

# CAREER SERVICES HANDBOOK



2022

# The University of Akron School of Law

## Career Services Office

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### **Statement of Student Professionalism**

By providing opportunities for you to learn to conduct an effective job search, to become familiar with career options, and to gain practical experience, The University of Akron School of Law's (Akron Law) Career Services Office (CSO) welcomes its role in establishing a professional development partnership with you. We take our responsibilities seriously; it is important that you, too, take seriously your role in this partnership.

Attorneys are expected to abide by a shared code of conduct governing ethics, courtesy, and personal and professional responsibility. They also must keep track of and attend client meetings, business appointments, and court dates. This expectation extends to you, as law students, and future lawyers.

Accordingly, all first year students are required to read the below document, sign and date it, and return the form to the CSO. Signing this document is a prerequisite for: (1) receiving your AkronLawJobs ID and password; (2) receiving a CSO Handbook; (3) receiving services from the CSO; and (4) applying for Public Interest Law Program Fellowships.

This Statement of Student Professionalism does not supplant or alter the Honor Code or any other provisions of the Student Handbook.

I agree to:

- Assure that any email address I use for job search and employment purposes, as well as the email that I transmit, will be professional. I further assure that I will seek assistance from CSO with questions concerning this paragraph.
- Assure that my voicemail greetings and the messages I leave for others regarding job searching and employment purposes will be professional. I further assure that I will seek assistance from CSO with questions concerning this paragraph.
- Monitor and take responsibility for content pertaining to me on social networking and other websites. I understand that I am a

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representative of Akron Law, a future professional, and a future member of the Ohio Bar. As a result, I will be expected to adhere to high standards of professional and ethical conduct. Further, I understand that anything I post on social media is a reflection of me and my professionalism, as well as Akron Law and will be considered by potential future employers. Accordingly, I will not post or aid in posting (i.e. “retweets”, “liking” or external links) inappropriate or unprofessional material to the Internet, including social networking and other websites. I understand that what constitutes inappropriate or unprofessional content may be subjective and assure that I will seek assistance from CSO with questions concerning this paragraph.

- Take responsibility for written statements I make, including but not limited to: print publications, blog posts, Facebook, Snapchat, and Twitter. I understand the potential adverse effects those statements may have not only on my job search and admission to the bar, but Akron Law’s reputation and if employed, the reputation of my employer.
- Accept responsibility for staying informed about CSO policies, procedures, programs, resources, and employment opportunities by fully reading the CSO Handbook, The Career Connection, Administrative Briefs, email and blog posts from CSO and the administration, Symplicity announcements, and flyers posted by CSO throughout the law school.
- Make reasonable efforts to attend and participate in CSO programming, including workshops, presentations and other career-related events sponsored by and suggested by the CSO.
- Adhere to all instructions and deadlines in my dealings with CSO and employers.
- Provide, to the best of my knowledge, accurate information in all resumes, cover letters, transcripts, writing samples, and other materials provided for purposes of securing employment and during the interview process. If I am unsure about how to characterize an item in any document, or how to handle a matter in an interview, I will consult with CSO before submitting materials or interviewing.

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- Timely complete all required action under CSO programs which require affirmative action for participation, including but not limited to: the Law Clerk for Hire Database, On Campus Interview Program, Minority Clerkship Program, and Akron Bar Mentorship Program.
- Keep appointments, whether for an advising session with CSO staff or a CSO program requiring an RSVP. If unusual circumstances prevent my doing so, I will provide a timely explanation to CSO.
- Exhibit courtesy, respect, and professionalism in dealing with all people, including my classmates, alumni, networking contacts, law school personnel, the community, the judiciary, and employers, their staff members, and their clients.
- Conduct reasonable due diligence and carefully consider the prospect of working at a particular employer prior to bidding on Symplicity, applying for jobs listed through CSO, applying directly to employers, or interviewing with employers.
- Always be as prepared as possible for on-campus, job fair, in-office, and call back interviews. I further agree to be prepared for CSO advising sessions, including mock interviews, resume reviews, and programming. I further assure that I will seek assistance from CSO with questions concerning this paragraph.
- Timely respond to any employer communication. I further assure that I will seek assistance from CSO with questions concerning this paragraph.
- Attend all initial and callback interviews, whether obtained through on-campus interviews, job fairs, or resulting from resume collections, job listings, or my own direct applications. If I decide to decline an interview or to cancel an interview already scheduled because I have changed my plans, I will provide advance and timely notice to the employer and the CSO. If unavoidable and unforeseen circumstances prevent my attending an interview and providing advance and timely notice, I will promptly notify the employer and the CSO. In all cases, I will draft a letter of apology to the employer and may be subject to a

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meeting with the Assistant Dean of Career Services and/or the Dean.

- Read and abide by the Principles and Standards for Law Placement and Recruitment Activities of NALP, The Association for Legal Career Professionals, at [www.nalp.org/principles](http://www.nalp.org/principles), also available online at the CSO Resource Library.
- Honor my commitment once I have accepted an offer of employment. I will promptly withdraw all pending applications and cease seeking employment or entertaining other offers once I have accepted an offer. If extraordinary and unforeseen circumstances require that I modify or be released from my acceptance, I will promptly consult the CSO and the employer.
- Keep the CSO apprised of my employment status by completing annual surveys about my summer and post-graduate employment, and updating them as circumstances dictate, so that CSO can fulfill its reporting obligations to Akron Law, the American Bar Association, and NALP.

**I acknowledge that I have read and will abide by the guidelines in this STATEMENT OF STUDENT PROFESSIONALISM.**

Signed:

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Date:

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### CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

#### Introduction to Career Services Office

**Where we are.** The Career Services Office (“CSO”) is located on the second floor of the C. Blake McDowell School of Law. The CSO’s office hours are posted in The Career Connection, but generally are 8AM to 5PM, Monday through Friday. Please check with the CSO for official hours. Evening appointments are available.

**Who we are.** The CSO is staffed by Assistant Dean of Career Services, Alisa Benedict O’Brien, and Director, Alecia Bencze. Both are friendly, approachable, and always willing to answer any questions you may have. We hope that each of you will stop by the CSO to meet us and to become acquainted with our services and resources. The CSO is here to help you! While the CSO maintains an open door policy, the office is extremely busy. Thus, it is highly recommended that you schedule an appointment to ensure our full attention to your particular question. Here is a little bit of information about us:

CSO Assistant Dean Alisa Benedict O’Brien is a graduate of Loyola University in Maryland and Cleveland-Marshall College of Law. Dean O’Brien has practiced in the area of estate planning and general business law at a boutique firm in Cleveland, where she also clerked during law school. In addition, Dean O’Brien has served as a law clerk for a South Euclid Municipal Court judge. With eleven years of Career Services experience, Dean O’Brien utilizes her expertise to counsel students on a wide variety of topics, including: career paths, interviewing skills, the impact of legal writing on resumes and cover letters, judicial clerkships, public interest careers, and overall professionalism. Dean O’Brien also presents numerous workshops throughout the academic year concerning these topics. Dean O’Brien is available for individual consultations, mock interviews, and general career advice. She also spends much time contacting and building relationships with legal employers throughout

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Ohio and across the country to improve job opportunities for Akron Law students.

CSO Director Alecia Bencze is a graduate of the University of Mount Union and the University of Akron School of Law. Director Bencze has practiced in the area of civil litigation, with a specific focus on tax foreclosures, at a local county prosecutor's office. During law school, she interned and worked for that same prosecutor's office giving her experience in criminal law and appellate practice. Additionally, she is admitted to practice in federal court at the Northern District of Ohio. Director Bencze will assist Dean O'Brien throughout the academic year presenting numerous workshops and meeting with legal employers. With five years of Career Services experience, Director Bencze is available to meet individually with first year law students and all two-year JD students to counsel them on a variety of career and professionalism related topics. Additionally, she will be available for mock interviews, and general career advice as first year students, two-year JD students, and MSL students prepare for summer internships and job opportunities.

**What we believe.** It all starts with you. We believe in *individual advising*. Our professionals help you define and refine your career goals and job search strategies. To assist you in understanding the world of options, we offer a full range of *programs and workshops* where attorneys from law firms, businesses, government agencies, courts, and non-profit organizations share their experiences and answer your questions.

The CSO is committed to assisting students and graduates with their career aspirations by providing them with the tools necessary to help them position themselves to succeed. This commitment is reflected in our mission statement:

- To give students the skills they need for their law job search, as well as job searches throughout their careers.

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- To promote the excellent reputation of The University of Akron School of Law and aggressively develop job opportunities for students and graduates.
- To provide one-on-one job search counseling and guidance to students and graduates.
- To provide students and graduates with up-to-the last minute information on job trends and employment options.
- To serve the hiring needs of employers in a way that encourages them to hire Akron Law School students and graduates.
- To promote networking opportunities with faculty administrations, alumni and non- alumni employers.

**What we do.** The CSO offers comprehensive services to current students and Akron Law alumni, including:

- The Career Services Handbook. Comprehensive book containing information about CSO facilities, resources, and services offered, career options, and resume, cover letter, and interview advice. The CSO also has the following handbooks: Judicial Clerkships, Alternative Careers, Out of Town Job Searches, and a Public Interest Directory, all available on our website.
- Individual Career Counseling. Including resume and cover letter writing, interview and interpersonal skills, job search strategies, and general advice.
- CSO Web Portal. The CSO Web Portal (<http://www.uakron.edu/law/career-services/>) is the redesigned and interactive gateway for all things related to career planning. Students can review the latest edition of the Career Connection, check out the CSO's services and upcoming events, watch videos of CSO workshops, log onto AkronLawJobs, and browse the online Resource Library.

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- AkronLawJobs. AkronLawJobs, powered by Symplicity, is Akron Law's online job database. This is where you should look for all job postings. Students can post resumes, create profiles, and search for jobs. First year law students are automatically registered with AkronLawJobs.
- Resume Books. The CSO organizes and maintains resume books throughout the year that we provide to employers upon request for full and part-time and short and long-term positions.
- Job Postings for Students and Alumni. Job postings are available online at AkronLawJobs which is accessed via the CSO Web Portal: <https://law-akron-csm.symplicity.com/>

Many opportunities are also included in the weekly Career Connection and monthly Alumni Career Connection. Students should note that AkronLawJobs is the comprehensive job source and should be relied on by students for the most accurate and complete information.

- Library. A comprehensive library of books, directories, handouts, and other career services resources is available in the CSO and Akron Law library.
- Online Resources. Convenient online access to some of the CSO's most critical and useful resources:  
<http://www.uakron.edu/law/career-services/>
- The Career Connection. The CSO publishes a weekly e-mail newsletter which contains important and timely information regarding your law school and budding professional careers. For example, The Career Connection highlights job opportunities, provides notice of upcoming CSO workshops, presents articles and tips on interviewing skills, resume and cover letter drafting, and announces significant career related issues. The Career Connection is the CSO's primary means of communicating with

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law students. It's what you need to know. The CSO highly advises reading *The Career Connection* on a weekly basis. The *Career Connection* is e-mailed to all law students every Friday and the current issue is posted to the CSO website.

- The Alumni Career Connection. The CSO publishes a monthly version of *The Career Connection* specifically for Akron Law alumni.
- Employer Relations. The CSO aggressively recruits legal employers to participate in the Akron Law's fall and spring interviewing programs, including on-campus interviewing and resume collections. The fall on-campus interview and resume collection programs are designed for 2FT (3PT) and 3FT (4PT) year students. Eligible Spring Start students may participate in fall on-campus interviews. 1FT (2PT) students do not participate in the fall interviewing programs but can partake in the spring program.
- Job Fairs. Akron Law participates in national and regional job fairs including the Patent Law Interview Program; the BLSA Midwest Minority Recruitment Conference; the NAPIL Job Fair; the Midwest Public Interest Career Conference; the Akron Law Government and Public Interest Law Fair; and the 3L/Recent Graduate Job Fair.
- Workshops and Seminars. The CSO plans and presents many career related workshops, panel discussions and presentations on topics such as interviewing skills, judicial clerkships, different practice areas, non-traditional careers, marketing yourself to employers, networking, and how to launch a successful job search campaign. As these workshops often include multiple local practitioners, the CSO encourages all law students to participate in these events.

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- Mock Interviews. The CSO schedules and conducts mock interviews, both with CSO staff, alumni, and local practitioners.
- The Lawyer to Law Student Mentoring Program (“Pathfinder Program”). The CSO, in conjunction with The Akron Bar Association Liaison Committee, pairs Akron Law upper division students with local attorneys for the purposes of assisting law students in beginning the transition from law school to law practice. The Mentoring Program, or Pathfinders Program, accomplishes this through a one-on-one relationship with practicing attorneys. The mentor provides perspective on the law school experience and its relationship to practice; helps the student understand the nature of different practice areas and types of employers; and has the opportunity to advise the students on networking and career opportunities. Above all, the mentor is a role model who conveys his/her commitment to the profession and the responsibility that comes with admission to the bar. Mentor interaction with the student takes many forms. In general, mentors and their students meet at least three times during the mentoring semester, but the actual amount of contact will depend on the student’s initiative, the attorney’s schedule, and the quality of their relationship. In the past, mentors have shared lunch with the students; invited the students to their office; taken the student to court; recommended legal and career resources; and provided networking contacts and career advice, among other activities. The Pathfinder Program occurs during your second and third year in the spring semester and the CSO will send out information concerning applying.

**How to reach the CSO.** The CSO is located on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of the law school. You may email or call Assistant Dean O’Brien or Director Bencze directly. The CSO prides itself on its’ responsiveness and we will return your communication as soon as possible. Appointments with your designated CSO professional can be made directly using Calendly.

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**Alisa N. Benedict O'Brien, Esq.**

330-972-8540

[ab139@uakron.edu](mailto:ab139@uakron.edu)

<https://calendly.com/ab139>

**Alecia N. Bencze, Esq.**

330-972-7876

[anb77@uakron.edu](mailto:anb77@uakron.edu)

<https://calendly.com/anb77>

Director Bencze is the designated 1L and two-year JD professional. All upper class Akron Law students and Akron Law alumni are encouraged to make an appointment with Dean O'Brien. Please note, however, that anyone in the CSO is here to help you.

**How to use the CSO.** Simply, the only way to maximize the CSO's resources to enhance your career development is to actually use them early and often. CSO access for 1L students is restricted until **July 1** for Summer Start Students, **October 1** for Fall Start students and **February 1** for Spring Start students. The CSO schedules mandatory small group meetings we call "Get to Know the CSO" for Summer and Fall Start 1Ls at the beginning of October and for Spring Start 1Ls at the beginning of February. We will email you with more details. After attending your "Get to Know the CSO" session, first years are welcome to use all of the services of the CSO and are encouraged to do so early and often.

You came to law school to get a job using your J.D. The most destructive thing that you can do to that objective is to forsake your career development while a student. Focus leads to diligence. Diligence leads to opportunity. Opportunity leads to success.

**CHAPTER 2**  
**CAREER PLANNING AND JOB SEARCH TIMELINE**

**Career Planning and Job Search Timeline**

This Career Planning and Job Search Timeline is an introductory tool for Akron Law students to help plan your career development, and to help determine how to meet your post-law school professional aspirations.

This timeline is a road map to follow through each semester of your law school career. While it may seem early to begin planning your career in the very first year of a three-year or four-year degree program, many important milestones happen almost immediately, and you need to be ready. The experience of hundreds of law students has taught us the secret to obtaining post-graduation employment is to start early and to take responsibility for your career development from the first months of law school. The following timeline will give you some guidelines to follow.

Many additional resources and individualized counseling appointments are available through the Career Services Office (“CSO”), as well as on our web page: <http://www.uakron.edu/law/career-services/>.

**Career Planning and Job Search Timeline**

This Career Planning and Job Search Timeline is an introductory tool for Akron Law students to help plan your career development, and to help determine how to meet your post-law school professional aspirations.

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Many additional resources and individualized counseling appointments are available through the Career Services Office (“CSO”), as well as on our web page: <http://www.uakron.edu/law/career-services/>.

### First Year, First Semester

- **July (December for Spring Start)**
  - Complete your self-assessment for Get to Know the CSO
- **August (January for Spring Start)**
  - Submit your resume to Director Bencze for a mandatory resume review.
  - Attend first-year orientation session (includes part-time and full-time students)
    - Identifies and explains resources available through CSO.
    - Helps plan steps to prepare you for law school and professional development.
  - Consider specialization vs. general practice: start thinking about what kind of law you are interested in pursuing and what courses excite you.
    - Specialization: will want to build up documented record of interest and experience in that specialty (e.g., civil rights law, labor law, health care law, international law, public interest, intellectual property, etc.).
    - General Practice: will want to build up a record of well-rounded experience in traditional areas of law (e.g., business, transactional, litigation, criminal, estate planning, etc.).

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- Consider which law school and community organizations share your interests, or will expose you to areas of law within your interests so you can learn more about those areas and future career opportunities within those areas. This is also a good way to start building relationships for future networking opportunities.
- **September (February for Spring Start)**
  - Concentrate on studying to get the best grades possible and adjust to law school.
  - Attend CSO workshops/information sessions to learn about practice areas, gain tips on job searching, and obtain other information not available elsewhere. Calendar of events is in the Career Connection and on our webpage.
  - Start your class-specific Pathway on Symplicity.
  - Build or update your LinkedIn profile.
  - Attend Career Kick-Off Event at Akron Law with local and state bar associations.
  - Join other local bar associations – you will be automatically enrolled as a member in the Akron Bar Association, Ohio Bar Association, and the American Bar Association.
- **October (March for Spring Start)**
  - Attend CSO workshops.
  - Attend First Year CSO Orientation:
    - CSO access for 1L students is restricted until **October 1** for Fall/Summer Start Students and **February 1** for Spring Start students. Soon thereafter, CSO will host mandatory 1L Orientation sessions at varying times. Students must attend one session.
      - These sessions will be tailored based on the information provided during your self-assessment.

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- These mandatory orientation sessions provide information that is critical to your second semester and first summer. For example:
  - How to start (applying, networking, etc.) on job search strategies, etc.
  - An individualized career plan for your area of interest
- Log on to Symplicity/AkronLawJobs upon receiving email notification from our office. Create your individual profile.
- Study. Also get plenty of rest, exercise and healthy diet. This will help with stress, which will help with exams, which will help you get interviews!
- Socialize with your law school classmates – they will be your future colleagues. You never know when a law school classmate will be in position to pass on your resume, act as a reference, or even hire you.
- **November (March/April for Spring Start)**
  - Continue to attend CSO workshops/presentations.
  - Review the CSO handbook, as well as resources available on the CSO Resource Library, specifically resume and cover letter handouts.
  - Prepare a draft cover letter and schedule an appointment with Director Bencze to review.
    - Day and evening appointments are available.
    - Virtual appointments are available on Teams.
    - 1L Part-time students can make appointments as early as August or January if Spring Start.
  - Identify opportunities for first-year summer positions, including internships with large, medium and small firms, both local and non-local, public interest opportunities, and judicial clerking.
  - Special note to Spring Start students: consider taking summer courses, participating in clinics, or volunteer work.
- **December**

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- Begin applying for first year summer associate programs: Large-firm employers associated with the National Association of Legal Professionals (NALP) start accepting applications on December 1 annually.
  - Large firms require students with excellent grades, generally top 10-15%.
  - It is likely that first-year grades and/or class rank will not be released before submitting applications.
  - Important: update applications once you have your grades/rank.
- Begin applying for diversity fellowships, as applicable.
- Review the governmental summer internships requirements and submission timelines.
  - Hot tip: Arizona Law Government Honors and Internship Program Handbook is available on the CSO Resource Library. See us for the password.
- Start sending out resumes and making contact with small and medium sized law firms.
- Utilize online legal directories such as Martindale.com or local bar directories, and LinkedIn to locate firms in your area.
- Attend holiday networking receptions.

### **Semester Break (Spring Break for Spring Start)**

- Have a plan to make your break productive
  - Contact local attorneys and schedule time to meet with them for coffee or lunch.
    - Do not make it all about resumes and interviews and jobs. Going in with this attitude will only turn off potential employers.
    - Remember, your goal is to get substantive legal work, not necessarily a job. Establish networks,

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- make contacts, create relationships. Those will hopefully turn into a job, an internship, or even just a “shadowing” experience at a later time.
- Submit applications and schedule interviews over the semester break where opportunities are available.
- Call or visit hometown attorneys over the break, and follow up with a resume and cover letter.
  - Include in your cover letter information learned during your discussions, and include information that shows you have local connections.
  - Start networking for summer clerkships.
- Take advantage of every opportunity presented to you.
  - If an attorney offers you coffee – take it.
  - If the county prosecutor offers for you to observe a trial – go.
  - If a partner offers you the chance to shadow him / her – do it.

### **First year, Spring Semester**

- Fall Start Students: prepare application materials, resume and writing samples after first semester exams.
  - Have final resume reviewed by CSO in January – do not wait!
- **January**
  - Large firms will continue to accept applications.
  - Attend all CSO workshops and presentations.
  - Discuss research assistant positions with professors for summer and the next academic year.
  - Apply to smaller-sized law firms for summer jobs.
  - Meet with Assistant Dean O’Brien to discuss summer externship opportunities.
  - Participate in the Minority Clerkship Program through the Cleveland Metropolitan Bar Association (CMBA) if applicable. Check the Career Connection for application guidelines. *Open to Spring Start students.*

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- **February**
  - Spring On-Campus Interview (OCI) and Resume Collection. Spring Starts: view and apply for all participating employers on Symplicity.
- **February/March/April**
  - Apply to smaller-sized law firms for summer jobs.
  - Spring OCI Program continues.
  - Register for the Loyola Patent Law Interview Program (PLIP) if pursuing a career in IP.
  - Attend CSO Workshops and presentations.
  - Join student organizations.
    - Great opportunity for current and future networking.
    - Shared activities are fun and often benefit the local community.
- **March**
  - Set up an appointment for a mock interview with Director Bencze or Dean O'Brien.
  - Attend the Government and Public Interest information fair – dress appropriately and bring your resume.
    - Many students obtain summer internships by attending the fair and making good impressions.
  - Inquire with CSO about externships and the Public Interest Law Fellowship Program.
    - Externships: legal placement for credit
    - Fellowships: obtain volunteer public interest job and apply for a monetary award
      - Deadline for PIL Fellowships is customarily mid-April. Pay attention to the Career Connection for actual date and time. Also, look out for other fellowships beyond the PIL Fellowship. Check Equal Justice Works and PSJD.
- **April**
  - Register for national job fairs held during the summer. =
  - Try out for Moot Court and Trial Teams.



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- National Association of Legal Professionals (NALP) Directory of Legal Employers -- <http://www.nalpdirectory.com/>
- PSJD (NALP's Public Service network) -- <http://www.psjd.org/>
- Job Bank through Brigham Young University Law School at [https://www.law2.byu.edu/Career\\_Services/jobbank/](https://www.law2.byu.edu/Career_Services/jobbank/). Contact the CSO for username and password.
- LinkedIn.
- Contact CSO for more information and assistance.
- **June/July**
  - Review CSO Fall OCI Program package and instructions sent via email.
  - Make appointment with Dean O'Brien to discuss employer research as necessary.
  - Note: CSO **is open** during the summer. Update resume, writing sample and order new transcripts.
  - Request resume / cover letter review from CSO.
  - Review CSO interview resources posted online and participate in the Mock Interview program with local attorneys held in July (or anytime by arrangement throughout the school year).
  - Remember to get resumes and tailored cover letters **out by the deadlines** to large-firm employers participating in the Fall OCI Program (using Symplicity/AkronLawJobs).
    - **Must** follow the CSO OCI packet schedule for application deadlines and requirements.
  - Send your resume, cover letter, etc. to firms who are not participating in the Fall OCI Program. Visit firm websites for specific instructions.
- **August**

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- **Important:** Many law firms, including most small law firms, do not participate in on-campus recruiting. Firms that are unable to participate in the OCI Program often request the CSO to collect designated application materials and forward them to the respective employer for consideration. The Fall list of employers requesting resume collects is included in the Master Fall OCI Program and on Symplicity.
- Participate in Fall OCI Program. Fall OCI is traditionally a second year program, so 2FT/3PT students who meet an employer's criteria are more in demand for the OCI Program (including 2 YR JDs.)
  - OCI is an outstanding opportunity to jump start your legal career early. If you meet an employer's stated criteria, **do not miss out.**
- If you are not eligible for Fall OCI, or are a 3FT / 4PT student, do not sit on your hands!
  - Make an appointment to meet with Dean O'Brien.
  - Pay attention for CSO workshops targeted to help your specific situation or seek out assistance from CSO!
  - CSO has effective strategies and ideas for job searching for the vast majority of students who do not qualify for OCI.
- If you have not already, engage with bar associations (remember, you have student memberships!) and participate in committees as a way to both network and to learn about legal practice areas and opportunities in your area.

<b>Second Year, Fall Semester</b>
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- **Throughout Second Year**
  - Attend CSO workshops and presentations.

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- Review 2L Pathway on Symplicity, including 2L Handbook.
- Participate in Bar Association Committees, Continuing Legal Education (CLE) courses and other mentoring/networking opportunities.
- Start developing your contact and networking list! Make sure you are making yourself a known member of the legal community.
- Contact alumni in the area you would like to practice in after graduation, and set-up informal meetings, informational interviews, lunches, etc.
- **September/October**
  - Meet with Dean O'Brien to discuss 2L summer positions and judicial clerkships. Applying for clerkships can be difficult and complicated.
  - Attend CSO workshops and information sessions.
  - Update your resume to include your 1L summer experiences, leadership/volunteer activities, grades/Rank, honors, and activities.
  - Update your LinkedIn.
  - Meet with Dean O'Brien to discuss externship opportunities for spring semester.
  - Attend the Career Kick-Off and Bar Association Meet and Greet in late September.
- **October**
  - Fall OCI continues. Apply to job postings as well.
  - Attend Equal Justice Works Fair in D.C.
- **October-December**
  - STUDY and WORK HARD. The second year in law school is, for most students, the most difficult and demanding. Your time will be stretched and much will be expected of you. Learn to multi-task and work hard; it is a precursor to your life as an attorney.

<b>Winter Break</b>
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- Rest.
- Continue to fine tune your resume and cover letter – continual updating is essential
- Continue networking and maintaining your web of contacts. This includes: follow up emails/calls with those you have already met, sending out new resumes, and requesting informational interviews.
- Investigate volunteer opportunities to gain additional experience in desired field and to accumulate Pro Bono hours toward your graduation requirement.

### **Second Year, Spring Semester**

- **January**
  - Meet with Dean O'Brien (designated 2L/3L professional) to review current version of resume and cover letter.
  - Meet with Dean O'Brien to discuss externship opportunities for summer.
  - Complete an application for the Akron Bar Pathfinder Program to obtain a mentor.
- **January/February/March**
  - Apply for summer jobs with medium and small firms -- the earlier the better.
  - Some jobs will be available later than this, especially in smaller firms, so stay in touch with CSO.
  - Attend Career Workshops and presentations and continue reading the Career Connection and checking AkronLawJobs/Symlicity.
  - Contact Dean O'Brien regarding out-of-state job searching tools, including Reciprocity.
  - Akron Bar Pathfinder Mentors are assigned and events take place.
- **February**
  - Spring OCI begins.

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- Attend Spring OCI information session.
- Create OSCAR account if interested in federal clerkships. Prepare materials and seek letters of recommendation for federal clerkships. Start learning the in's and out's of OSCAR.
- **February/March**
  - Spring OCI Program continues.
  - Government and Public Interest Information Fair.
  - Start preparing judicial clerkship application materials (federal and those state courts who you have not already applied to).
    - Note: state level judicial clerkships tend to vary more in their deadlines. Contact courts and/or CSO for assistance determining hiring cycles for state courts.
    - You will need multiple letters of recommendation, writing samples, etc.
      - Contact your recommenders early because it often takes a long time to get a recommender to actually get the letter to you.
    - Investigate application timelines and application means.
      - OSCAR for federal clerkships has very defined timelines. CSO can help.
      - OSCAR access is available:  
<https://oscar.uscourts.gov/>

<b>Summer</b>
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- Work. Your goal should be to have a paid legal job for the summer. If you are public interest minded, a full time job at a public interest organization (which may be paid or not).
  - Participate in the Externship Program / Public Interest Law Fellowship Program.

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- I.e., prosecutor/public defender offices, court and other opportunities.
  - Work at the Akron Law Clinics.
- Apply for Law Review or other Law Journals – editorial staff.
- Apply for federal and state government post-graduate positions and state clerkships. Many deadlines pop up prior to 3L year.
- **July**
  - Attend Department of Justice online webinars for Honors Program information.
  - Participate in Mock Interview Program.
- **August**
  - Update resume, writing sample, and cover letters.
  - Continue to meet with Dean O'Brien to review your resume, cover letter, and practice interviewing.
  - Start 3L Pathway on Symplicity.
  - By August, remember to directly apply to as many legal employers as possible, including large-firm employers not participating in the Fall OCI Program and out-of-state employers.
  - Identify employers specifically interviewing 3Ls and 4Ls during Fall OCI and prepare resumes and tailored cover letters. Participate in Fall OCI Program for 3Ls.
  - Network!
- **NOTE: If you have been working at a law firm as a summer associate, most firms will want you to continue working throughout your third year. THIS IS A GOOD THING and should be done. At this point in your career, you will need to learn how to balance your job with your classes. Quitting your job despite the employer's continued interest in you to make time for school is not a good idea. You will have to learn how to make time for both!**

<b>Third Year, Fall</b>
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- **September**

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- Apply for Federal Honors programs
  - Presidential Management Fellowship.
  - Honors programs (i.e., Department of Justice, Department of Housing and Urban Development, etc.) are typically due around Labor Day.
  - Details available in the Career Connection and via emails.
- Follow federal law clerk hiring process for applying to particular federal courts.
- Apply to state court clerkships and public interest post-graduate fellowships.
- **October**
  - Meet with Dean O'Brien and work your 3L job search plan.
- **November**
  - Note to December Grads: complete your exit interview with the CSO. Information packet will be emailed to you in September.
  - Contact CSO to develop job strategies to target small to mid-size firms that do not participate in OCI Program.
  - Continue to network through law school, alumni and Bar Association events, as well as reaching out to the legal community for mentoring.
    - Most lawyers will respond positively, but **you** have to reach out to **them**.
- **December**
  - Continue to update resume and cover letters.
  - Continue to build your professional network - send out resumes and request informational interviews over the break.
  - Investigate volunteer opportunities to gain additional experience in desired field.

