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Opportunities for Evening/Part-time Students

As an evening student, you face a special set of challenges in acquiring legal experience. While most day students are able to devote their summers to legal employment, evening students typically already have full-time jobs on top of a busy course load. Yet, legal employers expect you to graduate law school with practical legal experience. Employers want to know that you can apply the skills you developed in your law school classes in a practical setting, so that they know that when they hire you, you can hit the ground running. While most evening students will not be able to explore full time options during their summers in law school, there are a number of other options available to evening students. In addition, although day students (who graduate law school in three years) are urged to begin acquiring legal experience as soon as possible, evening students (who graduate in four years) may consider waiting until their second year to begin exploring their options. Nevertheless, all students are strongly encouraged to acquire legal experience before graduating.

Students who are sure about the legal area that they want to pursue should target jobs that will help them demonstrate their commitment to that area, as well as develop legal knowledge and personal contacts in that area.

As you explore career options, it is important to keep in mind what is best for you and not your friends, classmates, or family members. There is a wide range of career options available to law school graduates and it is important to take the time to discover your niche. Some students are able to do this very early on in the process, but for many, career planning takes much longer. Remember that career planning is a process and not a single event. In addition, career planning is not a one-size-fits-all process. What works for one person may not work for another person.

While there are many legal opportunities for 1L students, **there are few paying positions.** This is due to the fact that opportunities at law firms tend to be limited for 1Ls because law firm employers are focused on hiring 2Ls. The majority of 1L students

who find legal work obtain internships with judges, government agencies or public interest organizations. Due to the nature of government and public interest funding, most of these opportunities are unpaid.

Below are a number options for evening students to explore throughout their law school education:

I. Pro Bono & Public Interest Programs

The law school offers various opportunities for law students to obtain legal experience through Pro Bono & Public Interest Programs. Some programs meet at night or on the weekends, others, such as the Pro Bono Research Project, allow hours to be scheduled at the student's discretion. We encourage you to explore these programs to determine the best fit. For more information go to <http://www.camlaw.rutgers.edu/site/main/ourprograms.shtml>

The Bankruptcy Pro Bono Project is a cooperative effort of the law school, South Jersey Legal Services, the U.S. Bankruptcy Court, District of New Jersey and the local bankruptcy bar. It provides bankruptcy representation for those in need of filing for Chapter 7 Bankruptcy relief who are not presently served by existing resources. (2L and 3L students)

The Childrens SSI Project provides representation to children whose SSI applications have been denied. Students are paired with volunteer attorneys to work on these cases, which are referred from South Jersey Legal Services. (2L and 3L students)

The Community Dispute Resolution Committee (CDRC) is a joint effort of the New Jersey Courts and the law school. This is our Pro Bono Mediation Project; law students mediate disputes referred by Camden City Municipal Court or mediate small claims matters for Superior Court, Camden. Students involved in this mediation project receive formal training and New Jersey Court certification as trained mediators. (Second semester 1L, 2L, and 3L students)

The Domestic Violence Pro Bono Project is a cooperative effort of the law school and the Camden County Bar Association's Family Law Section. The Project is designed to assist victims with the initial filing of a complaint, obtaining of a temporary restraining order, and the court appearance for the permanent restraining order. (Second semester 1L, 2L, and 3L students)

The Immigration Pro Bono Project includes different opportunities: one is for students to assist attorneys from the Camden Center for Law and Social Justice with political asylum cases, another is to provide assistance to community members with immigration questions at the Camden Public Library, and another more limited opportunity is to work with clients seeking naturalization at the Nationalities Service Center in Philadelphia. (2L and 3L students)

The Pro Bono Research Project, co-directed by Professor Sarah Ricks, offers free legal

research services to public interest law practitioners. The goal of the project is to match law student researchers with organizations that can benefit from the students' legal research skills. Students in this project may provide written or oral legal analysis or may gather legal research materials such as judicial decisions or legislation. Students must devote a minimum of 20 hours to the project - and those hours can be scheduled at the student's discretion - within one semester.

