case notes for scheduling conferences and Magistrate's hearings. Assisted in the drafting of recommendations and orders. Compiled and organized pending cases for absolute divorce and modification of child custody.

**Women's Law Center of Maryland, Baltimore, MD**

*Legal Intern, Protective Order Advocacy and Representation Project*, Summer 2016

Completed client intake interviews in person and by phone. Drafted motions to extend and modify protective orders and completed follow-up and pre-order expiration surveys. Assisted in filling out grant applications.

**Hon. Julie L. Glass, Baltimore County Circuit Court, Towson, MD**

*Judicial Intern*, Summer 2016

Conducted research and prepared bench memoranda and opinions for a range of family, criminal, and civil law matters.

**Baltimore County State's Attorney's Office, Towson, MD**

*Intern, Domestic Violence Unit*, Summer 2015

**SELINA MEYER**

1201 W. Mt Royal Ave., Apt. 303 - Baltimore, MD 21217 - selina.meyer@ubalt.edu - 443.236.3421

**BAR ADMISSIONS & MEMBERSHIPS**

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Admitted in Maryland, November 2018. Member of the Family Law Section, Maryland State Bar Association and the Baltimore County Bar Association.

**FAMILY LAW EXPERIENCE**

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**Magistrate Hope Tipton, Baltimore County Circuit Court, Towson, MD**

*Judicial Law Clerk*, September 2018 – Present

*Judicial Intern*, Fall 2016

Create case notes for scheduling conferences and Magistrate’s hearings. Draft recommendations and orders. Compile and organize pending cases for absolute divorce and modification of child custody. Communicate with counsel.

**Bronfein Family Law Clinic, Baltimore, MD**

*Rule 16 Student Attorney*, September 2017 – May 2018

Represented low-income clients in child custody, domestic violence, and divorce disputes. Interviewed clients, conducted extensive fact investigation, and developed case theories and strategies. Drafted pleadings and correspondence. Prepared and presented arguments at protective order hearings and appeals.

**Adelberg, Rudow, Dorf & Hendler, LLC, Baltimore, MD**

*Law Clerk, Family Law Practice Group*, Summer 2017

Conducted legal research related to divorce, equitable distribution of marital property, child support, and custody. Organized and prepared clients’ financial statements. Drafted and edited pleadings, including complaints, motions, and discovery requests.

**Women’s Law Center of Maryland, Baltimore, MD**

*Legal Intern, Protective Order Advocacy and Representation Project*, Summer 2016

Completed client intake interviews in person and by phone. Drafted motions to extend and modify protective orders and completed follow-up and pre-order expiration surveys. Assisted in filling out grant applications.

**Baltimore County State’s Attorney’s Office, Towson, MD**

*Intern, Domestic Violence Unit*, Summer 2015

Observed felony trials. Performed background checks on defendants. Listened to jail tapes in order to identify any incriminating evidence for a domestic violence homicide trial. Helped interview domestic violence victims.

**EDUCATION**

---

**University of Baltimore School of Law, Baltimore, MD**

J.D., May 2018

G.P.A.: 3.31; Class Rank: Top 33%, as of July 2018

Honors: *University of Baltimore Law Forum* – Articles Editor

Publications: *Rivera v. State*, 46 U. Balt. L.F. 146 (2017)

Activities: Family Law Society – President

My Sister’s Place Women’s Center – Volunteer

Center for Children, Family and the Courts, Truancy Court Program – Mentor

**University of Maryland, Baltimore County, Baltimore, MD**

B.A. in Political Science, *cum laude*, May 2015

**JONAH RYAN**

701 Maple Leaf Street - Timonium, MD 21093  
jonah.ryan@ubalt.edu - 410.544.6077

**EDUCATION**

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**University of Baltimore School of Law, Baltimore, MD**

Candidate for J.D., May 2018

Activities: Criminal Law Society

**Stevenson University, Owings Mills, MD**

B.S. in Criminal Justice, May 2015

Activities: Student Government Association - Vice President & Executive Board Co-Chair  
Criminal Justice Student Association - President  
Legal Society  
Club Basketball

**EXPERIENCE**

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**Baltimore County Police Department, Reisterstown, MD**

*Intern, Precinct 3, Summer 2015*

Aided officers and detectives as needed. Assisted the Juvenile Offender Coordinator with administrative tasks, and helped at community events.

**Stevenson University Student Government Association, Owings Mills, MD**

*Vice President and Co-Chair of the Executive Board, September 2014 - May 2015*

Elected to the Executive Board to oversee all planning and operations of the student government, including the oversight and disposition of an annual budget of \$250,000. Acted as liaison to the faculty and administration on all matters of importance to the student body, such as the proposed transformation of the required curriculum, the increase in tuition and fees, and the introduction of a new Honor Code.

**Stevenson University, Owings Mills, MD**

*Student Ambassador, September 2013 – May 2015*

*Orientation and Welcome Leader, Summer 2013 and 2014*

Gave tours to prospective students and parents. Helped with open houses. Assisted admissions counselors with administrative duties.

**Sports Authority, Owings Mills, MD**

*Sales Associate, September 2010 – August 2014*

Generated sales and provided superior customer service at this specialty retail store. Assisted store manager with range of duties, including personnel management and training. Responsible for merchandise display and cashier duties.

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

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Completed the Marine Corps Marathon in October, 2014. Enjoy playing basketball, hiking, and kayaking.

**DANIEL EGAN**

1201 W. Mt Royal Ave., Apt. 303 - Baltimore, MD 21217  
daniel.egan@ubalt.edu - 443.626.3415

**EDUCATION**

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**University of Baltimore School of Law**, Baltimore, MD

Candidate for J.D., May 2018

G.P.A.: 3.75; Class Rank: 9/165 (Top 6%)

Honors: *University of Baltimore Law Review* – Staff Editor

National Environmental Law Moot Court Team

Byron L. Warnken Moot Court Competition – Best Brief Award

Highest Grade Award – Contracts

Royal Graham Shannonhouse III Honor Society – Distinguished Scholar

Activities: Business and Tax Law Society

**St. Mary's College**, St. Mary's City, MD

B.S. in Business Administration, May 2015

Activities: Sailing Team – Captain

**LEGAL EXPERIENCE**

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**Hon. George E. Russell, U.S. District Court for the District of Maryland**, Baltimore, MD

*Judicial Intern*, Fall 2017

**Hon. Timothy E. Meredith, Maryland Court of Special Appeals**, Annapolis, MD

*Judicial Intern*, Summer 2016

Conducted legal research for a wide range of issues, including the legal standard for a motion to suppress identification of evidence, and the constitutionality of third-party custody of a minor child when the biological parent is deemed fit and proper. Drafted an opinion on whether a trial court's denial of a motion to withdraw a guilty plea was an abuse of discretion. Proofread opinions and checked citations.