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### Third Year, Spring Semester

- **January**
  - May Grads: You will receive your CSO graduation requirements:
    - Exit interview, Employment survey, Directory information, Job seeker resources.
- **February**
  - Make appointment with CSO to tailor your employment searches.
  - Participate in Spring OCI Program where applicable.
  - Schedule your exit interview with the CSO.
  - Network – time to reconnect and make new connections with members of the legal community!
- **March**
  - Continue participating in CSO workshops and programs.
  - Government and Public Interest Information Fair (some participants may interview that day).
  - Consider setting up informational interviews and conducting outreach to attorneys in your desired field/practice area. Keep an updated spreadsheet of your contacts/follow-up items. The CSO can help you with this!
- **April**
  - Deadline for submitting completed graduation interview, employment survey and directory information to CSO.
- **May**
  - Graduation!
  - Stay in touch with CSO for continued opportunities and alumni counseling.
- **June - December**
  - Many opportunities **for graduates come up from June to December**, particularly after Bar passage. Continue to check your Akron email!
  - Apply to posted positions on AkronLawJobs, the blog, and the Career Connection. Cast a wide net!

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- Join the Law School Alumni Association.
- Continue clerking for your current employer while awaiting bar results if offered this opportunity.
- Keep developing and working your career and networking plan.

*Prepared by the University of Akron School of Law Career Services Office, July 2022*

### **Career/Job Search Preparation: A Lifelong Approach**

Most attorneys change jobs at least four times in their lives. Therefore, learning how to conduct an effective job search now is a skill that will serve you both now and in the long run.

Do not be concerned if you entered law school without a specific career goal in mind. You certainly are not alone! Determining a career path takes time, effort, and a lot of soul searching. Taking the time to learn about the different areas of the law (by talking to practicing attorneys and participating in CSO workshops) is the best way to familiarize yourself with your chosen profession and to equip yourself with the knowledge to make an informed choice.

To be successful in your job search, you must also go through a period of serious self-assessment to determine your abilities, interests, and needs. Much of what you learn about both the law and your own strengths and preferences will be through personal experiences and discussions with others, including: professors, attorney supervisors, interviewers, program speakers, friends, family, and classmates. Once you make these determinations, you must then take the time to evaluate potential careers to find the calling that best matches your abilities, interests and needs.

Although it will certainly provide you peace of mind if you have found a focus by the time you graduate, it is important to note that many graduating law students have not yet clarified their career goals. Do not

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worry! Finding your practice area or niche after law school is normal. Further, your career planning will and should continue throughout your working life. However, this fact does not alleviate your responsibility to learn as much as you can during your law school career, and by doing so, may make things easier in the long run.

For example, if you diligently inquire about litigation while in law school, that is talk to litigators, work for a litigation firm, attend CSO workshops on litigation, and take Trial Advocacy classes, you may decide litigation is not for you. This diligence, research and self-assessment then saves you from taking a litigation job in the real world, and, potentially being pigeon-holed as a “litigator” – a career path that you would not enjoy.

There are numerous effective ways to approach career planning and no single method will suit everyone. Many excellent books have been written on the subject and most include exercises that you can do yourself to help you key in on factors for a compatible work environment and suitable career growth. The career collections in both the Law Library and in the CSO contain several books that address legal career paths specifically and others that are more general.

The CSO can also help you via its workshops, seminars, and other attorney contacts. The CSO provides students with many opportunities to meet local attorneys throughout the academic year. Further, on a one-on-one basis, we can help you to identify and explore paths and evaluate your interests and skills.

### **Areas of Law**

Your law degree and eventual license to practice law demonstrate commitment, persistence, intelligence, and strong analytical abilities. These qualities are valuable in a competitive job market, no matter what exact field you choose. A Juris Doctor can be used in traditional legal employment, non-traditional legal employment and non-legal employment. One helpful way to begin to identify preferences is by

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getting an overview of the types of employment in which lawyers are typically involved. While you should not rely too heavily on generalizations, the following can help you to begin to focus your search.

### **Traditional Legal Employment**

#### **Law Firms**

Up to half of Akron Law graduates report entering law firms directly following graduation. Historically, students who clerk for firms during law school are often offered permanent positions upon graduation.

Seeing a law firm as a for-profit business comprised of many co-owners, professionals, and support employees will help you to understand how these organizations operate. Income must be generated through cultivating and satisfying clients. The firm must be managed by a managing partner and/or committee. Operations must be geared to maintaining or improving the quality of the service that is provided to clients while maintaining or reducing the costs, including overhead.

Most attorneys start their careers as associates. After a number of years, which can vary greatly from firm to firm, they may be invited to join the ranks of partner, shareholder, or principal status, depending on the firm's structure. Regardless of the title, law firm partners generally have the right to part of the firm's annual profit. Along with the financial benefits, law firm partners are also responsible for supervising associates and developing business.

A number of attorneys choose instead to be staff attorneys (also called contract attorneys, senior attorneys, etc.), with little or no track for promotion. The division between associates and staff attorneys can usually be measured in a number of ways: staff attorneys are hired for specific mid-level tasks and often for specific projects, involving research and writing, including document production. Benefits, including professional malpractice insurance and continuing legal education

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(mandated in Ohio and most other states), are sometimes paid at a lower level or not at all. Hours are significantly shorter.

Associates, while often involved in much the same work initially as staff attorneys, are simultaneously being groomed for other responsibilities, such as case management, hiring, supervision, and client development. They are also paid more from the time they are hired, as greater potential is considered part of their value to the firm. In other words, in addition to providing service for income, associates learn how to run the business of the law firm as future co-owners.

The differences among firms can be startling. Most firms above 100 attorneys are engaged in many practice areas, so that one client may work with many lawyers in different departments and various cities that semi-independently fill different needs.

Firms of any size are usually either client driven or substantively oriented. In the former, they handle either all or most of the clients' needs on demand, from business start-ups through mergers, dissolutions, acquisitions and bankruptcies, purchase and sale of real estate, labor agreements and estate planning to perhaps even the same client's prenuptial agreements, wills, residence sales and divorces. Boutique firms specialize and often gain their clients through referrals from general practice and other specialty firms. Common examples of such specialization are litigators in different fields (including lawyers who handle only trials), labor arbitrators, intellectual property, and criminal defense lawyers. Many other specialty firms exist in areas that you may not even imagine, such as school board representation, municipal bond work, and oil and gas rights.

Firm structure can also vary greatly. Generally, very large firms (over 100 attorneys) are departmentalized and it can be extremely difficult or even impossible for an associate to move among departments, commonly called "practice groups". Most firms, however, give students and young associates the opportunity to rotate through several practice groups before making a choice. Each practice group generally has a head or

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chairperson, and attorneys work in teams or separately under his or her direction. Particularly in the first few years, the work you are assigned will probably be only a small slice of the total business of any case and you may sometimes find yourself buried in researching minute intricacies that only large firms with large clients can afford.

The clients of large firms are usually medium to large corporations and their executive boards and management, government offices and institutions. A smaller general practice firm will have a mix of predominantly smaller businesses and individuals as their client base.

Small firms tend to be more diverse in atmosphere. Some require a corporate look from their associates; others have “dress down” days. Some are known for a collegial atmosphere, others for a hard driving, results oriented environment. Firms of all sizes also differ greatly as to how much management responsibility and power associates and junior partners have, if any.

If you are a person who loves structure, a large firm may be ideal. If you enjoy the wheeling and dealing of large business deals, the complexity of the elements involved, and the prestige associated with the work, then you will likely be very happy. If you are uncomfortable or impatient with office politics or you find little joy in reading *The Wall Street Journal* and other business oriented papers, beware! While these firms generally pay the most to new associates and summer students (called “summer associates”), competition for these positions is fierce and is based significantly on law school grades. Further, many new associates find that they can only tolerate the high billable hours, operating on a global time-clock, and political career maneuvering for so long.

Moreover, generally, firms are becoming much more overt about client development. Since students learn very little about this aspect of practice while they are in school, each law student should spend time during any work experience discovering how different firms develop clients, how associates are trained and nurtured, and how important client

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development is in determining your career track. Client development is a crucial part of law practice and if you do not think you would enjoy or excel at client development, private practice may not be right for you.

Regarding employment during law school, the experience you gain can be very different according to the size and needs of each firm. With notable exceptions, firms over 50 attorneys often hire “summer associates” to give them positive experiences in the law—particularly with their firms—in the hope that these students will accept offers of permanent employment after graduation. Although the wining and dining and the sky-high salaries about which you may have heard are not uncommon in these situations, these firms also endeavor to give their summer associates solid critiques on the work they produce, and they plan often elaborate summer programs around both objectives. Beware, however, that the current downturn in the economy has forced many law firms to re-evaluate their summer associate programs and the programs may not be as elaborate or fun-filled as they have been in the past.

Small firms typically hire clerks for year round employment because they need work done which does not require full time professionals or support staff. “Law clerks” as they are generally called, are usually paid hourly wages comparable to those of undergraduate positions and an educational program is not arranged for you. You may be the firm’s only clerk and will likely need to be more proactive during your experience (i.e. suggesting opportunities to attend client meetings or go to court). The partner(s) may let you know that, regardless of your performance, they cannot afford to offer you a permanent position following graduation.

So why would a law student want to clerk in a small firm? First, there are many more opportunities at smaller firms. Some of these firms do hire first-year students as a jump start on their campus public relations and to “home grow” their associates, but they are rare and the competition is severe. Second, the smaller the firm, the fewer the layers of organization and the more opportunities you will have to observe and interact with senior partners. The work is not usually as complex and

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protracted, which will give you a much better overall picture of how cases, transactional matters, and clients are managed. In litigation, smaller cases are more likely to go through the discovery process, motion practice, and to trial. One of the most exciting experiences for a law student at a small firm is to be able to contribute to preparation for a trial, by preparing witnesses, drafting jury instructions, and “sitting at the table”.

The CSO library contains several publications that profile firms in considerable detail. A law firm’s website is also a great source of information on everything from what clients the firm represents to a list of their attorneys, staff, and office locations.

### **Solo Practice**

Each year, a few Akron Law graduates decide to enter solo practice. This is usually done either entirely on their own or by entering into an office sharing or “of counsel” agreement with an experienced attorney, who usually subcontracts extra work to them and teaches them the fundamentals of the practice. Sometimes an office sharing arrangement provides access to group benefits as well.

Also, many local bar associations, operate Incubator programs for those graduates interested in solo practice with oversight and mentorship.

A few years after graduation, many more attorneys have taken this route and report doing well. The ability to choose clients and cases and take total responsibility for practice decisions and client counseling attracts many experienced lawyers who are less team oriented and structured and more entrepreneurial. The financial risk is greater and potentially more rewarding. Most solo practitioners find the work exhilarating and would never trade their practice for a “cushy” partner job at a big firm.

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### **Government**

Lawyers are employed in every branch and at virtually every level of government. The U.S. Department of Justice alone (the investigation and litigation arm of the federal government) is the single largest employer of attorneys in the country.

Some attorneys will tell you that the major drawback to government service is getting hired. The application process, even for the summer internships, is a very slow procedure, particularly when background check (security clearance) is involved. Identifying specific departments and their hiring authorities is a crucial, yet often elusive, step. The rule of thumb is generally to be persistent and consistent in your repeated contacts, including making every effort to meet personally with people even when openings do not currently exist.

The Library has an excellent collection of federal and state directories, as well as county directories for some states. Some publications include explanations of department structure, numbers of attorneys and contact names. Most government agencies and departments also have excellent websites that give extensive information about their department's work and details about their hiring procedures.

### **Administrative Agencies**

Working for an administrative agency is often a prime way to begin or gain further experience in a specialty. Many attorneys enter such a situation intending to spend four (sometimes a contractual minimum) or more years creating policy and cultivating contacts which can be transferred to a lucrative sole or group private practice or corporation. Many such lawyers, whose less than stellar law school grades perhaps shut them out of the largest firms or most exclusive boutique (specialty) practices at graduation, find this "back door" approach highly effective.

You can improve your ability to be hired or advance your standing through geographic flexibility. At any level of government, it is usually

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far easier to receive an employment offer for a rural area. Happily, since, federal positions customarily pay the same amount for most locations (state government wages are set by each state and may differ), your income will stretch much further than it would in such a desirable location as Washington, D.C. Take heart, you can always transfer!

### **Judiciary**

The judicial system also hires many attorneys, primarily as judges, magistrates, referees, clerks, and prosecutors. The federal courts are separated into trial level (called “District Courts”), appellate level (called “Circuit Courts”) and the United States Supreme Court. There are other specialized federal courts as well, including the United States Bankruptcy Courts, and various U.S. courts of tax, claims and international trade. Federal judges are appointed by the President of the United States.

There are also approximately 30 federal executive agencies that utilize Administrative Law Judges (“ALJs”). Most ALJs hire staff attorneys and hiring varies from agency to agency. The best way to learn of available opportunities is to visit the agency websites, contact the ALJs’ office directly, and monitor USAJobs.gov.

The structure of state courts varies from state to state. In Ohio, the main levels are trial courts (“Common Pleas”, other county, municipal and mayor’s courts), appellate and Supreme Courts. Other state courts are juvenile and domestic relations, probate and the Court of Claims. All Ohio judges are elected.

Law students are often employed by individual judges as externs during the summer. While these positions are usually non-paying, you will have direct contact with one or more judges, attend trials, perform research for pending cases and help draft orders and opinions and generally gain great insight into the workings of the court system and judicial decision making. Having a judge as an employment reference does not hurt, either! Students interested in working at the court may be

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compensated in two ways: (1) Earn credit through Akron Law's Externship Program; and (2) Earn a fellowship through Akron Law's Public Interest Law Program. Contact CSO for details.

Both state and federal court employ magistrates and referees. While magistrates and referees preside over proceedings and have decision making capabilities, it is not nearly as extensive as that of judges. Many magistrates, especially federal magistrates, also have externs and clerks and provide work experience similar to that of judicial clerks.

Lawyers are often employed by the court system as judicial law clerks. These positions are available to law school graduates who for a set term, usually one to two years, act as a judge's right hand. Although a judicial law clerk's responsibilities vary greatly depending on the judge and the level of the court, most law clerks do a great deal of research and analysis, which they present to the judges to whom they are assigned orally or in writing. Some judge's law clerks may also perform certain administrative tasks. It is considered an honor to be a judicial clerk, especially for a federal judge, so the competition for these positions tends to be quite fierce. Federal judges tend to hire their law clerks well in advance of their terms and students generally begin applying for these positions in May of their second year. Many federal judges use the online application system known as *OSCAR*. Further info about *OSCAR* is available from the CSO. State court judges generally do not hire their law clerks quite so far in advance but it is best to determine the courts' hiring practices, check by contacting the courts directly.

Prosecutors, including U.S. Attorneys on the federal level, Attorney Generals on the state level and District Attorneys on the county level, are also employed by the court system. These offices are excellent places at which to obtain experience in criminal or civil trial work. Most prosecutors' offices hire students as volunteers or for pay and, except for the U.S. Attorney's Office, they also generally hire new graduates, as well. Prosecutors' offices are noted for offering early responsibility and a very fast paced environment. Competition for these jobs is great so those interested in a career in prosecution are advised to consider such offices in rural areas and then network your way into larger urban areas.

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### **Legislature**

Many lawyers work on Capitol Hill or for the state government as aides to elected representatives. In addition to supervisory duties (some U.S. senators have staffs the size of midsize companies!) and speech writing, they participate in committee and subcommittee activities in which their employers are members. Aides are regular targets of lobbyists (another common lawyerly career) as they can influence legislative voting significantly. It's very difficult, though not impossible, to find such a position immediately after graduation. Be prepared to be (in fact, you must have started before law school) the ultimate political mixer. If this is a more far off goal, start now by contacting your local congressional representative and senator.

The career paths for legislative aides are many. Some ride their representatives' coattails all the way to the top. Others leave for administrative or executive office positions or they create or join lobbying firms for the institutions they supported.

Other legislative positions include positions for the Senate or Congress as a whole, where you become involved in cutting edge issues through detailed research and high level briefings before legislators and their aides. At both the federal and state levels, it is commonly lawyers who draft legislation.

### **Military**

The legal system of the military is separate from civilian courts. Each branch of the military (Army, Navy, Marines, Air Force, and even the Coast Guard) has its own lawyers and judges who are members of the JAG ("Judge Advocate General") Corps for that particular branch. The military actively recruits Akron Law students and the CSO maintains files of information about the JAG Corps for each branch of the military.

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### **Public Interest**

Akron Law students historically have a strong commitment to public interest. The role of public interest law is to promote the representation of the underrepresented, ensure equal access to the legal system for all and to raise society's consciousness regarding social and political issues that affect all of our lives. Public interest lawyers represent a variety of individuals, including the poor, the homeless, minorities, the elderly, veterans, workers, and consumers. In addition to representing a diverse group of people, public interest lawyers perform a wide range of law-related activities and their work embraces a wide diversity of issues, including: immigration, the environment, employment, housing, civil rights, First Amendment rights, consumer rights, education and child abuse.

Public interest practice settings are also numerous and can be broken down into three broad categories. The three categories are:

(a) *Public Interest Organizations*—these include civil rights groups, legal services corporations, legal aid societies, public defenders offices, children's rights centers, prisoners' rights centers, disability law centers, social action organizations and other specialized law centers that work to protect rights of underrepresented people. Legal Aid offices offer direct representation of clients and sometimes perform legislative advocacy work as well. Recent funding cuts and changes in tax laws have forced these organizations to make do with less. Hiring for permanent employment is tight; you may have to be admitted to practice before you are offered a position. Be persistent and show employers you are serious through repeated, yet polite, contact.

A frequently overlooked resource for obtaining a public interest position is through fellowship or grant. Organizations that cannot afford to hire staff often welcome attorneys who can bring some or all of their own funding for at least a year. Cleveland has one of only four national branches of the Foundation Library which is located in the Hanna Building at 1422 Euclid Avenue. (The others are in Washington, DC,

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New York and San Francisco). The librarians are highly knowledgeable. If you call and schedule an appointment, they will help you conduct a thorough search of nonprofit organizations that award grants for various purposes. The Foundation Library's phone number is 216-861-1933.

Summer employment is an excellent way to learn about the satisfaction and frustrations of the legal market and to meet and impress hiring attorneys for later reference. Akron Law, through its membership in the National Association for Public Interest Law (NAPIL) supports students in their search for employment through basic funding for volunteer positions each summer, payment of fees for students to participate in national and regional job fairs and by extensive publication holdings in the Library.

(b) *The Private Bar*—there are a number of relatively small law firms across the country that devote a substantial amount of their practice to civil rights law, plaintiffs' tort cases, union-side labor law, prisoners' rights and tenants' rights. Public interest law firms may also represent cities and counties or public organizations and agencies in the area of municipal law.

In addition, some law firms devote some of their resources to handling pro bono cases and allow associates to spend a certain amount of time in a legal services office while still on salary at the law firm. Most other law firms, both large and small, encourage their attorneys to work on pro bono matters on an occasional basis.

(c) *Non-Practicing Legal Positions*—there are many alternatives to practicing “traditional” law in public interest organizations or law firms. These include policy, management, and legislative analysis positions.

### **Corporations**

About 20% of Akron Law graduates find employment each year with corporations. A majority of graduates who locate employment with in-house corporate legal departments have an extensive background in tax or accounting or an undergraduate degree in engineering or another

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technical field. Since corporations typically hire experienced lawyers who have been in practice for five years or more with private law firms, competition for permanent opportunities for new graduates is very intense even for those who possess the requisite backgrounds.

In-house attorneys may work on issues and projects inherent to the corporation's general operations, such as purchase / sale agreements, employment and HR matters, and labor negotiations, or in areas specific to a corporation's products or services, like patent applications and regulatory compliance. Depending on a company's structure, lawyers engaged in tax, personnel and risk management functions may also be included in the legal department.

In recent years, there has been significant growth in the number and size of in-house legal departments. Most Fortune 500 companies (the largest companies in the U.S.) find it cost effective because of their size to have in-house legal departments regardless of their products or services. Many corporations prefer to recruit experienced attorneys from the law firms which serve as outside counsel for the corporation, both for their substantive expertise and their ability to understand and control law firms' functions and costs. This is particularly true in litigation, where a growing number of corporations are requesting that the firms submit competitive bids and detailed records of charges.

Attorneys generally enter a corporation's legal department as staff attorneys, legal counsel, or assistant general counsel. Highest ranking attorneys within the company often have executive responsibilities and commonly hold titles such as a secretary, treasurer or vice president.

While law firms and corporations share the same goal—generation of income at the lowest cost – and while the work of the attorneys is often substantively the same, the two groups are engaged at different points of the businesses' operations, making their experiences and roles quite different. When you are an in-house corporate attorney, the company is your sole client and your job is to work to prevent costly litigation, minimize taxes and liability and ensure that your corporation is in

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compliance with all applicable rules and regulations. Although in-house lawyers have to sell their ideas and recommendations to the corporate leaders, they do not need to engage in client development in quite the same manner as law firms and private practitioners do.

### **Legal Publishing**

Opportunities in legal publishing are growing as vehicles for sharing information develop. Many lawyers who enter publishing as researchers and editors do so from a love of research and writing. Additionally, they do not have to worry about client development, exhausting hours or keeping track of billable time. Like legislative researchers, they are often involved at the cutting edge of legal analysis. For the corporate minded management opportunities are attractive and can lead in several directions, including senior editing, researchers, product development, marketing and executive level management.

Lawyers are also frequently hired as sales representatives for a publisher's legal client base, which may include firms, legal departments of corporations, law schools and government libraries, and faculty. Strong interpersonal skills are needed to be successful at this work, as it involves gaining clients' trust in you as well as your company and products. You may be responsible for extensive training and upgrades, especially if you represent an on-line computerized research service. Good training should result in reduced costs for a client, so your ability to understand computer communications and impart the information in a variety of non-technical ways to suit each client is essential. Those of you with sales experience can understand especially the satisfaction of such work. Examples include working as a representative of Westlaw or Lexis.

The advantages of working for legal publishers include lack of necessity for Bar admission (making it possible, for instance, to relocate to a different state and change employers almost without interruption) and the availability of flexible or part time hours.

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### **Academia**

If you really think you have not had enough of school by the time you graduate, you can always choose to stay for good! Positions in academia include faculty, administration and university counsel (which is much like an in-house corporate position). You can work for a law school or at any other level.

Feel free to talk to one or more law professors about what they do. If your pre-law advisor was a lawyer, you may also want to consult him or her. You will find that they all have different reasons for enjoying their work: some will talk about their love of teaching and watching the capacities of their student grow almost before their eyes; others will discuss the chance to write about intellectual and stimulating topics and the ways they can influence how others perceive current legal issues; still others will mention the prestige of association with a great institution and its scholars.

Faculty requirements vary by school. Law schools generally require significant post J.D. experience before you apply, and for most positions, your law school grades are very important, as is the writing experience (i.e., law journal experience) you gained during school. A brief review of [The AALS Directory of Law Teachers](#), will give you an indication of the backgrounds required law school faculty members. The Association of American Law Schools also publishes a placement bulletin. Undergraduate faculty and administrative position openings are listed in [The Chronicle of Higher Education](#).

Many administrative positions, especially at law schools, are often filled by those with law degrees. Lawyers are often found in law school career services office (such as Akron Law's), admissions offices, law clinics, and other student and alumni services offices. In these positions, one can expect to enjoy direct contact with current students, prospective students and those who have already graduated. The skills needed to succeed in these positions include organizational skills, counseling skills, analytical skills, and other skills these individuals may have honed in

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legal practice. Some of these positions may also be combined with teaching.

A hybrid position involving both faculty and administrative roles is that of some law librarians. Equipped with J.D.s and M.L.S.s, they give lectures and publish journals. Akron Law has several librarians with these credentials who would be happy to let you know more about what they do.

Universities also hire in-house counsel who give advice on a full range of legal and other issues confronted by the school's administration.

### **Non-Traditional Avenues**

Some law students graduate from law school with the unsettling feeling that the traditional practice of law is not what they imagined when they began law school. Luckily, there are many options available today to those who decide to shy away from the mainstream of practice. You may wish to use your experience in a career that requires knowledge of the law and frequent contact with lawyers or their needs, for example. You may decide, after any length of time, to leave practice and use your training and skills in other fields. You may have enrolled in law school so that you could be more effective, acquire greater responsibility and earn more in the field in which you intend to remain.

Hiring officials have become increasingly aware of the value of hiring lawyers to fill various positions within their organizations. Because of the basic skills that lawyers acquire in law school, attorneys have the qualifications to prosper in many different fields. Even if you failed to realize it while a law student, you have acquired basic skills in law school not provided by any other part of our educational system. These skills can lead to a competitive advantage in many fields. These skills include the ability to analyze facts and frame issues, legislative and regulatory analysis, and oral and written advocacy, to name just a

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few. These skills are not only basic to your value in a non-legal position, but are also essential to success in the business world.

Alternative law-related positions are found in every employment sector and in virtually every industry and economic endeavor, including corporations, trade associations, professional associations, government, advocacy organizations, foundations, colleges and universities, accounting firms, hospitals, museums, banks, insurance companies, and even law firms. For specific suggestions and a list of hundreds of alternative legal careers, please refer to Federal Reports Inc.'s "*600+ Things You Can Do With A Law Degree (Other Than Practice Law)*" and NALP'S [JD Advantage resources](#). In addition, the CSO has several resources dealing with alternative career options and how to go about finding one of these jobs.

Because these J.D. holders are not part of the mainstream of practice, it is harder to find them for advice. They do not tend to be members of Bar associations and it may not be known generally that they possess J.D.s. If you have an interest in any area, whether or not you think your legal skills will apply, ask the CSO, or the Alumni and Admissions offices, if staff members know of any alumni in that field. Ask questions.

Make a habit of reading about the recent developments in the field. You may want to subscribe to a general publication such as *The New York Times* or *Wall Street Journal* or search through the legal databases for existing articles. In interviews, people often mention their education backgrounds.

The paths which lawyers have followed are virtually infinite, but there are several common areas which you may wish to explore.

### **Business**

Since lawyers often deal with business people and are relied on for advice in a variety of matters, many decide to enter business themselves. In certain industries, you will find a high percentage of lawyers, for

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example: real estate development and management, financial services, mediation and general business consulting. In some ways, the people who enter these areas are the opposite in character to the classic attorney: they are involved daily in the creation of new opportunities by taking calculated, yet considerable risks; practicing attorneys tend to focus on ways to minimize risk through examination of similar circumstances in other cases. Akron Law offers a joint JD/MBA program as well as a JD/MTax and JD/MSA (Master of Science in Accountancy – Financial Forensics).

### **Law**

Students with an interest in advanced legal training centered on Intellectual Property are able to earn a LL.M in Intellectual Property Law as a joint degree. The LL.M in Intellectual property allows students to interact as part of a larger University community that includes The University of Akron's world-renowned polymer science program and award-winning engineering program.

### **Politics**

Legal training provides an excellent foundation for a career in politics. Elected positions are the most obvious, but other common examples are lobbying, campaign management, and political appointments. Akron Law offers JD/MAP (Master of Applied Politics) as well as JD/MPA (Master of Public Administration) programs.

### **Sports and Entertainment**

Aside from the obvious profession of agent, lawyers are engaged in a number of areas in sports and entertainment. Many lawyers are in compliance departments at universities and at all levels of the NCAA and other collegiate leagues. Further, lawyers are involved in all levels of professional sports leagues and for individual sports teams. Also, lawyers are heavily involved in the players' unions.

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In the entertainment world, a surprising number of attorneys are producers, directors and writers who use their ability to create and analyze contracts, assess business deals and investment possibilities, and outline and write competently and to a demanding production schedule (a highly prized commodity in weekly and daily television shows). Finally, although it is much more unlikely, a number of lawyers have gone on to become high profile pundits, panelists, and legal analysts.

### **Nonprofit Development, Fundraising and Management**

Nonprofit organizations are increasingly turning to professional developers, fundraisers, managers, and others who are politically savvy and well connected. Lawyers who have had experience in trust and estate planning are particularly well suited to the design and management of large gift giving programs. Lawyers are also sought after as board members since they can provide legal advice and/or guidance to an organization that may not be able to afford an ongoing relationship with outside counsel. Becoming a board member or a volunteer is often an excellent entree to gain experience in the nonprofit sector.

### **Fundamentals of Job Searching—A Lifelong Endeavor**

The first step in deciding what you want to do with your law degree is determining what your ideal or dream job is. Making this decision requires a great deal of introspection and soul searching. And although there is no magic formula for this kind of self-analysis, the following questions and exercises will help get you started in figuring out exactly what it is that will make you happy.

#### **Identifying Your Needs**

- 1. Who am I?** This includes your interests, your skills, your values (what gives meaning to your work and motivates you), the kind of people contact you like to have, and the kind of work environment that would make you happy.

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**a. Your interests** — What kinds of topics intrigue you? For example: What kinds of magazines do you read? What substantive issues do you discuss with your friends? What are your favorite television programs?

**b. Your skills** — What are your natural abilities? What are your abilities that other people have commented on? Do you have good writing skills? Are you good at talking and listening to other people and their problems? In other words, what are you good at?

**c. Your values** — What elements would create job satisfaction for you? In *“What Can You Do With A Law Degree,”* Deborah Arron suggests performing the following quiz. Scan the list and cross off the values that do not matter to you. Then, boil your list down to the six most important attributes. Your dream job should include these six elements!

achievement, accomplishment	action, fast-paced
aesthetics, appreciation of beauty	autonomy, make own choices
creativity, generating new ideas	peace of mind
being yourself with others	sense of humor
intellectual challenges	treating others fairly
knowledge, seeking truth	integrity, morality
pleasure, fun, enjoyment	influence, power
recognition	religious conviction
security	serving a cause
skill, being good at something	tangible results of effort

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variety of experiences	wealth; ample money
wisdom, insight, judgment	productivity at work
leisure, lots of time off	opportunities to travel

**d. What Kind Of People Contact Do You Want to Have?** Do you want to work in a team or by yourself? What are the personality traits of the people you hope to work with? What age group would like to work with?

**e. What Kind Of Work Environment Would Make You Happy?** Ask yourself the following questions: Do you want friendly and casual or intense and driven office atmosphere? Are you willing to work long, unpredictable hours or do you need a set schedule? What kind of physical setting do you prefer?

**2. What Do I Want?** What is your personal definition of success? What in life makes you the happiest? Where do you hope to be and what do you hope to be doing in five years? Ten years?

**3. What Am I Willing To Give Up To Get What I Want?** The issues involved in this question include money vs. meaning and work vs. family. As you know, it's impossible to get anything (at least anything worth getting) without giving something up. Being intellectually honest and admitting exactly what you are and are not willing to give up is a big step in determining what your dream job is. When answering this question, also take into account any geographic considerations that are important to you. In other words, where are you willing and not willing to live?

