



In Brief

THE NEWSLETTER FOR UM LAW ALUMNI SPRING 2008

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School of Law to Survey Graduates About Career Paths and Satisfaction

FALL 2008 REPORT WILL OFFER RECOMMENDATIONS FOR LEGAL EMPLOYERS
TO ENHANCE RETENTION, IMPROVE WORK-LIFE BALANCE

The University of Maryland School of Law is launching a major survey of its alumni and alumnae to better understand their professional and personal career paths. School of Law faculty Jana Singer and Paula Monopoli are leading a research project, in collaboration with the Center for Worklife Law at UC Hastings, that will explore the decisions graduates make in shaping their careers, rate their satisfaction with those decisions, and offer recommendations to law firms and other legal employers for enhancing career satisfaction and work-life balance in the profession.

“We will learn how our graduates have constructed their professional careers, and integrated them with their personal and family lives,” said Professor Singer. “What are the factors that our graduates view as most important as they chart their careers: compensation, rewarding work, valued colleagues, job flexibility? We hope to correlate employment settings with satisfaction levels, and offer suggestions for legal employers — who are quite concerned with retention issues — about what would make lawyers want to stay.”

The survey will begin with graduates from the last 25 years who are having reunions this year (the classes of 1983, 1988, 1993, 1998, and 2003). The law school hopes to repeat the survey over each of the next five years with reunion classes to collect longitudinal data on our graduates. The survey will be conducted online (watch your email and “snail-mail” for details) and there will also be a kiosk where attendees at this year’s April 12 Reunion (see p. 3) can take the survey. All survey responses will be recorded anonymously, with individual responses remaining confidential.

“Our graduates pursue an incredibly diverse range of career paths. It will be exciting to get hard data on the decisions that have shaped their careers and understand the impact of those choices on career satisfaction,” said Assistant Dean for Institutional Advancement Teresa K. LaMaster ’95.

Professors Singer and Monopoli plan to issue a report on the survey’s results in the fall of 2008. Its release will be accompanied by a series of workshops with graduates to discuss the survey’s results and their implications for law schools and law practice.

“Our hope is that in revealing some of the challenges our graduates face in choosing their career paths, the survey will give us a window into some of their needs,” said Dana Morris, Assistant Dean for Career Development. “This information may help us provide resources related to career decision-making for alums.”

Professor Singer is optimistic that the survey will ultimately help graduates enhance their career satisfaction and better balance their work and professional lives.

“This is a chance for our graduates to communicate with each other, with their law school, and with the legal profession about what matters most in their careers,” she said.

Survey Says!

Graduates from the Classes of 1983, 1988, 1993, 1998, and 2003 will be contacted about participating in the survey this spring. Among the topics on the survey:

- How often do graduates change jobs?
- Why do graduates leave firms, and what alternate career paths do they pursue?
- If graduates leave private practice, do they continue to practice law? How do they continue using their legal skills?
- What programs and policies do graduates think would enhance their career satisfaction?



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