**Prof. Nancy Modesitt, University of Baltimore School of Law**, Baltimore, MD

*Research Assistant*, Summer 2016

Researched and summarized case law regarding the causation standard for various torts in each of the fifty states as part of a larger project scrutinizing employee whistleblower rulings.

**Andrews, Bongar, Gormley & Clagett**, Lexington Park, MD

*Paralegal*, September 2013 – August 2015

Worked part-time at a small general practice firm in southern Maryland. Managed case files including pleadings, correspondence, and orders. Conducted research for a range of litigation matters. Assisted with court preparation, discovery coordination, client communication, and scheduling. Observed depositions and court proceedings.

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

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During college, worked 20+ hours a week as a server in a busy waterfront café while maintaining full academic courseload. Active in conservation groups, especially Blue Water Baltimore and Save the Bay. Avid weekend sailor.

**AMY BROOKHEIMER**

1401 Riverdale Road - Severna Park, MD 21146

amy.brookheimer@ubalt.edu - 410.544.0499

**EDUCATION**

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**University of Baltimore School of Law**, Baltimore, MD

Candidate for J.D., Evening Division, May 2019

G.P.A.: 3.54; Class Rank: 5/42 (Top 12%)

Honors: *University of Baltimore Law Forum* – Comments Editor

Publications: *The Crime Next Door: An Examination of the Sex Trafficking Epidemic in the United States and How Maryland is Addressing the Problem*, 49 U. Balt. L. F. 43 (2018)

Activities: Women’s Bar Association

**Loyola University**, Baltimore, MD

M.A. in Education, May 2014

G.P.A.: 3.78

**Towson University**, Towson, MD

B.A. in Psychology, May 2012

G.P.A.: 3.93

**IMMIGRATION LAW EXPERIENCE**

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**U.S. Department of Justice, Executive Office of Immigration Review**, Baltimore, MD

*Law Clerk, Baltimore Immigration Court*, Fall 2018

Researched and helped draft decisions on questions of removability and requests for relief for asylum, withholding of removal, protection under Article 3 of the Convention Against Torture, and cancellation of removal.

**U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Office of the General Counsel**, Washington, D.C.

*Legal Intern, Immigration Law Division*, Summer 2017

Conducted legal research and drafted memoranda on a range of immigration and nationality law issues including removal, arrest and detention authority, national security matters, unaccompanied minors and victims of human trafficking, and international human rights. Observed court proceedings.

**LITIGATION EXPERIENCE**

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**U.S. Attorney’s Office for the District of Maryland**, Baltimore, MD

*Law Clerk*, Summer 2018

Drafted memoranda and motions for civil and criminal case involving issues such as medical record privacy protections, False Claims Act liability, post-conviction procedures, and various evidentiary disputes. Drafted an appellate brief on criminal sentencing. Assisted prosecutors with trial preparation. Observed trials and proceedings.

**Whiteford, Taylor & Preston**, Baltimore, MD

*Summer Associate*, Summer 2016

Conducted legal research for a variety of litigation matters including product liability, environmental exposure, and corporate and securities cases. Drafted legal memoranda on the ‘new evidence’ standard under FRCP 59. Gathered research on the enforceability of electronic signatures under the E-Sign Act. Observed depositions.

**ADDITIONAL EXPERIENCE**

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**Severna Park High School**, Severna Park, MD

*Teacher, AP Literature & English*, July 2014 – May 2018

**GARY WALSH**

1111 Light Street, Apt. 907- Baltimore, MD 21230

gary.walsh@ubalt.edu - 410.753.4790

**EDUCATION**

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**University of Baltimore School of Law, Baltimore MD**

Candidate for J.D., May 2018

Activities: Phi Alpha Delta

**University of Maryland, College Park, College Park, MD**

B.A. in Government and Politics, May 2014

Activities: CIVICUS Living and Learning Program

**LEGAL EXPERIENCE**

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**Young & Valkenet, Baltimore, MD**

*Law Clerk*, June 2017 – Present

Participate in all aspects of civil litigation matters. Draft discovery documents, including interrogatories, requests for document production, motions to compel and motions for sanctions. Coordinate discovery responses with clients. Draft litigation documents, including complaints, motions to dismiss, and motions *in limine*. Support attorneys at court proceedings and trial. File documents in federal and state cases. Conduct legal research and draft memoranda on litigation and contract issues for criminal defense and real property matters.

**Baltimore City Law Department, Baltimore, MD**

*Intern*, Fall 2016

Prepared training and legal materials to assist city police with implementing new curfew laws, including power point presentations that explained the new law to officers and how the curfew was to be enforced. Drafted and filed motions for removal in defense of the police department. Drafted motions to dismiss when the police department was sued by *pro se* plaintiffs.

**Office of the Maryland Attorney General, Baltimore, MD**

*Health Education and Advocacy Intern*, Summer 2016

Mediated billing and coverage consumer complaints against health care insurers and providers, responded to consumer inquiries on the telephone hotline and researched current health policy and legislative issues.

**Law Office of Gregory C. Powell, Riverdale, MD**

*Law Clerk*, Summer 2015

*Paralegal*, August 2014 – August 2015

Researched civil matters including personal injury, property disputes, Chapter 7 and 13 bankruptcies, and family law. Drafted pleadings, discovery motions, dispositive motions, proposed orders, settlement agreements, and judgments of divorce. Performed phone interviews with clients and observed attorney-client meetings. Assisted with criminal defense matters including DUI/DWIs, traffic offenses, drug crimes, violent crimes, and property crimes. Performed pre-trial investigations and document review.

## COVER LETTERS

“Why do you want this job?” Hiring managers will want an answer to this question *before* they invite you to an interview, and often the answer cannot be discerned from your resume, especially if you have no directly relevant prior experience. Thus a good cover letter, first and foremost, provides the WHY that is missing from the resume.

Legal employers want to hire law students who can explain why they want the job, and do so in a way that is detailed, specific to the employer, and credible. For example, it is not enough to express interest in public interest work generally, you need to say something *specific* about the organization, either about its substantive legal work, the clients it serves, or ideally, both.

Examples from 1L cover letters, without prior legal experience, answering the *why this job* question:

### Maryland Public Defender’s Office:

In college, I took a seminar on Contemporary Issues in Social Justice during which we explored the development of mass incarceration as a system of racial and social control. I had already decided to attend law school due to my commitment to social justice, but this class sparked my interest in being a public defender.