As a general rule, most lawyers change jobs at least four times in their lifetimes. So, it is safe to say that your first job out of law school will probably not be your dream job. Landing your dream job is a process that takes time, effort and patience. Please keep that in mind as you perform

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these self-assessment exercises and as you conduct your current job search.

### **Networking**

Now that you have determined what your ideal job is, be it legal, non-legal, traditional or non-traditional, the most important thing you can do now and forever is to learn how to effectively **NETWORK!** However, it is important not to subscribe to the generic and cliché definition of “networking.” Effective networking is not schmoozing, glad handing and handing out your cards at cocktail parties. While those are certainly elements, proper networking is about building lasting personal and professional relationships. So, not only is the initial contact important, so is the follow-up.

Networking has many purposes. It is an effective way to learn about your chosen profession, including the different career options and legal practice areas, what job search strategies work and which ones do not. Networking is also critical to learning about the 65% of all jobs out there that are not advertised anywhere. In addition, your future success as a lawyer may depend upon your ability to effectively network in order to generate new business for the firm.

And it’s really quite simple. Make a list of **all** the people you already know. **All** the people you already know include all your friends, family, professors, social acquaintances, doctor, minister, or whoever. These people need not be “professional” contacts—the important thing is just to tell everyone you know that you are looking for a job. Also, join organizations where there will be other people with common interests. In other words, talk to new people whenever you have a chance, listen to and show interest in what they have to say and learn about their jobs and their career paths. And that’s all networking is—meeting people and talking with them!

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### **Designing a Search Strategy**

Once you have identified in general terms the type of experience you are seeking over the summer or after graduation (for example, government agency practice or a position with a smaller firm in your home town), it is a good idea to make a list of all possible employers who meet your criteria. At the end of this section, you'll find a chart that you can use to keep you on track. Feel free to make as many copies of it as you want or to adapt it in any way.

Especially for your first summer, keep your criteria broad, so that your list of potential employers will be lengthy. A list that eventually contains about one hundred potential actual employers would be ideal. In most cases, if you prepare and implement your search, interviewing and follow through properly, you will not need to use nearly all the names. Aiming for such a large number will ensure, however, that you are not too narrow in your focus.

Composing a list of prospects is not hard. Most students use a combination of the people they know (who may themselves be attorneys) and the CSO resources located in the office, the law library, and the online Resource Library. Think of family, friends and former employers who may know of people you can approach for advice or a job. One student was very successful by contacting attorneys whom he had told of his law school plans while caddying for them during the summer at a local country club. Your pre-law advisor may also be of assistance, especially if you went to school near where you want to work.

Do not forget, as well, to check *The Career Connection*, and *AkronLawJobs*, regularly, for notices of openings and employers who are interviewing on campus.

Each summer, the CSO asks returning students to let us know where they spent the summer. Students can and do work in virtually every area mentioned in the practice area descriptions above. Some areas are filled more by first year students, for instance, professors' research assistant positions, and judicial externships.

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### Implementing Your Search

When you decide to start looking for a summer position depends on both the market you are entering and your own schedule. Markets vary in their timing, but be aware, it can be self-defeating to start too soon. A proper job search requires diligence and organization. Be careful to not begin before you are ready to allocate the time necessary to conduct a thorough and organized job search.

Take another look at the timeline at the beginning of this section. Prospective employers may initiate contact with law students early in the first year of law school, however, most employers, especially larger firms, will await fall semester grades (early – mid January) to begin engaging with potential law clerks. Be prepared to apply to large firms and federal government positions in January of your 1L year.

Most small and medium-sized employers and public sector employers solicit resumes from students from January - April and the vast majority of students find internships and jobs between spring break and the end of exams.

Grades are the foundation for your job search. Accordingly, your studies must take first priority. During your first year, you will be extremely busy and stressed; therefore, it is essential to plan your job search in small, manageable steps. Here are some tips to place and keep first years on track:

During **winter break**, arrange one or two opportunities to shadow a lawyer or conduct an informational interview in an area in which you are interested. This can be done by telephoning directly and asking for the lawyer in charge of a given area. These opportunities can result in an offer for a summer position or valuable referrals, as well as giving you an idea of the practice. Schedule coffee or lunch meetings, or informational interviews with local attorneys.

Contact bar associations if you are looking outside Northeast Ohio. A number of them offer student mentoring programs or invite students to

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attend section meetings. Take advantage of opportunities to meet and network with attorneys in non-interview situations. Some bar associations may even help graduating students find permanent positions. Student membership is often available at little or no cost.

Try to schedule within your breaks and any long weekends some time for meetings and interviews. If you are looking for a position outside of Northeast Ohio, you will need to spend some time locally to make yourself available for meetings. Plan ahead and lay the groundwork to avoid wasting valuable time.

Plan to send cover letters and resumes at least a couple of weeks before you plan to be at that location. While you can always include in the concluding paragraph of a letter that you will be in the area and that, if you do not hear from the recipient before you leave Akron (or by the time you arrive), you will call to arrange a convenient time to meet, warn the recipient of your letter and give him/her the chance to avoid your call. The CSO suggests that if you do not hear back by the week before your trip, simply email or call the person to whom you sent the letter and resume to see if he/she has time to meet with you.

Whenever possible, address your correspondence to hiring attorneys, rather than recruiting coordinators, since the former have the ability to offer you a position. Your email may be passed on, but it should reach its primary destination first.

Use the CSO, LinkedIn, and legal research databases to find alumni in your target areas or organizations. They can be a terrific help in giving general advice, suggesting places you may not have considered and forwarding your resume. You can arrange telephone or video meetings; if you plan to meet personally while you are visiting an area, try to meet the alum early in your visit so that you can take immediate advantage of his or her advice or referrals.

Never, ever, underestimate the power of a follow-up email or phone call. Students have received job offers simply because they followed up and stayed connected!

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### **Preparing Yourself for Interviews and Presenting Yourself Professionally**

This area is covered in detail in the section on interviewing. Several workshops during your law school career will also cover this topic and allow you to ask questions.

It is an excellent idea to treat almost any meeting with an attorney as an interview situation. Further, some students will become involved in bar association or alumni activities, where you may be matched with a lawyer in your interest area. Also, several firms extend invitations to students to attend cocktail parties and other gatherings, at their offices or at the school.

Always dress professionally, though you need not be quite as conservative as for an interview. Remember to carry copies of your resume and references. Order “student” business cards and be sure to ask attorneys for their business cards.

### **Following Through**

Maintaining contact after an interview shows both professional courtesy and genuine interest. Writing a thank you email or letter and when to send it are covered more thoroughly in the section on Correspondence.

Many students do not know what to do after they have sent an email following an interview. As stated in the Interview Section, try to ask the hiring authority at the close of an interview about the next step and his or her hiring time frame. This should give you an idea of when to contact this person again.

Your objective should be to keep your name in every hiring authority’s mind without being overly aggressive. It may surprise you to learn that many lawyers complain that qualified students often miss out

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on jobs because they are too passive and do not appear to have any interest in the opportunity under consideration.

**CHAPTER 3**  
**THE EFFECTIVE LEGAL RESUME**

**RESUMES**

**Purpose of a Resume**

A resume is a marketing tool. It is an advertisement of what you have to sell. A resume is designed to accomplish one thing - to interest a potential employer sufficiently to invite you to an interview. Its purpose is to make you stand out from all of the other candidates and to get you that all-important interview. In order to get the interview, your resume must answer the following critical question for every prospective employer: “Why should I hire you?” When drafting your resume, never lose sight of this decisive question. Weigh every word and phrase against it and eliminate any lines that do not answer it.

It is true that a resume reflects what you have already accomplished in life. However, the only thing that truly matters about your prior experience is how it translates into what you will be able to do for the employer in the future. Always keep this precept in mind when you are drafting your resume.

In today’s tight legal job market, law firms and other legal employers are flooded with resumes from law students and practicing attorneys seeking work. These employers use the resumes to identify those candidates who are appropriate for the available position and screen out those who are not. In order to be competitive in today’s job market, your resume must give the employer a reason to want to meet you and hear more about the terrific experiences on the resume. Three things are critical if you want to accomplish this goal:

First, your resume must convey an initial good impression. Employers make instant judgments about you as a person and hire based upon the physical appearance of your resume. Accordingly, your resume must be neat and well-organized.

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Second, in only a few seconds of cursory examination, your resume must convince the reader that your work experience and educational background were virtually “custom designed” for the position for which you are applying. This can be done only if you have researched the particular employer and have learned about the requirements this employer has and the credentials that this employer is looking for.

Third, your resume must proclaim your ability to not just perform but perform well in the desired position. This goal is achieved by effectively describing your work and educational experience in terms of past activities and related accomplishments most relevant to the knowledge and skills required for successful performance in this particular job. Further, it requires you to write persuasively and to “take credit” for your past success. Resumes are, at least in part, salesmanship.

### **Tone of your Resume**

For your first draft, put yourself in the place of the employer and decide what they are looking for. Write down everything you want to say about yourself, emphasizing the positive information and minimizing, if not eliminating, facts you think are negative. Weed out the least important facts. Ask yourself questions the employer might ask about your resume. Remember “who, what, when, where, and how.”

Remember, your resume is your marketing tool. And as any good marketer will tell you, the best way to write about anything you want to sell is to sit down first and concentrate on your target audience. If you are reading this Handbook, then most likely, your target audience is some sort of legal employer. Discussions with various types of legal employers have revealed that there are numerous tangible and intangible qualities that legal employers believe are essential to the makeup of a successful attorney.

So, even if you have little or no legal work experience, or if you have only worked minimum wage positions, you will still be able to write a resume that will be of interest to potential legal employers by

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concentrating on those tangible or intangible skills that demonstrate transferable skills - those that will make an employer interested in you. The CSO often refers to these items as Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities (KSAs) or Transferrable Skills and they are crucial to proving to a legal employer that you have what it takes to succeed at a legal job – especially where you have little to no legal experience.

Below are some exercises to help you craft your legal resume.

### **Exercise #1: List of Attributes Exercise**

The following is a list of attributes that legal employers look for in job candidates. Review the list carefully and circle five of the adjectives that describe you most closely. Here they are:

accommodating	achieving	logical
ambitious	analytical	attentive
conscientious	competent	bright
consistent	creative	decisive
determined	efficient	energetic
exacting	explicit	goal-oriented
imaginative	industrious	inquisitive
insightful	instinctive	inventive
aggressive	mature	meticulous
methodical	observant	perceptive
persistent	persuasive	probing
purposeful	resourceful	self-confident
self-reliant	serious	systematic
sophisticated	thorough	

### **Exercise #2: The “Prove It” Exercise**

Now copy down each adjective that you checked off from the list and write down the specific experiences that you have had, whether or not

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they had anything to do with the law or law school, that prove that those five adjectives apply to you. Give proof that each of the characteristics is one of your strengths. For example, if you chose “ambitious” as one your adjectives and you are an evening law student who is working full time while attending law school, that shows great ambition. Or, if you waited tables in the past, you probably had to learn on your own how to organize your trips between the kitchen and your tables for greatest efficiency. Efficiency is of prime importance to legal employers who seek to control or reduce costs while increasing client billing.

In performing this exercise, do not overlook your volunteer experience. The skills you exhibit in volunteer work are often the same as you exhibit in your work. Thus, such skills are very important to employers. Employers are interested not only in the skills you have applied and honed, but also in your self-motivation and your commitment, especially when not being paid.

For those with particular undergraduate or other graduate degrees and/or work experience, filling specific personnel needs may be an important part of your resume’s appeal. For instance, electrical engineers, physicists, and chemists often seek summer legal and permanent work at patent firms or as in-house counsel with large manufacturing companies. Medical doctors and nurses may have excellent backgrounds for insurance defense, medical malpractice and personal injury firms. Social workers, parole officers, police officers or teachers may want to practice in domestic, criminal or juvenile law area. These items can be referred to as the “specialized skills” part of KSAs. Remember that drafting a legal resume for a law clerk or associate position with your qualifications should be approached in a very different manner from the way in which you compose a resume that would appeal to a hiring manager from your prior field. You need to write to the legal employer, not the employer in your prior field.

Keeping your audience in mind, think about how your experience will be used in your present circumstances. For instance, nurses and social workers have close contact with individuals and families at times of great

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distress. What would this mean to an employer who is hiring a new attorney for a domestic practice, especially a small practice, where the new associate will immediately be expected to handle client contact with minimal supervision? How have you been able to handle conflict and resolve issues? What benefit could your experience resolving conflict and working in a fast-paced environment bring to a law firm? Think about what you have done in terms of what the employer wants.

If you can demonstrate through your resume that you have transferable skills, then your resume has succeeded in its intended job of opening the door for you. Do not assume though that just by listing previous job titles and a brief list of duties for each, that any hiring attorney will be able to make the leap to figure out what your transferable skills are and how they would benefit the employer. You must list your experiences in terms most clear to this particular employer—do not leave anything to chance. You must lead them to the conclusion that your prior experiences resulted in transferable skills.

This is tricky because most people think resumes should be short. While they should be concise, that is, to the point, they do not need to be so short and generic that a reader has no idea what you did or how you can benefit the organization. Be descriptive, be specific, but stay concise. Do not ramble and do not include unnecessary verbiage that you think makes you sound smarter or more lawyerly.

### **Resume Content**

**What to Include on Your Resume.** Now that you understand how legal employers perceive resumes (by looking at how things you have already done translate into things you can do for them in the future) it is time to get down to the nitty-gritty and figure out what exactly to put on your resume.

The first step is to write down on paper everything you have done, and pull from those experiences everything you have accomplished. Methodically list your job and volunteer experiences and think about the KSAs you have or gained at those experiences, as evidenced by the tasks

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you completed. Your accomplishments and the transferable skills you gained from those accomplishments are what will distinguish you from the other people with a similar background who are applying for the same job. When deciding what to include on your resume, do not focus on your duties in the various jobs held. Simply listing prior job titles and assigned tasks you performed does not say anything about the skills you acquired in those previous positions. That is why you must concentrate on your accomplishments and transferable skills, the KSAs.

*Name.* Use your full name. Do not use nickname or shortened forms of your name.

*Address and Telephone Number.* Use your current address. If you are not from Northeast Ohio and are applying to an employer in your hometown area, include your permanent address or hometown address. It is acceptable to just list the city and state you reside in rather than the full address. Law firms are businesses in the community. They have civic pride and generally respond more favorably to locals.

List one phone number. This can be your mobile number, but be sure it is the phone that you use and will answer. In this day and age, employers expect to be able to get in touch with you. They do not really want to leave voice messages and if they do, they expect a rapid response. If an employer cannot reach you before you have the job, how can they expect to reach you once you have the job? It is your duty to live up to and exceed the employer's expectations.

Professionalism is the key and should be your constant compass. If you have small children at home who will answer the phone, do not use that number. While "cute" it is not professional for your 3 year old to answer the phone, babble at, and hang up on, a potential employer. This same holds true for using a work number. It speaks volumes to your lack of professionalism to have potential employers call you at your current job. It makes the potential employer think, "will the applicant do that when they work here?" Further, most employers track or monitor phone

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usage, it can be serious as more and more employers consider wasting company time as stealing from the company.

Regardless of what phone number you provide, make sure that you have a voicemail greeting and that it is professional, polite, and warm. Nothing cute (i.e. kids or songs) or immature (i.e. recording a greeting while out on a Friday night with your friends).

Next, you want to draft the substantive content of your resume. One way to begin this arduous task is to brainstorm on a legal pad, or however you best think. However, it is recommended that you write things down before you start drafting the resume.

*Education.* This information will draw the potential legal employer's attention first. Education and grades are important to the legal employer. Normally, it will be the first listing on your resume, under your name, address and telephone number. Your educational history should be listed in reverse chronological order with your law school listing first followed by other graduate degrees and finally your undergraduate college or university.

Include information about the school's name, city and state, your graduation date (Candidate for Juris Doctor, May or December 20xx) and any extracurricular activities in which you are involved. Extracurricular activities include moot court, law school journals, student organizations and the like. All extracurricular activities should be included immediately under your Education section, and not in a separate section. When listing extracurricular activities include information about offices you have held and details about any organization that you founded or improved.

Write down your GPA, your class rank, any scholarships you have received, any scholastic honors or awards you have achieved, any favorable moot court results, and any publications you have authored. Also include short descriptions of any honors or awards so that potential employers know their meaning (i.e. describe academic fraternities).

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These items will hopefully distinguish you from other candidates applying for the same job.

*Scholarships.* To help a potential employer recognize the value of a scholarship, a short description will help. The following is a sampling of some of the scholarships, awards and activities at Akron Law. Using the descriptions as a starting point, try to vary your final outcome, so that your resume does not read the same as others' whose backgrounds are similar to yours. *E.g.*, "Full Tuition Scholarship: awarded and renewable on basis of grades; one of X distributed to incoming class."

Partial scholarships are also awarded on the basis of grades, but some additional factors may also be involved, such as where you permanently reside or your ethnic background. You may find out during the school year that your scholarship has a donor name; otherwise, they are known as Academic Scholarships. If you do not know the name of your scholarship you can write: "Academic Scholarship, partial tuition paid." "Partial Academic Scholarship: renewable for three years."

*GPA.* Many people choose to reveal their GPA or class rank on their resumes. If you do not, you may be selling yourself short because many employers may assume your grades are lower than they actually are. Generally, a GPA of 3.00 and higher should usually be included on your resume. However, class rank is often the more critical statistic as it indicates your position relative to your classmates.

Generally, while the largest law firms and corporate employers are very concerned about grades, smaller and specialty firms and other employers are often equally or more concerned with what else you can bring to the position. If you include your grades on a resume that you are mailing to prospective employers before making appointments to meet, then you can be fairly sure that they will not be an issue during your interview. Before you make the decision whether or not to include grades, talk with CSO staff and possibly other lawyers for advice on what would be best for your goals. You may even wish, at little extra cost, to have two versions of your resume for different employers.

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In planning how you will present your academic record to others, bear in mind that it is a violation of the Law School Honor Code to misrepresent intentionally to anyone material facts regarding grades, rank or other aspects of personal or academic achievement. If you are including your GPA on a resume (or responding to a question about your grades), here are some key things to remember to avoid misrepresentation:

- If stated numerically, your GPA should be shown as on your transcript that is, taken to two decimal places. Law school is generally presumed to operation on a scale of 4.00, so it is not necessary to state “GPA=2.87/4.” It is a misrepresentation to round up the 2.87 to 2.9.
- You may include your GPA for each semester or year, to show a progression in grades, but you should always include your cumulative GPA.
- Class ranks are computed twice each year, at the end of the fall and spring semesters. Ranks do not appear on your transcript. Grades from other law schools are not factored in. When including your class rank on your resume or relating it in an interview, you must give the number last computed by the Law School. It is a violation of the Honor Code to misrepresent your rank but you may need to project your class rank based on the last time the rankings were computed, if you’re a part-time student, or a spring start student. Please contact the CSO for assistance in ensuring your ranking as stated on any application materials is not misleading or in violation of the Honor Code. Showing your rank as a percentage can be helpful to employers. Just as you cannot round up your GPA, you cannot round down your class rank to the next integer, but you can round it up.

Repeat the process with your undergraduate experience. Include any clubs, sorority/fraternity or student government activities in which you were involved as well as any sports in which you may have participated. And again, list the accomplishments in each organization that will make

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you stand out in a crowd. If you have other graduate degrees, brainstorm the same information for them.

Continuing through your academic record, other degrees are handled in the same way as your legal education. The key is consistency.

If your undergraduate degree includes courses taken at another institution, it is generally not necessary to include that information, only the name of the degree granting college. Exceptions to this would include a transfer program for which you are proud to have been chosen (you may even want to list the courses taken, if they are relevant.) and a Study Abroad type program. **Note:** One common mistake students make with unfinished graduate work is giving the impression that they have a degree when actually they may have completed only several courses. The CSO recommends not including unfinished coursework as it is irrelevant. However, if you insist on including it, contact CSO to help frame it as to not be misleading.

*Experience.* Now turn your attention to your nonacademic experience which will include your complete employment history (legal and non-legal) as well as any volunteer work that you have done. The first step is to organize all your relevant work experience. Be sure to completely separate your independent work experiences. You may even want to write each on a separate page.

As you did for your Education section, in the left hand column of each “Employer” worksheet, enter your job title(s), the name of your employer and the city and state where the employer is located and the dates of your employment. It is very important to utilize the same formatting as your Education. You want the document to be consistent and professional looking.

Next, list your tasks and duties. Give details about exactly what you did—be as specific as possible. Do not just say, “Drafted memoranda.” Instead give examples of the kinds of research you performed and what those memos were about. These are the details that will be of interest to

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the employer reviewing your resume. So at this point, just write down as many details as you can remember—you can always cut things out later.

Write down things you accomplished with each of your previous employers that show that you were an above average employee—the ways in which you performed those duties in the left hand column that distinguish you from everyone else. In other words, how well did you do those tasks and duties which you listed? For volunteer positions, be specific about the amount of money you raised and anything else that distinguished you. Again, with all past employment be specific as possible and keep in mind the list of adjectives which describe you.

Structuring the descriptions of your various positions is quite straightforward. Most accepted now is the practice of using phrases beginning with an active verb, either in the past tense (for work no longer being done), present tense, or less commonly, present participle form , for example:

“Wrote memoranda, researched cases...”

“Process estates, assist at trials...”

“Drafting briefs, preparing testimony...”

The latter can also be preceded with, “Responsible for ...” or, “Duties included...,” if you find you have too little to fill a whole sheet of paper.

To emphasize your accomplishments visually, try starting sentences by giving the results of efforts first, for example:

“Reduced overtime 23% while increasing productivity, by cross training all staff. Virtually eliminated downtime through equitable task distribution.”

There is a hierarchy of information you can give regarding your positions. For each position you have held, try working your way down this list finishing at the highest (i.e., first) level you can:

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Accomplishments: this is the highest level of description you can relate to an employer, the one which highlights your successes. Examples include:

- “Developed new chemical process which received patent.”
- “Began as volunteer; hired and subsequently promoted on basis of performance.”

Range: numbers or percentages can help prove accomplishments, as they are verifiable:

- “Employed up to thirty hours per week on third shift while attending school full-time.
- On Dean’s List six of eight semesters.”
- “Founded company with two fellow engineers. Built \$5,000 investment into \$2.5 million annual gross revenues within five years.”

Skills Gained/Abilities Sharpened: if you cannot prove accomplishments you can still let an employer know what you derived from an experience that you can bring to a future position:

- “As shop foreman in union environment, developed ability to vary communication style to suit audience, from PhD chemists to assembly workers. Received formal training in grievance procedures, negotiation techniques and anger diffusion.”
- “Journalist; developed quick, concise writing style under strict time constraints. Approach emphasized fact gathering and distillation and multiple angles in stories ranging from local public health crisis to international stock market trends.”
- Admissions Office Assistant: required to work, at times, with little direct supervision; noted for accuracy, even in repetitive tasks, speed and attention to detail. Received two merit raises in six months.”

Duties/Responsibilities: if you are this far down on the list and your page is still blank or if your responsibilities are not evident by your job title, then you need to include some information at this level. Two interesting ways to do this are given below. The first example follows a rhythm of duty/accomplishment, which is highly effective. The second

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dispenses with the regular position duties in a phrase, enabling you to concentrate on special areas of responsibility:

- “Managed twelve employees; during four years, maintained 0-9% annual turnover in area which previously experienced over 50%. Handling accounts receivable by 30% through instituting follow-up system and streamlining accounting procedures for easier tracking.”
- “General Litigation Paralegal: in addition to customary duties, performed legal research and drafted briefs, which were generally accepted with little revision. Assessed computerized documentation systems and recommended package which was purchased.”

Another good reason to include your responsibilities is so that you can highlight those that put you in close contact with lawyers or had you performing duties similar to those in the legal profession, such as negotiating contracts or disputes, being an expert witness, or participating on judicial boards for undergraduate fraternities or student government.

The sample resumes at the end of this section may provide further ideas on how to structure your job descriptions.

Legal Employment. Legal experience is commonly listed first, since it is more relevant and usually more recent. This part of your resume is the most important for what it says about your ability to handle the practical aspects of lawyering, and if possible, the results of your efforts. Hopefully, it also conveys your enthusiasm about what you did. Unless your legal employer is very likely to be known to your target audience, including a line briefly describing the employer may help those reading your resume to put your experience in context with his or her own needs. For instance, you can describe the firm this way:

“Smith, Smith and Jones; Springfield, Ohio.  
Seven attorney firm with general civil practice.”

Any work that you have performed for the faculty should be included in the legal section of your resume. Structure these descriptions in the

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same format you have used for other employment experience. If you are unsure of a title or how to describe your work, consult with the professor. A typical entry could look like this:

Professor J. Smith

The University of Akron School of Law

Legal Research Assistant          Summer 20XX

- Researched ‘Contests of Will in Akron, Ohio, 1990-2020.’ Utilized Lexis and Westlaw databases daily; taught database research methods to three research assistants. Drafted two sections of article for publication.

Remember to be specific, descriptive and concise. Sell yourself, be persuasive. Note: Legal experience includes unpaid internships with government or legal aid organizations.

Non-Legal Employment. Again, in the descriptions of your non-legal employment, emphasize the results of your past efforts by drawing your points from the right-hand side of your worksheets. Draw attention to your transferable skills. Highlight your KSAs as evidenced by the tasks you did, not the tasks themselves.

Volunteer Activities. As mentioned above, through your volunteering activities, you may have achieved a level of responsibility or results that can tell a prospective employer a lot more about your potential than the paid summer or part time jobs you may have held. Just because you did not work for pay does not mean the work was easier or the results less indicative of your abilities. Letting employers know that you worked for no pay can also stress your commitment and drive.

Generally, volunteerism and community involvement should be highlighted in its own section, structured the same as your work experience. However, volunteer experience may be included in the Experience section of your resume, as long as you indicate in the description that the experience was on a volunteer. Also, some unpaid internships are the result of a competitive selection process. If this is the

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case be sure to indicate that fact. Use the same guidelines in relating your volunteering experience as you do for any paid work, for example:

Amigos de las Americas  
Volunteer  
Summer 2021

- Community volunteer in Ecuadorian village for international volunteer health organization
- Introduced modern sanitation methods to a village of 220 people, in a successful effort to stem further typhoid outbreaks.
- Spoke exclusively in Spanish.

“Big Brothers/Big Sisters of Akron: Helped one little sister through family transition over a two year period. Raised \$450 and coordinated weekend camping trip involving 24 big and little sisters, which was reported in national newsletter.”

*Special Skills and Publications.* Any special skills you possess, such as other languages or computer expertise can be included in a separate section if you wish to emphasize them, customarily below your employment history. Languages are an important addition. Special skill means real and relevant skill, not just the ability to use Microsoft Word and Lexis. Publications can also be listed. The amount of detail you choose to include is determined by its importance to a legal employer.

*Journals.* Journal experience can have different meanings to different people who are reviewing your resume. Since excellent writing ability is crucial to any student editorial position and any subsequent legal position you will hold, you should never neglect to include these activities on your resume.

However, what some employers may not realize, especially if they had no journal experience in school, is that there are many other skills both in editorial and managerial positions that are developed to a relatively high level. These can make you highly marketable if you present them properly on your resume and in interviews.

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For instance, most editors select, supervise and advise other student contributors, which adds to their leadership, management and critical analysis skills in a legal setting. They learn how to delegate and oversee work. Solicitations editors have significant managerial duties, including topic development and the solicitation of prospective authors from the legal community at large. Such skills involve creative and organizational thinking. This situation is akin to client development in a private law practice, but it is up to you to make that correlation for the employer.

Job titles given to first year journal students sometimes change from year to year. Be sure to verify your title with a senior editor rather than using one from an example here. In addition to listing your title, duties and skills, you may wish to give the topic of your writing contribution, which may attract potential employers. On the other hand, you may also be opening yourself to a substantive debate with an interviewer, so be ready to discuss and defend, if necessary, your analysis.

Akron Law has multiple journals, but to demonstrate, we will use The University of Akron Law Review. Since almost every school has a Law Review, it is not necessary to describe the Law Review in detail. Other journals may, however, require a brief description. Although students can participate as a result of high grades or selection through the writing competition, you do not need to state on your resume how you were chosen. Duties not evident by their job titles can be described very briefly, as in this example:

### The University of Akron Law Review Articles Editor

- Assumed full editorial and verification responsibility for three articles to be published in Spring 202\*.
- Supervised six associates.

*Moot Court Competitions.* This activity is important to legal employers because it develops your ability to research and analyze a point of law and express yourself persuasively orally and in writing. It also provides the most direct measure, in a non-exam setting, of your

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abilities against others in your class. Look at the following examples for ideas on how to describe the activities and your results:

### Akron Law National Moot Court Team

- Selected for team after ranking among top six oral and written advocates out of 75 participants in intramural competition.

*Mock Trial Competition/Trial Team.* One of the more important elements of trial team competition is that it develops students' advocacy and courtroom skills in a start-to-finish trial situation. This is a very time-consuming activity and stating this on your resume will pique an employer's interest, especially if you can also point out that you did well in the competition, for example:

### Akron Law National Mock Trial Competition

- Ranked 12<sup>th</sup> out of 22 teams in the U.S., after winning regional competition against 25 teams.
- Preparation and participation involved over 100 hours per semester, without course credit.

*Law School Clinic.* Akron Law students and graduates report that their experience in the Law School Clinic was of real interest to employers, for a variety of reasons. It gave them their first chance to apply theory to real life situations; they learned how to handle clients and their own time. And it provided the opportunity to make their elementary mistakes in a uniquely structured environment designed for their practical education as much as for client care.

Especially for students whose grades are not outstanding, this practical experience can give them the ammunition to say to potential employers that they can perform well day-to-day. Let an employer know the scope of your activities and responsibilities in this clinical program:

### Law School Clinic Intern

- Served as legal counsel in seven civil cases over full academic year.

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- Conducted client interviews, witness identification and preparation; researched and authored memoranda, briefs and motions;
- Represented three clients at trial and under supervision of Clinic lawyers.
- Gained direct experience in client contact, case development, pretrial and trial procedures, and law practice management.

Please note that these bullets could be better developed and serve only as a basis to get you started.

Some students prefer to place Legal Clinic experience under “Legal Experience” rather than “Education.” This is an excellent idea, especially if you feel your resume is weak in the former area. It also allows you more space to devote to your description.

*Student Associations.* Since there are far too many student associations to cover in depth here, the following is only a brief example, again to provide you with a basic direction in presenting the accomplishments and skills you have gained from these activities.

