Career Services: Coaching on the Fine Points

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.law.buffalo.edu/ub_law_forum

Recommended Citation
Available at: https://digitalcommons.law.buffalo.edu/ub_law_forum/vol21/iss1/12

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Alumni Publications at Digital Commons @ University at Buffalo School of Law. It has been accepted for inclusion in UB Law Forum by an authorized editor of Digital Commons @ University at Buffalo School of Law. For more information, please contact lawscholar@buffalo.edu.
Even in the best of economic times, finding the right legal job can be tricky. This year, UB Law’s Career Services Office has been busy helping students with a number of innovative approaches to the employment challenge by providing a heavy volume of programming on topics like networking, interviewing, public service and government job markets (especially in Washington, D.C.), judicial clerkships and other topics.

According to Lisa Patterson, associate dean of career services, “This has served two purposes: training the students to present themselves as strongly as possible, and ensuring our students feel supported.” Toward this end, the CSO has conducted a heavy volume of one-on-one counseling. Marc Davies, a 2003 UB Law School graduate, has been added to the office staff, where he is doing more employer outreach and counseling students.

“While we send people to a broad spectrum of jobs, one part of that spectrum is the large-firm job market in New York City. Many of our soon-to-be graduates joining those firms have been deferred,” says Patterson, but they will eventually go to firms including Ropes & Gray; White & Case Cadwalader, Wickersham & Taft; Willkie Farr & Gallagher; Dewey & LeBoeuf; Skadden Arps Slate Meagher & Flom; Fried, Frank, Harris, Shriver & Jacobson, and others.

“We have seen bright spots,” she says. “Recently, a larger volume of smaller firms have hired our recent graduates. They have also been offering jobs at the SEC, as well as Presidential Management Fellowships. We have also been getting cautiously optimistic reports from the local market. Many of our employers are weathering the economic dips and turning their heads.”

The CSO brought star power to O’Brian Hall in the person of Kimm Walton, the “Job Goddess” and bestselling author of Guerrilla Tactics for Getting the Legal Job of Your Dreams. “When things are competitive, we want our students to be as competitive as everyone else,” Patterson says. “This is all intended to give our students some creative ways to find their edge in the marketplace.”

In her well-received Feb. 10 seminar, Walton assured law students, “There is always a way to get a job you love.” How? By, among other things, networking creatively. Walton suggested, for example, writing an article for a bar association newsletter showcasing a particular area of expertise, or volunteering to pass out name tags at a conference.

And she suggested that job seekers remain enthusiastic about the hunt, even when it hurts. “The best thing you can show to an employer is that you really want the job,” she said. “Everybody hates rejection, but rejection is not a guillotine. You cannot control it, but you can control your attitude toward it.”

“Students always love Kimm Walton’s presentation, and derive great energy and inspiration from it,” Patterson says. “Especially this year, we want to give our students as many positive and creative tools as possible.”

Patterson also points out that in situations where many people apply for a plum job, employers look for ways to narrow the field. Something as minor as chewing with one’s mouth open, she says, can be a disqualifier.

Hence Career Services’ three-part etiquette series “Career Networking With Polish,” co-sponsored by the Student Bar Association, Kaplan Preliminary Multistate Bar Review and LexisNexis. The series covered correspondence around the interview, including tips on communicating with prospective employers, alumni and other professionals, presented by Mary Ann Rogers, a UB assistant professor of human resources; an at-the-table seminar on strategies and etiquette for lunch interviewing, led by expert Liz Englest; and a wine education and tasting session with Professor and Vice Provost Lucinda Finley, a wine aficionado.