



MEMORANDUM

TO: Class of 2010 and 2011
FROM: CDO Staff
DATE: April 2009
RE: **2009 Fall Recruitment Program Overview**

2009 Fall Recruitment Program Information

- **Fall Recruitment 101**
- **Fall Recruitment Checklist**
- **General FAQs**
- **Symplicity Instructions**
- **Employer Research and Other Resources**
- **Cover Letter Tips**
- **2009 Fall Recruitment Dates and Deadlines**

We are busy getting ready for the fall semester's interview programs, panels, job fairs, and activity generated by employers participating in OCI, regional and other programs. While it might seem as if you have barely put away your last outline from spring finals, it is time for you to begin thinking about how you'll approach your job search during the 2009-2010 academic year.

Now is the time to revise your resume and prepare cover letters. We are available during the summer to meet with you, speak with you by phone, or communicate via e-mail. The easiest way to reach a counselor is to e-mail your request to careerdv@law.umaryland.edu or call our main number 410-706-2080. Please do not delay in getting your materials reviewed and finalized; otherwise, you run the risk of not having them ready by the July deadlines. The counselors' calendars fill up quickly in July, so we urge you to take advantage of our availability now.

To prepare for fall interviews, we recommend that you participate in our **Mock Interview Program**, which will take place on Monday, July 27, 2009 at the school and is open to all students in the Class of 2011. **Patent Mock Interviews** will take place on the same date and are geared toward students with a hard science background interviewing for patent related positions for the summer or after graduation and is open to students in the Classes of 2010 and 2011. More information about these programs will follow. Additionally there will be an **Interviewing Skills Workshop** on Wednesday, July 29, 2009 at the law school and we encourage you to attend this program. More information about all of these programs will be provided closer to the date and they will be listed in the UMD Symplicity Events section and you can RSVP for them on the UMD Symplicity Site. You will also sign up for the Mock Interviews through Symplicity.

There will be many changes and additions to the employers that have registered for our programs as the summer and fall progress. Check both Symplicity systems regularly for the most current employer registrants. Student applications will be accepted on June 15, 2009 and you will be able to begin researching and bid/apply for employers in Symplicity at that time.

Some of you may want to work for other types of legal employers that don't interview in the fall. Public interest organizations, smaller law firms, and many government agencies have a different hiring cycle than the mid-sized and larger urban firms and government agencies that interview early in the fall. These employers hire on a less structured basis and on an as-needed basis. Although the CDO sponsors programming and interviewing events with these employers throughout the school year, it is a good idea to initiate contact with these employers during the summer to arrange informational interviews or apply initial screening interviews on your own. Work with a counselor to create your action plan.

Finding a position in the legal job market during the upcoming academic year will continue to require creativity and energy from all of us--you and the CDO staff. As you did this past year, you will need to aggressively supplement the on-campus interview programs with networking, informational interviewing, direct contacts (where you write to employers directly and they contact you for interviews), resume collections (where the CDO sends your materials to employers and they contact you directly for interviews), and job fairs. We are devoting significant efforts to increase and develop resources to assist you in your job search. We are also working very hard to maintain and build relationships with potential employers. However, we **STRONGLY ENCOURAGE** you to write to employers outside these programs especially in geographic areas that are outside the DC/Baltimore area. This is an extremely competitive process and you should consider a number of geographic areas and think broadly about employers and be willing to consider many types of employers in different locations.

We are confident that together, we will have a successful, productive year. As always, do not hesitate to contact us if we can assist you in any way this summer. We look forward to hearing from you before classes resume and to seeing you in July.



FALL RECRUITMENT 101

The Fall Recruitment Program brings national and local legal employers to University of Maryland School of Law and to regional locations for the purpose of interviewing second-year and third-year students for summer and permanent legal positions. The majority of employer participants are large law firms; however, other employers represented include government agencies, legal services offices, public defender and district attorneys' offices. The Fall Recruitment Program features several interview programs and venues for you to pursue interview opportunities. These programs include: Regional Interview Programs sponsored through the National Law School Consortium (NLSC) in New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, Miami, Atlanta, Houston, San Francisco and Philadelphia, the Washington, DC Interview Program (WIP), the On-Campus Interview Program (OCI), The North Carolina Interview Program (NCIP) in Raleigh and Charlotte, NC, the Loyola Patent Interview Program, The New Hampshire Legal Job Fair, Resume Collection opportunities, and Direct Contact opportunities.