*Student Bar Association.* Whether elected or appointed to this organization, you will probably be called upon to represent and “sell” the school at various functions. What does this say to legal employers, particularly private firms, which are always looking to attract new clients and increase retention of their existing client base? It says “good client development skills”. Many SBA officers also become involved in counseling and mediation, which provides proof of their ability to do the same with clients. Even relatively small assignments can have some significance, if you present them truthfully and well. When you list your participation, never forget the marketability of your own specific experience:

Student Bar Association  
Student Representative, Curriculum Committee

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- Targeted and successfully recommended new international law course and clinical program to faculty, in response to student/faculty survey to identify curriculum gap.

### Student Bar Association

#### Akron Bar Association Liaison

- Regularly attended bar association meetings and expressed student concerns on various issues. Attracted over 50 new members through first on-campus recruitment in over 10 years.

Your commitment to a student association will be a very positive signal to employers. Student groups are often local chapters of national associations. They sponsor many activities and this is a good chance to show your organizational, leadership and communication skills:

### Black Law Students Association

#### Midwest Recruitment Conference Volunteer

- Manned student and employer check-in booths. Recruited and supervised 10 students.

### Law Association for Women

#### Chairperson, Speaker Committee

- Solicited several national speakers, generating press coverage. Events attracted greatest per-event attendance of all student groups.

No matter what you are describing on your resume, always write to the employer and point to the transferability of your skills;

### Student Public Interest Law Fellowship Board Member

- Helped to raise awareness among law students and lawyers of employment opportunities. With fellow students, raised \$13,000 during one year and \$19,000 during the next year for funds for student internships.

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If you participated in any fraternity activity that transcended the basic social nature of many fraternities, you should include it on your resume. If you held office, then write that down; if your title looks silly on such a formal document, you can merely record that you held an office:

“Phi Delta Phi Legal Fraternity: active in tenants’ rights issue which involved representing tenants through the media, letters and a court appearance.”

*Hobbies and Interests.* The merit of including personal hobbies and interests on your resume is a topic for debate among legal resume experts. It is really a matter of personal preference and may be a great way for you to connect to an employer. While your hobbies and interests are the attributes that make you a living, breathing person, those who oppose the inclusion of the personal avocations insist that such information is irrelevant in any way to a hiring decision. This camp contends that revealing personal information may have the opposite effect you desire—it may invite discrimination. For example, the employer who hates opera reading your resume which indicates that you are an opera aficionado, or the employer who is an animal rights activist who reads you are an avid duck hunter, may be turned off to you before they even lay eyes on you.

On the other hand, those who support the inclusion of personal interests and hobbies say that these traits make you less one-dimensional. Further, many interviewers love to use questions about the interesting tidbits on your resume as icebreakers. Both sides agree, however, that if you are going to include hobbies on your resume, you should include only those hobbies which either:

- show rainmaking potential;
- suggest worthy traits like self-discipline;
- provide interesting material for conversation; or
- give you a connection to the employer.

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### **What Not to Include on Your Resume**

*Objective Line.* Such lines are not appropriate on legal resumes. If included they cannot help you, and can hurt you. An objective line may have the effect of “pigeon holing” you or revealing your naiveté regarding the legal profession.

*Personal Section.* Personal information about your age, health, marital status, children and the like is none of your employer’s business. As a matter of fact, it is illegal for a potential employer to ask you questions about these subjects. Please see the “Interviewing Section” of this Handbook about how to handle illegal and inappropriate questions in an interview.

*Summary of Qualifications Section.* This is not appropriate for a legal resume. This type of information really adds nothing to your resume because it simply is an inventory of subjective qualifications which you list without providing back-up. Instead incorporate these things into your descriptive bullets.

*References.* It is not necessary to include references on your resume. Potential employers know that if they ask you for references, you will be able to supply them. Including a line on your resume that says “References available upon request” is not only unprofessional, it demonstrates inefficient legal writing – it is superfluous. Of course, references are available on request, if they are not, you will have a hard time finding a job!

### **Format and Style**

Format is a crucial and often overlooked element of resume writing. When formatting your resume remember the “5 C’s” – Clean, Clear, Concise, Conservative and Consistent. All are important, but consistency is a key because an employer may perceive an inconsistency in your formatting to a lack of attention to detail or plain sloppiness.

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Formatting is important because even though you have followed all the rules and double checked the spelling, your resume may still not promote a positive initial impression if the information that is most relevant to the reader is not immediately evident. Therefore, you must avoid using a style or format that forces the reader to hunt for your areas of expertise, experience or critical skills.

Remember, you may not have more than 30 seconds of the reader's attention, so you must use that time well and arrange your resume so that the high points can be absorbed within those 30 seconds. There is no single correct way to set up a resume. However, there are some ideas which are better than others and the CSO is here to help you through the process. Of the many acceptable formats, you must determine which format best suits the content and represents you.

No matter what you select, however, there are some basic rules that every resume must adhere to in order to ensure that it is a neat, professional, high quality representation of your credentials.

- Your resume must be presented on good quality 8 ½" x 11" paper, usually white or a close relative of white, such as ivory, beige, light grey, cream, etc. You want your resume to stand out because of its contents, not because of the hot pink or marbled paper you printed it on. Remember, conservative!
- Your resume must be free from hand corrections, typos, spelling errors, and grammatical mistakes. This is a deal-killer and mistakes will cause the employer to question your ability to produce a first-class legal work product on behalf of its clients.
- Your resume must be neatly typed using a professional font. Times New Roman is outdated and generally serif fonts are preferred. See the CSO with questions about font choice. Resumes must be printed or copied with quality. Use blank spaces, block caps and bold face print to highlight your major accomplishments. Since you are now marketing yourself as a professional, your resume must look professional.

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- The font size of the body of the text should be between 10 and 12 points. Standard is 11 point. Headings can be in larger point.
- Save your resume as a PDF. Unless specifically directed otherwise, transmit the PDF version, not the Word version of your resume. When titling your resume, save the document as “John Smith Resume.pdf” and not John’s resume version 3, etc.
- The resume should be one page unless you have extensive work experience. If so, use two separate sheets and staple them together if sending in hard copy.
- Use active tense verbs to describe your duties. A list of active tense verbs commonly used on resumes is included after the sample resumes. Make sure verb tenses within the same job description are consistent. Use present tense to describe current jobs, past tense, to describe former jobs. A list of commonly used action verbs is included in this Handbook
- Do not include false or misleading information or pad or exaggerate any of the contents, including previous jobs or academic attributes. If you list yourself as a law clerk for a firm when in fact you were a secretary, you endanger your credibility. When an interviewer questions you or your former employer about your specific responsibilities, they will learn the truth and you will be eliminated from consideration for the position.

Similarly, if you were on the Dean’s List for one semester in college, you must list it that way. Do not use a general statement “Dean’s List”—this conveys the impression that you were on the Dean’s List every semester. And, of course, your GPA and class rank must be absolutely accurate. State your GPA to two decimal places and do not round up. Neither Akron Law nor the CSO will tolerate false information on a resume.

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For those students in a joint degree program, you may not average your GPAs for each school. Each must be listed separately. If you only wish to display one of your GPAs then make sure you indicate the school to which it applies. E.g., Law School GPA: 3.25; Business School GPA: 3.70.

The resume examples in this Handbook are designed only to assist you in your initial drafting of your resume. Before sending out your resume to any potential legal employers, please schedule an appointment for the CSO to review and revise your resume.

### **References**

References should be typed on a separate sheet. A reference sheet should be on the same letterhead as your resume and cover letter. A reference list ideally should contain between two and five people. Personal references should be avoided, if at all possible. Past employers are excellent, as are both law and undergraduate professors. It is better to use as a reference someone who knows your work intimately than to use someone whose name is recognizable, but who really cannot talk about the quality of your work.

Always ask for a reference's permission before you use their names and keep in touch with them to let them know of your progress in general. Be sure that each reference has the most current copy of your resume. Most importantly, choose references that you trust implicitly. References will make or break a job opportunity, so you have to be sure they will provide you a good reference when asked.

List each person's full name and job title, business address, telephone number with area code, and email address.

### **Visuals: What is your style?**

Resumes can vary quite a bit in appearance, but for legal positions, it is best to be on the conservative side and not let the appearance of your resume detract from the impact of its content. Thus, do not use

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wingdings, clip art, or corny templates taken from the Internet. Create your own custom marketing brochure. Here are some helpful suggestions and points to keep in mind:

*Abbreviations.* Since resumes tend to be rather formal in style, abbreviations should usually be avoided. If you do choose to use an abbreviation, be consistent. Do not, for instance, abbreviate the name of a state in one section and not in another.

*Punctuation.* Punctuation is not necessarily required for resumes. However, whether you choose to use punctuation or not, its use must be consistent.

*One v. Two Pages.* For a student who has only undergraduate and clerking experience to relate, one page should certainly provide enough space. For those with former careers, you may need to use two pages (never more!), but remember that your resume is an item of promotional value, not a curriculum vitae. You want to include the items that will be of greatest interest to your target audience, rather than a complete record of your working and academic life.

*Margins, Tabs and White Space.* It is hard to decide what is visually most pleasing. Look at the sample resumes and decide which you like best. Ask the CSO for tips or suggestions. 1” margins are outdated - the modern trend is to use 0.7” margins on all sides. However, make sure that no information will be lost if holes are punched near the left margin.

Try to keep tabs, indents, and bullets to a minimum for the neatest and most organized effect. Your resume should not look like an outline! Also, make sure you keep tabs, indents, and bullets consistent and everything aligned. Be sure to leave enough space around your name so that it stands out. Information can be read much more easily and rapidly if it is organized both visually and by subject matter.

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### Visual Enhancements

Decide which information is most important to employers and then experiment with whitespace, underlining, CAPITALIZED and oversized lettering, *italics*, SMALL CAPS, and **boldface** type to create emphasis and add to readability. Try different fonts, but do not mix fonts unless you are extremely careful about consistency.

*DO NOT OVERUSE BOLD, ITALICS,  
UNDERLINING OR OTHER EFFECTS!!*

Customarily, your name and all headings should be formatted in some way. You may wish to call attention to schools and employers, or your job titles or skills. In resumes, it's better to use visual enhancements to stress your format, rather than certain information.

The former (e.g., bolding all school and employer names) will add neatness to your resume and make it more readable. The latter (e.g., underlining important achievements) is harder to read quickly and when used too often, especially together with too many typestyle changes, begins to look amateurish and unprofessional.

Italics should be used only sparingly. It can be difficult to read an entire page in italics. Names of journals and other publications should be italicized or underlined and names of articles should be encased in quotation marks.

In choosing a typestyle, it is best to be traditional. The type size you use for the body of your resume should be large enough to be easy to read; do not attempt to squish a lot of information onto one closely printed page. At the other end of the spectrum, some students use large type to attempt to hide their lack of work experience. It does not work. It's actually better to have more white space and large margins than noticeably large type. Lastly, keep in mind that most resumes are viewed on screen these days, so be sure it is easy to read in digital format.

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### **Paper**

White or ivory colored 8 ½ x11 inch paper is customary, for practical reasons. As somewhere along the way your resume will certainly be photocopied, and perhaps faxed, you want it to be as reproducible as possible. Whether you're producing the final copies yourself or having them done by a copy service, purchase extra matching blank envelopes. It always looks more professional when your cover letters are on the same paper stock. A good tip is also to use different papers for alternate or succeeding versions of your resume to avoid mixing them up. CSO has resume paper if you would like to have printed copies on hand.

### **Review and Revision: When is Your Resume Finished?**

After you have finished your “final” draft, show it to people who can help you. Past employers are sometimes a good resource, especially if they are also providing references. Professors can also help with difficult phrasing. Have one or more friends look at your draft for typographical errors. Check a printed copy of your resume at least three times to be sure you catch all typographical errors. Remember sometimes the document you see on your computer screen does not match the printed version.

The CSO is here to help you at any stage in your resume writing process. In addition to resume workshops, individual counseling is available by appointment.

### **Summary**

Although preparing your resume can be an exhausting and time-consuming process, it is probably only a small part of the work you will need to do before you apply for a position. Your resume, however, will provide a basis for everything else that comes after.

Because of all the work you did in delving into your past, deciding the best ways to communicate your efforts and their results, you are now

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well on the way to drafting a cover letter and preparing yourself for actual interviews. Even the information you discarded from your finished product should not be forgotten. Save it all for your interviews. Writing your resume may even help you in choosing or widening your career options, since it organizes your thinking and the communication of your strength, abilities, skills and achievements.

Remember that a good resume is a work in progress. It will never be a “final” version. You can always find better ways to express your past experiences, job descriptions and activities. So, save this Handbook for future reference.

### Sample Resumes

Take note of the layouts of the following sample resumes. While they can be very different, all are well-organized, clear, concise, easy to read and relatively conservative. You are free to use any of these layouts or to create one of your own.

Please note that that the descriptive bullets and the substantive content, for most of the sample resumes, are not sufficient for your resume. These resumes are provided solely so you have an idea where to start with structuring and formatting a legal resume.

### List of Action Words to Use on Your Resume

accelerated	applied
accomplished	appointed
achieved	appraised
acquired	arbitrated
adjusted	argued
administered	arranged
advised	assembled
aided	assessed
analyzed	assigned

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assisted	consulted
assumed	contracted
audited	controlled
authored	convinced
authorized	coordinated
awarded	corresponded
began	counseled
bolstered	created
boosted	created
briefed	critiqued
budgeted	debated
calculated	decided
catalogued	defined
chaired	delegated
charted	delivered
checked	demonstrated
classified	designed
cleared up	determined
closed	developed
collected	devised
combined	directed
commented	discovered
communicated	dispensed
compared	document
compiled	drafted
completed	edited
composed	elected
conducted	enlarged
conserved	enlisted
consolidated	ensured
constructed	established

# The University of Akron School of Law

## Career Services Office

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estimated	licensed
evaluated	located
examined	maintained
executed	managed
expanded	maximized
expedited	modified
familiarized	monitored
filed	motivated
forecast	negotiated
formulated	observed
fostered	obtained
found	operated
gathered	organized
guided	participated
handled	performed
heightened	persuaded
highlighted	planned
identified	prepared
implemented	prescribed
improved	presented
initiated	processed
inspected	procured
instituted	produced
instructed	programmed
interpreted	projected
interrogated	promoted
interviewed	proposed
invented	prosecuted
investigated	provided
launched	purchased
lectured	received

# The University of Akron School of Law

## Career Services Office

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recommended

recorded

referred

reported

represented

required

researched

resolved

revealed

reviewed

scheduled

selected

served

solved

specialized

streamlined

strengthened

studied

suggested

summarized

supervised

supplied

supported

surveyed

targeted

tracked

trained

transformed

translated

traveled

uncovered

updated

welcomed

worked

# The University of Akron School of Law

## Career Services Office

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### **BASIC RESUME FORMAT**

The following template demonstrates the information that is typically included on a legal resume. When preparing your resume, please review all samples, as you may find information from several of them helpful. Always have someone review the final draft of your resume.

#### **NAME (16 pt)**

*Current Address:* Street • City, State • Zip Code • Phone (14 pt)

*Permanent Address:* (Optional—shows geographic connection)

Email Address

**EDUCATION (12 pt)** (List all graduate and undergraduate degrees in reverse chronological order)

**The University of Akron School of Law, Akron, OH**

*Candidate for Juris Doctor, May 2024*

[Evening Students may say: Candidate for Juris Doctor, Part-Time Student, December 2025]

*Class Rank:* Top \_\_% (list if in top third)

*Honors:* Law Review/Moot Court Honor Board (years)

*Activities:* Competitions (years)

Organizations (years)

**Undergraduate School, City, State**

*Degree in Major, honors, date (e.g., Bachelor of Arts in Biology, cum laude, May 2022)*

*GPA:* (if distinguished)

*Honors:* Dean's List (Identify semesters or academic years). If multiple semesters, say "[# of] semesters"

Scholarships/Awards (years)

*Activities:* Varsity Swim Team (years)

Volunteer Inner-City Tutor (years)

*Study Abroad:* (may be listed as a separate entry if space is available), year

# The University of Akron School of Law

## Career Services Office

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**EXPERIENCE** (May divide into separate sections, entitled “Legal Experience,” “Relevant Experience,” “Work Experience,” etc. Include full-time, part-time, internship, and volunteer positions. Use reverse chronological order within each section.)

**Employer** Location City, State

*Title Dates (season or month and year)*

Job description should include responsibilities and accomplishments, highlighting transferable skills. Use action verbs. May be in paragraph or bullet style. Omit personal pronouns and articles (“I”/“the”).

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

May title this section, “Skills and Interests,” “Activities,” etc. Include foreign language skills, advanced or specialized computer skills, community service work, professional certifications and organizations, publications, and *unique* interests or hobbies.

# The University of Akron School of Law

## Career Services Office

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### STUDENT NAME

**120 Exchange Street, Akron OH 44325 (330) 555-xxxx**  
**firstyear@uakron.edu**

### EDUCATION

**The University of Akron Law School, Akron, OH**

*Candidate for Juris Doctor, May 2024*

Activities: International Law Student Association

Intellectual Property Student Law Association

**University of Arizona** Tucson, Arizona

*Bachelor of Arts, Political Science, May 2018*

Minor: Computer Science

Honors: Academic Dean's List, 2020–2021

### EXPERIENCE

**Federal Aviation Administration (FAA)** Frankfurt, Germany

*Computer Specialist (GS-11) 2020–2021*

- Streamlined information flow by automating procedures for enforcing flight safety regulations.
- Managed all automation and telecommunication activities within FAA field office.
- Led office committee to develop and publish office website.
- Controlled automation budget by researching, forecasting, and purchasing services and equipment.
- Developed and trained personnel.
- Analyzed and resolved computer problems and predicted potential automation issues.

**U.S. State Department, American Consulate General** Frankfurt, Germany

*Background Investigator, Diplomatic Security Office 2019—2020*

- Interviewed and completed background investigations of applicants for issuing security clearances.

# The University of Akron School of Law

## Career Services Office

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- Drafted numerous reports analyzing security for required audits after embassy bombings in Africa.
- Created Security Advisories to State Department personnel and members of American community.
- Managed access control systems of all German and Luxembourg consulates.
- Provided exit briefings for departing personnel and conducted exit interviews.

### **U.S. Army, JAG Darmstadt, Germany**

*Volunteer Assistant, Legal Assistance Office Summer 2017*

- Researched regulations and claims.
- Processed numerous tax returns, wills and affidavits.
- Directed clients to appropriate counsel and managed client database.

### **Morris Communications Augusta, Georgia**

*Advertising Administrative Assistant, National Magazine Division 2016*

- Provided extensive customer service with clients worldwide.
- Updated, edited, and proofread promotional literature and advertisements.
- Compiled budgets including graphical and statistical analysis.

### **AWARDS**

*Superior Accomplishment Award, FAA, Frankfurt International Field Office, 2020*

*Readiness and Preparedness Award, FAA, Frankfurt International Field Office, 2020*

*Meritorious Honor Award, US State Department, 2021*

# The University of Akron School of Law

## Career Services Office

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### **STUDENT NAME**

Stow, OH (330) 555-xxxx

[student@aol.com](mailto:student@aol.com)

### **EDUCATION**

**The University of Akron Law School**, Akron, OH

Candidate for Juris Doctor, May 2025

Intellectual Property Concentration, certificate anticipated May 2025

Class Rank: Top 20%

Honors: Moot Court Honor Board Staff

Alumni Scholarship

Dean's List, Spring 2023

Honorable Mention, Legal Practice Skills Best Brief Competition

**College of the Holy Cross**, Worcester, MA

Bachelor of Arts, *cum laude*, English, May 2022

Cumulative GPA: 3.65/4.0; Major GPA: 3.7/4.0

Honors: English Department Honors Program, 2017–2021

Sigma Tau Delta (English Honors Society), 2018–2019

Jack D. Rehm '54 Scholarship, Holy Cross Scholars' Fund, 2018–2022

Publications: "Self-reliance and Identity Formation: American Literature and American Women,"

*Nu Chi Literary Journal*, Spring 2022

Activities: Choreographer, Holy Cross Dance Ensemble and Senior Class Production of *Anything Goes*, 2022

Team Member, Habitat for Humanity Collegiate Challenge, 2021

Mentor, College Administered Mentor Program, 2020–2021

### **LEGAL EXPERIENCE**

**Murray & Murray** Akron, OH

*Law Clerk December 2022–Present*

Assist partner of law firm on variety of civil litigation issues, researching and writing legal memoranda, drafting and responding to discovery requests, and communicating with clients.

# The University of Akron School of Law

## Career Services Office

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### **San Diego County Office of the Alternate Public Defender** San Diego, CA

*Law Clerk Intern Summer 2022*

Analyzed unpublished appellate court decisions, compiled substantive outline with corresponding database for staff research attorney, and observed motion hearings and argument of staff attorneys.

### **Ironworkers Union Ohio District Council** Akron, OH

*Legal Intern Spring 2021*

Researched and drafted memorandum on wage claims under the Fair Labor Standards Act and Massachusetts prevailing wage laws for in-house counsel to the Ironworkers Union.

## **PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE**

### **Paula Terenzi's Dance Complex** Warwick, RI

*Faculty Member 2017 – 2019*

Planned and instructed dance classes for beginner and competitive students, choreographed routines for performance, cultivated student creativity, and addressed parental concerns.

### **Fleet Bank** Boston, MA

*Float Teller Summer and Academic Recess 2017–2018*

Processed transactions, assumed responsibility for a \$50,000 cash vault, implemented bank procedures, enforced bank security policy, investigated suspicious activity, adjusted to differences in branch operations, provided customer service, and relayed customer concerns to branch supervisors.

## **COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES**

Summit County Habitat for Humanity

Munroe Falls City Schools – PTO President

# The University of Akron School of Law

## Career Services Office

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### **PART-TIME STUDENT NAME**

125 Main Street • Cuyahoga Falls, OH • 44xxx • (330) 123-4567 • [student@uakron.edu](mailto:student@uakron.edu)

### **EDUCATION**

**The University of Akron Law School**, Akron, Ohio  
Candidate for Juris Doctor, Evening Division, May 2026  
Activities: American Bar Association (2021–present)

**Miami University**, Miamisburg, Ohio  
Bachelor of Arts in Writing and Literature May 2016  
GPA: 3.45/4.0  
Honors: Dean’s List (2013–2014, Spring 2016); Gold Key Honor Society (2013–2014) Activities: Career Mentor (2015–2016)

**Broward Community College**, Coconut Creek, Florida  
Associate of Arts in Journalism, May 2010  
Activities: Managing Editor, *The Observer*, 2008–2010

### **PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE**

**Hill, Holliday, Connors, and Cosmopulos, Inc.** Canton, Ohio  
*Senior Traffic Manager Fall 2016–Present*

- Managed advertising projects from inception to delivery.
- Maintained positive client and vendor relations fostering loyalty to the agency.
- Oversaw and improved quality assurance during production, including press and lettershop checks.
- Managed and facilitated resources across seven departments to meet time and budget requirements.
- Developed and implemented departmental cross-training.

**Irma S. Mann Strategic Marketing, Inc.** Boston, Massachusetts

*Traffic Manager 2011–2016*

- Managed and facilitated an average of 45 advertising projects.

# The University of Akron School of Law

## Career Services Office

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- Spearheaded procedural troubleshooting, teambuilding, and tracking of job profit and loss.
- Initiated cross-training program and improved departmental efficiency by 40 percent.

### **Interact NOVA Group** Tokuyama, Japan *English Teacher Fall 2010–Fall 2011*

- Taught conversational and written English.
- Administered and graded exams.
- Increased lesson sales by 30 percent.

### **Massachusetts Financial Services, Inc.** Boston, Massachusetts *Correspondence Associate, Retirement Accounts Fall 2008–Fall 2009*

- Responded to client requests using canned letters combined with free-form writing.
- Ensured that all requested transactions were within legal compliance guidelines.
- Wrote style manual that increased consistency and departmental efficiency.

## **MILITARY EXPERIENCE**

### **United States Navy** Naval Air Station, Norfolk, Virginia *Parachute Rigger, Petty Officer Third Class (E4) 2006–2008*

- Honorably Discharged
- Honors: Several commendations for efficiency, Persian Gulf Service Medal

## **INTERESTS**

Travel throughout Eastern Europe, Southeast Asia, and most of the United States.

# The University of Akron School of Law

## Career Services Office

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### STUDENT NAME

Current Address: 123 Main Street • Akron, OH • 44xxx • (330) 333-5555

Permanent Address: 500 South Street • Phoenix, AZ • 30000

• (xxx) 555-1111 [student.name@uakron.edu](mailto:student.name@uakron.edu)

### EDUCATION

#### **The University of Akron Law School Akron, Ohio**

Candidate for Juris Doctor, May 2022

*Class Rank:* Top 2% (7/371)

*G.P.A.:* 3.63/4.00

*Honors:* Akron Law Review, Staff Member

Academic Leadership Scholarship awarded for first place ranking within section

Dean's List

Honorable Mention, Legal Practice Skills Section Competition

*Activities:* International Law Students Association; Intellectual Property Law Students Association

#### **University of Arizona Tucson, Arizona**

Bachelor of Arts, Political Science (International Relations), May 2018

*Minor:* Computer Science

*Honors:* Dean's List, Fall 2017

### LEGAL EXPERIENCE

#### **Humpty, Dumpty and Lumpty, Cleveland, Ohio**

*Summer Associate* Summer 2021

- Researched and analyzed state and federal legislation in connection with corporate policies for compliance in areas including telemarketing and extended warranty regulations.
- Reviewed and revised contracts and non-disclosure agreements with internal clients. Identified and discussed business and legal concerns.
- Drafted contract for the sponsorship and promotion of selected musicians.

# The University of Akron School of Law

## Career Services Office

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- Researched and analyzed European Union directives and member state legislation regarding privacy laws in connection with company websites for Austria and Ireland.
- Presented research and analysis concerning attorney-client privilege as applied to in-house counsel.
- Evaluated trademark matters including proper use within company advertising copy and potential misuse by competitors; drafted cease and desist correspondence to trademark infringers.

### **U.S. Army JAG, Legal Assistance Office Darmstadt, Germany**

*Volunteer* Summer 2020

- Researched military laws and regulations regarding such matters as filing property claims, debt repayment by the government, and divorce procedures while overseas.
- Prepared and filed claims, tax returns, wills, and affidavits.
- Developed and managed client database.

### **OTHER EMPLOYMENT EXPERIENCE**

### **Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Frankfurt, Germany**

*Computer Specialist (GS-11)* 2017 – 2018

- Managed all information technology within field office; streamlined procedures, and implemented new technology.
- Controlled automation budget by forecasting needs, researching, and purchasing of services and equipment.
- Developed curriculum and provided training of personnel.

### **U.S. State Department, Diplomatic Security Office Frankfurt, Germany**

*Background Investigator* June 2015–January 2017

- Interviewed and conducted background investigations of applicants for security clearances.
- Drafted reports analyzing security for required audits after embassy bombings in Africa.
- Created Security Advisories for State Department personnel and the local American community.

# The University of Akron School of Law

## Career Services Office

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### **Student Name**

123 Any Road, Anytown, OH 44111  
(800) 333-3333 student.name@uakron.edu

### **EDUCATION**

**The University of Akron School of Law** Akron, Ohio

Candidate for Juris Doctor, May 2022

Class Rank: Top 3% (2/153)

Honors: Dean's List; Akron Law CALI Award in Labor Law (2021)

**University of Oklahoma College of Law** Norman, Oklahoma

Completed first year of law school, 2018–2019

Honors: Pierpont Scholarship for Academic Excellence (2019)

**Princeton University**, Princeton, New Jersey

Bachelor of Arts, *cum laude*, Anthropology, June 2018

Honors: National Merit Scholar (2016–2018); National Endowment for the Humanities Younger Scholar for Comparative Study of French and Russian Revolutions (2017–2018)

Activities: Whig-Clisophic Debate and Literary Society (2015–2016)

### **LEGAL EXPERIENCE**

**Northeast Ohio Legal Foundation** Akron, Ohio

*Intern* January 2020–Present

Co-authored articles on payment of wages statutes in the six New England states; closely examined Massachusetts's payment of wages statute and assisted in incorporating research into an *amicus* brief to be filed in *EDS v. Office of Attorney General*; analyzed proposed Fair Labor Standards Act provisions.

**Ohio Courts of Appeals, Eighth Judicial District** Cleveland, Ohio

*Intern, The Honorable Rutherford J. Somesuch* Summer 2020

Drafted memoranda and assisted with drafts of opinions based on research into a variety of legal issues, including contract interpretation and rights of

# The University of Akron School of Law

## Career Services Office

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tenants in common; discussed legal issues with Judge Cohen and observed court proceedings.

**University of Oklahoma College of Law** Norman, Oklahoma  
*Research Assistant, Professor Steve McQueen* Summer 2019  
Edited and further researched leading law review article *Peevyhouse Revisited* for republication in Contracts textbook; directed initial research into article pertaining to current trends in English legal system.

### **LANGUAGES**

Proficient in Spanish

# The University of Akron School of Law

## Career Services Office

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### **STUDENT NAME**

21 Blackberry Drive, Anytown, OH 44111 · (330) 573-xxxx  
[studentname@uakron.edu](mailto:studentname@uakron.edu)

### **EDUCATION**

#### **The University of Akron School of Law, Akron, OH**

*Juris Doctor Candidate, May 2025*

Activities: National Women's Law Student Association:  
Alumnae Liaison (2022–present);  
Director of Fundraising (2021–present);  
National Board of Directors (2022–present)  
Akron Public Interest Law Group (2023)

#### **Ohio University, Athens, OH**

*Bachelor of Arts, Communications, May 2022*

Minor: Women's Studies, Concentration: Pre-Legal Studies  
GPA: 3.55/4.0 Honors: Dean's List (all semesters)  
Golden Key International Honor Society (2020–2022)  
National Society of Collegiate Scholars (2020–2022)  
National Professional Golfers Association Scholarship  
(2015–2018)  
Activities: Varsity Golf Team (2019–2022)

#### **University College, London, England**

*Study Abroad Program, January 2019–June 2019*

### **LEGAL EXPERIENCE**

#### **Danaher, Tedford, Lagnese & Neal, P.C., Hartford, CT**

*Paralegal Assistant, June 2024*

Summarized cases and depositions for insurance defense attorneys in a medium-sized firm. Drafted legal correspondence to opposing attorneys. Organized medical files and maintained and closed case files.

**OTHER EXPERIENCE**

**Summit Educational Group, Cleveland, OH**

*SAT Tutor, 2022*

Teach SAT preparation to high school students in need of supplemental assistance.