### Business Law firm:

Although I am not sure exactly what type of law I would like to practice, I do know that I would like to work with business clients. In college, I majored in Business Administration, and enjoyed most a class called The Business of Law. It focused on how lawyers create and capture value for businesses using knowledge of contracts, business organizations, and intellectual property, and it involved a number of case studies and simulations. This led me to consider a career in law instead of business management given how much I enjoyed the challenge of tackling complex business law issues. I am interested in Saul Ewing’s summer associate program because it is one of the region’s preeminent business law firms, and enjoys a reputation not only for excellence but also collegiality and teamwork.

### Public Interest Organization:

I would welcome the opportunity to intern with Senior Legal Services. My interest in elder law began after witnessing the myriad of legal and economic issues faced by my family when my grandfather, a small business owner, developed Alzheimer’s disease. Visiting him in assisted living facilities, and meeting other families like mine, opened my eyes to the challenges that seniors face, especially those living on fixed incomes or in poverty, and the degree to which they are underserved by the current system. I understand that Senior Legal Services represents clients in a broad range of civil legal matters, including trusts and estates, guardianship, consumer and debt collection issues, and landlord/tenant disputes. This opportunity would be ideal for me, as I could help a population I care deeply about, and gain experience in many different practice areas.

## Overcoming Writer's Block.

Writing a cover letter can be daunting, and faced with a blank page, it may be tempting to copy something you find on the internet. *Don't do that.* Instead use this exercise, which many students have found very helpful for overcoming writer's block when tackling a cover letter:

- Complete the *Cover Letter Information Worksheet*, on the next page, organize your thoughts.
- Then take out a notepad and pen. Imagine that you have the hiring contact on the phone. You know you need to tell him or her why you want the job, and briefly highlight the reasons that you would be good at it. What would you say? Just write out what you would say longhand.
- Then type it up, cleaning up the language, and you have your first draft. Congratulations!

Good writing is rewriting. Revise your draft multiple times, so that it is as crisp, clear, and direct as possible. You will need to add topic sentences to your paragraphs and organize your argument logically, just as you do in legal writing.

### *Formatting Tips:*

- Follow standard business block text format (see the examples on the following pages). Always include the date, the name of the recipient, his or her title, the name of the organization, and its full address.
- **Always address your letter to a person.** You may have to do some research. If you cannot find a hiring contact, then address the letter to the managing partner, the general counsel, the practice group head, the human resources director, or the office manager.
- **Sign your letters.** If you are applying to a judge, you will *always* hand sign your letter, and mail it to his or her chambers. For most other employers, you will submit your materials by email, and thus you will need an image of your signature.
  - ***Creating an image of your signature:*** Scan a document with your signature. Then take a screenshot of the document. Paste your screen shot image into a new document. Crop it so you get an image with just your signature. Size it if necessary, then save it. Going forward, you can simply paste it into your cover letters, above your typed name.
- **Keep it short.** The actual body of your letter should take up half the page.
- **Proofread!** Your cover letter is your first writing sample. So it must be well written. Be simple, direct, and brief. If your cover letter contains grammatical or spelling errors, your materials will quickly be moved into the pile of rejected applications. If you are unable to produce a one-page document without errors, an employer can hardly expect that your work for them would be any better.
  - Read it out loud, or backwards from the bottom up. This will help you catch grammatical errors.
  - Take out any word or phrase that is so awkward or archaic that you would never actually say it to someone, such as “honed my skills.”

## **Cover Letter Information Worksheet**

*(Copy this page & use it for each cover letter that you write)*

### **Paragraphs 1 & 2 – Brief introduction to who you are and an explanation of *why* you want *that* job.**

What are your biggest selling points? What are the “sweet spots” - the place where your background most clicks with the employer? You want to reference them right way, in your introduction.

*(This could be prior academic achievement or experience, a prior professional career, related experience or volunteer work, or a geographical or personal connection.)*

Why do you want that particular job, with that particular employer?

*(Reference something about the employer that demonstrates you did your research!)*

### **Paragraph 3 – Write about your qualifications**

What are the key skills and abilities valued by the employer? Review the job description or the relevant part of the website, i.e., the internship page. Usually employers will identify what is most important to them – and these are the skills and abilities that you should address in the cover letter.

*(For judicial internships or clerkships, as well as summer associate positions with business law firms, you may not have a job description to work from. In that case, you should talk about your legal research, analysis, and writing skills, as well as your good judgment, attention to detail, and work ethic.)*

Identify which of your experience/skills “match” the skills and qualities that are desired by the employer, and jot down some supporting examples:

### **Paragraph 4 – Closing Paragraph**

Reiterate your interest in the position, and ask for an interview. Thank the employer for their time and consideration. Provide your contact information.

## Cover Letter Examples

Cover letter example: 1D without experience  
*Internship with a government agency*

### **PIPER CHAPMAN**

1415 Maryland Avenue · Baltimore, MD 21201  
(410) 837-4404 · piper.chapman@ubalt.edu

Ms. Rhonda Kirk, Esq.  
Internship and Training Programs Specialist  
Maryland Office of the Attorney General  
St. Paul Plaza, 200 St. Paul's Place  
Baltimore, MD 21202

Dear Ms. Kirk:

I am first-year student at the University of Baltimore School of Law, with a strong commitment to public service, and I would welcome the opportunity to participate in the Maryland Office of the Attorney General's Summer Law Clerk Program.

In college, I majored in Political Science, and wrote my senior thesis on the Consumer Protection Financial Protection Bureau's efforts to regulate payday lenders. I would love to gain regulatory and enforcement experience at the Attorney General's Office, given its critical role in protecting Maryland's citizens from exploitation by the unscrupulous. Although I am not sure what type of law I would like to practice, I enjoyed my Criminal Law class and would be open to working in any of the offices within the Criminal or Consumer Protection Divisions.

Although I have not yet acquired many legal skills, I have so far enjoyed my Introduction to Lawyering Class, and I did well on the first assignment of researching and writing a legal memorandum on strict liability. I am confident that I possess the professional skills required to succeed as a law clerk. During college, I served as a Resident Advisor, a position that required a high degree of maturity, good judgment, reliability, and excellent interpersonal skills. In addition, I worked part-time as a server in a very busy restaurant during the academic year to help finance my educational expenses, demonstrating my work ethic and ability to effectively manage my time and responsibilities.