OCI, WIP, AND NLSC INTERVIEW PROGRAMS

Please be aware that the majority of employers that participate in the OCI and Regional Programs use academic excellence as an important factor in choosing students to interview, so be strategic and make your employer selections wisely. Also please bid broadly many students in the past have complained that they bid too narrowly and in looking back would have bid more broadly on a variety of firms in multiple cities if they could do it again.

Students may submit bids for up to **35** on-campus interviewing employers per session, excluding the resume collections. This limitation encourages greater selectivity on the part of prospective student interviewees, providing more students with interview opportunities. Counselors are available to meet with you to help you strategize on how to best approach the process.

I) THE SELECTING INTERVIEW PROCESS (BIDDING)

- A. Students upload resumes, cover letters and transcripts through our on-line UMD Symplicity system (<http://law-umd-csm.symplicity.com/students>) and then bid for the organizations in which they have an interest. Please note you will upload your materials to a separate site for the NLSC programs (<http://law-nlsc-csm.symplicity.com/students>). *A password and log in for that site will be sent to you in May after finals.*
- B. The employers may then view the students who bid (applied) for an interview. The employers select those students they wish to interview. Please note that the CDO will screen all resumes, cover letters and transcripts that are uploaded for each employer to be sure students meet the criteria the employers have requested. Employer criteria will be posted in their entry on the UMD Symplicity site. For those employers who request writing samples or other documents, those materials will be available to employers on-line through Symplicity.
- C. Students who are selected may, on a first-come, first-serve basis, select a time on the employer's interviewing schedule through UMD Symplicity. The only exceptions are the North Carolina Interview Program where interview times will be assigned, but still viewable through UMD Symplicity.

II) ON-CAMPUS INTERVIEW PROGRAM (OCI) (<http://law-umd-csm.symplicity.com/students>)

- A. On-Campus Interviews are held at the Career Development Office in Room 208 in one of the interview suites.
- B. Interviews may take place on the following days: August 17, 18, 19, 20, 25, 26, 31; September 1, 2, 8, 9, 14, 15, 16, 17, 21, 22, 23, 24, 29, 30; October 1.

III) THE WASHINGTON INTERVIEW PROGRAM (WIP) (<http://law-umd-csm.symplicity.com/students>)

- A. The WIP is held at the St. Gregory Luxury Hotel & Suites (located at 2033 M Street, N.W.) on August 13 & 14, 2009.
- B. Please note it is very important to review the interview location, a few firms have decided to interview students in their DC office during the Washington Interview Program.

IV) NLSC REGIONAL INTERVIEW PROGRAMS (<http://law-nlsc-csm.symplicity.com/students>)

The National Law School Consortium Interview Programs (along with the North Carolina Interview Program and New Hampshire Legal Job Fair) have employers that typically do not interview on campus. The students who benefit the most from these programs are those whose job search is targeted to a specific region.

Students who participate in "regionals" cover their own travel and other personal expenses. You should carefully select bids for on-campus and/or regional programs. **Students are required to accept the interview if selected by an employer for which they selected. Please see the interview cancellation policy for more information.**

- A. The NLSC Philadelphia, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Atlanta, and Miami Interview programs are a “walk around style” and the interviews will take place at each employer’s office.
- B. The NLSC New York Interview Program will take place at the Embassy Suites (located at 102 North End Avenue, New York, NY) on August 4, 2009.
- C. The NLSC Chicago Interview Program will take place at the Residence Inn by Marriott/Springhill Suites (located on 410 N. Dearborn Street, Chicago, IL) on August 10, 2009.
- D. The NLSC Texas Interview Program will take place at a hotel TBD in Houston, Texas on September 10, 2009.

V) OTHER REGIONAL INTERVIEW PROGRAMS

- A. The North Carolina Interview Program is a “walk around style” program and the interviews will take place on August 27th at the employer’s offices in Raleigh, and August 28th at the employer’s offices in Charlotte. Bidding takes place via UMD Symplicity (<http://law-umd-csm.symplicity.com/students>); however, the CDO will coordinate your interview time for North Carolina interviews.
- B. The New Hampshire Legal Job Fair will take place at The Event Center at CR Sparks in Bedford, NH.

