Career Services: Coaching on the Fine Points

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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 turns pretty steadily. Some are even still growing.”

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.

In addition to the programming for students, the Career Services Office continues to offer free lifetime access to its job bank and alumni job newsletter, resume and letter review and personalized career counseling. To access any of these services, please e-mail lawcareers@buffalo.edu or call (716) 645-2056.

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 Englet; and a wine education and tasting session with Professor and Vice Provost Lucinda Finley, a wine aficionado.