I would appreciate the opportunity to meet with you to discuss my qualifications and your hiring criteria in greater detail. Please do not hesitate to contact me at (410) 443-1234 or piper.chapman@ubalt.edu. Thank you for your time and I look forward to hearing from you.

Regards,



Piper Chapman

**ALEX VAUSE**

1415 Maryland Avenue · Baltimore, MD 21201  
(410) 837-4404 · alex.vause@ubalt.edu

July 22, 2015

Ms. Karen Paglia  
Director of Human Resources  
Semmes, Bowen & Semmes  
25 S. Charles Street, Suite 1400  
Baltimore, MD 21201

Dear Ms. Paglia:

I am writing to express my interest in working at Semmes, Bowen & Semmes (“Semmes”) as a summer associate in 2016. I am a second-year law student at the University of Baltimore, with a 3.83 G.P.A., two years of graduate training in History, extensive teaching experience, and strong interests in complex litigation and regulatory issues.

I am interested in Semmes because the firm has both a diverse litigation practice and regulatory expertise. The summer before starting law school, I worked for defense counsel in a civil suit brought by the Securities and Exchange Commission, and this experience led me to believe that I would enjoy the challenges of complex commercial litigation. My work this summer at the Maryland Office of the Attorney General gave me a keen interest in regulatory compliance issues as well. Working at Semmes would allow me to explore these areas of law in more depth, and determine which one of them is the best match for my skill set and interests.

I will bring several strengths to a summer associate position with Semmes. As a graduate student in History, I developed the ability to critically analyze complex problems and clearly communicate my analysis in writing. I refined my legal writing skills by writing research memoranda during my internship at the Office of the Attorney General, and I will further develop these skills as I participate in the *University of Baltimore Law Review* during the upcoming academic year. As a legal research assistant, I further refined my research skills and proofread antitrust publications. My experience as a teaching assistant makes me very comfortable speaking in public and working on collaborative projects. Finally, as I have extensive experience teaching students at the college level, I can present challenging information in a clear, concise, and engaging manner.

I look forward to meeting with you or others at Semmes to discuss my qualifications and the details of the summer program in greater detail. Please contact me at your earliest convenience. Thank you for your kind and thoughtful consideration.

Regards,



Alex Vause

**SUZANNE WARREN**

1401 North Charles Street · Baltimore, Maryland 21201  
(410) 837-4404 · Suzanne.warren@ubalt.edu

September 1, 2015

The Honorable Karen Friedman  
Circuit Court for Baltimore City  
Clarence M. Mitchell, Jr. Courthouse  
111 North Calvert Street  
Baltimore, MD 21202

Dear Judge Friedman:

Please accept my enthusiastic application for the 2016-2017 Judicial Clerkship with your chambers. I am a third year law student at the University of Baltimore with a strong interest in litigation. My diligent work ethic, coupled with my excellent research and writing skills, make me a competitive candidate for the position.

My interest in clerking stems predominantly from my experience as an extern for Judge Vicki Ballou-Watts in Baltimore County. In this position, I researched case law, drafted memoranda and opinions, and observed court proceedings. This was an invaluable experience, in which I assisted the Judge and her chambers with the interpretation and application of the law, and saw the litigation process through the “other side” of the bench. By applying my research, writing, and analytical skills to assist Judge Ballou-Watts, I acquired the skills necessary to succeed as a law clerk in your chambers.

My other work experience and academic achievements make me particularly qualified to serve as your law clerk. As a Staff Editor for the *University of Baltimore Law Review*, I have refined my research and writing skills in an academic setting. Additionally, as an intern for the Legal Aid Bureau in Baltimore City, I sharpened both the written and soft communication skills necessary to communicate with counsel, *pro se* litigants, and other courthouse staff. I regularly drafted pleadings and papers, which required me to analyze issues and formulate arguments to the court. I wrote letters to opposing counsel and accompanied the attorneys in meetings with clients. My work experience and academic success exhibit my dedication to the law, and demonstrate that I will be successful in completing the tasks required as your clerk.

I would very much appreciate the opportunity to meet with you to discuss in greater detail my qualifications for the clerkship position in your chambers. I can be reached at (410) 837-4404 or [suzanne.warren@ubalt.edu](mailto:suzanne.warren@ubalt.edu). Thank you for your consideration and I look forward to hearing from you.

Respectfully,



Suzanne Warren

**SOPHIA BURSET**

1415 Maryland Avenue · Baltimore, MD 21201  
(410) 443-1234 · sophia.burset@gmail.com

October 6, 2015

Ms. Carolyn Jones  
Director, Law Fellowship Program Environmental Law Institute  
2000 L Street, NW, Suite 620  
Washington, DC 20036

Dear Ms. Jones:

I am writing to apply for the 2016-2017 Public Interest Environmental Law Fellowship with the Environmental Law Institute (ELI). I am a third year law student at the University of Baltimore, with substantial environmental litigation and enforcement experience, including broad exposure to climate change matters such as emissions trading, clean energy projects and enforcement actions filed pursuant to the Clean Air Act. I would welcome the opportunity to help advance the cause of environmental protection by assisting ELI with the programs of its Research and Policy Division.

Having worked in a non-profit, a government enforcement agency, and an environmental law firm, I have come to share ELI's commitment to bringing an independent approach to solving environmental problems. While the adversary system does have its strengths, on its own it cannot adequately address the complex and pressing issues raised by global warming. I would like to use my legal education and experience to help strengthen the institutions needed to ensure environmental protection.

Besides my commitment to environmental protection and my experience in this area of the law, my greatest strength is research and writing. My undergraduate thesis explored the environmental consequences of war. In law school, and during my internships and clerkships, I focused on developing my legal research and writing skills. In professional settings, I have researched and drafted a dozen memoranda in support of dispositive motions, as well as discovery motions, and have recently completed my first appellate brief as a Rule 16 student attorney. I am also serving as the Notes and Comments Editor for the *University of Baltimore Law Forum*, a position that has improved my writing skills and has given me the opportunity to gain experience as an editor. As an ELI Law Fellow, I am confident that I would be able to complete outstanding research and writing projects across the range of your project areas.

I would appreciate the opportunity to meet with you to discuss my qualifications and your hiring criteria in greater detail. Please do not hesitate to contact me at (410) 443-1234 or sophia.burset@gmail.com. Thank you for your consideration and I look forward to hearing from you.

Regards,



Sophia Burset

## WRITING SAMPLES

Legal employers will usually want to see an example of your legal research and writing skills before making you an offer. Below are some guidelines to help you select an appropriate piece of your work for this purpose.