RESUME COLLECTION AND DIRECT CONTACT OPPORTUNITIES

Firms and organizations that are unable to interview through the on-campus or regional programs but wish to recruit Maryland students often request that the CDO collect resumes on their behalf. Some employers ask that students contact them directly by sending a cover letter and resume. These requests are advertised on-line through the UMD Symplicity system. These types of resume collections and direct contacts **do not** count toward the 35 employer limit for OCI.

I) RESUME COLLECTIONS

The Resume Collections are under the OCI section in Symplicity as a session under OCI. There are three Rounds you can participate in at this point and more may be added later. Each round has a different deadline.

Round #1’s deadline is August 14th

Round #2’s deadline is August 27th

Round #3’s deadline is September 11th

Please check the announcement in both Symplicity Sites for late additions sessions which may be added throughout the fall. If we have late employers come to campus we will add “Late Additions Fall OCI Rounds.”

II) DIRECT CONTACT

Direct Contact refers to postings found under the Jobs section of the UMD Symplicity site. Employers will list summer associate and associate positions here and would like students to either apply through the UMD Symplicity site or mail their materials to the employer. The deadlines for these employers vary throughout the fall, so you need to check this section often. Each job posting will also specify the employer’s preferred method of receiving your materials; they have the option to either receive them via e-mail through Symplicity, via regular mail or via fax. *Please read carefully and follow directions.*

2009 FALL RECRUITMENT PROGRAM CHECKLIST

Prior to the Bidding Deadlines, don't forget to:

- 1) Research participating employers through the NALP Directory of Legal Employers and the Internet including employer websites. One of the best sources of information is each employer's website. See "Employer Research Resources" included in this packet.
- 2) Confirm that all your Profile information is current (particularly class year and graduation date) in Symplicity.
- 3) Confirm that your current class year status is correct. Please contact our office immediately. We will be rolling students over to their fall class year status in June and if your class year is not correct when you log in to bid we must know or your bids will not be accepted.
- 4) Upload your default resume under "Documents." Please upload early, we are not the only school with July deadlines! Document conversion may be slow with system traffic the last week in July.
- 5) If you wish to attend one or more of the Regional Programs or the Washington Interview Program, place an unlimited amount of bids no later than 5:00 pm EDT, on the deadlines listed in this packet.
- 6) For (OCI) On-Campus employers, place up to **35** bids no later than 5:00 pm EDT, Sunday, July 19th. Do not wait until the last minute to make these bids. The system will be slow in the hours leading up to the deadline.
- 7) Upload employer specific cover letters, if desired or required. They must be uploaded and attached to bids by their respective bidding deadlines.
- 8) Upload unofficial transcript (grade report obtained from the Office of Registration and Enrollment, Room 280), list of three references and a writing sample and make sure you attach these to each bid as requested. **YOU WILL ONLY BE ABLE TO UPLOAD THE DOCUMENTS EMPLOYERS REQUEST.** If they do not want to see cover letters for example, you will not be able to upload them.
- 9) Rank locations for multi-office employers. If you are not interested in a particular office location leave that location unranked!
- 10) Complete and return by fax your Summer Experience Survey.
- 11) Read, sign, and return by fax your Interview Cancellation Policy if you have not already done this. Please fax us your signed interview cancellation form and completed summer survey. It is mandatory that we receive your signed interview cancellation form in order for you to participate in the Fall Recruitment Program. The CDO fax number is (410)706-0870.
- 12) Find Direct Contact employers listed in the "Jobs" section of UMD Symplicity.
- 13) The Resume Collection Rounds will all be sessions under the "OCI" section in Symplicity. Remember there are three Resume Collect sessions and you will need to upload and bid for each of them as you do with the on campus and regional employers.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q....I received an e-mail notice about an employer participating in the Fall Recruitment Program but I can't find the employer listed in the UMD Symplicity system.

A....Employers in the Fall Recruitment Program will be participating in various interview forums. These separate forums are listed in the drop-down menus in the UMD Symplicity system as "sessions." Make sure that you check the correct session to find the employer that you're seeking. For example, the Fall Recruitment Program includes several Regional Interview Programs, the Washington, DC Interview Program (WIP), the On-Campus Interview Program (OCI), Resume Collection opportunities and Direct Contact opportunities.