**Meisner, Larry, Moe and Curley, P.C., Barberton, OH**

*Public Relations Intern, Summer 2022*

Contacted media with news pitches regarding firm and attorneys. Edited and compiled news clips featuring firm and attorneys for internal distribution. Created database for public relations press releases.

**Center for Corporate Citizenship, Chester, OH**

*Research and Development Intern, Fall 2020*

Evaluated research information from member-company surveys regarding community involvement.

**CIGNA Retirement & Investment Services, Hartford, CT**

*Sales Operations and RFP Services Intern, Summer 2019*

Prepared and assisted in answering Requests for Proposals.

**VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE**

*Campaign to Re-Elect Akron City Councilor Mark Decker, 2019*

*Democratic National Convention, Volunteer, 2020*

# The University of Akron School of Law

## Career Services Office

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### **Student Name**

120 Tremont Street, Apt. 2 • Boston, MA 02108  
617.555.0123 • studentname@uakron.edu

### **EDUCATION:**

#### **The University of Akron School of Law, Akron, OH**

*Candidate for Juris Doctor, May 2024*

Honors: Legal Practice Skills Class Distinguished Oral Advocate Award (2021)

Legal Practice Skills Class Honorable Mention Brief Award (2023)

#### **Costa Rican Spanish Institute, San Jose, Costa Rica**

*Study Abroad Program, Summer 2020*

#### **Lafayette College, Easton, PA**

*Bachelor of Arts in English; Minor in Music, May 2020*

Activities: Volunteer tutor at Northampton County Prison (2016-2017)

Founder of an intramural sports organization for independent students (2018)

#### **Lafayette College Program in Israel, Tel Aviv, Israel**

*Study Abroad Program, Spring 2019*

#### **Athens University, Athens, Greece**

*Study Abroad Program, Fall 2019*

### **EXPERIENCE:**

#### **Re-Elect Jim McGovern Committee Worcester, MA**

*Campaign Coordinator March 2016–August 2019*

Organized campaign fundraisers and other campaign related events.

Created website to collect campaign contributions and volunteer information.

# The University of Akron School of Law

## Career Services Office

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### **Congressman Jim McGovern's Office** Worcester, MA

*Intern* Fall 2016

Answered inquiries and wrote letters as an assistant constituent liaison.

### **PC Connection** Marlborough, MA

*Corporate Account Manager* December 2015-2016

Provided software, hardware, and network solutions to businesses across the country.

### **QWSI.Net Incorporated** Northborough, MA

*Director of Web Design* May 2015–December 2016

Designed websites for local area businesses. Responsibilities included marketing, advertising, design, business strategy, and sales.

### **COMMUNITY INTERESTS**

*Habitat for Humanity*: Volunteer carpenter for Habitat for Humanity, Summer 2018

### **INTERESTS**

Active musician and guitarist for 15 years; former guitarist and singer/songwriter for local band “Blend”; play at the Middle East bar in Boston, MA; carpentry.

# The University of Akron School of Law

## Career Services Office

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### **GRADUATE NAME**

10 Main Street, Parma, OH44333 (440) 555-xxxx Alumni@verizon.net

### **BAR CERTIFICATION**

**Ohio State Bar**, admitted November 2021

### **EDUCATION**

**The University of Akron School of Law**, Akron, OH

Juris Doctor, *cum laude*, May 2021

Class Rank: Top 18%

Honors: Akron University Law Review, Case Note Editor (2018–2019); Staff Member (2019–2020); Dean’s List (2017–2020); CALI Award in Criminal Procedure (2018)

**College of Wooster**, Wooster, OH

Bachelor of Arts, *magna cum laude*, Political Science, May 2017

Bachelor of Science, *magna cum laude*, Criminal Justice, May 2017

GPA: 3.73/4.00

Honors: Dean’s List (2013–2017); Honor Society of Phi Kappa Phi (2013–2017); National Political Science Honor Society, Phi Sigma Alpha (2014–2017); Department of Political Science Academic Award (2017); Department of Criminal Justice Academic Award (2017); Who’s Who Among Students in American Universities and Colleges (2014 & 2017)

### **LEGAL EXPERIENCE**

**Donald, Duck and Daisy, P.C.** Akron, OH

*Law Clerk* May 2020–present

Assist attorneys with white collar criminal defense and a wide variety of complex civil litigation cases, including contract, securities, tax, and employment disputes, as well as torts. Research and draft various pleadings, motions, and memoranda of law.

Researched and drafted appellate brief regarding contract dispute and Chapter 93A cross appeal.

# The University of Akron School of Law

## Career Services Office

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### **Judge Advocate General, US Army Reserves, Trial Defense Team**

Washington, D.C.

*Intern* March 2019–May 2020

Worked with military attorneys regarding criminal case preparation. Conducted investigations and interviews; researched and drafted memoranda for pending cases. Attended various seminars and training activities. Awarded civilian commendation for exemplary service, October 2001

### **United States Attorney's Office** Cleveland, OH

*Legal Intern* August 2018–May 2019

Worked closely with Assistant United States Attorney in prosecuting federal drug and other major criminal cases. Researched federal law and wrote memoranda for pending prosecutions. Formulated prosecution strategies.

### **City of Cleveland Law Department** Cleveland, OH

*Legal Intern* Summer 2017

Assisted attorneys in all stages of civil cases in state and federal courts. Interviewed parties, prepared for and participated in settlement mediations and depositions. Researched issues and drafted memoranda, motions, and novation agreements. Drafted and responded to interrogatories, requests for production of documents, and requests for admissions.

### **Shelter Legal Services Foundation, Inc., Veteran's Legal Service Project**, Dayton, OH *Volunteer* Spring 2017

Interviewed clients (pro-bono service for indigent veterans). Analyzed client cases with other volunteers and attorneys. Researched and drafted legal memoranda and client letters.

# The University of Akron School of Law

## Career Services Office

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### **GRADUATE NAME**

234 South Avenue, City, State Zip (555) 123-4567 graduate@verizon.net

### **BAR PASSAGE**

**New York State Bar**, taken July 2021 (results pending)

### **EDUCATION**

**The University of Akron School of Law**, Akron, OH  
*Juris Doctor*, May 2021

**Wichita State University**, Wichita, KS  
*Bachelor of Arts, Business Administration*, May 2019  
Minor: Entrepreneurship  
Honors: The National Dean's List 2018–2019

### **LEGAL EXPERIENCE**

**The University of Akron School of Law**, Akron, OH  
*Legal Clinic, Fall 2020 - present*

- Responsible for handling cases involving Social Security and Medicaid issues, including client correspondence, legal research, and oral advocacy.
- Obtained Social Security benefits at the reconsideration level on behalf of one client.
- Represented client before hearing officer for Medicaid benefits.
- Drafted and submitted affidavits to the Ohio Department of Medical Assistance.

**Social Security Law Group LLP**, Avon Lake, OH  
*Law Clerk, August 2020–March 2021*

- Researched and drafted briefs on Social Security disability issues on behalf of clients nationwide.
- Secured benefits in four cases based on written briefs.
- Analyzed viability of cases at hearing and on appeal, and developed case theories.
- Interviewed clients for relevant information.

*Administrative Assistant, Summer 2019*

# The University of Akron School of Law

## Career Services Office

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- Drafted correspondence to clients, Social Security Administration, and third parties.

### **WORK EXPERIENCE**

#### **PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP**, Boston, MA

*Executive Assistant, IRS Service Team, August 2016–August 2018*

- Researched specific tax law issues.
- Created promotional marketing materials.

#### **Food Dynamics, Inc.**, North Royalton, OH

*Administrative Assistant, August 2015–August 2016*

- Conducted administrative duties, including filing, reception, drafting correspondence, and dictation.
- Responsible for organization and maintenance of office.

### **PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS**

American Bar Association (2020–present); Akron Bar Association (2020–present)

### **INTERESTS**

Fine arts, fostering shelter dogs

# The University of Akron School of Law

## Career Services Office

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### **GRADUATE NAME**

50 Main Street • San Francisco, CA • 90000 • xxx-555-1111 •  
grad@yahoo.com

### **BAR ADMISSIONS**

**California State Bar**, November 2022

**United States District Court for the Northern District of California**,  
February 2015

### **EDUCATION**

**The University of Akron School of Law**, Akron, OH

Juris Doctor, *cum laude*, May 2022

*Class Rank*: Top 26%

*Honors*: Dean's List, 2019–2022

Akron Public Interest Law Group Public Service Fellowship, Summer  
2019

Distinguished Oral Advocate, First Year Legal Practice Skills Section,  
2019

*Activities*: Environmental Law Society, President, 2020–2021, Treasurer  
2021–2022, Co-Editor of Spring 2021 Newsletter; Akron Public Interest  
Law Group, 2019–2022

**University of Miami**, Coral Gables, FL

Bachelor of Business Administration, *with honors*, International Finance  
and Marketing, December 2015

*Honors*: Dean's List, 2012–2013; Mortgage Bankers Association of  
Miami Scholarship, 2012; Business Dean's Scholarship, 2013; Henry  
King Stanford Scholarship, 2014; Golden Key National Honor Society,  
2014–2015

*Activities*: P.H.A.T.E. (Promoting Health Awareness through Education),  
Treasurer, 2012–2013; Habitat for Humanity, 2015

*Study Abroad*: Semester at Sea, Indian Ocean, Institute for Shipboard  
Education, University of Pittsburgh, Fall 2014

# The University of Akron School of Law

## Career Services Office

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### **LEGAL EXPERIENCE**

#### **Conservation Law Foundation, Miami, MA**

*Legal Intern, May 2021–March 2022*

Drafted legal memoranda involving state and federal environmental laws as well as state laws concerning agricultural land taxes, prescriptive easements, public hearing procedures, and public utility property transfer laws. Participated in strategy meetings with attorneys. Assisted in drafting an amicus brief to state appeals court and comments to state and federal agencies on environmental issues. Attended public hearings, a legislative committee hearing, a Gubernatorial Transportation Forum, and the Northeast Regional Public Meeting of U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy.

#### **State of Florida, Office of the Attorney General**

*Legal Intern, Environmental Protection Division, January 2021–March 2021*

Conducted legal research on toxic tort law and federal preemption issues. Drafted motions to compel, complaints, and document requests. Drafted memoranda on Endangered Species Act. Attended motion argument with attorneys. Summarized federal environmental legislation and assisted in drafting state legislation on indoor air quality in schools.

#### **McGregor & Associates, P.C., Boston, MA**

*Legal Intern, July 2020–December 2020, April 2021*

Conducted legal research and drafted memoranda at firm focused on commercial and residential real estate, environmental law and related litigation. Discussed research memoranda with attorneys and participated in strategy sessions. Observed client meetings, negotiations, and pre-hearing conferences before the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). Attended site visits and filed documents with the DEP, EPA, Land Court, and Registry of Deeds.

### **OTHER EXPERIENCE**

#### **Saez Leon Urdaneta Calzadilla & Perez-Burelli, Miami, FL**

*Office Manager, January 2013–January 2015*

# The University of Akron School of Law

## Career Services Office

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Established and maintained all accounting, billing, time-keeping, client management systems, and software for small corporate, real estate, and intellectual property law firm. Collected and disbursed funds for real estate closings. Managed three employees, payroll, insurance, and general office matters.

### **PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS**

Los Angeles County Bar Association, since 2019; American Bar Association (Environment, Energy & Resources and International Law sections), since 2021

### **INTERESTS**

Horseback riding, camping, and historical novels

## CHAPTER 4

### **EFFECTIVE LEGAL EMPLOYMENT CORRESPONDENCE** (Cover Letters, Thank You Letters and Acceptance/Rejection Letters)

#### **Cover Letters: The First Writing Sample**

Writing effective cover letters is critical to a successful job search. A well-researched and written letter that is individually tailored to the employer and to the position being sought can persuade the employer to consider your resume seriously. To maintain an employer's interest, your cover letter must possess the qualities of effective legal writing, but it must take a marketing approach. It should be well written, persuasive, and free of typographical, grammatical, and spelling errors. Your cover letter should be one page. Your cover letters are meant to attract a reader's attention quickly, rather than to present an exhaustive recitation of facts or detailed analysis of a situation.

When writing your cover letter, keep in mind that it is your first writing sample. It introduces you, expands on important points on your resume or parts of your background not mentioned in your resume, and requests an interview or a personal meeting. It is in your best interest to make a favorable first impression. If your cover letter is not well written, persuasive, and concise, the employer need not bother to read your formal writing sample. Express yourself clearly. Language and sentence structure must be kept simple and clean. Obviously, typographical errors and spelling errors are unacceptable and will likely disqualify you from being considered a serious applicant. While most word processing systems have a spell check capability, you should not rely solely on it. Many people have a difficult time seeing mistakes in their own writing, so it is helpful to have someone else proofread your cover letters before sending them. It is also a good idea to read your cover letter aloud, slowly and word by word. Every time you make a correction, read the whole document again.

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Your cover letter is usually your first opportunity to express your interest in a position and describe your qualifications. It is important to emphasize what you can bring to the job; too often, cover letters merely emphasize what a candidate is hoping to get out of the position. While you want to convey why a position appeals to you, you must be able to communicate what you can contribute to the employer. Before writing the letter, you should research the employer and understand its employment standards.

Your letter should establish that you have the skills the employer is seeking, by elaborating on your educational and professional experiences and providing concrete examples of your accomplishments. Rather than repeating the entries on your resume, your letter should supplement your resume and pique the reader's interest. Ultimately, your cover letter should entice an employer to want to interview you.

Performing research on a prospective employer and incorporating this information into your cover letter demonstrates your sincerity and genuine interest in a specific position. Generic letters will not generate any employer interest in you. If a cover letter is broad enough to be sent to almost any employer, it is unlikely to be effective in helping you obtain an interview.

Each letter should be composed individually with the specific recipient in mind, even if you are using a mail merge program; however, there are simple guidelines you can follow. Samples included in this chapter show a range of styles that you may use as a basis for your own efforts. Just a note of caution: employers know a “canned” letter when they see one—especially if they receive ten or twenty all the same! Be sure you do not rely on these samples too directly.

### **Purpose of Cover Letters**

The purpose of a cover letter is to introduce yourself to the potential employer and to highlight and emphasize some of your most outstanding qualities, skills and experiences that you can bring to that employer. In

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order to write an effective cover letter, you must research an employer before you send a cover letter. You must gather all the information you possibly can before you write a cover letter to any prospective employer.

Use this information to relate your background more directly to the employer's specific needs and specific law practice and to convince the employer that you are truly interested in working for them and only them. Chapter 5 "Interview Skills" contains suggestions on where to find information on potential employers.

### **Tone of Cover Letters**

Your cover letters should always exude enthusiasm, sincerity and genuine interest in the particular employer to whom it is addressed.

### **Format of Cover Letters**

A cover letter is nothing but a persuasive argument for why an employer should select you for an interview. The #1 comment that employers make in this market is that applicants must give an employer a reason to hire them and not the next person. Moreover, your cover letter (and resume) is the first and possibly only writing sample that the legal employer will read. It should read like a cross between a professional letter and a legal brief/motion.

Accordingly, accuracy, content, style, and skill must be demonstrated. If you do not believe that an employer will throw away your resume or not grant you an interview because you have a typo in your materials, then you are badly mistaken. These are lawyers. They write for a living. Writing is a lawyer's craft and that is something job applicants must understand. Further, the letter should present logical arguments and the evidence supporting those arguments. Most cover letters are unorganized, unpersuasive, and either a form/template that says nothing or a "me" letter which focuses on all of the great things the employer or job will do for the applicant.

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By drafting a persuasive “brief” type letter, that eloquently and logically argues your position, and that focuses on the needs of the employer, you will: (1) demonstrate, from the outset, your ability to draft a persuasive document; (2) sell yourself; (3) and distinguish yourself from your peers, all at the same time.

How is that done? First, it requires thinking, planning, and editing. Most applicants do not bother with these steps; they simply crank out and transmit an unpolished, unprofessional and unhelpful first draft. However, one draft will normally not suffice. It takes WORK. That is what will hopefully distinguish you. Second, below is a simple format that can be followed to provide an outline to the writer of a persuasive cover letter. However, it is imperative that the writer understand that the most important part of the letter – the substantive content – is solely up to the writer to craft. This outline is intended only to provide the writer with a framework and points on which to think and focus. It is a tool to help the writer draft a persuasive cover letter. It is not a template and should not be treated as such.

With that in mind, the outline contains three major sections: the Claims Paragraph, the Proof Paragraphs, and the Closing Paragraph.

“Claims” Paragraph (Para. 1). Use the first paragraph to introduce yourself, but most importantly, make your claims. Just like in a brief where you will state your causes of action, you want to, right up front, present your arguments for why the employer should hire you. These are your “claims”. Your claims must be in the first paragraph – this is simply good writing (and parallels good public speaking). The point of the claims paragraph is to provide all of your “bullets” in case the reader does not read past the first paragraph. So, when drafting:

- Write to the reader – a legal employer who is likely an attorney.

Appropriately and professionally address the reader: “Dear Mr./Ms.”; “Mr. NAME”; or “Hiring Committee:” when no individual name is available.

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- Introductory statement. Be professional. State who you are and what you want. Something like: “Please consider the enclosed resume for a position with XYZ firm.”
- Tell the employer why you will be an asset to them: “I believe that I am an excellent candidate for this position because....”
- Make your claims. Identify and list the 2-3 things that you think you will bring to the firm. That is, the top 2-3 reasons why the employer should hire you and not the next person. Make your claims in order of importance or relevance. “..... I am an outstanding legal researcher and writer, I have significant litigation experience ...”
- Sell yourself. We are lawyers. Words matter. Word choice is a crucial skill and will demonstrate your ability to write persuasively. Remember, you are advocating for yourself. If you cannot advocate for yourself, how can you convince an employer that you will advocate for their clients?
- Be humble, but quietly confident in your value and the skills you bring to the table. Use words like “I believe, I am confident” etc. to soften statements like “I am a great candidate....” which may come across as arrogant without some qualifying language.
- Do not tell the employer about all the benefits you think you will receive from working there. They do not care about your career aspirations or mentoring you. Law practice is a business – you are a commodity that will make them money. That is what you need to demonstrate.
- The best way to come up with your claims is to sit down and brainstorm, for each of your prior experiences (work, volunteer, whatever), the knowledge, skills, and abilities you have or gained from those experiences. This is an important step because these experiences will serve as the “evidence” to prove your claims. *See below.*

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“Proof” Paragraphs (Para. 2-4). Next you will need to present evidence to prove your “claims”:

- Keep all of the above in mind.
- Take each one of your claims and independently and specifically prove them in a separate paragraph. Accordingly, 2-3 claims = 2-3 proof paragraphs.
- Use your prior experience, law school experience, etc. to prove your claims.
- Write like a lawyer. Make sound arguments. Prove everything you say. Be specific and concise.
- Bring it all back to the fact that the claim / skill you just proved will provide a benefit to the employer.

Closing Paragraph (Para. 5-6). The third and final major section is the closing paragraph(s).

- Succinctly reiterate your claims. This tracks with good writing and public speaking where the main points are hit at the beginning, middle, and end.
- Ask for the job – it is perfectly acceptable to express interest or excitement for the job. Another comment from employers is that they want applicants to show genuine interest in THE job, not A job. It is the writer’s duty to convey this interest to the reader. If the employer has a specific practice area, or there is something about the employer the applicant truly likes or is interested in, now is the time to express it (i.e., location, practice areas, commitment to the community, etc.).
- Close strong. You just spent five paragraphs boldly stating why you should get the job/interview – do not back down now. Sadly, many

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applicants just cannot bring themselves to close strong. Instead, the last impression an employer has is something like “I really hope that maybe you will call me.” Or, the equally weak and redundant “if you have any questions or need more information, please feel free to contact me.” The employer does not need your permission to contact you. If they want to, they will. Or, the unprofessional “please contact me for references.” Again, if they want references, they will ask for them.

Instead, close strong. Leave them with an impression that you are confident but not arrogant. Leave them with little doubt that you expect an interview. Perhaps something like: “I look forward to discussing my qualifications with you.” Or, if that seems too presumptuous: “I look forward to the opportunity to speak with you concerning my qualifications.” Or, if the job is a posted job: “I look forward to discussing this opportunity with you.” Never demand or presume an interview. Certainly never tell them that you will have a meeting. Just leave them with the impression that YOU believe that THEY will naturally want to speak with you given the argument you just made.

- Always say “thank you.”
- To close, we suggest “Regards, Best Regards, Respectfully ...”

It is important to note that there is not necessarily one way to draft a cover letter. Even using the above methodology, each student should add their own unique style. What is important is to present information that (1) proves why you are the best candidate for the position and (2) present it in a way that is logical, ordered, and persuasive.

Most importantly, remember to follow up. The best written cover letter in the world does not matter if you do not follow up. Wait 7-10 days and then call or email the person to whom you sent the letter. If an assistant answers, ask for the attorney’s voicemail. Leave a coherent message and tell them when you will call back. If you reach the attorney, but they blow you off, say you understand they are busy and that you

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will call them back at a time that is good for them. Get a time. And then, call them back when you say you will.

Think of it like a tennis match. The employer is desperately trying to lob the ball back in your court hoping that you swing and miss. Simply put, attorneys generally do not want to talk to you on your timetable. But, they will talk to you on their timetable.

So, Always....always....hit the ball back into the employer's court. Do not wait for the employer to come to you or to call you back. You must be persistent, but always be respectful and cognizant of the importance of their time.

### **Dealing with Salary Requirements in a Cover Letter**

Occasionally, a job advertisement asks you to include your salary requirements in your cover letter. While answering this question can be tricky, you must research the geographic area and be familiar with what other employers in that field are paying. You might want to say, for example, "Other law firms of your size in this market are paying their new associates in the \$50,000 range and I would expect a salary in that range". Be careful though as giving a specific salary requirement may either price you out of a job or allow an employer to offer a salary lower than what he or she may have been willing to offer. If you believe that it is necessary to provide a salary requirement, give as general a range as possible ("in the range of \$50,000 - \$60,000"). Incorporate this information in the last paragraph of your cover letter.

### **Correspondence via Email**

It is common for employers to request that cover letters and resumes be sent via email for posted job openings. When the employer specifically requests email, then you should absolutely and only use email to transmit your application materials.

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Avoid casual and informal language and formats in the transmission emails. Instead observe the same professionalism and formality demonstrated in your cover letter. Never draft your cover letter in the body of the email – always send as an attachment. Keep the following suggestions in mind:

- Always send your materials in PDF unless the employer specifically requests another format.
- State in your transmission email that the employer should contact you if they have any trouble opening the attached files.
- Save a copy of everything you email either by bcc'ing yourself or by keeping a copy in your sent mail folder.
- If you are going to draft a lengthy email, consider drafting it with your word processing software and pasting it into your email application.
- Wait until you are completely finished writing and editing your email before filling in the “to” field with the recipient’s email address. This prevents you from accidentally sending the message before it is ready.

### **Summary: Final and Crucial Thoughts**

Ultimately, while many of the “rules” concerning cover letters are subjective, there are certain things that are crucial and non-negotiable. Always remember that your cover letter is a writing sample. Keep the following in mind:

- Draft your cover letter on the same letterhead you use for your resume.
- You cannot afford typos or grammatical mistakes. Proofread very carefully. You must do more than a standard spell check on your computer.

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- Try to keep cover letters to one page—good legal writing is always succinct and concise. Your cover letter should be too!
- Do not seem clueless as to what the employer does—make it clear from your cover letter that you have researched the employer.
- Do not make conclusions—back up all your statements about your qualifications with hard facts from your past experience.
- Do not focus on why you want the job. The point of cover letters is to market yourself—employers want to know what you can do for them, not vice versa.
- Never point out negative things about yourself. Do not fall on the sword. Accentuate the positive.
- Have the CSO review your letters before you send them out.
- It is always better to address cover letters to a definite person, rather than “hiring partner” or “recruiting coordinator”.
- Try to address your letters to hiring attorneys or heads of hiring committees, rather than recruiting coordinators, as they are the ones who have the authority to fit you into an interview schedule or even to create another position, if you are seen to be worth it.
- While “Dear” is an often-used salutation, you can also try just simply stating the addressee’s name, such as “Ms. Johnson”.
- The most commonly used valediction, or complimentary close is “sincerely.” While there is nothing wrong with “sincerely” you may want to try others to find the valediction you like best: “best regards”, “regards”, “yours truly,” “very truly yours,” or others in common used by professionals to one another.

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- Do not forget to type your name below the signature block. Do not include your telephone number and/or address as that information is contained in the letterhead.
- Sign in blue ink when printed. This is an old lawyer's trick to know which document is an original and which is a copy. It is a little thing, and not a deal breaker, but can add that unique "touch" that may resonate with a practitioner.
- Utilize an electronic signature when not printing and sending as an electronic file. This shows professionalism and sophistication. An electronic signature is as follows: "/s/ John Smith".

The following cover letter examples are designed to assist you in your initial drafting of a cover letter. They are not to be copied verbatim, nor do they necessarily reflect a complete or finished cover letter. The CSO simply presents them as a beginning point for you to create your own custom cover letter.

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### SAMPLE COVER LETTERS

**JON DOE**

**0000 E. Exchange St. Apt. 00 | Akron, Ohio 44308 | (XXX) XXX-XXXX | [doe@zips.uakron.edu](mailto:doe@zips.uakron.edu)**

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February 27, 2023

Jack Attorney, Esq.  
Sebben & Sebben, LLC  
South Main Street  
Cincinnati, Ohio 44308-1322

Dear Mr. Attorney:

Please consider the enclosed resume for a Law Clerk position at Sebben & Sebben. I am confident that I am an excellent candidate for this position and can be an asset in your Akron office. Through years of sales experience I have honed strong written and oral communication skills, and the ability to smoothly transition from independent work to group projects. Additionally, while working on many successful management and marketing projects I have developed exceptional time and project management skills. Those skills combined with my extensive background in research provide me with the tools to excel on any project. Further and perhaps more importantly, I am a motivated self-starter with acute attention to detail, possessing both the ability to learn quickly and to use creative problem-solving techniques.

One of the most important and useful assets in my skill set is the ability to effectively communicate and smoothly transition into different environments. For example, as a National Sales Manager, I was given the responsibility of introducing a new product line. In doing so my honed written and oral communication skills allowed me to develop an entire new client base and distribution network. Further, without the ability to transition between independent work and projects involving multiple

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companies, I could not have been successful. I believe my effective communication skills and my adaptability directly translate to the legal field because they are a lawyer's essential tools.

Additionally, in over a decade of experience within the corporate world, the backbone of my skill set has always been my ability to successfully manage time and projects, coupled with effective research utilizing both written and electronic sources. For example, my time and project management skills, combined with effective research and analysis skills allowed me to create successful research driven marketing materials for X Corporation. I will bring these same skills to Sebben & Sebben.

Furthermore, my results driven mentality has helped me develop creative problem-solving techniques including the ability to both learn on the fly and an acute attention to detail because achieving results requires finding a solution to any problem. For example, as a licensed securities broker, the lack of knowledge of FINRA or SEC regulations could have resulted in the loss of my licenses. Anything less than an acute attention to detail when analyzing Private Placement Memorandums could have resulted in substantial financial losses for my customers. As a Law Clerk at Sebben & Sebben, I will use these abilities to deliver timely and quality work.

My research shows that Sebben & Sebben has a commitment to treating every client as an individual, not simply a number. Personal service requires hard work and dedication to a client's needs, a commitment I have always promised my clients. These commitments that we share, as well as the skills demonstrated above are the reasons that I am an excellent candidate for a Law Clerk position at Sebben & Sebben. I am confident that I can be an asset in your Akron office, and I look forward to the opportunity to speak with you more about my qualifications.

Thank you,  
/s/ Jon Doe

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**Student B. Good**  
**studentbgood@gmail.com**  
**1725 Some Road, City, Ohio, 99999**  
**445.123.4567**

[DATE]

Roger Contact  
Legal Employer, LLC  
Address  
City, Ohio 99999

Mr. Contact:

Please consider the attached resume, transcripts, and writing sample as my formal application for the summer law clerk position at Legal Employer, LLC (“Employer”). I am confident that I would be a valuable addition to Employer, because I am an excellent writer, an effective researcher, and a proven leader. I also have a unique background in both economics and finance, which I could use to your company’s advantage through my sophisticated understanding of business. Moreover, I could bring a business perspective to legal tasks.

My legal writing skills are outstanding. These skills are evidenced by my previous position as an assistant editor for the *Akron Law Review*. I was selected for membership on the law review based on the quality of the note I submitted for the write-on competition. I also earned excellent grades in both first-year legal writing courses. I believe my proficiency in writing would serve Employer well.

I also have significant research experience. As a law clerk in the Office of General Counsel at Northeast Ohio Medical University (“NEOMED”) I am often called upon to submit research memoranda to the senior attorney on many and often diverse topics. Because of my experience, I am able to quickly locate the pertinent information, analyze it, and present it in a useful manner. My research and rhetorical skills were also

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tested during the membership competition for Moot Court Honor Society. I was pleased to be selected for membership based on the quality of my oral argument, which was largely a result of my diligent research on the assigned topic. I am confident that these skills would be useful to Employer during a summer clerkship.

Further, I am an experienced leader. My position as a manager of the Student Venture Fund at The University of Akron demonstrates my leadership skills. The Student Venture Fund is a venture capital investment fund managed and staffed by graduate students at The University of Akron that specifically targets early stage start-up companies for investment opportunities. I was also recently selected to be the Managing Editor of the *Akron Tax Journal* for the 2022-2023 academic year. I believe my leadership skills would be advantageous to Employer.

Due to my interdisciplinary background in economics, business management, and law, I am confident that I would be an asset to Employer. As a summer law clerk, I could use both my research and writing skills and my highly developed knowledge of finance and economics to assist in the corporate legal department at Employer.

Please consider me as a strong candidate for the law clerk position. My unique background, along with my academic accomplishments, has provided me the tools to be an asset to Employer. I look forward to the opportunity to discuss my qualifications with you.

Sincerely,

/s/ Student B. Good

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Suzie Q. Student

1414 Anystreet • City, OH • 330-543-2100 • [suzie.student@gmail.com](mailto:suzie.student@gmail.com)

[DATE]

Carol Contact  
County Legal Agency  
Address  
City, OH 99999

Ms. Contact:

Please consider the enclosed resume for a law clerk position with County Legal Agency. I believe that I am an excellent candidate for this position because I have significant legal research experience and I am an outstanding legal writer with an understanding of how to draft all manner legal documents. Further, I have a strong commitment to the Northeast Ohio community.