**Legal Reasoning**—A writing sample must demonstrate your legal reasoning and analytical skills, i.e., apply law to facts, and distinguish cases on their facts. Thus, an academic survey of case law or a note that summarizes a recently published decision is not the best choice as it does not include legal analysis. Possible writing samples include:

- A memorandum from your legal writing class.
- Your portion of your moot court brief. The best way to present an excerpt is to keep the statement of facts, the table of contents, and your argument, or a section thereof. You should indicate that sections have been redacted for length.
- A memorandum of law or brief that you created during an internship. Redact any information such as the client’s name or identifying characteristics to protect privilege. You should always ask for permission from your employer first before using your work product as a writing sample.
- A memorandum or draft opinion you wrote for a judge during an internship. Again, you must ask for permission. Your writing sample should always be what you provided the judge, and not the opinion itself.

**Length**—Unless employers indicate otherwise, writing samples generally should be 7-10 pages (some employers may request 5, in rare instances 12). You may excerpt if necessary, but remember to describe the nature of the larger document and context of the analysis in your cover sheet. Re-read it to make sure the shorter version makes sense and flows well.

**Recent**—Writing samples should be current, and reflect your best possible effort.

**Practical**—Employers prefer to see work product from an internship or law clerk position.

**Proofread**—Typos, poor grammar, or incorrect citations will disqualify you for the job.

**Blue Book**—Cite legal authority accurately and in proper “Blue Book” format.

**Confidentiality**—As mentioned above, if you are using a sample from a job or internship be sure to obtain permission for any documents not considered public record. In addition, take out any confidential or privileged information. You should use fictitious names rather than blacking out the information, but indicate you have done so in your cover sheet. For legal opinions, you must obtain the express permission of your judge and only submit *your* draft of the opinion.

**The Employer**— Check whether the employer has specific writing sample guidelines, and consider your audience when choosing a writing sample. If possible, choose a sample that pertains to the employer’s practice.

**Your work**—Use a sample that you wrote on your own. If it is a collaborative sample, excise any part written by others and be sure to provide an explanation on your cover sheet. If the sample incorporates light editing from a professor or employer, this should be noted on the cover sheet.

**Cover sheet**—Attach a cover sheet to your writing sample that offers a brief explanation of the document, including whether confidential information has been redacted or changed, whether the sample is an excerpt of a larger document, and when and for whom the original was written.

Examples:

Draft of Legal Opinion submitted with the express permission of The Honorable Lisa Simpson, U.S. District Court for the District of Maryland.

The attached writing sample is a memorandum for an Introduction to Lawyering Skills (ILS) course, Fall 2015. It incorporates suggestions by my writing professor, but is unedited by any third party.

The attached writing sample is an excerpt of the appellate brief that was submitted for the 2016 Byron L. Warnken Moot Court Competition. The sample includes the Statement of Facts, the Table of Contents, and Section III of the argument. Sections I and II of the argument has been redacted for brevity. It is unedited by any third party.

*Formatting tips:*

Use the same header you employ for your resume and cover letter, and center justify the text of the cover sheet, and place about 1/3 of the way down the page. Set your margins as wide (1” top/bottom, 2” right/left) to center the text.

Example:

**ALEX VAUSE**

1415 Maryland Avenue · Baltimore, MD 21201  
(410) 443-1234 · alex.vause@ubalt.edu

### **WRITING SAMPLE**

The attached writing sample is a memorandum for an Introduction to Lawyering Skills (ILS) course, Fall 2015. It incorporates suggestions by my writing professor, but is unedited by any third party.

## REFERENCES

The most important factor in choosing an academic or professional reference is to approach only those individuals who can speak to your legal reasoning, writing and advocacy skills, or your professional accomplishments, abilities, attitude and personality. Do not ask a professor for a reference just because you did well in his or her class. Without some type of relationship, there is no basis for the reference. (Please note: judges will not generally write clerkship letters of recommendation on behalf of former interns.)

When asking a professor or a former employer for a reference, provide them with a current copy of your resume, and explain what the position entails, why you want it, and why you think you are a good fit. The more information you provide to your references about yourself and the opportunity, the more helpful they can be.

Make sure to contact your references shortly before a prospective employer is likely to call them. (Usually references are not checked until *after* a successful interview.) That way, the call will not come as a surprise. Make thank you calls to all your references if you get the job, and let them know how much you appreciate their help!

Always provide three references unless otherwise specified.

### *Formatting tip:*

Use the same header you employ for your resume and cover letter, and left justify the text, just below the header, as you would a business letter. Employers will generally ask for three professional references.

Example:

### **ALEX VAUSE**

1415 Maryland Avenue · Baltimore, MD 21201  
(410) 443-1234 · alex.vause@ubalt.edu

### **PROFESSIONAL REFERENCES**

Professor John Bessler  
University of Baltimore School of Law  
1401 N. Charles Street, Room 929  
Baltimore, Maryland 21201  
(410) 837-1234  
jbessler@ubalt.edu

Sean B. McNally, Esq.  
Assistant States Attorney, Baltimore County  
180 Court Street, 14th Floor  
Towson, Maryland 21212  
(410) 555-1234  
smcnally@statesattorney.balt.gov

## THANK YOU NOTES

Send thank you notes to each of your interviewers within 24 hours of the interview.

Do your best to personalize each thank you note with a topic discussed in your meeting with that person. Typically, these letters will end up in one central file with your resume, evaluations and other information concerning your candidacy. You do not want them to be identical!

It is perfectly acceptable to email thank you notes rather than mail them, with the exception of judges. Most judges do not accept emails from applicants, so send them a hand written note instead.

### *Formatting tips:*

Thank you notes, even if sent by email, should be formal in tone and format, and free from spelling errors or typos. Moreover, your email should never include a tagline with a quote or anything similarly unprofessional.

### Example:

Dear Mr. Roberts:

Thank you so much for taking time out of your busy schedule to meet with me yesterday afternoon. I thoroughly enjoyed my visit to the Federal Trade Commission's offices. I particularly appreciated getting your perspective on the pending EU investigation of Google, and learning more about the antitrust enforcement challenges posed by internet companies.

I remain extremely interested in a position as a summer associate with the Commission. Should you require any additional information to assist you as you consider my candidacy, please do not hesitate to contact me at (410) 443-1234 or via email at alex.vause@ubalt.edu.

Thank you once again for your time and consideration. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Alex Vause

## **INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWING & NETWORKING**

An estimated 70-80% of all job openings are *never* advertised. Many job openings, especially those for new attorneys, are filled through personal and professional contacts.

