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Students receive personalized support from day one

Alumni have access as well to the office's jobs database

You probably remember the feeling: The first days and weeks of law school, when new people and new experiences are coming at you from all sides. Got that torts casebook yet? Password for NexisLexis? Alarm clock set? Study group in place?

Oh, and by the way, what's your plan for after graduation?

For the 1L just worried about getting his feet under him, that question might seem like piling on. But from the perspective of the friendly folks at the Law School's Career Services Office, it's the beginning of a three-year conversation – one full of practical advice and guidance, but also dedicated to the hopes and dreams that are as individual as each student.

"We try to get students early on in their law school career so we can get to know them," says **Marc Davies**, the Law School's associate director for career services. "As they go through their legal education and they gain experience and begin to mature, they start to develop their narrative in terms of what their future is going to look like. This is their professional story – where they're coming from, what they've experienced and what they're interested in, and where they're headed."

"You see them develop genuine interests through internships and externships, through clinical experiences and certainly through summer jobs. Throughout, they're learning how to talk about their skills and what they bring to the table in terms of adding value to an employer."

That approach reflects an attitude of concern for the whole student, which SUNY Buffalo Law has cultivated in every area from admissions recruit-



New York City Chapter Chair Robert J. Gutowski '99 helps prepare 2L student Andrew J. DeMasters '16 in a mock interview.

ment to building post-graduation connections with alumni.

"Some students are drawn to particular schools because they have these massive recruiting models, places where 300 firms are interviewing on campus," says **Lisa M. Patterson**, associate dean for career services. "Our strength is that we're a place that cares about students as individuals and is welcoming and tries to see the whole person. We don't just sweep them all into a basket and try to dump them into one market. You never know what people want to do when they walk through the door."

The one-to-one approach is labor-intensive, but CSO is serious about it – all first-year and third-year students are required to visit the office and familiarize themselves with the resources available to them.

That includes mock interview sessions – conducted in Buffalo, Rochester and New York City by volunteer alumni – that hone students' presentation skills. Davies says that experience helps students express their professional experiences in a vocabulary that connects with potential employers. For example, he says, a student skilled in litigation might want help talking about those skills with an employer whose major area is financial regulatory compliance.

Also important is helping students develop a presence on LinkedIn, the online tool for professional networking. The Law School's LinkedIn Discussion Group has more than 1,000 members – students, alumni, faculty and staff – who can post updates, share news and make comments. Membership is by permission. The Law School's LinkedIn Education Page has over 16,000 followers who can read news from the Law School and can recommend the school to others. Both groups are a rich source of information as well for the school as it studies individuals' career trajectories and can identify, for example, alumni working in a specific geographic or practice area.

CSO's support services, on a case-by-case basis, are sometimes also extended to alumni seeking a change in their working situation. Alumni have access as well to the office's jobs database, with further links to national databases of job openings.

Overall, Patterson says, the encouraging employment numbers for recent graduates point to the success of this one-job-at-a-time approach, working with students to bring their professional ambitions to fruition. "There are a lot of things that success looks like in a graduating class full of people with jobs," she says. "We're here to help them develop their narrative and their path, wherever that may lead."



Lisa M. Patterson, associate dean for career services.



Marc Davies, the Law School's associate director for career services