As stated, I have significant legal research experience. In summer 2022, I worked as a Summer Associate with Community Legal Aid's Family Law Team. During my internship, I thoroughly researched complex legal issues involving the relationship between federal statutes and state laws, including the interaction of the federal Brady gun statutes and an Ohio Civil Protection Order consent agreement. Additionally, I learned the intricacies of Ohio's domestic violence law. By interviewing clients, I gained an ability to analyze the pertinent facts and assess the merit of cases. Also, I attended numerous Civil Protection Order hearings and gained insights into these types of hearings. In summer 2021, I also conducted legal research for an Akron Law professor where I precisely verified citations for a textbook update and compiled and analyzed Women's Law Fund ("WLF") cases. I then composed summaries of WLF cases to be used in various scholarly publications.

I also have extensive legal writing experience. My undergraduate studies at Mount Union College were legal writing intensive. In my final year, I

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researched and drafted a Law Note on the Eighth Amendment. During the 2019 spring semester, I interned with the Clerk's Office in the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Ohio. There, I observed District Court hearings and assisted in filing cases on CM/ECF, the Federal Judiciary's comprehensive case management system for all bankruptcy, district, and appellate courts. As an undergraduate student, legal advocacy and mock trial classes enhanced my analytical ability as well as my oral and written communication skills. Also, in my first-year law school Civil Procedure class, I drafted complaints, motions in support, motions in opposition, and various other pleadings and responses as part of a mock litigation. At Community Legal Aid, I drafted objections to magistrates' orders, interrogatories, requests for production of documents, requests for admissions, memorandums on the interaction of federal statutes and Ohio law, memorandums on Ohio domestic relations law, and submitted case intake recommendations to the Family Team Senior Attorney.

Finally, I have a strong commitment to the Northeast Ohio community. My great-grandparents immigrated to this area and settled in Akron in 1902. I have been raised with a strong sense of civic pride and have a desire to build my career in, and thus serve, my community.

I believe that I will be an asset to County Legal Agency because I will bring all of these skills to our community. I possess strong legal research and writing skills and I also am very committed to Northeast Ohio. I look forward to the opportunity to speak with you concerning my qualifications. Thank you for your consideration.

Regards,  
Suzie Q. Student

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**Adam A. Adamson**

214 Somewhere St. • Akron, OH 44313 • (999) 555-5555 •  
adamson@gmail.com

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[DATE]

Recruiting Director  
ABC Company  
Address  
City, State Zip

Recruiting Director:

Please consider the enclosed resume for a position as a law clerk with your ABC Company. I believe that I am an excellent candidate for this position because: (1) I am an outstanding researcher and writer; and (2) I have developed substantial skills from prior work experience that readily translate to the practice of law. I am confident that my particular experience and skill set will benefit ABC Company.

First, I have cultivated crucial researching and writing skills in my academic studies and work experience. My legal writing professor commented that my final predictive memo from the previous semester contained some of the best analysis in the class and that I exhibited very strong research and writing skills. Additionally, as a Political Science undergraduate, I was required to develop research and writing abilities. I thrived at assignments that challenged my research and writing skills. Once I had chosen Political Science as my undergraduate degree, I was on the Dean's list each of those years and received almost all A's in those courses. My crowning undergraduate achievement was receiving the top grade in the Senior Capstone class. In this class, I was required to write a 25-30 page research paper and present the thesis. I am confident I will be able to benefit your company with these skills.

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Second, after undergraduate school, I was again able to utilize my research and writing skills. I was able to work for a job support company that helped people with disabilities become integrated in the workforce. I spearheaded the task of drafting many work documents and training materials. Additionally, I was in charge of a research project where I reviewed all of the clients' files, determined the common medications they took, and researched the medications' effects on the clients pertaining to their potential employment opportunities. Additionally, I have extensive woodworking experience where I oversaw various large-scale projects and managed others. I was able to develop strong personal relationship and conflict resolution skills from the rich experience of working with co-workers and clients. Currently, I volunteer with my church as an executive secretary and effectively provide administrative support for church leaders responsible for 3,500 members in the Akron/Canton area.

I believe that my skills, abilities, and drive will benefit the needs of the company. I possess the discipline needed to excel at your firm. I look forward to discussing my qualifications with you.

Thank you,

Adam A. Adamson

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[INSERT LETTERHEAD FROM RESUME HERE]

[DATE]

Susan Rogers, Esq.  
Rogers & Rogers  
199 Exchange Street  
Cleveland, OH 44444

RE: Summer Associate Position

Dear Ms. Rogers:

Rogers & Rogers recently sponsored a panel discussion at Akron Law School on intellectual property law that featured John James. The presentation was impressive and prompted me to contact you regarding a summer clerkship with Rogers & Rogers. As a second-year student at Akron Law School, I am focusing my studies on the intellectual property area and plan to graduate with a certificate in the Intellectual Property Law concentration. Additionally, I believe that my considerable knowledge of intellectual property law combined with my significant experience as a professional prior to law school makes me an excellent candidate.

As you can see from my resume, I have considerable experience in the area of intellectual property law. Before law school, I spent two years as a paralegal at the boutique firm of Jones & Jones, where I gained substantial training in legal research and writing. In this position, I also gained substantial client contact experience. I left this position to begin law school full time and chose to attend Akron Law School specifically because of its Intellectual Property concentration. Through this program, I have taken numerous classes, including Patent Law and Drafting Patent Claims. Last summer, I returned to Jones & Jones and gained additional practical experience researching legal issues, responding to client inquiries, and drafting legal memoranda. During this school year, I am assisting Professor Samuels with research on Ohio Probate Laws. The

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combination of my work experiences and legal education, with my sincere interest in intellectual property law, would make me a valuable member of your summer program.

Jones & Jones is renowned for being a wonderful place to work. The prospect of working with talented attorneys in a firm with such a large Intellectual Property department genuinely excites me. I am confident that my extensive experience and strong writing skills would allow me to be an asset to your firm. I have enclosed a copy of my resume and look forward to meeting with you. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Suzanne Hendricks

Enclosure

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### **SAMPLE LETTER TO ALUMNUS REQUESTING ADVICE**

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[INSERT CUSTOM LETTERHEAD]

[DATE]

Joseph Phoebe, Esq.  
Ross & Chandler  
1250 West Wisconsin Avenue, Suite 1011  
Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53202

Dear Mr. Phoebe:

As a second year law student at The University of Akron School of Law who intends to practice in Milwaukee, I would be grateful for any help you could give me regarding legal practice in your area. I understand that you graduated from Akron Law and that you now practice in labor law.

I will be spending winter break in Milwaukee and would appreciate any time you could spare for advice. During my stay, I plan to arrange several interviews for summer positions with firms that are devoted to, or have significant, labor practices. My resume is enclosed so that you may review my background. You will note that I have emphasized my related legal course work, activities as president of the Labor Law Association and relevant undergraduate studies. You can see that my commitment to this area is long standing and continuing.

I hope we can arrange a convenient time to meet, should your schedule allow the opportunity. Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to speaking with you soon.

Very truly yours,

David Student

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### **SAMPLE LETTER TO AN ALUMNUS REQUESTING ASSISTANCE**

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[INSERT CUSTOM LETTERHEAD]  
[DATE]

Mr. Matthew Williams  
Jacobs & Field, P.A.  
11075 East Boulevard  
Bethesda, MD 20814

Dear Mr. Williams:

As you will note in the enclosed letter to Michael Hargrove, hiring partner at Jacobs & Field, I have applied for a summer position with your firm. I am interested in your firm, as your practice includes real estate and land use, as well as related areas.

I understand that you are an alumnus of The University of Akron School of Law. As my resume indicates, I am in my second year at Akron Law. I am finding that employers in Bethesda are commonly unfamiliar with the school and its academic strengths. I would appreciate any help you could give me in stating my case for employment to Mr. Hargrove and others involved in the hiring process.

I will let you know if I am granted an interview. Should you wish to contact me before then, please do not hesitate to do so. Thank you in advance for your consideration and help.

Sincerely,

James M. Thome

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### **SAMPLE LETTER TO AN ALUMNUS REQUESTING ADVICE**

[INSERT CUSTOM LETTERHEAD]

[DATE]

Mr. Michael Jordan  
Jordan, Pippen & Rodman, L.P.A.  
Two Merchandise Mart  
Chicago, IL 60602

Dear Mr. Jordan:

I am writing to you as fellow Akron Law School alum who intends to practice health law in Chicago. I will be in town from August 15 to 20 and would appreciate any time you could spare to discuss the Chicago legal market, and how I can best uncover potential employment leads. I wish to break into the health care field at any angle, whether working at a law firm, hospital or corporation. Any assistance that you could provide me would be greatly appreciated.

As my resume reflects, I have academic, extracurricular and work experience in the health care area. I have taken a variety of health care courses including Health Law, Medical-legal Concepts, Civil Law and Psychiatry, and Health Care Controversies. The knowledge that I gained from these classes helped me as I prepared my argument for the National Moot Court Competition on the denial of recovery for medical monitoring damages in a cancer phobia action. Further, working closely with the attorneys at Kemp, Ferrey, & Sura last summer provided me further exposure to health care issues.

I would welcome the opportunity to meet with you at your convenience. I look forward to speaking with you soon.

Sincerely,

I.M. Looking

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### **SAMPLE COVER LETTER**

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[INSERT CUSTOM LETTERHEAD]

The Honorable George Lowrey  
Magistrate, U.S. District Court, Central District of Ohio  
U.S. Courthouse  
85 Macaroni Boulevard  
Columbus, Ohio 43215

Dear Judge Lowrey:

In reference to your posting with The University of Akron School of Law for a judicial law clerk, I would like to submit an application for your consideration. As requested, I have enclosed a resume, writing samples, official transcript and a list of references.

I understand from speaking with two law professors who have served as federal clerks that important criteria for the position are demonstrated ability in legal research, analysis and writing. Through three years of law school, I have assisted various professors in their legal research, most notably, Professor Peter Aurbach, whose written recommendation will be forwarded under a separate cover. Please feel free to contact him or the other professors, whose names I have listed, for further information.

The enclosed writing samples highlight the range of my writing ability. “The Historical Advance of Female Practitioners in the Law Through Practice Specialty and Law Firm Management Responsibility” is an excerpt of a scholarly paper written to satisfy Akron Law’s upper level writing requirement. Further, the memorandum regarding a client’s responsibility to provide proper provisions for a handicapped employee was transmitted to the client with no substantive revisions.

I am confident that my proven research and analytical skills, as well as my demonstrated writing ability, make me an excellent candidate to successfully clerk in your chambers. I look forward to hearing from you

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at your earliest convenience. Thank you for your consideration of my application.

Sincerely,

Andy Garcia

Enclosures

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### **SAMPLE FOLLOW UP COVER LETTER**

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[INSERT CUSTOM LETTERHEAD]

[DATE]

Mr. John Hart, Esq.  
Jacobs & Field  
6700 Grant Building  
Pittsburgh, PA 15219

Dear Mr. Hart:

As you may recall, I submitted a resume to you last fall expressing my interest in a position with your firm as an associate. You indicated to me at this time that, although you planned eventually to hire an associate, you were not yet in a position to do so. You suggested you might be interested in discussing employment with me the following summer, if I were still seeking a position.

I subsequently clerked during my last year of law school at Alomar & Vizquel, a small Cleveland firm that specializes in personal injury and medical malpractice matters. In that capacity, I participated in numerous aspects of the litigation process, including interviewing clients, drafting pleadings and motions, preparing correspondence, developing strategies regarding negotiations with opposing counsel, and attending court proceedings.

While I gained invaluable experience at Alomar & Vizquel, I have returned to Pittsburg to practice. I have registered for the Pennsylvania Bar examination, which I will take next month. If you are currently in a position to consider bringing in a new associate, or expect to be in the near future, I would be most interested in discussing possible employment with you. I have enclosed my updated resume for your consideration and am available to interview at your convenience. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

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Very truly yours,

Anne D. Paccione

Enclosure

**Thank You Letters: The Finishing Touch  
Sending a Thank You Note After Interviewing.**

One of the most commonly asked questions is whether or not to send a thank you note after an interview. While it is not strictly a necessary component of your job search process, there are several excellent reasons for taking the time to send a thank you letter after an interview. Through the course of your efforts, you should always be putting your best foot forward and a note thanking the interviewer for considering you is only polite. It gives evidence of follow through and attention to detail, qualities you should be marketing at every step. It also provides an excellent opportunity to remind the interviewer briefly of your features or experiences most interesting to him or her. Finally, you have another chance to reaffirm your interest in the position. Keep in mind, however, that while it is always appropriate to send a thank you letter after an interview, please beware that “a well written one cannot help you all that much, but a poorly written one can hurt you!”

Some employment experts say that one should always send a thank you letter via mail. To be practical, this will depend on your time and the circumstances under which you are meeting with people generally, thank you notes via email are perfectly acceptable and always a good idea, though handwritten notes make a strong impression.

The key to thank you letters is timeliness. Since thank you notes/emails can help you make a good impression and connection, try to personalize each one, including a specific reference to your discussion with each person you’ve met or interviewed with. Since one important purpose of the letter is to express your gratitude for the time spent with you, it is most gracious to do so as soon as possible after the event, preferably on the same day.

If you are emailing in any professional capacity, be sure you have an appropriate signature block.

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Example student signature block:

### **ZIPPY LAW STUDENT**

Juris Doctor Candidate 2023

Student Bar Association – 1L Class Representative

The University of Akron School of Law

zls1000@uakron.edu

(330) 555-5555

If you are hand writing any notes, buy notepaper or cards that look conservative. Simply buy blank thank you cards from Target or Walmart and be sure they come with matching envelopes!

Do not be skimpy with your thank you notes. Be sure to send thank you notes to all those with whom you met or spoke by telephone for advice or referrals, including professors, counselors, and attorneys with whom you have met for informational interviews. Let them know you will be in touch with an update on your progress. These individual touches will earn you a positive professional reputation and may help you in the future.

### **Acceptance and Rejection Letters: Tying the Knot or Maintaining Relationships**

#### **Letters Confirming Job Acceptance or Rejecting a Job Offer.**

Congratulations! You did it! You got the job!! Now is the time to ask those questions you could not ask during the interview. So before you accept or reject an offer, contact the person who made you the offer to arrange for a follow-up meeting or telephone call to clarify your unanswered questions.

After all your questions are answered to your satisfaction, ask the employer to put the offer of employment in writing. This will assure you that the offer is formal. You should then accept the offer first on the

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telephone and then in writing. Your acceptance letter should set forth your understanding of the terms of the offer—salary, starting date, length of employment (if applicable), and hours per week (if applicable). If you are rejecting an offer, it is also courteous to put your rejections in writing. The following sample letters can be used to help you draft your acceptance and rejection letters.

Please keep the CSO informed of the progress of your job search and let us know when you have accepted an offer of summer employment or permanent employment.

### **SAMPLE THANK YOU LETTER**

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[INSERT LETTERHEAD FROM RESUME HERE]

Ms. Cindi Shumaker  
Loop, Wright & Connelly  
2100 Renaissance Drive  
Tallmadge, OH 44278

Ms. Shumaker:

Thank you for arranging my interviews with the members of the hiring committee of Loop, Wright & Connelly. I truly enjoyed our discussions, as well as my stay in Detroit.

I believe that my training, experience and goals blend well with the firm's direction and needs. In particular, through my experience with Judge Lowrey, the University of Akron Journal of International Law and the school's writing program, I have developed the strong research and writing skills you seek. At the same time, Loop, Wright & Connelly's early emphasis on courtroom experience and direct client contact fulfills my expectations of a challenging work environment.

I look forward to hearing from you soon.

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Warmest regards,

James F. Student

### **SAMPLE THANK YOU LETTER** [INSERT LETTERHEAD FROM RESUME HERE]

Ms. Roberta S. Stevens  
Assistant Ohio Attorney General  
30 East Broad Street, 17<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Columbus, OH 43215

Ms. Stevens:

It was a pleasure meeting with you today to discuss the possibility of becoming a summer law clerk with the Ohio Attorney General's Office. I genuinely appreciated and enjoyed the opportunity to discuss my background and goals with someone whose career path has so closely paralleled my own aspirations.

I would like to reaffirm my interest in this position. My extended undergraduate internship with the Iowa Public Defender's Office gave me a solid grounding in one form of public interest practice, and helped pique my interest in government service. You can be confident that the commitment you seek is matched in my established and active desire to succeed as a legal professional.

As we discussed, since you expect to be making summer employment decisions before mid-February, if I do not hear from you by then, I will contact you for an update. I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours truly,  
Chloe Sullivan

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### **SAMPLE THANK YOU LETTER**

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[INSERT LETTERHEAD FROM RESUME HERE]

Dene Domenique, Esq.  
Senior Attorney, Securities Department  
First Bank of First City  
6759 Wall Street  
New York, NY 10002

Mr. Domenique:

I would like to thank you and your colleagues for taking the time to meet with me today. Our discussion served to increase my interest in the position and your institution.

My paralegal experience with Kleinman & Crouse has given me a solid grounding in the intricacies of securities rules and transactions that will allow me to produce work this summer that will be both usable and indicative of my abilities. Furthermore, I believe that First Bank of First City would provide an excellent environment in which to sharpen and refine my skills while providing your organization with excellent work product.

Again, it was a pleasure to meet with you and I look forward to hearing from you.

Best regards,

Securities Law Student

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### **SAMPLE HANDWRITTEN THANK YOU NOTES**

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Ms. Jones:

Thank you for taking the time as a University of Akron School of Law alumnus to speak with me today concerning my employment search in the Boston area. I followed your advice immediately with a telephone call to John Joyce of Smith, Smythe and Schmidt and have an appointment for next week.

Professor Raw sends his regards and would like to hear from you.

I look forward to meeting you in person and will contact you when I reach Boston to arrange a time.

Sincerely,

Mark Student

George,

Thank you for meeting with me today to discuss the nature of your practice at Hine and Schnake. I was particularly interested to hear about the degree of feedback an associate receives and the level of responsibility to which you have risen in only two years. I look forward to working with you should I be selected for an associate position.

Sincerely,

Bob Student

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Career Services Office

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March 29, 202\*

Lillian,

I appreciate the time you took today to help me consider possible areas of employment. In particular, I appreciate the names of people to contact. I am meeting with Syd Broder on Thursday. I also spoke briefly with Susan Friedland and plan to meet with her next week. I have calls in to the others.

Also, thanks for the Lexis tips. I am sure that they will come in handy when faced with deadlines! As we discussed, I will call you in about two weeks.

Sincerely,

Joan Farragher

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### **SAMPLE THANK YOU LETTER**

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[INSERT LETTERHEAD FROM RESUME HERE]

May 1, 202\*

Ms. Laura Blackacre  
Korngold, Leatherberry, Weinzierl  
520 S.W. Yamhill Street  
Portland, OR 97204

Laura:

It was a genuine pleasure to meet with you yesterday. After speaking with Roger Weinzierl, I was looking forward to our meeting and I found our discussion a pleasant change from typical interviews.

Your positive indication about the needs of the corporate health law department was encouraging. As you will remember, I am also from Portland and my goal is to work in this field and city. Because of your description of the attorneys and working climate at Korngold & Leatherberry, I am particularly interested in an associate position and hope that my application will be considered further.

Thank you once again for meeting with me. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Yours truly,

Donna Moray-Student

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Career Services Office

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**SAMPLE ACCEPTANCE LETTER SUMMER POSITION**

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[INSERT LETTERHEAD FROM RESUME HERE]

March 1, 202\*

Ms. Jeanne Darte  
Consolidated, Inc.  
55 Public Square, Suite 7200  
Cleveland, OH 44113

Ms. Darte:

This letter will confirm my acceptance of your offer for summer employment with the legal department of Consolidated, Inc. I am looking forward to meeting the rest of your staff, as well as beginning my employment. At this point, I do not know the exact date when I will be free to start. I should be able to let you know by the beginning of April after the examination schedule is distributed.

Thank you once again.

Sincerely,

George L. Student

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**SAMPLE ACCEPTANCE LETTER PERMANENT POSITION**

[INSERT LETTERHEAD FROM RESUME HERE]

February 29, 202\*

Mr. Mark Valerio  
Porcelli & Associates, L.P.A.  
123 W. Market Street, Suite 6700  
Canton, OH 44718

Mr. Valerio:

I am very pleased to confirm in writing my acceptance of employment as an Associate Attorney with Porcelli & Associates following my law school graduation and sitting for the Bar examination. At this point, I expect to commence my employment on Tuesday, September 6, 202\*.

Once again, I would like to emphasize my enthusiasm and desire to begin my legal career with Porcelli & Associates and I look forward to the challenges and experiences awaiting me as an Associate Attorney with the firm.

Very truly yours,

Rafael F. Morstad

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Career Services Office

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**SAMPLE REJECTION LETTER**

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[INSERT LETTERHEAD FROM RESUME HERE]

March 17, 202\*

Mr. Herman Munster  
O'Connor & Munster, L.P.A.  
1250 E. Exchange Street  
Akron, OH 44309

Mr. Munster:

Thank you for extending an offer to join your firm as a summer associate. I regret that I must decline. I enjoyed my visit to O'Connor & Munster and was impressed by everyone I met. As a result, this decision was truly a difficult one to make.

I wish you so much success with your summer program. Thank you again for your consideration.

Very truly yours,

Marcus Thompson

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **INTERVIEWING SKILLS**

#### **What is an Interview?**

Basically, an interview is a conversation during which the participants exchange information, ask and answer questions, and form opinions about each other and about whether a long-term relationship is likely to develop. And just as you would during any good conversation, you must pay attention to what the other person is saying, look at them while they are speaking, and respond appropriately. Remember, employers hire people they like.

Generally speaking, first interviews, especially those held during on-campus interviews, are between 15 and 30 minutes long. The purpose of these "screening" interviews is to identify students who the interviewer feels have the potential to succeed at the firm and eliminate those who are not a good match. Remember, not being chosen for a second interview is not a personal rejection - it just means that the firm does not feel that you are a good fit.

Those students who are invited to the firm's offices for a call-back or second interview usually meet with several of the firm's hiring committee members, either individually or in a group, depending on the firm's policy. Second interviews generally last between one and four hours and may include lunch with associates or members of the firm's hiring committee. Remember that the lunch is still part of the interview. Some firms will send you to lunch with several young associates to see if you will "let your guard down" and make inappropriate comments or behave unprofessionally (i.e. ordering alcohol).

Smaller and medium sized firms that do not interview on campus may choose to interview students at their offices and may only conduct one round of interviews. During this interview, students will meet with several of the firm's attorneys and a hiring decision may be made based upon this initial meeting.

Being prepared before you go on an interview is one of the keys to a successful interview. There are several steps that you must take before an interview to ensure that you make a good first impression. Those steps will be discussed further in the section below titled Before the Interview.

### **Dynamics and Strategy: Underpinning of Successful Interviews**

Students may find interviews to be a very unnatural situation, where they feel they are putting on a performance, rather than communicating in a normal one-to-one manner. They additionally feel that, in this tense atmosphere, the impressions they convey and receive in a brief 20 – 30 minutes are less than accurate. In an interview, you will certainly be on stage. Like an accomplished actor, however, you can develop methods to grab and hold your audience's attention. Through practicing, you can learn to overcome stage fright and relax enough to make a positive first impression.

The basic dynamics of successful interviewing can be outlined as follows:

- Conversation is the two-way flow of information
- Chit-chat v. directed discussion
- Creating a style and personality match
- Tough question strategy: dealing with your natural imperfections
- Special situations: e.g., stress interviews, multiple interviews, meals, marathon interviews

Each of these interview dynamics will be discussed later in this chapter.

### **Before the Interview**

Preparing for an interview. Being prepared before you go on an interview is one of the keys to a successful interview. Try to arrive ten - fifteen minutes early, but no more than that. To ensure that you will not be late and to account for rush hour traffic, etc. plan extra time for traveling. If you are in an area that is unfamiliar to you, you may want to scout out the area a day or two before. If you arrive for the interview

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more than five minutes early, you can always walk around the block. There are several steps that you must take before an interview to ensure that you make a good first impression. And remember to always be nice to the secretary/receptionist!

Know the Employer. Just as it is crucial to research an employer before you send out a cover letter and resume, it is imperative that you research a potential employer to learn all you can about the firm or corporation before an interview. This is just one more way for you to display your initiative, enthusiasm, and genuine interest in working for that particular employer. Besides, a student who has obviously done his/her research about a particular employer will certainly impress and flatter an interviewer.

Besides the obvious points about an employer's areas of practice, office locations, and number of attorneys, you should also be aware of and be prepared to discuss any significant lawsuits or legal matters in which the firm is currently involved, clients that the firm represents, and the presence of infamous lawyers at the firm. You should also know a little bit about the person who will be interviewing you, including where they went to law school and college, any awards they have won, articles they have published and, naturally, the type of law they practice.

Locating the information you need to prepare for an interview is really relatively simple. There are several sources that you should consult. They are:

- *Employer websites.* Almost all medium and large firms, as well as many smaller ones, maintain web sites that include information about the firm's offices, practice areas, types of clients they represent and usually information about the individual attorneys. When reading a firm's web site, take note of the tone of the language and the manner in which the firm presents itself. This can tell you a lot about the atmosphere at the firm and the personality of the lawyers that work there. Web site addresses may be found by running a search of the firm's name in one of the more popular search engines.

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- *Online Information from LEXIS and/or Westlaw.* Akron Law students have easy access to both of these online services that provide a wealth of information about a large number of legal employers. LEXIS contains the information available from Martindale-Hubbell (see below) and NALP, whereas Westlaw maintains its own database, which lawyers may be included in for free. Because a Westlaw listing is free, some smaller firms and sole practitioners not included in the LEXIS database may be located in Westlaw, so search both.

- *NALP Directory of Legal Employers.* Larger law firms, corporations, government agencies and public interest organizations fill out the National Association for Law Placement form, which provides all kinds of basic information, including size of firm, practice areas, starting salary, benefits, recent hires, and number of minority lawyers at the firm. Some employers also include a brief description of their firm, its practice and the criteria they use in making hiring decisions. This information is available on [www.nalp.org](http://www.nalp.org).

- *Martindale-Hubbell.* Martindale-Hubbell is a comprehensive directory with biographical information on many practicing attorneys. It includes information on individual attorneys, including when and where the attorney was born, where they went to law school and college, the awards they won in law school, their area(s) of practice, as well as information on the firm, including location of their offices, and representative clients. The CSO stocks the complete Martindale-Hubbell Directory. A copy is also available in the Law Library, and a searchable database is available online at [www.martindale.com](http://www.martindale.com).

- *Employer's Own Literature.* Many law firms and corporations, especially the larger ones, distribute literature to the CSO, including brochures, firm resumes and annual reports. Firm brochures usually include information about the firm's size, office locations, practice areas, types of clients they represent, and, sometimes, information about the individual lawyers. When reading a firm's biography, take note of the tone of the language and the manner in which the firm presents its image. This can tell you a lot about the atmosphere at the firm and the personality of the lawyers who work there.

- *LinkedIn.* Learn more about the firm and your interviewer(s) from the site designed for professional networking. This information is

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publicly available but just note LinkedIn will share with your interviewer you have viewed their profile. Some firms will have company pages on LinkedIn which may help provide you with information you did not find from other sources.

- *Inside Scoop.* There is no better way to find out what it is really like to work for a particular employer than to talk to someone who has either worked there or knows someone who has. This would include professors, fellow students, Akron Law alumni, local attorneys, and the CSO staff. Talk to as many people as you can to get as much information as you can. This will help you get a realistic picture of the place and the expectations that the hiring committee has of potential employees.

Know Yourself. Before going on an interview, you must come up with points about yourself that you definitely want to make during your interview. These points are the things you want employers to know about you and should include your most outstanding accomplishments, as well as the transferable skills demonstrated by your accomplishments.

*In Guerilla Tactics for Getting the Legal Job of Your Dreams*, Kimm Walton suggests that all law students create an "infomercial" about themselves. The purpose of creating an infomercial is to have something about yourself that you feel comfortable saying. The infomercial should convince a legal employer that you will be a great employee. Walton says that "It has got to be short, and it has to say the most crucial things about you - the things you want employers to know about you, whether they ask you questions that elicit those assets or not." According to Ms. Walton, coming up with an infomercial has five basic steps:

- Go through your background and make a short list of your accomplishments (either personal accomplishments or the results of non-legal or legal jobs). They should be the things you are most proud of and should be accomplishments that are as interesting and unique as possible.

- Based upon your list of accomplishments, select the three to five job-related strengths demonstrated by those accomplishments that you have. These are the transferable skills that employers are most interested in. Your accomplishments are only of interest to employers to the extent

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that you can relate how they are examples of assets that will benefit the employer. Generally speaking, the job-related skills that are most important to employers are things like solid writing ability, strong work ethic, good judgment, thoroughness, persistence, superior analytical skills, the ability to take the initiative on new projects, etc.

- If your skills and accomplishments are all job-related, come up with one personal achievement that you want to mention. This is important because, besides wanting to hire someone who has wonderful job-related skills; employers also want to like the people who they hire.
- Assemble and memorize your infomercial. In assembling your infomercial, you should cite your job-related skills and then use your accomplishments as support for those skills. Come up with the actual language that you will use during the interview. Sit in front of a mirror to practice making your speech and memorize it. Memorizing your infomercial will help you to appear calm and confident. Just be sure that your infomercial does not appear stiff and rehearsed - be as natural as possible.

Tailor your infomercial to the particular employer based upon your research. If through your research you learned that a particular employer is very conservative and also values hard work and initiative, and you have these traits and an accomplishment that backs them up, say "I'm very ambitious and a self-starter. During my senior year of college, I established my college's Young Republican's Club. This involved petitioning the student government for approval of a new organization and soliciting 20 new members as required by the college's rules governing student clubs." Not only does this show initiative, and conservatism, but also the potential and ability to solicit new business for the firm.

Dress for Success. Before you even open up your mouth to say "Hello, my name is John Justice," the interviewer will have an impression of you based upon your appearance. Fairly or unfairly, legal employers consciously judge students by how they dress and carry themselves at interviews. They look at students with the following

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questions in mind: Can I include this person in client meetings? Would I be comfortable inviting this student to attend a trial or hearing?

**In considering what to wear to interviews, remember that, just as with your resume, you do not want your appearance to detract from the impact of your skills, talents and achievements. Your performance will only be complete with the proper “costume.”** You never get a second chance to make a good first impression. Therefore, the rule of thumb is “dress for where you are going (or hope to be going) and not for where you’ve already been!” In other words, if you hope to land a job with a large conservative law firm, dress the part. Do not show up at the interview wearing jeans and a t-shirt or even an out-of-date suit.

Dressing appropriately is very important – it shows that you care enough about the job to get dressed up and to make a good impression.

This is the time to buy the best suit, shirt or blouse and shoes you can afford. Ultimately, you will be more comfortable and feel better about yourself in well-cut clothes. They will last longer and continue to look good, even if you travel long distances to interviews and wear them all day.