Although you do not need lifelong or family relationships in the legal community in order to find a job, you do need to devote time during law school to meeting people in the legal community. The best way to do that is to network, and one of the easiest ways to network is to conduct informational interviews.

Networking and informational interviewing can and should be used to explore practice areas and settings, develop relationships, and as a means of eventually obtaining job interviews and professional references.

### **Identifying Your Network**

The first step in networking is to identify your contacts. The best people to contact are the people who you already know such as family friends and acquaintances, professors, former supervisors and coworkers, members of your faith community, and people you know from your hobbies or volunteer work. Before you rule out a contact, remember that all of the people in your immediate, personal network know other people - anyone of whom could be a lawyer.

### **Asking for Informational Interviews**

Once you have identified people who could be helpful, you must contact them and formally ask for their help, preferably in a face-to-face meeting. Even if a contact is someone you know fairly well, you should send them a professional introductory email.

*Courage, persistence and patience are crucial to this process!* You may have to follow up on your email more than once. And once the meeting is set, be prepared for it to get rescheduled, maybe even more than once. Attorneys are busy and often have unexpected emergencies – be patient.

If you do not know the contact, then your email should identify how you obtained their name (e.g., “Professor Warnken suggested that I should contact you.”). Just like a business letter, your introductory email should start with a formal salutation, e.g., Dear Mr. Wallace:, and closing, e.g., Best, followed by your full name.)

Examples of initial emails:

#### *Requesting a meeting from a mutual contact:*

I worked with Sam Healy at Legal Aid last summer. He suggested that I contact you. I am interested in learning more about the CINA Division at the Office of the Public Defender, and was hoping you might have time to meet with me briefly to discuss your work. I am happy to come to your office at your convenience. Please let me know some dates and times that may work well with your schedule. I know that you are very busy, and I thank you in advance for your time.

*Requesting a meeting from someone you met at an event:*

I don't know if you remember but we met at the Young Lawyers Happy Hour last week and chatted about Keith Richard's new autobiography. You kindly invited me to get in touch with you to talk further. I'm the 2L at UB who is interested in gaining advice and information about environmental practice. I interned with the Environmental Protection Agency last summer, and am interested in learning more about environmental practice in a law firm setting. I know that you are very busy, but I was hoping that you might have time to meet with me briefly to discuss your work. I would love the opportunity to hear more about your practice and career path.

Please let me know if there are some dates and times that may work well with your schedule. I am happy to come to your office at your convenience. Thank you in advance for your time.

When you are reaching out to someone you don't have a connection with, explain why you want an informational interview in a detailed way, and also take a few lines to convey that you are *very dedicated* to his or her type of practice.

*Requesting a meeting from someone you do not know, and without a mutual contact:*

I am a 3L at UB who is interested in gaining advice and information about international adoption practice. I was told by an acquaintance that you are one of the leading experts in this area, and I would be very grateful to have the opportunity to meet with you briefly to learn more about your practice and career path.

I have a background in social work, and experience in family law, especially with divorce and custody matters. However, adoption law, especially international adoption, is a strong interest of mine. I have volunteered for several years at the international adoption agency Children of All Nations, but unfortunately I have not yet had the chance to meet any lawyers that specialize in this type of work.

Please let me know if there are some dates and times that may work well with your schedule. I am happy to come to your office at your convenience. Thank you in advance for your time.

## **The Informational Interview**

An informational interview is NOT a job interview. *Do not ask for a job, or for information about particular jobs.* But treat it like an interview anyway. Be positive and enthusiastic. Say only nice things about yourself. Wear a suit or business casual attire that is on the formal side. (Review the section of the Handbook on Interviewing for more tips).

Do your research about the attorney, the field, as well as his or her organization before your interview. Come prepared with a list of topics you would like to cover. This will help you make the most of the opportunity.

## **During the Informational Interview**

Always start with small talk to create a "comfort zone" – observations about the weather, the restaurant or office, and lightly personal things such as complimenting something the contact is wearing, or discussing the people you know in common, or a connection like being from the same town.

Next, ask the person some open-ended questions about their biography. See the suggested questions below.

Then, give a brief summary of your personal background, but remember this is akin to an interview, so don't engage in "TMI" or say anything negative about yourself, e.g., "I failed Organic Chemistry so I decided to go to law school instead of getting a Ph.D. in Ecology."

*Example:*

I am very interested in environmental and conservation issues, and since high school, I have volunteered as a naturalist educator at some of Baltimore's area parks. I thought originally of being an ecologist, but in college, found myself gravitating towards policy and legislation and away from science, and ended up majoring in Government & Politics. I came to law school hoping to explore a possible career in environmental law.

After that, tell them how they can help you:

*Example:*

After working at the EPA last summer, I remain very interested in environmental practice, but I am not sure enforcement is the right fit for me. I would like to explore the regulatory side of practice, as it involves a lot of the things I do love to do and think I am good at - legal research, analysis, writing, and problem solving - but without the adversarial process. But I don't know many people who do that kind of work, so I was hoping that you might tell me about your regulatory environmental practice, and help me identify some career options in that field.

Then ask some broader questions that will give you helpful information and the additional contacts to expand your network.

Here are examples of some questions to ask during an informational interview:

- How did you get into this practice area?
- Did you know in law school what you wanted to do? How did you figure it out?
- What do you like most about your job? What are the greatest rewards? The greatest challenges?
- What are your chief day-to-day activities?
- In the field right now, where do you see the greatest activity?
- Are there opportunities for new attorneys in your field? Is your area of practice growing?
- Do you know of any groups I should join, or publications I should read regularly?
- What experiences did you have in law school that you believe best prepared you for your current position? Which courses do you feel best prepared you for your current position? Which courses do you wish that you had taken?
- I put together a preliminary list of organizations that I would really like to learn more about. Here is the list. Do you know people who work there or used to work there?
- Do you think it would be a good idea to contact those people? Would you be willing to send them an email letting them know I will be contacting them?

- Given my goals and background, can you think of any ideas of other types of organizations that I should learn more about?
- What aspects of my background do you think might appeal to employers in your area? What could be an obstacle to employment in your area?
- Can you suggest anyone else that I might contact to learn more? May I tell them that you referred me?

### **After the Informational Interview**

Follow-up, follow-up, follow-up. Send a thank you letter to your contact, thanking him or her for any specific information that they provided. And be sure to let them know when you get a job. If they were instrumental to your getting hired, you should send flowers, a bottle of wine, or a gift basket of some type to show your appreciation.

### **Maintain Your Network**

Stay in touch with your contacts on a regular basis. Your professional contacts can be a continuing source of advice, support, contact referrals, references, and information about opportunities. One day, they might even be a source for client referrals.

