**HELP!!! I NEED A JOB!**

Relax—you are not alone. Because the legal employment market is so competitive these days and because many legal employers, especially small to mid-sized firms, hire on an “as needed” basis, many of you will graduate without a job offer in hand.

Understanding why and how the legal employment market works is the key to obtaining employment. Law schools typically track job placement information for their most recent graduating class during the nine-month period after graduation. What happens during this nine-month period?

Many things happen, including obtaining your J.D. degree, taking the bar exam and getting the results, and becoming admitted to practice law in one or more states. By completing each step in this process, you make yourself more valuable and employable in this competitive employment market.

During the next nine months, it is also important to implement as many job search techniques described below as you can to increase your chances of getting hired:

- Update your application materials, including your resume, cover letter, reference list, transcript and writing sample. Work with a CCD counselor on making your resume and cover letter as effective as possible.
- Work on your interviewing skills by having a mock interview with a counselor.
- Utilize as many resources as possible including Symplicity and other job search websites.
- Network! Network! Network! Tell everyone that you know that you are looking for a job.

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- Attend career fairs, CLE programs, bar and professional association meetings and events.
- Go on informational interviews.
- Actively participate in your undergraduate and law school alumni associations.
- Reciprocity: if you are looking for employment outside the tri-state area, the CCD can arrange for your use of the resources at another law school career services office. Contact Nicole Moncayo (nmoncayo@law.pace.edu)
- Continue to gain legal experience by doing pro bono work for legal service and non-profit organizations, and look for temporary employment as a contract attorney or law clerk.

**Follow Your Passion**

A perfect job is one that melds your passion with your skills. Few of us ever attain that perfect job on the first try, particularly straight out of law school. However, studies and informal surveys with attorneys have shown that those who follow their passion — by making conscious decisions and sacrifices or by learning particular skills that stay true to their passion — are generally more satisfied and happier in their careers than those who do not.

How do you stay true to your passion in a tough economy when jobs are scarce? If you know what your passion is now, you have a clear base upon which to judge options. For example, you may have to decide to work in a non-legal job after graduation to support yourself while you do pro bono or other work in your desired area to keep your skills sharp. You can also take CLE courses and do professional reading to maintain a high level of knowledge in the field you really love. If you don’t know what your passion is now, think about what you have and have not liked about past jobs, whether legal or not. Did you particularly like public speaking? Detailed work? Problem solving? Often certain types of work lend themselves well to particular areas or venues for practicing. Keep your eyes open and let your passion lead the way!
**Important Deadlines**

**Fellowships, Honors Programs, Scholarships & Internships**
For descriptions and application information click [here](#) (then click on the appropriate fellowship guide under “Resources”) and/or see the Symplicity posting and contact the CCD

**Summer/Academic Term Positions**

- 5/4/09, ABA Section of Antitrust Law Summer Fellowship Award
- 5/8/09, Voice of the Defense Bar Law Student Diversity Scholarship Program

**Post-Graduate Positions**

- 4/30/09, Center for Human Rights and Global Justice at NYU School of Law Fellowship
- 5/4/09, ABA Section of Antitrust Law Summer Fellowship Award (Open to a 3L who does not have a paying post-graduate position)
- 5/15/09, 2009-2010 Water for People Research Fellowship in Innovation and Sustainability

**Spring, Pace Center for Environmental Legal Studies Fellow**

**Rolling, American Constitution Society Law Fellowship**

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**State of the Legal Market**

The legal market has been affected by the downturn in the economy as much as any other industry. If you have missed all the articles in AboveTheLaw, the American Lawyer, the New York Law Journal and The New York Times and The Wall Street Journal over the past six months, here are some basic trends and predictions for the future:

- Law firm layoffs will likely continue deep into 2009 and possibly into 2010 or the next year. Starting salaries may experience reductions over the coming year.
- Hildebrandt, a professional services consulting and research firm ([www.hildebrandt.com](http://www.hildebrandt.com)), noted in its 2009 Annual Report to the Legal Professional that law firms are under tremendous economic pressure to change the structure of how they operate, including re-thinking the billable hour model, using an alternative lawyer structure with more contract attorneys, eDiscovery businesses and other bundled legal services.
- Most large law firms (“BigLaw”) are granting paid deferrals to recent grads to whom they offered permanent post-graduate positions and are offering paid furloughs to associates in slow practice areas. Firms are expecting not to give offers to all summer associates this year, making for a highly competitive summer.
- As a result of the deferrals, layoffs and down economy, there is a glut of highly qualified new and experienced lawyers in the market.

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**Stand Out from the Competition**

In order to get the job (or even the interview), you will need to get the employer’s attention and impress them. This does not mean using hot pink resume paper, submitting a video resume, or writing a cover letter in iambic pentameter. (We strongly advise against doing any and all of these things). In order to stand out from the competition, you will want to come across as professional and prepared to hit the ground running on day one of the job.

**First impressions count.** “Ask not what the employer can do for you; instead ask what you can do for the employer.” An effective cover letter should stress what you can do for the employer (not vice versa); this approach should guide your performance in interviews. Employers have repeatedly advised that cover letters are important and read carefully. If you are responding to a job posting, note the key attributes the employer is looking for and make sure that your application materials reflect them accordingly. If you are sending unsolicited mailings, your letters should be tailored to the specific employer. Remember—your cover letter (and any email communications) and resume are the first examples of your writing skills that an employer will review. Make sure that they are error-free and professional.

**Do your homework.** Prepare for every informational interview, career fair, and other potential networking opportunity as you would for a job interview. Identify what you want to get out of the opportunity and devise a strategy to reach that goal. For example, if you are attending a panel program, research the panelists prior to attending the event. Similarly, if you are attending a career fair, devise a plan so you can meet with as many employers/organizations as possible.