Since you should always be prepared with an extra resume and writing sample, etc., you might also want to invest in a slim leather portfolio. Never take your book bag into an interview - you want to appear as a future lawyer, not a present student. A file folder quickly becomes sloppy. Below are wardrobe suggestions generally considered appropriate for interviews:

- **Suits:** Choose a pant or skirt suit in black, gray, navy blue or other subdued neutral tones. You will get the most wear out of a classic look that complements your body type. Be sure it’s dry cleaned and pressed between heavy wearings and tailored to fit your body.
- **Shirts/Ties:** Under your suit jacket wear a collared, ironed dress shirt or a conservatively-styled blouse in a color that complements your suit. Colors like white, light blue and cream

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are the most versatile for pairing with your other garments. Save the extra buttons in case you lose one. Ties are considered an essential part of business professional attire. Choose ties in solid colors or subdued patterns that complement the color of your shirt.

- **Leg-wear/Socks:** Socks should be a matching pair in a color one shade darker than your suit. If you choose to wear a skirt, pair it with stockings or tights, even in warm weather. They should complement either your skin color or the suit.
- **Coats:** Consider investing in an all-weather 3/4- or full-length wool coat for use in autumn and winter. A tan or black trench coat might be useful for mild or rainy days in spring and summer.
- **Shoes:** Choose black or brown leather dress shoes or a classic pair of pumps or flats in black, brown, navy blue or taupe. Avoid extreme styles, i.e. excessively pointed or square-toed shoes, or shoes with unusually thick soles or high heels. Shoes should be polished and in good repair, and comfortable, in case you have to walk a long distance. Do not wear brown shoes with a black suit.
- **Belts:** If your slacks or skirt have belt loops, you must wear a belt. Your belt should be leather and should coordinate with your shoes. Cloth belts should not be worn with suits.
- **Accessories:** For a first interview or an event that calls for Business Professional, the most important thing to remember is less is more.
- **Jewelry:** Keep it simple. Avoid extremes of style. No more than two rings per hand. No ankle bracelets and keep to one piercing per ear. Avoid wearing any other piercings during the interview as they may be distracting.
- **Bags:** Choose a small and simple purse that has structure. Choose a color that coordinates with your ensemble. Leather and finely woven fabrics are the best, while canvas and straw are inappropriate for business.
- **Briefcase or Portfolio:** A leather briefcase or portfolio can be used for interviews and can carry a pen, notepaper, and copies of your resume. Always bring one nice pen—you'll look prepared!

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With the increasing number of firms having a business casual policy, you should know what this means. It is a good rule of thumb to err on the *business* side of business casual. By dressing in a clean and neat manner, you present yourself as a good representative of your employer. It is important to be “business ready” and to always have a suit jacket and/or tie in your office for a last-minute meeting or invitation to attend court proceedings. If you have any doubt about the employer’s rules for business casual dress, ask the recruiting office or the human resources professionals for a copy of the office’s policy; if working in a smaller office, ask your supervisor or other attorneys.

Items to Bring. As you want to appear organized and prepared, you should carry to any interview the following:

- *Resume:* bring an extra copy, even if you are interviewing on campus or have sent your resume ahead for an in-office visit.
- *References:* always bring your list with you, even to a first interview.
- *Transcripts:* many employers are interested in reviewing a copy of your law school, and sometimes even undergraduate transcripts. Many employers are more interested in the combination of courses you have chosen than your grades. Generally speaking, unless you are applying for government positions or the employer has specifically requested an official transcript, copies are adequate.
- *Writing sample:* since most employers will want you to do a substantial amount of writing in a summer or permanent position, virtually all will ask for a sample. Remember, a writing sample should be your very best work! Work you submit for a first-year writing course or moot court generally serve well as writing samples until you have legal work experience. Once you have a research memorandum or a brief that you wrote in the course of employment in a legal position, it is preferable to use that as a sample. It is, however, imperative that you obtain permission from a previous employer before using any writing you composed while working for that employer. You may also need to black out any identifying information such as party names if not a matter of

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public record. The CSO can help you decide what to select as your writing sample.

### **The Interview**

The most important thing to remember about an interview is that the employer is trying to determine whether you are somebody with whom they would like to work. The best interviews are usually great conversations. Of course, you must also be able to convince the employer that you would be a great employee and can do the work satisfactorily. Most students are able to convince employers that they can do the work, but in order to make yourself stand out, the interviewer must believe they would like to work with you. In order to accomplish that, you must establish a rapport with the interviewer and do it quickly.

To do so:

The First Five Minutes. First impressions count a great deal and that is why the first five minutes of an interview are so crucial. They set the tone for the rest of your meeting. When you meet the interviewer, greet him or her by name, shake hands firmly, but not tightly, smile and make good eye contact, as a way of establishing rapport and setting both or all participants at ease. Remember that most interviewers have little more experience than you in this situation. As you are shaking hands, walking to an office or being seated, you may want to use an icebreaker that you have prepared in advance. The easiest icebreaker is a reference to a mutual acquaintance, a mutual interest or if the interviewer is an Akron Law alum, some interesting, fun fact about the law school these days. It does not matter terribly much what you say; the key is to appear friendly, open and pleased to be there.

During the first five minutes of the interview, the interviewer will usually engage in small talk in an attempt to break the ice and set you at ease. Go along with whatever the interviewer is talking about. Be up to date on current events for that week so that you can talk intelligently about whatever topic the interviewer brings up.

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The middle part of your interview should be a dialogue. A brief list of questions that interviewers generally pose is included here, as well as questions you can ask. The CSO also stocks books that contain more extensive lists for legal and non-legal interview situations.

Although experts are divided on whether an interviewee should take notes, the CSO recommends that you not take extensive notes during an interview. If you are busy taking notes, it is too difficult to give your full attention to the conversation. However, if something important is said, it is acceptable to make a quick note and **then put down your pen!**

The Rest of the Interview. Throughout the rest of the interview, it is critical that you maintain a positive and enthusiastic attitude. Convey in your tone, body language and words, that you really want this job. Do not wait for the interviewer to ask you questions about why they should be interested in you rather than the next person. Now is the time to use the infomercial or "sales pitch" that you have prepared. Show the interviewer why they should be interested in you. In other words, sell yourself. And do not be too shy to say "I really want this job!"

- *Conversations: Two-way Highways of Information Flow.* An interview should be a session for mutual information swapping. Unlike the educated guessing you've been doing when composing cover letters and resumes, at interviews you will have the chance to ask each potential employer what they are seeking in an employee. The answers you receive to your well framed questions and the verbal and non-verbal responses you elicit as you speak will enable you to tailor your information and also help you to decide whether this is an employer for whom you would like to work.

It is crucial to let the interviewer take the lead in an interviewing situation. It is equally crucial to take part in the direction and flow. Many interviewers remark that students are too passive at interviews and that they do not appear to take a real interest, either in the employer's organization or in the interviewing process. Of course, this is not actually so, but it is easy for someone who is unpracticed in successful interviewing techniques to create a wrong impression. You can avoid this

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in two simple ways: by letting interviewers know what you have discovered about their organization through your research and by asking the types of questions that will let interviewers know that you are interested and involved in the conversation.

Many students make the mistake of waiting to ask questions until near the end of the interview when they are asked by the interviewer the dreaded final question, “Do you have any questions?” To make the situation worse, by this point they sometimes have either so little information from the interviewer, who has skillfully prompted students to speak for the whole time, that they cannot think of anything to ask or they may be tired and bored from listening to an interviewer who has droned on virtually the entire time. Posing just a few questions during the course of an interview will help you to create that conversational atmosphere and flow of information in both directions and eliminate that final question altogether.

There are several types of questions to pose in different situations. All can be used in a typical interview:

1. Ask questions to clarify the interviewer’s questions, when necessary, instead of possibly plunging in the wrong direction. For instance, an employer might ask how likely you are at any point to relocate from the geographic region where the organization is located. If you are open to moving elsewhere, but you assume the employer wants to hear only about your loyalty to that area, you might miss out on an opportunity to practice in a branch office of that organization. Your response in this situation might be to say something positive about the region first, if you wish, but then to add a question or two along the lines of, “Does the organization have plans for growth into any other regions? Have attorneys ever relocated within the organization?”

Clarifying a question is also a good way to deflect a question you find uncomfortable, even intrusive. You may not realize that the attorney sitting across from you may have little more experience than you in interviewing and that a very relevant question might be

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merely badly phrased. For instance, many women dislike such a question as, “How does your family feel about you traveling frequently?” When this sort of question is asked to all candidates, it is not discriminatory. However, when you are in the middle of an interview, you will not know whether everyone else is being asked this and you may feel that it does not relate directly to the duties of the position for which you are interviewing. Your response in this particular situation can be to clarify the question in the following way: “How much do associates generally travel?” and additionally, “How much does this vary by department? How long do trips usually last?” Then, you can frame your answer in specific terms, which will be much more satisfactory and informative for both you and the interviewer.

2. Ask questions after some of your responses to gather more information on the subject and possibly add to the strength of your answer. When an interviewer asks about your work history, for example, after you have answered with a brief history, you might ask how much experience past law clerks or summer associates they have hired have had and how it has helped them in their legal positions—or you might simply ask, “Is this the sort of experience you are looking for?” This is an excellent way to find out how your answer was received.

Many students dread, above all other questions, open-ended questions like the classic, “Tell me about yourself” that often begins interviews. They do not know where to start and end. A great way to keep yourself from talking endlessly is to use your prepared “infomercial”, along with a question or two that can finish your answer and lead towards some response from the interviewer or towards information about the opportunity for which you are interviewing. If you were chosen for the interview on the basis of your resume, you can ask after your response, for instance, “What was it in my resume or cover letter that interested you and brought me here?”

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3. Ask questions that display the depth of your research and show a desire to know more. These questions might include, “I see from reading your brochure that summer and permanent associates rotate through several practice groups. How much individual choice is involved in practice group selection?” And additionally, “Which practice groups are you with? How did you come to make the choice?” Do not be afraid to show some interest in the interviewer and his or her own experiences with that organization (never become personal or prying, though). Students should avoid pigeon holing themselves into wanting experience in a specific practice area – summer associate positions especially will be exposed to multiple areas and expressing an interest in only one area could make you a less attractive candidate.

A list of typical questions that interviewers ask and that you can ask is included in this section.

- *Chit-chat v. Directed Discussion.* One of the most common pitfalls into which inexperienced interviewees and interviewers fall is that of dwelling in chit-chat, rather than directed conversation. It is true that, especially when so many candidates are obviously qualified for a position, people tend to be hired on personality as much as ability. It is also most frequently the case that your resume will have preceded you through the employer’s doors, highlighting your ability to do the actual work.

Be prepared, though, after a few minutes of chat about the weather or the city or local sports or even about your extracurricular activities, to bring the discussion delicately to the matter at hand, if the interviewer does not. The best way is by somehow finding a relationship between the subject and your interest in or value to the organization.

For example, in discussing a local topic, you might refer to your desire to relocate to or stay in the area due to that and other interests. In chatting about an extracurricular activity in which you held a leadership role, you might allude to it as an activity where you learned initially how

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to handle yourself as a professional and how that will help you in learning to work with a legal organization's management and clients.

Do not be afraid to do this sort of delicate conversational maneuvering. While you view yourself as a student and interviewee, and thus in a subordinate role, the interviewer is trying to picture you as a future lawyer. Lawyers must be diplomatic leaders in dealing with clients and you can show some of the same characteristics, in a somewhat subdued way, according to your level of comfort. Be careful, though, to let the interviewer retain control.

If an interviewer insists on remaining with trivial topics, no matter what you do, try to avoid showing any annoyance you may be feeling. Some lawyers like to try to find out more about the personality during the interview and they rely on your references to learn about your work habits.

Another aspect of directed discussion is in how you present what you say. As a future lawyer, you are expected to have excellent analytical and verbal skills. Whatever you say, and especially your experiences, should be presented in terms of what you derived from them and what you can bring to the present situation.

Remembering the two or more strengths and their proof that you stressed in your resume and cover letters, you should treat interviews as your best opportunity to present yourself in the same way. **In fact, your strategy should center on ensuring your strengths and accomplishments are reviewed during the interview.** To do so, you need to be practiced enough in what you say to sound natural and relaxed. Also, you need to be comfortable enough with your answers to allow you to actually listen to the interviewer's responses and ensure your points are being made.

Law school sharpens your ability to analyze situations and with a little practice, you will find it very easy to talk about your own background in this way. Getting started in an interview is the hardest part. It is even harder when the interviewer drops the ball in your court

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on the first play. As mentioned above, the question students seem to dread most is the classic interview opener: “Tell me about yourself.”

Be prepared and logical: speak in chronological or reverse order (do not flip back and forth) about education and other experiences, including student activities, work and volunteering and, as mentioned before, be prepared with a question you can use as a graceful ending. In talking about your experiences, try to relate them in terms of the interests and skills they awakened or sharpened and possibly how they help you now in law school or other activities. It is a common mistake to think that you have to cover everything. Stick to what’s interesting! And keep your answer to between thirty and sixty seconds.

As examples of analytical speaking, instead of merely giving the name of your undergraduate major or advanced degree(s), you might mention how your studies prepared you for long hours of detailed research you now do, or how your thesis and other lengthy papers gave you experience (hopefully, as evidenced by the recent high grade you just received on a legal research paper!). If the nature of your degree or other experience is the reason you are in law school, let the interviewers know that in as specific terms as possible. Plenty of people enter law practice as a result of working closely with lawyers or the legal system while in other fields or on personal matters. Many undergraduate students find legal history, systems or philosophy fascinating. Volunteering to work with the underprivileged during college may have given you a perspective beyond that of your own community, as well as the ability to gain trust from others with whom you may have little in common and the desire to help them through the legal system.

Different experiences may give you an edge in being ranked as a candidate for a position: it is up to you, though, to let people know why these experiences are useful in the position for which you are being considered. After all, interviewers have not necessarily worked or volunteered where you did or followed the same course of study as you. It is your responsibility both to provide the link and to ensure that your points are appreciated. **Do not simply respond to the questions – take**

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**every opportunity to evidence lawyerly skills: logic, reason, communication, and most importantly, persuasion.**

Practice by recording yourself as you talk and practice in front of a mirror to see how you should sound and look. Try out your self-description on friends and family to see if they hear what you think you are saying. *If you think it is silly, consider this: if you cannot talk to yourself in a mirror, how can you possibly expect to talk to a complete stranger in a position of authority?*

Schedule an appointment with the CSO to review your presentation skills.

- *Creating a Style and Personality Match.* When the qualifications of candidates are more or less equal, employers tend to hire those with whom they feel a connection. Creating this relationship is in part dependent on your specific behavior as well as your personality. We all work and socialize on a daily basis with very different types of people and we display a variety of facets of ourselves through different behavior, quite naturally. Consciously controlling your behavior, to an extent, to match that of the interviewer is a good way to create rapport, but it is only possible when you are relaxed enough to pick up cues.

Conduct extensive research, practice your presentation with friends in advance and while you are interviewing, try to take note of the interviewer's general behavior and specific reactions to what you say and how you phrase things. For example, look for times when the interviewer perks up or appears bored. Try to find out what he or she thinks about what you are saying by using the questioning technique reviewed above or even asking directly for a response regarding a point you are making. Try to match your voice level and speed to the other person, sit forward if he or she does, or back (but not as relaxed). Make sure you shake hands firmly at the beginning and end of the meeting, maintain good eye contact throughout and do not appear too serious (that is, do not forget to smile, show some friendliness and look as if you are happy to be considered for the position). Your manner unconsciously changes

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according to whom you are with; now try to become aware of it, so that you can fine tune it. In short, **master your face and mannerisms.**

Assuming that if you obtained a job, you would be working for the interviewer, this is one way of testing whether the position is for you. If you feel uncomfortable trying to absorb a small portion of a particular person's style, apart from the differentness of the exercise, you will likely have problems working with him or her in the future.

- *Tough Question Strategy.* Virtually everyone who has ever interviewed has found one or more questions they would rather not be asked. Listed below are questions that students report they find hard to answer for a variety of reasons.

The best way to handle tough questions is in two steps: state your answer and then follow it with a related question you also prepared in advance to lead the interviewer very gently away from the topic. If humor seems appropriate, you can test it first on a friend. Humor within your answer can also help dispel tension. Be careful not to appear flippant or questioning of the employer's wisdom in posing the question.

Practicing your answer in advance will ensure that you are as concise as possible. Watch your manner and choice of words, so that you continue to appear energetic, flexible, confident and pleased to be interviewing with that employer. **Make sure that you do not appear apologetic, vague or unfocused.** Remember that the interviewer will rarely be aware in advance that he or she has hit your weak area; proper preparation will ensure that your technique and discomfort are not apparent.

### 1. Motivational Questions

These are the questions that ask why you are choosing or have chosen a certain route or goal.

*Why law school?* If you cannot remember exactly why (some students have always wanted to become lawyers, it seems), think

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back to family or longtime friends who are lawyers who may have talked with you when you were much younger. Sticking to the point, try to show some enthusiasm by also tying in whatever brought you here to how well you are doing now, how you are enjoying law school, where you intend to practice or another related point.

*Why interest in that employer?* Read any employer information available in the library and sound informed. You can mention practice mix (especially if you are undecided as to specialty, the range of departments and ability to rotate through them might be inviting), types of clients, geographic location, etc. All of these answers are appropriate to let the employer know that you are not wasting his or her time.

*Why interest in the geographic area?* The hidden agenda in this query is: how do we know you will accept a permanent offer if we extend one and that you will stay long enough to earn back what it will cost to train you? This question is frequently asked if nothing on your resume indicates that you have lived in that area or if you have moved frequently, other than for school. Even if you have never visited the region, you can present a strong response through talking about general reading or research and discussions with others, including friends, family, peers and alumni.

## 2. Open-ended/Customary Personnel-type Questions

These questions are very simply phrased so as to give you little direction in how to answer them. Be careful not to drone on!

*Tell me about yourself.* Try handling your response in the way described, above. Above all, avoid becoming defensive or annoyed because the interviewer appears not to have read your resume. This question is often used merely as a way of establishing rapport.

*What are your weaknesses?* You can be humorous, but not flippant here. You can also answer with an actual weakness (but not condemnable), such as too self-driven, perfectionist, etc. which,

hopefully you have just about overcome. Avoid sounding canned. You can also ask a former employer to give you his or her opinion about this; your references will probably be checked and your impressions should roughly match.

*Where do you want to be in 5/10 years?* This question is best answered by acknowledging that you will be at very different places in 5 years and in 10 years. It is actually a two part question. As you have no idea what you will be doing, avoid specifics and speak in general terms that fit the organization. For example, for a law firm: (a) in 5 years you will be a new to mid-level associate, and thus you will want to have growing responsibility, significant client contact, mentoring and possibly administrative responsibility at the firm (hiring committee), and be learning how to develop business; (b) in 10 years, you will hopefully be a partner and will thus have much different goals, such as having a book of business, managing your own cases and associates under you, participating in the management of the firm, and being active in the community. This awareness and astuteness will be noticed and will definitely set you apart from the cliché answers most interviewees will give.

### 3. Apparently Discriminatory and Inappropriate Questions

Although it does not happen very often, an interviewer may occasionally ask a question that is illegal. An illegal question is a question that is asked only of a certain group of candidates, defined by race, color, gender, religion, sex, age, national origin, sexual orientation, handicap or economic status. It is a question that has nothing to do with your ability to effectively perform the job for which you are interviewing. Illegal questions include:

- How old are you?
- Are you married / single / divorced / engaged / dating anyone?
- Do you have or plan to have children?

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- Do you attend church?
- Do you own or rent your home?
- Are you in debt?
- Are you a member of any social or political organizations?
- What do your parents/spouse do for a living?
- What does your spouse think of your career?

If you are confronted with an illegal question, do not panic. Stay calm, objective and dispassionate. The interviewer probably does not intend to offend you. More often than not, there is a non-discriminatory motive behind the question. If you can determine what that motive is, respond to it.

For example, if the interviewer asks if you plan to have children, he/she may really be interested in your commitment to your career. An appropriate response may be "It is natural for firms to be concerned about any new associate's commitment to the practice of law. I have demonstrated my commitment by clerking during the summer, working part-time while in school, participating in moot court, and working for a judge as an extern." If you are unable to decipher any innocent motive behind a suspect question, you may then want to ask "How is that question job-related?" or "Why do you ask?" Or if you prefer not to confront the interviewer in that way, you may choose to simply answer the question. If asked "How many children do you have?" and you have one child, simply say "One. How about you?" **Finally, please report any illegal or inappropriate interview activity to the CSO so that we can work to halt such practices in the future.**

#### 4. Plain Old Tough Questions

Unless you are number one in the class and every moment of your life is entirely accounted for on your resume, you will likely have to answer a question like:

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*What did you do during the gap on your resume?* Most people who think they have terrible gaps on their resume are never asked about them. You should have a concise answer prepared that you have tried out on others in case it comes up. Avoid sounding mysterious. You can say, for instance, that you left “x” off because it was unrelated to your legal experience and would have made your resume too long.

*What is your GPA/class rank?* Never apologize or make up excuses for lackluster grades. Own them. Give the information and also discuss your progression in grades, if applicable. You may let the employer know of certain courses in which you did well, but avoid sounding as if you make a real effort only on projects you liked (certainly you would not treat that employer’s work assignments that way). Finally, divert the conversation to your skills or practical experience. Grades are not everything. Always turn the negative into a positive.

*Why are you so interested in this substantive or practice area when nothing on your resume indicates previous exposure?* It is not always necessary to have prior experience in an area. This question can really mean, “What is your commitment to an organization [especially in public interest law, are you going to continue searching for a higher paying position]?” Or “are you realistic in your substantive choice [or just trying to impress the interviewer]?” Try to find out what the real question is and address it directly.

Many students become interested in an area through a law school course, although this is rarely apparent on their resumes. This is a terrific reason to explore a practice area, and you should be prepared to discuss the issues covered in class and the professor’s skill in covering them, as well as subsequent reading, if any, on your part. Many interviewers have had a similar experience and they will be most receptive to your answer.

*Did you receive an offer for a permanent position from this summer’s employer [why not]?* This question might be asked of you in coming years. First, you must remind yourself that many competent people do not receive offers for reasons that have nothing to do with their performance. These can vary from a change in the organization’s client

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base or funding source or a reduction in workload, to a mismatch of personalities, or even the discovery that you were not interested in a continuing or permanent position. If the decision was mutual, let the interviewer know this without sounding all bitter or negative. Try to find at least one attorney for whom you did work, who will give you a good reference. Ask that person what he or she will say to prospective employers and try to get a reference in writing.

*If you were so good in your other career, why did you leave?* It may have been because you were so good, that you had risen to the top of your field, level of education, geography, etc. Or perhaps you have always wanted to be a lawyer and you finally have the financial means to do it. Or perhaps you desire more impact in your old field and are achieving your goals through legal representation, policy / legislation, criminal justice, etc.

- *Other Questions That You Should Expect Employers to Ask You.* Although no one can ever predict all of the questions that you will be asked on an interview, you should be prepared to answer some or all of the following types of questions:

- Tell me about yourself. In other words, tell me things about yourself that will make me want to hire you.

*Use your infomercial here!*

- What are your long and short range goals and objectives?
- When and how did you establish these goals?
- How are you preparing yourself to achieve these goals?
- What do you see yourself doing in five years? Ten years?
- Why did you go to law school?
- Why did you choose Akron Law?
- How would you describe yourself?

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- How has law school prepared you for the practice of law?
- Why should we hire you?
- Why do you think you will be a successful lawyer?
- What have you liked most about law school? What has been your favorite law school course? Why?
- Are your grades a good indication of your academic achievement?
- Why are you interested in our firm?
- What areas of practice interest you?
- What do you know about this firm?
- What two things are most important to you in a job?
- What are you looking for in a law firm?
- What have you learned from your participation in Law Review? /Moot Court? /Legal Clinic?
- How do you spend your free time?
- What is your greatest strength?
- What is your greatest weakness?

*The best way to respond is to highlight a past negative and tell how you've taken steps to correct it.*

- What achievements do you look back on with pride and why?
- If you could do it all over, would you still choose to go to law school?
- You may also get behavioral questions that ask you to describe major challenges in your life and how you faced them, whether you ever had to lead others and how you did it, etc.

- *Questions You Should Ask*

Perhaps even more important than the questions an interviewer asks you are the questions you ask the interviewer. **Hiring partners consistently say that they are looking for people who are genuinely interested in their organizations.** People who are genuinely interested usually ask lots of questions. Intelligent, well thought-out questions are one more way that you can distinguish yourself from the rest of the crowd. Be careful, however, not to sound like you are quickly trying to think up a few questions to ask on the spur of the moment. **This is one more area in which you should be thoroughly prepared.**

Kimm Walton, author of *Guerrilla Tactics*, writes that there are five basic categories of questions that interviewees should ask the interviewer. The five categories and some sample questions from each category follow. Another great tip is to use the very questions that you find difficult, and ask them. For example, ask the employer where they see the firm in five years, or "What is the most challenging aspect of this position," etc.

**Category 1:** Questions that show off your research into the firm and the interviewer.

- If the firm just added a department to work on a different area of the law, you may want to ask: How did the firm make the decision to add this department? Does the firm have plans to expand into other areas?

-If the firm has recently added a large number of attorneys, you may want to ask: Does the firm expect to grow more in the next five years? If so, what type of growth does the firm anticipate?

**Category 2:** Questions about what your own job experience at the firm would be like. The most important thing when asking these questions is **to understand that law is a business...and that an associate's primary role is to bill hours.** So, while you may have interest in the following topics, always ask the question in a way that will not impugn

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your work ethic and will express a desire to work hard, bill hours, and develop clients.

- How is your summer associate program structured?
- What types of projects do summer law clerks work on?
- How are summer law clerks evaluated? A good way to phrase this question is to ask the interviewer to give his or her opinion on how to succeed as a summer associate.
- How many offers did you make to summer law clerks last year?
- How many of those students accepted the firm's offer?
- What kind of training is provided to new associates?
- What kind of responsibility would I have?
- How do attorneys get channeled into different practice groups?
- Are associates assigned to one partner or are they part of a pool of associates available to work with a number of different partners?
- How long does it normally take for a new associate to be able to participate in a trial? This question, obviously only relates to students hired into the litigation department.
- How much client contact can I expect to have during my first year? Second year?
- Is work generally assigned or are associates free and encouraged to seek out assignments on their own?
- How are associates evaluated? This question can be dangerous as it seems to imply you are only interested in the minimum. Again, couch your question in terms of succeeding.

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- What is expected in terms of participation in professional activities? Again, this concept is good, but you want to express your question in a way that will not detract from your desire to bill hours. Perhaps phrase in terms of professional activities as a means to develop business.

- What are the firm's expectations of associates concerning bringing in new business? Again, important information, but **express as a desire to learn how to develop business.**

**Category 3:** Questions that depend on the size of the employer and the age of the interviewer.

- Questions to ask depending on the size of the employer

- For large firms: Does your firm have a mentor program? How often are associates evaluated?

- For smaller firms: How quickly are associates expected to take part in new business development? Will I be able to attend depositions and court hearings? Savvy interviewees will also ask questions about the viability of the firm as a business: the impact of market changes on major clients, etc. Remember, law firms are for-profit entities, and your ultimate goal is usually becoming a shareholder in that business.

-Questions to ask depending on the experience level of the interviewer

- For interviewers with less legal experience (those who have been out of law school four years or less): What is a typical day like for you? Were you a summer clerk with this firm? Did you work for this firm during law school?

-For interviewers with more legal experience at this firm: How has the practice changed over the past five years? Where do you see the partnership heading in the next five years?

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**Category 4:** Personalized questions designed to evoke an emotional response from the interviewer.

- What do you like about working for this firm?
- How did you choose this firm?
- How is your job different than what you expected it to be?
- What is the most interesting case you've worked on?
- What have you learned as a result of working here?
- What do you find most challenging about working here?

**Category 5:** Questions involving bad publicity and firm scandals. Although you need to be very careful how you phrase questions involving these very sensitive subjects, the consensus is that interviewees need to ask about them. Anyone who is genuinely interested in an employer will want to know how such scandals impact the future of the employer and its reputation.

- *Questions You Should Never Ask.*

No matter how much you may want to know the answers to certain questions, there are some questions that you should just never ask. Again, there are several categories of these questions:

**Category 1:** Any questions that have a "What's-In It-For-Me" tone. Questions in this category include:

- What are the hours?
- How much vacation time do I get?
- What is the salary?
- What type of benefits do you offer?

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**Category 2:** Questions with a Negative Tone, including:

- I read that your firm lost a big case last year. Is the firm still doing alright?

**Category 3:** Questions that are vague, cliché, or hard to describe:

- What is the firm culture like?

**Category 4:** Any question that you could have answered yourself through simple research. Asking a question about the number of attorneys at the firm or the firm's practice areas shows you have not done basic research prior to your interview. Kimm Walton also suggests avoiding questions about things like the firm's rotation program or its associate review process since these are very boring, meaningless questions that every other job candidate has probably already asked.

**Category 5:** Any question that indicates that you have not been paying attention during the interview. Although you will be nervous during your interview, **it is crucial that you pay close attention to what has already been said** and keep track of whether some of your questions have already been answered during your conversation with the interviewer.

### **Questions You Can Ask Employers After Receiving an Offer**

1. How much do you pay law clerks/summer associates? What are business hours/expected work schedules for your law clerks?

For third year students:

1. How much do you pay new staff attorneys/associates?
2. Questions regarding others aspects of compensation, including vacation, benefits, CLE reimbursement, bar memberships fees, etc.

3. What are your billable hour requirements and averages?
4. In which community and other activities are attorneys expected to play a substantial role? What time commitment is generally expected?

At the end of your interview, stand up when the interviewer does and do not forget to shake hands again. Remember to inquire as to the time frame for the hiring decision and whether and when there will be further interviews. You should also reiterate your interest in the position.

### **Special Interview Situations**

You also want to be as prepared as possible to handle special situations that arise in interviewing. Here are several of the most common and a brief overview of how to handle them:

Stress Interviews. Some people just love to load stress on candidates and while this can be really annoying, it must be dealt with. A stress interviewer is someone who seems to put you on the spot for everything you say or have written. First you must realize that everything you include on your resume, including names of papers and theses, is a fair topic about which the employer can ask. Make a point of rereading your writing samples if you have not interviewed for a while. You may also want to review all other written items to which you referred in your resume, to be sure of yourself.