Keep in mind that your network is your group of professional friends. They may not be intimate relationships, but they are nevertheless friendships and should be regarded as such. Check in during the holidays to wish them and their families well. Keep them posted when you get new positions and when something good happens in your life, like your comment gets published or you get engaged. If you see an article that you think they would appreciate, then forward it to them with a brief note. You should check in with your contacts by email four to six times a year, and try to meet at least once or twice a year in person – it doesn't have to be lunch or coffee, catch up with them at a networking event or meeting that you know they will be attending, or if you both play a sport like tennis, meet up for a game. Just keep the relationships you worked so hard to establish alive and growing.

## **SOCIAL MEDIA**

### **Join LinkedIn.**

All law students need to create a LinkedIn profile. It is the first thing that will come up when employers and professional contacts google you, and they *will* google you. Create a LinkedIn profile that mirrors your resume. Take advantage of this opportunity to shine: highlight your skills and ask for recommendations from former supervisors and colleagues.

Look professional in your photograph. You should be wearing a suit, and looking into the camera directly with a friendly expression. The photograph should not look like a selfie or a snapshot. It is the first impression an employer will have of you; make the effort to get an appropriate photograph.

You can use LinkedIn as your online rolodex, which helps you keep track of your network. Also, if you know you want to have an informational interview with someone, you can quickly find out who you know who knows him or her, and might be willing to make an introduction.

### **Other Social Media – Set Privacy Settings!**

Legal employers use internet searches to aid them in their hiring decisions. Set your privacy settings as strict as possible, and don't post anything that you would not feel comfortable being seen by a potential employer.

Over the years, we have seen a number of law students lose out on opportunities after a successful interview because their prospective employers saw something on social media that they didn't like. Many other students never received interviews, solely because of their social media content.

Review all your accounts and delete immediately:

- Images of you drunk or posts that suggest you drink a lot;
- Any content that even remotely suggests an interest in illicit drugs, gambling or guns;
- Sexualized images of you or others, including photos of you in a swimsuit, and posts with sexual content;
- Mean-spirited gossip or complaints about people, especially former employers and coworkers;
- Vulgar or profane language; and
- Insensitive or potentially offensive jokes or comments.

## INTERVIEWING

Interviewing is a skill that you can learn to do well. Practice makes all the difference. We *strongly* recommend that you schedule a mock interview with a career advisor because legal interviews are very different from the interviews you may have gone on in the past. Moreover, it is impossible to objectively assess your own interviewing skills.

An interview should be a dynamic conversation during which your interviewer gets a glimpse of who you are as a person. In order for that to happen, you have to be relaxed, confident, and most importantly, you need to be yourself. So don't adopt a stiff interviewing persona. Be yourself . . . but your best self, just as you would on a first date!

One of the most important things to keep in mind is that if you got an interview, then you are qualified for the job. The interview is simply an opportunity for the employer to see if there is genuine interest as well as a good match in terms of personality and "fit."

**Do your research first.** Interviewers are looking for candidates who display enthusiasm for both the position and the employer. You cannot convincingly convey enthusiasm during an interview unless you know everything you reasonably can about the organization. Thus, research is the cornerstone of a successful interview. You can be exceptionally well qualified and personable, but you will not receive an offer if you cannot demonstrate a genuine interest in the work. As one hiring attorney put it, "The most impressive interviewees are those who can clearly articulate why they are interested in our firm, with specific reasons that are based on research."

**Arrive ten minutes early and be friendly to everyone you meet in the office.** It is essential that you arrive on time (ten minutes *before* your interview is scheduled to start is on time), and convey that you are a confident, friendly professional. Be sure that your handshake is firm, but not too firm, and that you make sufficient eye contact. Be friendly and courteous to all the support staff, and do not show annoyance or impatience if you are kept waiting.

**Wear a suit.** The legal industry is conservative by nature, and the Baltimore/DC region is very traditional in its style. Lawyers on television are not representative of how lawyers living and working in Baltimore dress. The basic interview suit is even more conservative than what lawyers wear on a regular day at the office. It should be dark in color and well-tailored. No dresses or sleeveless blouses. Shoes should be low-heeled and conservative.

**Always be positive in all of your responses.** If questions arise regarding experiences that were negative in some way, focus on the best aspects of those experiences, not the worst.

### **Prior to the Interview**

*Review your strengths, abilities and qualifications.*

You need to take the time for self-assessment before an interview. Carefully review the job description. For each job responsibility identified in the description, think of an example from your academic or professional history that demonstrates you have the requisite experience or transferable skills. Do the same with all of the "qualifications," "skills" and/or "experience" that the employer requires.

For example, many job descriptions stress the importance of communication skills, i.e., “ability to communicate effectively with individuals of all responsibility levels.” If you interned last summer with the Public Defender’s Office, you will want to highlight the experience you gained in explaining complex legal concepts to diverse constituencies from judges to clients with little prior knowledge of the law. If you do not have directly relevant experience, discuss how you developed skills that are transferable to the position, e.g., working as a bartender during college, you learned how to talk with anyone. Select an example in which you displayed each of the requisite skills and tell a brief story about it. As one interviewer from a large government agency observed, “Being able to tell a good story is impressive; it can make a wonderful impression if the interviewee says ‘Let me tell you about this . . .’”

### **Research the employer.**

The more you know about the employer, the better able you will be to answer questions appropriately and to highlight those of your strengths that are most relevant to that particular employer. Research will also fuel thoughtful questions about the particular firm or agency.

It can be very helpful to do a news search in Google for the employer and your interviewers. This will alert you to big cases and professional accomplishments that are great topics for questions.

### **Practice: anticipate and prepare for interview questions.**

Obviously, you will not be delivering canned responses when you actually get to the interview, but if you have prepared adequately in advance, you are less likely to walk away feeling that you missed opportunities to sell yourself, or that you were thrown by unexpected questions.

### **Sample Interview Questions**

You can anticipate the questions that will be asked by the interviewer and prepare appropriate responses in advance. However, interviewers vary widely in their approaches to questioning. Most attorneys are casual and friendly during the interview, looking just to get to know you better.

Common interview questions:

- **Tell me about yourself.**  
This is a classic open-ended starting question. What they are really asking is, “How did you come to be interviewing with me today?” You should provide a brief summary of why you went to law school, your previous relevant work experiences, your reasons for being interested in the job, and why you think you would enjoy working there.
- **Why do you think you would like to work for our firm/agency/office?**  
You should be very well prepared for this question if you did your research. If you did not yet offer a brief summary of why you went to law school and your previous relevant work experiences, then do so before giving your reasons for your interest in the job, and why you think you would enjoy working there. They want to know the “story of you” - your motivation and background - not just that you like litigation.