Q....If I do not meet the required or preferred class rank requested by an employer, how do I make the most of the Fall Recruitment Program?

A...You should consider a wide range of geographic locations, employer types, and additional job application methods. Look at the organizations in the DC suburbs, and other smaller legal markets. Also take advantage of the Direct Contact & Resume Collection employers found through UMD Symplicity. The Direct Contacts are under the "Jobs" section. The Resume Collections are under the "OCI" section. There are three sessions for these employers. You will need to upload materials for each round as you have done for OCI and the Regional Programs. Furthermore, don't rely solely upon the Fall Recruitment Program. Meet with one of the CDO counselors to strategize and create your own self-directed search to identify opportunities that may not be advertised through the CDO. You may also want to take advantage of the summer, especially if you are in a location outside the DC area where you would like to spend next summer. Identify Maryland alums (using Martindale Hubbell on-line or through Lexis-Nexis.) and try to set up informational meetings or interviews before returning to campus. *Please consider employers that have preferred vs. required class rank information in the system. Also note that employers seeking students with hard science backgrounds, tend to be a bit more lenient on GPAs if you have the undergraduate or graduate degrees they are seeking for their practice.*

Q...What are "sessions"?

A...The Fall Recruitment Program is organized into sessions for each interview program or venue to make the bidding easier. Each regional location is a session and all of the employers that come to campus are in the OCI session. The resume collections are also divided into three sessions. You can search employers by session by going into the OCI section and under the "Employers/Bidding" tab, you can select any of the sessions as a search filter using the drop down sessions box.

Q...When my classmate logs onto UMD Symplicity he sees many employers, but when I log onto the system I do not see the same number of employers?

A...Symplicity will only display to students those employers who are requesting that student's class year. Please check your Profile, and under the tab "Academic Information" make sure that your class year is correct. If you believe your class year is incorrect please contact the Career Development Office ASAP and we will change your class year to the appropriate year. You can call us at 410-706-2080 or e-mail us at careerdv@law.umaryland.edu and ask for Terri Goode. Please note, the fall recruiting program is primarily for employers recruiting for summer jobs, and therefore the majority of employers will be seeking 2Ds only (and 3Es), and only a minority will also be seeking to recruit or only seeking 3Ds (and 4Es) for permanent employment. Again, if you are confused about if your class year, please contact our office.

Q...I am interested in several office locations of a registered employer. How many bids will I need to use?

A...It depends on how each office has registered. If each office registered individually, it will be one bid for each office. If the firm registered collectively, it will be one bid, followed by your ranking the individual offices in your order of preference. (For offices in which you have no interest, leave the corresponding text box blank.) If an employer is interviewing for more than one office, that employer will only be listed once and there will be a notation under that employer's name, for example it may state, "11 offices: Baltimore, MD, Boston, MA, Boulder, CO, Colorado Springs, CO, Philadelphia, PA, New York, NY, Los Angeles, CA, Miami, FL,

Washington, DC and Northern Virginia.” When you select that firm, it will be counted as one bid, and you will be given the option to rank the offices. If you see a firm listed multiple times with only one office in each listing, then each office is a separate bid. For example, if Skadden Arps is listed twice once for on campus and once in the Chicago Interview Program, one is for their Washington, DC office and the other is for their Chicago, IL office. That will count as two bids, but remember the bids for regional employers do not count toward the 35.

Q... Why can I not see any of the employers interviewing for the New York, Philadelphia, San Francisco or Chicago Programs.

A... Remember you must log into the separate NLSC Symplicity Site to bid on these employers. Additionally, you will also only be able to see employers interviewing for your class year in this site. (<http://law-nlsc-csm.symplicity.com/students>)

Q...Does bidding for an employer obligate me to interview?

A.. **Yes**. If you’re selected, you **must** take the initial interview through the Fall Recruitment Program. This does not apply to 2nd round interviews (i.e. call backs).

Q...Do I have to write cover letters?

A...Cover letters are strongly encouraged, but not required for all employers, however if the employers entry states they are required then you must write them. If you decide to write cover letters, they should be employer specific. Do not send generic cover letters and **do not copy the examples from the CDO handbook**. Remember, your cover letter serves as your initial writing sample. Please see the cover letter tips in this handout.