**Become an expert.** If you are seeking positions in a particular field of law, you should be knowledgeable about developments in that practice area. If there are recent important cases on that issue, be able to talk about them. Go on informational interviews with people in the field. Get involved in bar and professional associations affiliated with the practice area. Familiarize yourself with periodicals and websites that practitioners in that field regularly consult.

**Do the right thing.** When you get the interview (informational or otherwise), it’s not only important to look the part and dress professionally, but also to project “likeable confidence.” Smile. Have a firm handshake. Always send a prompt thank you letter or email (not a handwritten note).
Summer Positions

If you are still looking for a summer position, here are a few ideas:

- Talk to everyone you know (and I mean everyone, from the dry cleaner to your accountant to your cousin) and let them know that you are looking for a summer legal position. If you don't know any lawyers, chances are that someone you know does.
- Volunteer.
  - If it qualifies as public interest work, you may still be able to obtain funding. [See Jennifer Friedman at the Public Interest Law Center for more information. jfriedman2@law.pace.edu or 914-422-4265]
  - If you are unable to obtain outside funding, try funding yourself. Babysit. Work retail or as a bartender. Do evening research or word processing. Everyone at the CCD worked two jobs at some point during law school, mostly to allow ourselves to gain valuable legal experience at a place that did not pay. You will gain skills and tremendous respect for yourself and from others for working several jobs at the same time. [See “Stand Out From The Competition” on page 2]. In addition to Symplicity postings, the bulletin boards around campus are used to post flexible (non-legal) positions that you can use to supplement or fund a volunteer position.
- Call the Center for Career Development (914-422-4217). We have contacts that may be able to help at the last minute.
- Keep checking and APPLY for any new postings on Symplicity. Employers are still posting summer opportunities, but you need to let them know you are out there.

Post-Graduate Positions

In the next week or two you will need to put your job search on a more passive track while you study for and take your final exams and the Bar Exam. If you have not been in touch with the CCD in a while, please contact us in July or August after you have taken a breather after the Bar.

Remember that you are not alone in your job search, even if it continues after the Bar. Stay in touch with the CCD and your professors. There are often research, project and other positions available over the summer with various professors, clinics, centers and departments here at the law school.

You should also be aware that while most employers hire on an "as needed" basis, it is a good idea to be networking and making sure that your resume, your face and your good professional reputation are in front of hiring managers and on their mind when opportunities do arise.

Many organizations and bar associations hold job fairs in August and September (as well as other times during the year), and many of these fairs are open to law graduates. The CCD maintains a list of career fairs on www.law.pace.edu. Other fairs may be listed on www.pslawnet.org.

For those interested in judicial clerkships, there are often openings throughout the year due to newly appointed judges and staggered clerkship terms. You should periodically check OSCAR (the on-line federal clerkships job posting database), state court websites and Symplicity for openings. Make an appointment with Stephanie Golden, Associate Director for Private Sector and Clerkships, if you are interested in clerkships.

Similarly, opportunities in the government can arise for which the application process will be more involved and will require advance planning and forethought on your part. For example, candidates for NYS attorney positions in areas including securities and public finance may have to sit for competitive civil service exams on scheduled dates. To learn about this process, go to www.cs.state.ny.us/jobseeker/p public/index.cfm.

Also take a look at: http://careers.abovethelaw.com/
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- Temporary contract work has not and may not be that busy over the next several months as the types of clients and law firms that traditionally supplied the kind of work that lent itself to teams of contract attorneys are either being kept in-house or, in the case of large merger or litigation matters, simply are not happening.

Have hope. There is a silver lining in the midst of the market storm. Here are a few positive points to remember:

- All of the media attention is going to BigLaw firms (essentially the top 200 firms as ranked annually by The American Lawyer).
- Around 80% of law school graduates, and about 70% of Pace Law School graduates each year typically go to firms with fewer than 100 attorneys; 1/3 or more of those are in small to solo practices.
- Many corporate clients are re-evaluating how they dole out and pay for legal services and are turning to local and smaller firms to handle their outside legal work.
- This may be a great time to start a business or legal practice. A recent USA Today article noted that 16 of the 30 companies on the Dow Jones Industrial Average were started during a recession, and Microsoft Corporation began during the 1975 recession.
- There are jobs out there. Local and federal governments do have positions and will hire, even if they note a “hiring freeze.” You need to get your resume into the system or into the hands of someone at these institutions to be on file for when positions do open.
- Other areas where there might be work? Bankruptcy, regulatory work (financial and securities industry, environmental), infrastructure at federal, state and local levels. Follow the stimulus plan money.
- Many local law firms call us with a need for immediate help with litigation or other matters. We immediately post these positions and circulate them to students and recent grads that we know are still looking. Continue to check Symplicity and your email.
- Local Bar Associations (like the Westchester County Bar Association) and our alumni are willing to help, even if they cannot do so financially. Call the CCD or contact an alumnus directly.
- The structure of how law is practiced, particularly at large Manhattan firms, will likely change. Permanently. No one thinks that the legal market will return to the salary and work levels as in past years and clients are looking for more value for legal services (see the Association of Corporate Counsel Value Challenge at http://www.acc.com/advocacy/valuechallenge/ and news and resources from Hildebrandt, particularly their 2009 Annual Report to The Legal Profession, available at www.hildebrandt.com under News & Resources—>Publications). There may be more opportunities for contract attorneys, eDiscovery specialists, of counsel and other “nontraditional” legal roles at law firms that have until now been relatively underutilized and kept on the fringe of law firm practice.

We are constantly in touch with our and the Law School’s network to identify and develop positions and skill-building opportunities. Show up to as many networking events as you can, don’t be afraid to ask for advice or references, and stay in touch with the CCD!