- **What is your greatest weakness?**

The best way to answer this question is to describe a weakness that you have overcome, e.g., “When I had more free time, I sometimes used it ineffectively. Law school has taught me to make use of every minute of the day.” The weakness should be minor and unrelated to core lawyering skills, such as writing and legal research.

- **What area of practices are you interested in? Why do you want a career in...tax, litigation, etc.?**

If you know, this is a good chance to show that you understand the substantive work involved and that you are a committed, hard-working individual. If you are a 1L or 2L, it is okay not to be 100% sure what you want to do, so long as you show enthusiasm for the law, and the organization you are interviewing with.

- **Tell me about your article, internship program, work experience, cases, etc.**

You should be prepared to discuss everything on your resume. If you have written an article or worked on cases in a law office, you should be prepared to discuss the topic analytically. Remember that anything on your resume is fair game, including undergraduate papers or activities and early work experience. If you cannot remember anything about an item, or if your membership in a club or society is limited to attending one meeting, it should not be on your resume.

- **What do you do in your spare time? What are your hobbies, activities, outside interests? What is the last book you read/your favorite book?**

This is an opportunity to establish a personal connection with the interviewer, and your answer should be something that is inclusive and that opens the path to further conversation, not to impress or show how original and interesting you are. Remember, your main objective is to connect with the interviewer in a personal way and have a good, mutually pleasant conversation.

Thus your answer has to be tailored to your interviewer, as you are looking to find commonalities. Look for something that interests you, and which may interest your interviewer, and talk about that. For example, if you are interviewing with a sixty-something male judge, then it is pretty unlikely you two will connect over your love of scrapbooking and crafts. But if you are a foodie, and enjoy checking out new restaurants, sharing that with the judge could lead to a great conversation about great places to eat in the Baltimore area, and you may discover that you both love Korean food.

During law school, it is unlikely you have much in the way of free time. It is fine to say so, and to share that to relax you watch a certain television show. People definitely can bond over a shared appreciation for a certain television show, movie, or book. But you should add something else that is more active and gregarious, that you enjoyed doing in the past or would be doing if you had more time.

- **What are your grades like? Why are you not on a journal/moot court? Why are your grades not on your resume?**

You must know your official G.P.A. and class rank. Do not become evasive when asked about grades but answer these questions forthrightly and accurately. Class rank and grades can be the most difficult issue to deal with in an interview. But assume that if you are having an interview, you have a real chance at the position. Do not be defensive. Look for subjects that may be pertinent in which you did well. Cite any evidence of strong research and writing skills.

## **Prepare questions to ask the interviewer.**

Most interviewers will ask towards the end of the interview, “So what can I tell you about [the employer]?” or “What questions do you have for me?” This is a critical part of the interview, and many otherwise strong candidates stumble at this point because they either don’t have questions, or their questions are boring.

It is essential that you have prepared in advance for this situation, and that you are able, based on what has gone on in the interview, and on your previous research of the employer, to ask a thoughtful and pertinent question. The most impressive questions are highly informed, and relate directly to the work the interviewer or employer does. Asking such a question, in and of itself, demonstrates your intelligence, intellectual curiosity, and genuine interest in the employer’s work. It will distinguish you from your competition, and a good question could very well get you the job.

Example of a good question for a senior level attorney at the Federal Trade Commission:

I read that the Commission recently revised its Merger Review Guidelines, and that the changes have been well received by industry. How have the changes impacted your work so far?

Example of a good question for a law firm partner:

I saw on your biography that in addition to representing energy clients, you have a lot of expertise in helping cell companies navigate all the challenges that come with the construction of new cell towers. I would love to hear how you developed that type of practice. It sounds really interesting.

It is always good to give the interviewer an opportunity to say nice things about their employer or themselves. So a few “safety questions” to ask are:

- Why did you choose this [organization]? What do you most enjoy about working here?
- What do you think goes into doing this type of work really well?
- What do you enjoy most about working with the clients you help?

If you are interviewing with a large law firm or federal agency at a call back interview, then you should ask questions that show you care about what life is like for its junior lawyers, and their professional development:

- What type of matters do your junior associates typically work on? Do they work with more than one partner or practice group?
- Do you set professional development benchmarks for your associates? How do your midlevel associates know that they are on track with their professional skill development?

For a public interest organization, you can ask:

- What initiatives, developments, or trends in [their area of expertise] are you most excited about?
- What are some of the challenges facing your clients that worry you the most? (E.g., proposed program cuts, pending legislation, etc.)

## JUDICIAL CLERKSHIPS

In terms of training, experience, mentoring, and transitioning from law school to practice, a judicial clerkship provides an exceptional opportunity for a new graduate. Moreover, judicial clerks often have greater career prospects than their peers when seeking an entry-level attorney position, whether in the public or private sector.

Another advantage of clerking is that you avoid getting trapped in “bar exam limbo.” You will take the bar in July, but not get sworn in until November. You cannot even begin applying for attorney positions until then. Thus, it can take up to 9 months or more after graduation to start work at a full-time attorney position anyway. Why not spend that time gaining invaluable legal experience that will make you more competitive?

While academic performance is important, there are clerkship opportunities for applicants at every level of academic achievement, especially for those who have prior judicial internship experience.

### Application Timing

The most important advice for anyone interested in pursuing a judicial clerkship after graduation is to *start the process early in your law school career.*

- A judicial internship is the best way to lay the groundwork for a future judicial clerkship! Both the **EXPLOR** and **Judicial Externship Programs** offer you an opportunity to gain the experience, and more importantly, build the relationships, that will help you secure a clerkship.
- Also, keep in mind that judges highly value the recommendations of faculty members. We recommend that you work as a research assistant so that you can build a meaningful relationship with a professor.

**Appellate Courts:** you should begin preparing applications for appellate clerkships *during the fall semester of your second year.* Hiring often occurs in late fall and early spring.

**Circuit Courts:** some judges will begin accepting applications *as early as July prior to your final year in law school,* with the majority of judges accepting applications during the fall.

**District Courts:** hiring for District Court clerkships typically occurs later than other courts, most often *during spring before graduation.*

### Judicial Clerkship Resources on Symplicity

Complete application details for every judge in Maryland’s courts is available in the Resource Library on Symplicity, and is updated every summer.



# Don't Leave Your Career to Chance



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