Q...Do I have to upload a transcript, list of references, and a writing sample?

A...Uploading transcripts is required when the employer specifies they require them otherwise uploading these additional documents is optional, and is not required. Many employers will request that one or more of these items be brought to the interview. Please review what the employer wants you to bring to the interview. Even though you may have uploaded the requested documents in Symplicity, you should also bring them to the interview. Please note that employers will be available to view all of your materials online if they choose to do during the screening process. At the interview, always have with you extra resumes, writing samples, transcripts (IP students should also have their undergraduate transcripts), and a reference list. Please see “Uploading Your Resume and Other Documents” below for further details on uploading additional documents. For uploading your transcript, we recommend that you scan your Unofficial Transcript and turn it into a PDF or JPEG electronic document. Scanning services are available in the CDO Resource Library and typically available at copy shops such as Kinko’s.

Q...When an employer requests that a transcript be brought to the interview, does it need to be an “official” transcript?

A...No, copies of your unofficial transcript (grade report) are acceptable to the vast majority of employers. Should an employer require an official transcript, they will so specify and usually require you to bring it to the interview.

Q...When and how will I know if I have been selected for interviews?

A...Please see the deadlines provided in this packet. Generally, this is about one week prior to the interview date. Understand that this includes the Regional Programs, so please consider the implications before bidding, as it does not leave much time to make economical travel arrangements. We will do everything we can to notify you of interviews as far in advance as possible for regional programs.

During the fall recruitment season (early July - mid October), you should be logging into the Symplicity system at least once a day. **DO NOT RELY SOLELY ON EMAIL NOTIFICATIONS**. To see which employers have selected you, under the OCI tab look on the column labeled “Invitation” and if you have been selected, you will see a button marked “Accept Preselect.” When you click on that button, you will then be able to schedule the

time of your interview, and remember interview times are scheduled on a first-come first-serve basis. If under “Invitations” it states “pending” then EITHER the employers have not made any selections OR they have made selections and not selected you. If it states “Alternate” then you have been selected as an Alternate. Alternates will be able to schedule an interview for any available open slots on a first-come first serve basis, on the dates displayed on Symplicity. Please note the alternate dates vary by session.

Q...Is the Symplicity system secure?

A...Yes. There are multiple pairs of checkpoint firewalls to protect student information. To ensure your protection, please make sure you log out of Symplicity after each session. Do not share your member ID and password with anyone. Please be sure that when you are finished using Symplicity to exit the system using the Log Out button, located in the upper right hand corner of the screen.

Q...Can employers search Symplicity by the information I enter in my profile?

A...Employers will be invited to access the database and conduct searches based on information that you entered in your Profile section and search resumes if they so choose. If you match an employer’s search, the information available to them is your name, your resume (if you have a resume in the system) and your email. **Please note: employers will not be able to view the data you enter into your actual Profile.** You are free to make your Profile and Resume available or not available to employers. To check the privacy status, please log into Symplicity, click on “Privacy” and then choose whether you would allow employers to view your resume. If you choose to allow employers to view your resume, it is of the utmost importance to keep your Profile and resume in Symplicity updated at all times. Please be advised, the system defaults to allowing employers to view your resume. While this can be a useful tool for employers, most employers do not actively search the Symplicity database, and you must actively apply to firms (either through FIP or on your own) to ensure that firms will review your resume.

Q...What if I have technical difficulties with the Symplicity system?

A...Please contact the CDO at 410-706-2080 or e-mail careerdv@law.umaryland.edu. There is also a “comments/feedback” section on the home page when you log into Symplicity, and those comments are routed to the CDO.

SYMPPLICITY INSTRUCTIONS

The following are summarized instructions for creating a profile in Symplicity, uploading documents and bidding on employers. For more complete instructions see the guide provided at orientation. To log onto Symplicity, log onto <https://law-umd-csm.symplicity.com/students>. If you do not have a password, contact Terri Goode (tgoode@law.umaryland.edu).