Some interviewers may present hypothetical legal situations and ask you to let them know how you would handle them if you worked for an organization. If you are interviewing with a prosecutor's office or legal aid organization for a permanent position, you can expect a "hypo," as students refer to them; these employers expect you to be participating in the preparation, and sometimes trial, of cases after a mere six weeks or so of training. You may also become the target of bribery attempts, and employers are increasingly concerned about job candidates' potential for corruptibility.

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However, you should handle someone who tries to involve you in a substantive argument you know you can only lose, somewhat differently. Examples students give of such questions have included what they think of recent Supreme Court rulings (the more controversial rulings are generally singled out) and the effects of recent changes in the law (sometimes designed to find out how you vote, in general). You will probably have to play along for a while, but at the first moment, try breaking into your own answer and saying, quite ingenuously, of course, “Gee, this is exactly what I am looking for this summer-the chance to discuss issues with lawyers. I want an education as much as a job! Will there be opportunities like this during the summer?”

Multiple Interviews. This can be a demanding situation, especially if it is combined with a stress approach. Keep calm and address mainly the person who asks you each question, without ignoring others. Do not forget to share some eye contact and smiles with all of the participants. As it is a lot harder to ask questions, make a conscious effort to do so, at least a couple of times.

Do not worry about those interviewers who appear not to be interested in you at all. Students report instances of interviewers who never ask questions, who yawn, fidget, obviously do other work, and even enter or leave the room without a word of explanation. They feel naturally, that these people have decided against their employment with them. This is actually rarely so. When in pairs or teams, interviewers often relieve each other, so that each can maintain concentration throughout the day. Further, make it a habit to not jump to conclusions during an interview – you cannot control them, you can only control yourself and your presentation. Do so.

Meal Interviews. Some employers like to take prospective students to lunch and/or dinner for a variety of reasons. Before they have ever experienced such a situation, a number of students report that they are far more apprehensive about this aspect than any other in the entire interviewing process. You will find, once you have experienced one that a pre-employment meal is nothing to worry about.

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Customarily, only larger employers included a meal with a student's second interview or set of interviews. They often use this setting as a way of having you (and sometimes your spouse or "significant other") informally meet with more junior members of the organization. **It is very important to remember, however, that you are still being interviewed**, so it is strongly advised that you refrain from drinking any alcohol, particularly at lunch. If you are invited to dinner and the interviewers order a bottle of wine, feel free to have a glass of wine or beer. Know your limit though! You need all of your observational and analytical abilities to be working at full strength.

When ordering, it is best to select food that is easy to eat and near the middle range of prices listed in the menu. Boneless chicken or steak, shelled seafood, and fish with larger bones (such as salmon and halibut) are simple to eat and will not demand too much of your concentration. Avoid small fish (imagine having a mouthful of bones!), whole lobster or crab legs in their shells (avoid splashing partners!), spaghetti, ribs, and other foods that are messy or require your hands or delicate picking through to find edible areas. Some people should even avoid salads, if they are prone to grease spots on ties or blouses.

Meals present practical opportunities to practice your questioning technique. You do not want to leave the table famished because you spent a whole meal answering the questions of your companions! Use bites of your meal to create pauses while you think of answers. Avoid meals that you cannot eat easily with a fork. Obviously, maintain proper decorum and etiquette. If you have questions, contact the CSO.

Marathon Interviews. When arranging your appointment with an attorney or recruiting coordinator, ask about how many people you will be seeing and how much time you should reserve. While you can count on seeing between three and six attorneys over a half-day period for a call back interview or an out of town visit (initial visits at an office in this area might only involve one attorney and one-half to one hour), some larger employers may plan to meet with you for a whole day or more. Some students report meeting with twelve or even more attorneys

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in their offices, at lunch or perhaps over dinner during the same evening or the evening before.

Marathon interviews can be, and should be, exhausting. To pace yourself, do not worry too much about trying to remember who said what, or even what all the names were. A recruiting coordinator can help you with this at the end of the day or in a subsequent telephone call. (A good tip: if the recruiting coordinator gives you a schedule, do not make notes on it. Invariably, one attorney will ask to see it so that he or she can know whom else you are seeing).

It is not necessary to think of entirely new questions to ask each person. Many of your general questions can be the same for everyone; the different answers you receive will give you some perspective about the organization. Some of the more specific questions, regarding each attorney's practice area, responsibilities, etc., can be formed during each meeting after you have found out where each person fits in the organization.

### **Virtual Interviews**

Employers may opt to schedule a virtual interview for a variety of reasons. Here are some best practices for using Zoom, Skype, GChat, and other online platforms in a professional setting, for interviews and meetings.

- Ensure appointments are correctly incorporated into your calendars
- Understand protocols and etiquette in virtual communications
- Test equipment and WiFi connections in advance
- Practice (perhaps with a career advisor or mentor) with the selected online platform and tools therein
- Decide what to wear (email the CSO with questions or resources)
- Create a non-distracting background at home
- Start the interview and engaging in introductions
- Make eye contact with the interviewers

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- Consider posture and voice pacing (slowing down tempo)
- Demonstrate an appropriate level of enthusiasm and energy
- Reduce ambient noise during the interview (consider muting your microphone while not speaking)
- Anticipate and have a backup plan for technical glitches (most platforms have a phone-in option)
- Stay calm
- Amplify one's voice authentically
- Handle questions from the interviewers
- Ask questions during the interview
- Balance listening, not interrupting, yet also engaging
- Respectfully ask interviewers to repeat a question or a response if the technology makes it difficult to hear the dialogue
- End the interview in a timely manner (a virtual handshake)
- Identify next steps and appropriate follow-up.

### **Interview Advice Wrap-Up**

- Be positive: focus on your accomplishments and successes
- Be enthusiastic: show enthusiasm for the job
- Be energetic: goes along with the enthusiasm
- Be punctual: do not be late for your interview
- Smile: everyone wants to work with pleasant, happy people
- Shake hands: shows you are confident in the business world
- Make eye contact: sends the signal that you are honest
- Be attentive: listen and respond suitably to the interviewer
- Be yourself: do not act like someone you are not
- Be honest: always tell the truth
- Bring extra copies of resume, writing sample, transcript, and references - do not assume that the interviewer already has all of these things

### **Qualities Interviewers Look for in a Candidate:**

- Appears comfortable and relaxed

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- Proper professional appearance and demeanor
- Normal voice level and mannerisms
- Makes eye contact
- Responds directly to questions
- Presents information in a logical/organized manner
- Has defined career goals
- Understands own strengths and weaknesses
- Demonstrates problem solving skills
- Can explain relevance of background to career goals
- Demonstrates potential for professional excellence
- Has leadership qualities
- Specifies interest in size of firm and practice areas
- Indicates an interest in the location/has a tie to the region
- Gives reasons for applying to that employer
- Relates experience and goals to the employer/position.

### **Curtain Call: What to Do Afterward**

After your interviews, there are several things you will want to do to follow through or to improve your presentation for the next time.

Review and Revision. Particularly after your first few interviews, take some time immediately afterward to make notes regarding the tough questions you were asked and on which you will want to spend some time preparing better answers, and questions that you asked which you felt were particularly well or badly received. Within the next day or so, you will want to review how you felt you were perceived, in general. Did you have ample opportunity to sell yourself on your strongest points? Were they received as you thought they would be or were other experiences or attributes of more value to employers?

An easy way to review is to reread the part of this section on strategy and dynamics, applying the theory here to what you actually did during your interviews. This will help you to fill in any gaps you missed the first few times and to polish your technique.

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Thank Yous. After an interview, you should always send a thank you note or e-mail as soon as possible expressing your gratitude in being interviewed and reiterating your interest in the position. Sample thank you notes/letters are included in the Correspondence section of this Handbook. They will give you valuable tips and examples to use.

Expense Reimbursement. Most employers, including most firms under 50 or so attorneys, government offices and public interest groups, cannot afford to pay for travel and other costs students incur while interviewing. To keep your costs to a minimum, try to arrange several interviews on the same trip. If one organization contacts you to arrange an interview, call the others to whom you have forwarded resumes (or even if you have not) to let them know that you will be in the area and would like to arrange an interview with them. Let them know that you are visiting because of an interview; this will usually make you more desirable because it indicates the strength of your interest in the geographic location and also gives evidence of others' interest in you.

Most firms over 50 attorneys and some that are smaller will pay your expenses or reimburse you. Generally, they will let you know in your invitation letter or on the phone when you call to arrange your appointment. While it can be embarrassing to ask an attorney whether his or her firm pays expenses, do not hesitate to ask a recruiting coordinator (or any non-attorney employee) with whom you are arranging your visit; if it is done, handling the paperwork is one of their duties.

Any arrangements that a recruiting coordinator makes for you, such as flight and lodging, are generally paid directly by the firm. Those arrangements you make yourself are reimbursable. Covered expenses typically include transportation between the airport, hotel and the firm, or employment related mileage on your own car incurred during your trip and stay, meals (except liquor) during the day of your interview and evening before, if your meeting begins early in the morning, and tips. Non-covered expenses include entertainment and transportation to and from that location, extra hotel nights and meals, and in some cases, car rental (taxis or airport limousines are often cheaper and more convenient, anyway), and other expenses that are not directly related to the interview.

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The National Association of Law Placement has designed an expense reimbursement form, variations of which are used by many member firms and given to students during their visit to the firm. Be sure to save all your receipts. Mail the originals and the completed form to the recruiting coordinator and keep photocopies.

If you are visiting several employers on the same trip, all or some of whom are willing to reimburse you, they will split the expenses evenly. You still fill out the form once and send it to the coordinating person; she will do the accounting for you and issue one check, reimbursing you for everything.

Following Up. No two employers are alike in the way they hire and very few generalizations can be made. Some will invite you for a second interview immediately after the first; others might not call you for up to six months. Some employers participate in on-campus interviews well before they are ready to hire, just because they want to see who is out there.

Many students ask about the best time to call to follow up after an interview. Make a habit of asking employers at the end of your interviews when they plan on contacting students for call backs or offers. Ask them whether you can contact them or someone else if you have not heard either way by that time; generally, they will answer yes. Wait for a day or two after the deadline, then call. A polite student who is playing by the rules, who is obviously anxious to fill an opening, is never over reaching.

If an employer lets you know in advance that several months are likely to pass before the next step, you should probably contact that person about once a month, alternating with telephone calls and letters, to remind him or her of your continuing interest. Again, at this frequency of contact, you are not a pest, but rather a potential employee with a high level of interest and excellent follow through.

### **Handling an Offer**

Just because you receive an offer does not mean you are ready to accept. There are probably some questions you have not asked because the time was not right – salary, benefits, vacation time, etc. Before you accept or reject an offer, contact the person who made it to arrange for a personal or, if out of town, a telephone meeting to discuss these questions and other details. Make a list of all the questions you have so that you will not forget anything.

**Be prepared at the end of your follow up meeting after everything has been discussed to accept or refuse the offer on the spot.** Employers are pleased to have such evidence of enthusiasm. This may mean that you will need to discuss your possible employment with your spouse or “significant other” before the meeting. If you genuinely need more time, twenty-four hours is about all you can ask for without seeming unenthusiastic. Some employers may give you a week or more to think the offer over, but you cannot count on it.

If you receive an offer from an employer who is not your first choice, try to put off announcing your decision. Immediately contact the person on the top of your wish list to let him or her know that you have an offer that you are seriously considering, but that with the information you presently have regarding the position (the one not yet offered), you are more interested in it. At the best, you may be able to speed up the process. At the worst, you will accept the other position, leaving the other organization with a clear record of your interest in them.

Accepting a position is a serious commitment. Few stories run through the legal grapevine faster than those of the few lawyers who renege on an accepted offer. Once you do accept, there is no graceful way to back out. The reaction this causes will impact not only you and your own future prospects, it will reflect on the school and graduates who follow you. If you are not sure of your happiness in accepting a position, if you are inclined to take advantage of an opportunity that might become available shortly after, do not take the offer.

**Immediately after accepting the position, let all other employers who are giving you serious consideration know that you are no longer a candidate.** Such politeness and follow through may help you later on. The legal community is very well connected and you want to leave the best impression with everyone.

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**Below is a sample of an evaluation form that an employer may complete following an interview.**

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### CANDIDATE EVALUATION FORM

Name of Job Candidate: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Interview: \_\_\_\_\_  
School/Firm/Agency: \_\_\_\_\_  
Position Interviewing For: \_\_\_\_\_

Section I: Please complete this section based on the following 5-point scale:

5 - Outstanding 4 - Above Average 3 - Average 2 - Below Average 1  
Unacceptable x - unable to evaluate from

Interview

1. Verbal Ability \_\_
2. Confidence and poise \_\_
3. Personality \_\_
4. Motivation \_\_
5. Demeanor \_\_
6. Long-term commitment to geographic area \_\_
7. Valuable experience \_\_
8. Intellectual ability \_\_

Section II: Please check below.

- I recommend for immediate hiring.  
 I have no reservations regarding hiring.  
 I have reservations regarding hiring. (Please comment below).  
 This candidate should not be considered further for hiring. (Please comment below).

Section III: Please comment

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### **Sample Follow-Up Emails**

Following up on outstanding applications (when you receive another offer)

Dear Ms. Smith,

I have recently applied for a summer internship with your office. I am writing because I have been offered another position, and I've been asked to accept or reject the offer by February 15th.

I remain very interested in the possibility of working as an intern with the U.S. Attorney's Office this summer. Would you be able to provide me with an update on the status of my application? If you would like to interview me, I would greatly appreciate being able to do so before mid-February, if possible.

I have attached my resume and cover letter here for your reference. Thank you very much for your consideration, and I look forward to hearing from you.

Best,

Zippy Law Student

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**Following up on outstanding applications (without an offer)**

Dear Ms. Smith,

I am sorry to be contacting you again, as I know how busy you must be, but I just wanted to confirm that you had received my application, and to let you know I remain very enthusiastic about your work and the possibility of a summer internship with your office. If there is any other information you need from me, please let me know. Thank you very much for your consideration, and I look forward to speaking with you soon.

Sincerely,

Zippy Law Student

**CHAPTER 6**  
**NETWORKING AND INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWING**  
**WHAT DO YOU NEED TO KNOW?**

**Using Networking to Find a Great Job**

We have all heard the old adage “It is not what you know but who you know”. In today’s tight legal job market, that may be truer than ever before. A recent survey revealed that nearly half of attorneys interviewed feel networking is the most effective way to find work in the legal field. Indeed, Tom Jackson, author of *Guerilla Tactics in the New Job Market*, estimates that *only 20 percent* of all available positions are advertised on a given day. Therefore, you may increase your chances of finding a position if you are able to gain access to “the hidden job market.”

One of the most effective ways to access the “hidden job market” is by networking and informational interviewing. These techniques are the most likely to give you the inside track. As such, every job seeker must develop a productive job search campaign that includes networking and identifying prospective employers in your field(s) of interest and effectively marketing yourself to those employers. And this job search campaign must begin early in your law school career.

When law students hear the word “networking” they often run in fear. However, you must practice the art of networking and you must practice it early and often. Keep in mind that networking happens all the time. Networking activities may be as simple as having lunch with a friend or family member, volunteering at a local legal services agency, attending bar association meetings and participating in Akron Law School’s Mentor Program. Through networking, you will develop relationships with people connected to your field of interest with whom you may conduct informational interviews or just call with a quick question. Meeting lawyers and other professionals who can provide you with advice and insight into your area of interest may prove to be your single most valuable resource in your job search. Networking simply involves putting yourself in a position to interact on a regular basis with attorneys and others who may be helpful in your job search. The Career Services

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Office can help you by offering you many opportunities to network but in the end, you control your destiny.

### **Informational Interviewing**

Informational interviewing is perhaps the most useful networking activity to utilize and a valuable tool in career development. This is the process of meeting with practitioners for the purpose of gaining information about career choices and the job search process. It is crucial to remember that these informational meetings are distinct from interviewing with a hiring partner for an existing job.

The benefits of networking and informational interviewing are numerous:

- Gaining first-hand information on the day-to-day activities of a professional in the field
- Building confidence in your ability to discuss your strengths, goals and career interests
- Expanding your professional network and becoming known by “players” in the field
- Learning about career paths you did not know existed
- Clarifying, defining and redefining your interests and goals
- Gaining interviewing experience: the more comfortable you become with the process, the less stress you will experience
- Researching particular firms or agencies through meeting with current employees
- Becoming a more impressive job candidate by learning what is important to employers
- Learning more about the job market outlook for your area of interest

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- Obtaining new contacts for informational interviews and names of professional organizations and publications which may be helpful to you in your career
- Becoming familiar with salary structures within your field of interest
- Increasing your opportunities to access unadvertised job opportunities

### **Developing Your Network: Making Contacts**

Effective networking begins with “contacts.” Potential contacts include any people with whom you have a relationship (direct or indirect), who may be in a position to provide you with valuable “insider information.” As you begin to think of possible contacts, it is helpful to group people in to three general categories: personal contacts (friends, family), professional contacts (previous and current employers) and educational contacts (faculty members).

It is very important to remember that a contact does not have to be in a position of power (i.e., a hiring attorney) in order to help you in your job search. Contacts can offer advice and, provided they are impressed with you, act as additional eyes and ears in your job search. This is how the "hidden job market" becomes a reality. Contacts provide you with inside information about job openings that may never be advertised. Furthermore, if you and your contact develop a good rapport, your contact may add his or her influence to your candidacy when you do apply for a position.

Keep in mind that everyone you encounter connected to your law school experience, including faculty members, individuals you work with at part-time jobs, people you meet during clinical programs, a student you meet through a competition, etc., is a potential networking contact. Therefore, it is important to establish good relationships with these individuals. For example, if you hold a part-time summer job at the State House and a particular individual has been instrumental in making the experience worthwhile, write this individual a thank you note at the end

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of the summer. These small gestures will help you begin to develop a networking base.

List of Possible Contacts. Now that you understand the benefits of networking and informational interviewing, it is time to begin your list of contacts. Remember, your contacts do not have to be working in the legal field. They probably know people who do. Here is a list to help you get started.

- Family
- Friends
- Previous Employment
- Current Employment
- Akron Law Faculty
- Law School Administrators
- Akron Law Career Services Staff
- Fellow Law Students
- Undergraduate Faculty
- Undergraduate Classmates
- Fraternity/Sorority Members
- Alumni Associations
- Professional Associations
- Community Activities
- Religious Groups
- Neighbors

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- Customers/Clients
- Athletic Teams/Health Clubs

Once you have exhausted your memory, share your list with family and friends. Perhaps you have left off an uncle who just happens to be a family law attorney in New York City? Your family may think of people you have missed and may be able to help put you in touch with some of the people you have listed.

Other potential sources of contacts include:

- Akron Law School's Alumni. The Career Services Office can assist you with obtaining the names of alumni in specific geographic regions.
- A Lexis or Westlaw search of attorneys: Generate a list of possible contacts in a particular practice area (your search can be refined to seek Akron Law graduates who practice in your area of interest).
- Professionals who have been featured in Ohio Legal Journals, Bar Association publications. Consider contacting such individuals or other professionals who have spoken at law-related programs you have attended.
- LinkedIn (using search features to find Akron Law alumni or practice-area specific attorneys).

### **How to Set Up an Informational Interview**

Once you have developed a list of contacts, you should begin arranging "informational interviews." Initially, it is likely that you will be more comfortable setting up meetings and networking with people with whom you already have a relationship. Meeting with these individuals first will help you build up momentum before you start contacting people who you consider to be strangers.

The Initial Contact: Law students ask: "Should I make my first contact by phone or e-mail?" The reality is that there are positive aspects

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to both methods of contacting people. Put simply, calling is the quicker route and e-mail may be a more effective and preferred method..

Following are some guidelines:

Consider calling or e-mailing first if...

- The person is a relative's good friend whom you have met
- You worked with the individual a few years ago and developed a friendly rapport
- You are calling/e-mailing someone you recently met at a professional meeting and the contact gave you his/her business card and suggested you phone/e-mail him/her to speak further
- You are comfortable, articulate and succinct on the phone with people you do not know well or at all

If you choose to call first, be prepared with your introduction. For example, "Ms. Smith, my name is Lucy Brown and we met last week at the Akron Bar Association meeting. As you may recall, I am currently in my second year at Akron Law School and am interested in learning more about environmental law. I found our conversation very interesting and wonder if you might have 10 or 15 minutes for me to drop by your office. I would like the opportunity to hear more of your advice and ideas about entering the field."

Sample Email to a Networking Contact. A sample email to a networking contact is included at the end of this chapter. Always include the name of any mutual acquaintance in the first paragraph of your letter (particularly if the person you are writing to is an indirect contact and a mutual acquaintance referred you to him/her). In the second paragraph, explain why you think a meeting would be beneficial to you. You should also include any relevant work experience you possess. In your final paragraph, indicate you will be calling or otherwise following up with an email within the next week to schedule a brief meeting.

**Preparing For the Meeting:**

**Research Your Contact and Develop an “Elevator Speech”**

It is essential that you thoroughly prepare for your informational meetings. Having a specific purpose and agenda planned for each meeting you organize will ensure that you leave the meeting with helpful information and that you make a positive impression on your contact. Research your contact and his/her area of practice prior to the meeting, using information in the Career Services Office and/or resources available online. Learning about the area of practice through published information will allow you to devote more time during your meeting to the personal insights of the interviewee and to develop a rapport with that individual. Doing your homework will impress your contact and it will be more likely that you will leave his/her office with names of additional contacts.

In addition to performing research, you should develop a 90 second “elevator speech” to use when networking and requesting informational meetings. Your elevator speech is a response to the infamous interview question, “Tell me a little bit about yourself.” It may also be used when introducing yourself to others in networking situations. This is a statement that needs to be well thought out before you make contact with someone, written or spoken, to ensure that you make a good first impression. You should provide the listener with the following information:

- Your education/experience level
- A brief summary of previous, relevant employment, including the type of work you performed and skills you have developed
- A short explanation of your desired career path

Ideally, your elevator speech will not only provide your contact with the necessary information to form an impression as to what type of work you would be well-suited for, but it will also lead them to believe that you are focused and have your act together.

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Sample Elevator Speech. The following is a sample elevator speech to get the ball rolling. You should work hard to create a personal and unique elevator speech.

“Hello, my name is Louis Powell and I am a third-year evening student at Akron Law School. I am very interested in pursuing a career in Health Care Law and have been focusing my studies in this area. Since graduating from college, I obtained my Masters in Pharmacology from Ohio State University and then spent two years working as a pharmacist at a CVS located in Gambier. I am currently working as a pharmacist at Akron City Hospital, where I am responsible for ensuring that our drug distribution system complies with Federal and State regulations. At Akron Law, I have taken several courses in Health Law and it is my goal to eventually work as in-house counsel for a health care facility.”

### **The Meeting:**

#### **You are the Interviewer!**

After making your list of contacts, researching their organizations and preparing your three-minute story, you are now ready to conduct your first informational meeting. Remember, you are not interviewing for a job, but rather the purpose of this meeting is to gather information that will take you closer to your goal of getting a job. In this situation, you are the interviewer and it is your responsibility to direct the discussion. Your two main goals for each informational interview should be: (1) making a positive impression upon your contact, and (2) leaving the interview with additional names of people you can contact.

General Protocol. The general protocol is to treat an informational interview exactly the same as you would an interview for a job. Thus, the following are crucial:

- Present yourself as you would during an actual job interview: dress appropriately and bring your resume to the meeting
- Have a purpose and agenda: state your purpose early on (e.g. to gather information on a career in corporate law)

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- Be prepared to share your three-minute story
- After giving a brief presentation of yourself (your “three-minute story”), focus on the other person: design questions to elicit information about an area of practice, players involved, qualifications required, tips for entering the field, etc.
- Feel free to take a list of prepared questions and do not hesitate to engage in conversation to show the interviewer you have done your homework
- Bring a copy of your resume and ask for feedback and suggestions for improvement
- Always try to get a referral before you end the meeting
- Remember to ask for the individual’s business card so you will have the correct contact information for writing a thank you note and future communications
- Keep the meeting to the time limit initially requested – no matter how well it appears to be going; your contact will respect that you are using his/her time efficiently

Sample Questions to Ask. As stated above, your goal is to acquire basic information through an enjoyable conversation with your contact. After introducing yourself, establish rapport with “ice-breaker” types of questions (mutual contacts, weather, office environment – or something else you have in common). Next, begin asking specific questions about your contact’s position, personal career development, etc. Here is a sample of questions you may wish to ask during your meeting.

- How did you obtain your current position?
- What has been your career progression since graduating from law school?
- What do you like the most about your job? The least?

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- How do you spend your day?
- How much time do you spend researching?
- How much time do you spend with clients?
- Does your work place obligations upon you outside of the standard work week?
- What kinds of skills are most essential for success in this field?
- Are there particular law school courses that you suggest?
- If you were a law student again, is there anything you might do differently?
- Do you have any suggestions as to where I might gain the experience I need for a job in this field?
- How receptive is a private firm to a candidate who has gained most of his/her experience in the public sector?
- Do you have any suggestions for improvements on my resume?
- Based upon my resume and our discussion, how suited is my background for the work you do?
- What types of experiences, paid or volunteer, would you recommend to me?
- What should my salary expectations be?
- What is most rewarding about working in this field?
- Is this legal area growing? How do you see it changing over the next few years?
- Do you have suggestions regarding professional journals and associations that would put me in touch with people and information related to this area of practice?

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- How do people learn about open positions in this area? Are such positions usually advertised, or are they often filled through word-of-mouth?
- Can you give me the names of other attorneys who may be helpful to me?
- May I use your name when I meet with others in this field?
- May I call you again?

### **After the Meeting:**

### **Thank You Notes and Continuing the Relationship**

The Thank You Note. Send a thank you note or thank you e-mail after the meeting expressing your appreciation for your contact's time and advice. In your note/e-mail, mention something particularly informative you learned during the meeting and/or what further steps you plan to take in the near future as a result of your discussion. If the meeting went particularly well, consider asking your contact to keep you in mind if he/she hears of a position for which you might be well-suited.

Continuing the Relationship. If you feel like the contact was receptive to helping you, consider touching base on an intermittent basis to let him/her know you are still exploring the field (e.g. send an article that you think would be of interest to him/her, email him/her with a quick update about a summer job you have obtained). While we encourage you to keep in touch with your contacts on a regular basis, be careful not to come across as being too pushy or a pest.

### **Keeping a Record**

It is important for you to keep a record of your networking activities. Use a notebook, index cards, Excel spreadsheet or any other filing system that works well for you, to keep track of the following: the contact's information (name, title, address, phone number), date of your meeting, names and addresses of additional contacts received, helpful

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information received during the meeting, and dates you touch base with your contact after the initial meeting.

It may also be helpful to take note of the following: What positive and negative impression do you now have of the area of practice? How did this interview help you to clarify your own objectives? What are your next steps? With whom will you speak next? What more do you now know about the legal market in your field of interest? As you continue to meet with your contacts, you will become more educated on your chosen field, and your questions for contacts may become more specific.

### **Virtual Networking and Informational Interviewing**

With social media and web-based platform use on the rise by professionals, feel free to lean in to these platforms to build your network. Of course, there is no substitute for in-person relationship building, but online webinars, LinkedIn, virtual coffee chats or networking events, video conferences and even phone calls are great options to connect with other professionals.

- **Build Relationships:** employers may not have a job to offer at the moment, but they likely have time or can schedule time in the coming weeks.
- **Update (or create) your network list** (Who do you know? Who do you want to meet? Who can connect you?) **Build a pipeline of professional connections and prospective employers.**
- **Connect with Mentors.**
- **Connect with alumni of your law school.** Career Services can provide you a list.
- **Join local and state bar associations in your desired market.**

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- Host virtual coffee/lunches.
- Conduct informational interviews via phone, Zoom, Skype, Google Chat, BlueJeans, or other online platforms (explore free trials/current offers).
- Volunteer! Stay engaged with your community, even remotely (Ex.: volunteer to lead a committee or assist with a virtual board meeting.) Remote pro bono opportunities are also available.

### **Final Thoughts on Networking and Informational Interviewing**

Networking and informational interviewing can help you develop a better understanding of the area of practice that interests you and may enable you to build your self-confidence in marketing your skills to employers in that area of specialization. As "practice interviews," informational interviews will enable you to meet employers and present yourself in a more relaxed atmosphere than in an actual interview. In discussing your career objectives with legal professionals, you will become more comfortable in presenting your qualifications. You will also learn more about what prospective employers are looking for in a successful candidate.

As you continue in this process, you will clarify and redefine your goals. It is therefore possible to become a more impressive candidate; you will know what you really want and why. In addition, you will have established a network that you can use again and again for a variety of professional purposes.

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### **SAMPLE EMAIL TO NETWORKING CONTACT**

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Mr. Brown:

I am currently a second year student at the University of Akron School of Law interested in pursuing a career in Criminal Law. Through a search of our alumni on LinkedIn I learned that you practice in this field in the Akron area, and I would very much appreciate the opportunity to speak with you about your career.

The combination of my work experience and educational background demonstrates my strong interest in Criminal Law. After completing my undergraduate degree in Criminal Justice, I spent five years working as a Cleveland Police Officer. As a law student, I have taken Evidence and Criminal Law, and I will participate in Akron Law's clinical program next year. Additionally, I worked as an intern at the Stark County Prosecutor's Office last summer, and the practical experience I gained there only increased my desire to become a criminal law attorney. I am confident that I would benefit from your advice, as both an Akron Law alum and a practitioner, as I continue to plan for a career in Criminal Law.

I understand that you are very busy and respect your time. Would you would be open to arranging a brief meeting for coffee or a video call at your convenience? Thank you very much for your time and consideration of this request. I look forward to meeting with you and hearing more about your work.

Best regards,

**ZIPPY LAW STUDENT**

Juris Doctor Candidate 2023

Student Bar Association – 1L Class Representative

The University of Akron School of Law

[zls1000@uakron.edu](mailto:zls1000@uakron.edu)

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## CHAPTER 7

### JOB SEARCHING RESOURCES

Use the tools at your disposal but think outside the box too – the Career Connection and Symplicity are great resources to locate jobs, but LinkedIn, ZipRecruiter and other web-based job sites, local bar association websites, and local government websites may also have job postings

#### **Top 8 Legal Job Search Sites**

- 1.) [LinkedIn](#)
- 2.) [USAJobs](#)
- 3.) [ZipRecruiter](#)
- 4.) [LawCrossing](#) (contact CSO for access details)
- 5.) [Glassdoor](#)
- 6.) [Indeed](#)
- 7.) [LawJobs.com](#)
- 8.) [NALP](#)

We are always updating the resources and online networking links on the CSO website. Check back frequently for new information and past CSO programs: <https://www.uakron.edu/law/career-services/resource-library.dot>