CREATING YOUR PROFILE

1. Build a personal profile (contact information, change password, etc.) by clicking on Profile link on the top navigation bar.
2. Click on the Personal Information tab to update your contact information.
3. If you wish, you can update system access by clicking on the Change Password and creating a new password.
4. Update Privacy settings by clicking on Privacy tab.
5. Report placement information by clicking on Placements tab.

UPLOADING YOUR RESUME AND OTHER DOCUMENTS

1. View existing and upload new documents (resumes, cover letters, unofficial transcripts) by clicking on the documents link on the top navigation bar.
2. Under the Documents tab, click on [Add New] to upload a new document. (System will convert document to pdf.)
3. After clicking [Add New] button, enter a document title in the Label field.
4. Select a Document Type
5. Click on [Browse] button, select a file to upload and then click the [Submit] button.
6. The [Make Default] button designates a main resume that will be the first option when applying to employers, and with permission, will appear in employer resume books.
7. **Note on uploading transcripts: We recommend that you SCAN your Unofficial Transcript (grade report) and turn your transcript into a JPEG or PDF electronic document that you can then upload. Scanning services are available in the CDO Resource Library and routinely provided by Kinko's or other copy shops. Please note that some scanners may scan file sizes that are too large, if you are having a problem, reduce the resolution.**

BIDDING FOR EMPLOYERS FOR OCI, REGIONAL PROGRAMS AND RESUME COLLECTIONS

The OCI section enables students to manage their OCI activities including ranking employers, updating conflicts and viewing scheduled interviews

1. View employers that are participating in OCI by clicking on the OCI link on top navigation bar and then clicking on the Employers/Bidding tab.
2. Review upcoming dates on the Important Dates sidebar.
3. Filter the employer list by session, application status, interview date, etc. by utilizing the Search Filters. [Please note, the CDO has not entered all of the data for all of the listed Categories, so we suggest you view broadly and don't limit your search by category.]
4. Find specific employers, or search by city/state, by entering information into the Keywords field and then click the [Search] button.
5. Review Schedule details by clicking on the [Review] button to the left of the desired organization.
6. Bid for an employer and submit an OCI application by clicking on the [Apply] button.
7. The "Default OCI Resume" will be included with the application (shown in the Resume column).
8. You can change the resume selected at any time by clicking on "Review" and selecting a different resume, and then clicking [Apply].

SCHEDULING INTERVIEWS

1. If an employer selects you to interview, under OCI and under the “Employer/Bidding” tab, in the “Invitations” column, there will be a button [Accept Preselect]. If the employer has not made selections yet, the “Invitations” column will state “Pending”
2. To schedule an interview, click on the [Accept Preselect] button, and the dates and times that are available for that employer will appear, and you will be able to select a time by clicking on your preferred time.
3. After clicking the [Review] button from the Employers/Applications screen, review schedule details under the OCI Schedule heading.
4. You can review your scheduled interviews, by clicking on the “Scheduled Interviews” tab which will list all scheduled interviews. For more details about the interview including what the employer requests that you bring to the interview, click on the date of the interview.

APPLY TO DIRECT CONTACT EMPLOYERS

1. Select “Jobs” from the top navigation bar.
2. To apply to position, select the position by clicking on the job title from the list and information and a right hand side box labeled “Application Status” will appear.
3. Select the appropriate documents, and click on the button “Submit”
4. Each employers job posting will note the method of which they want to receive your application materials, some are via email through the system and others are hard copies to be mailed via regular mail.
5. Please note if the employers require a hard copy you should print your materials and mail them to the address provided.

EMPLOYER RESEARCH TIPS

Private law firms constitute the majority of employers, although there are a good number of other types of employers as well, including judges and government agencies. For those of you considering private legal employers, the sources below can be especially helpful to you in researching law firms and comparing them to each other.

1) The *NALP Directory of Legal Employers* (www.nalpdirectory.com). Also available in hardcopy in the CDO Resource Library. The directory can be an excellent “first stop” in researching firms, because it is relatively concise and lays out very fundamental information, such as types and sizes of practice areas, numbers of partners and associates, and statistics from last year’s summer associate program. The on-line version of the NALP Directory is searchable by many different fields, including by city and practice area. In addition to law firms, the NALP Directory contains information on some government agencies and public interest employers.

2) The firm’s web page (should be linkable directly from Symplicity).

3) Firm resume. Some firms provide the CDO with materials describing their practice areas, summer programs, and other relevant information. These materials are available in the CDO Resource Library.

***4) *The Vault Career Library*. It includes inside information on law firms and practice areas. To enter this password protected site, you must use the link available when you log into Symplicity. You will see it under announcements.

***5) *American Lawyer Mid-Level Associate Survey* and *Summer Associate Survey*. American Lawyer Media Group (parent of *American Lawyer* and *L* magazines) conducts annual surveys of mid-level and summer associates. The 2008 Summer Associate Surveys and 2008 Mid-Level Associate Surveys are online at <http://www.law.com/jsp/tal/index.jsp>. You will need to register for a password to access these surveys. The mid-level survey is particularly good since it tells you what it might be like to work at the firm a few years down the road. While the summer associate survey may give you some insight into the summer program, life may be very different working full-time as opposed to as a summer associate.

***6) Findlaw. The legal site Findlaw has a significant careers section at <http://careers.findlaw.com>. This site includes the Greedy Associate boards and discussiongroups as well as basic firm information.

***Please note that the asterisked resources contain some candid observations on life at certain law firms. Often these observations are from a limited number of survey participants and should be taken as data that you may or may not want to take into account, along with other factors, in your decision-making process.

10 Things to Tell Law Students about Cover Letters

by David C. James

Most law students have a lot of room for improvement when it comes to writing cover letters. Students know their résumés are important, but most give their cover letters short shrift, treating them as mere transmittal letters. Career counselors who tell law students that they need to draft individually tailored, well-researched, and well-written cover letters, are doing them a great service. As a hiring attorney, I offer the following ten points.

1. Students should carefully craft their cover letters. To do justice to what they have to offer, students must make their cover letters examples of their best work. When students write a mediocre cover letter, they diminish their résumé and everything else they enclose with it. Hiring attorneys evaluate cover letters as the student's first writing sample. If students want their writing samples to be read, they need to favorably impress hiring attorneys with well-written cover letters. To impress hiring attorneys, cover letters must possess the qualities of effective legal writing. Writing well will set students apart from most applicants.

2. Cover letters should not be so general that students could simply change the addressee and send them to any employer. Because many applicants know nothing about the employers to whom they are sending résumés, their letters simply say, "I want a job. My résumé is enclosed." When it appears that a student's principal interest is in having a job, that student will lose out to someone seen as genuinely interested in the employer. Since job seekers seldom write to only one employer, there is a natural tendency to draft generic cover letters. Generic cover letters focus on the writer and all but exclude the employer. The most common first word in cover letters (and other business letters) is "I." Students can signal their focus on the employer by starting with the word "Your," as in "Your firm . . ." or "Your job announcement. . ." Students should follow through with other references or allusions to the employer.

3. Students should purge their cover letters of telltale signs that the cover letters are generic.

The most flagrant sign of a generic cover letter is the inadvertent remnant of an earlier letter to another employer. I often receive letters addressed to me but with another person's name in the salutation, or another employer's name in the body of the letter. I also see more subtle remnants, such as references to "firms" instead of my government agency. When students are facing keen competition, it matters a lot when they fail to attend to detail.

4. Students should research employers and parlay that research into individualized cover letters. Students should research employers to figure out which ones are hiring applicants with credentials like theirs. When they discover which employers ought to be interested in them, they need to gather information for their cover letters. The most cursory research will reveal, for example, the name of the person the employer wants applicants to write to. When students aren't interested enough to find out whom they should be writing to, employers won't be much interested either unless the students' credentials are more than competitive. Students need to show a credible interest in the employer—not simply in having a job—by showing they know something about the employer.

5. Students should use cover letters to explain two things: why they are interested in the employer and why the employer ought to be interested in them. Properly done, cover letters supplement students' résumés. Many students don't address either of these questions, and many others address only why they are interested in the employer. Simply establishing that the student feels an employer's law practice is attractive isn't enough. Cover letters are the students' briefs on why hiring attorneys should interview them. Students should carefully frame their credentials to give employers concrete reasons why the employers ought to be interested in them.

6. Students should face the facts: sometimes well-crafted cover letters are not enough. No one meets the standards of every legal employer. If, for a given employer, students don't have the right credentials—their grades are too low, or they don't have the right experience—they need to be realistic. Students

need to target most of their cover letters and résumés to employers that are real prospects.

7. Cover letters should be credible. Employers are put off by inflated, overblown rhetoric: “Yours is the perfect job for me.” And hype: “I am exactly the candidate you have been looking for.” And, most of all, from bombast: “You can’t afford not to meet with me.” Students should be unpretentiously confident: “I have enjoyed success in. . . .” Cover letters should be strictly positive: “My strengths are particularly well-suited to your practice because. . . .” Students shouldn’t be defensive: “I know you get hundreds of résumés from top-notch applicants, but. . . .”

8. If ties between the student and the employer’s city are not readily apparent from the résumé, the cover letter should establish those ties. Often the student’s ties to the employer’s city are obvious, but often they’re not. Employers want to know that applicants are genuinely interested. Establishing ties to the employer’s city reinforces the student’s credibility. It’s not much of a leap for an employer to believe that the student is willing to live where the student has lived before or where the student’s family or friends live. Students who have no ties need to state that, despite having no ties, they’re interested anyway: “Though I haven’t any ties to [your part of the country], I know that your region has much to recommend it, particularly because I like to [ski, hike, or whatever else]. I would happily relocate for the opportunity to work with you.” Students who have trips scheduled to the employers’ cities, or are thinking about making trips, should mention that in their cover letters. A hiring

attorney who may not be interested enough to pay a student’s travel expenses may be interested enough to take a free look.

9. Students should show they are concise and considerate by keeping their letters to one page. Unless they take pains to be concise, students’ cover letters may reveal them to be verbose, and, when they expound for a full two pages or more, inconsiderate of the employer’s time.

10. Students should always include cover letters when distributing their résumés. By piquing employers’ interest and providing compelling information, properly crafted cover letters give students an advantage. If your career services office doesn’t allow cover letters for on-campus interview drops or résumé forwarding, your students must respect that policy, but I invite you to reconsider. Certainly your school can make that choice. But if I were a career services director, I would encourage students to use cover letters, unless employers participating in OCI specifically say not to. As a hiring attorney who interviews on campus, I ask for cover letters and often put résumés into the yes pile based on the strength of the letters. Students who follow these recommendations will gain a competitive edge. Standing alone, résumés simply present facts. Well-crafted cover letters do more; they persuade.

Dave James was hiring attorney for the San Diego City Attorney’s Office. This article is reprinted, with permission from NALP, from the NALP Bulletin.

2009 FALL RECRUITMENT DATES AND DEADLINES

****Please mark all of these dates on your calendar immediately****

OCI/ North Carolina Interview Program (Raleigh & Charlotte)/NLSC Los Angeles Interview Program/NLSC San Francisco Interview Program/NLSC Atlanta Program

OCI: August 17, 18, 19, 20, 25, 26, 31; September 1, 2, 8, 9, 14, 15, 16, 17, 21, 22, 23, 24, 29, 30;
October 1
Raleigh/LA: August 27
Charlotte/SF: August 28
Atlanta: September 3

Student Review/Bidding Start: June 15, 2009
Student Bidding End: July 19, 2009
Student Pre-Select Sign-up Start: August 5, 2009
Student Alternate Sign-Up Start: August 10, 2009
All Sign-Up End: August 11, 2009

Washington Interview Program (WIP)/ NLSC New York Interview Program/ NLSC Philadelphia Interview Program/ NLSC Chicago Program

WIP: August 13, 14
New York: August 4
Philadelphia: August 6
Chicago: August 10

Student Review/Bidding Start: June 15, 2009
Student Bidding End: July 14, 2009
Student Pre-Select Sign-up Start: July 21, 2009
Student Alternate Sign-Up Start: July 23, 2009
All Sign-Up End: July 26, 2009

NLSC Texas Interview Program/ NLSC Miami Interview Program

Texas: September 10
Miami: September 11

Student Review/Bidding Start: June 15, 2009
Student Bidding End: August 14, 2009
Student Pre-Select Sign-up Start: August 24, 2009
Student Alternate Sign-Up Start: August 26, 2009
All Sign-Up End: August 27, 2009

Resume Collections

Round #1 – Resumes due by August 14th
Round #2 – Resumes due by August 27th
Round #3 – Resumes due by September 11th