The Defender Project, which is limited to one or two students from Rutgers-Camden, as well as a limited number of students from each of the other Philadelphia area law schools, is an opportunity for students to assist with investigation, brief writing, and research on death penalty cases. Substantive training will be provided.

The Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Project trains students to assist low-income Camden residents in filling out their tax returns. Students make assistance available for three months prior to April 15th at community locations two nights a week, and on some Saturday mornings. (All students who complete training)

The Election Protection Project gives training in basic election law and students then have the opportunity to assist civic groups with voting day monitoring efforts. (All students who complete training)

The Financial Literacy Project gives students who have received training the opportunity to speak to groups of high school students about the true cost of credit card debt. Sponsored by the Camden bankruptcy bar, this project seeks to educate teenagers about budgeting, financial planning, and related topics. (2L and 3L students)

The Street Law Project places law students in Camden area high schools to teach students about legal issues pertinent to their lives.

II. Assistant to Law Professor

Many professors hire research assistants to help them with legal research for conferences, legal publications or books that they are writing. RAs usually meet with the professor periodically and then conduct research. They then either hand over their raw research, or discuss it with the professor, or draft a memo of findings. This is a great opportunity to get to know a professor on a personal level, which may come in handy for recommendations in the future. Students can approach professors directly about opportunities or apply for advertised positions with a resume and letter. Most positions pay, but some may require work study funding.

III. Per Diem/Project based work

Busy small and mid-sized law firms often hire law students to conduct research and writing assignment on a per diem or project to project basis. Depending on the project, assignments usually can be completed at home and emailed to the supervisor. Students can check their Symplicity account for these job posting, but since few positions are

advertised, we recommend that students send a cover letter and a resume to small and mid-sized law firms offering assistance on research and writing assignments.

IV. Full-time Law Clerk or Paralegal

Some law firms hire law students to work as full-time paralegals or law clerks. This is an excellent way to make contacts in the legal community and begin exploring your options. These types of positions are usually advertised on Symplicity, but students may want to be proactive and contact firms they have an interest in working for.

V. Write an article

Write an article for publication in a law journal. All legal employers value strong writing skills. Writing and publishing an article is an excellent way to hone those skills and to demonstrate your interest in a particular area of law. In addition, employers recognize the significant time and effort required to write and publish an article.

VI. Externship

The Law School conducts an extensive externship program whereby third-year students gain academic credit while working 12-15 hours each week for various public and private nonprofit agencies and for state and federal judges. In addition to the work, students attend seminars relating to the work done in their placement. One or two term placements during the school year, and summer placements are available.

Prerequisites: Professional Responsibility, Evidence (for any student taking a placement requiring appearance in court on behalf of a client), and Criminal Procedure: The Adjudication Process or Criminal Procedure: The Investigatory Process (for any student taking a placement in a criminal litigation agency; these courses may be taken concurrently with the first term of the criminal litigation extern placement). For more information go to <http://camlaw.rutgers.edu/site/clinics/extern.shtml>.

VII. Clinical Programs

Clinical programs, available for third-year law students, are an excellent way to obtain legal experience. All three clinical programs are offered in both fall and spring semester. The Civil Practice Clinic is also offered in the summer. Time commitments for the clinical programs vary. For more information go to: <http://www.camlaw.rutgers.edu/site/main/ourprograms.shtml>.

The Children's Justice Clinic is a holistic lawyering program using multiple strategies and interdisciplinary approaches to resolve problems for Camden youth facing juvenile delinquency charges. Students primarily provide legal representation in juvenile court hearings. Students will work in trial teams and have the opportunity to handle two of their own trials in delinquency court. In addition to providing legal services related to that forum, students work with their clients to address the causes of delinquency problems in their home environment.

The Rutgers Civil Practice Clinic is both a law school course and a law office staffed by students. It is a six-credit, one semester limited enrollment course open to any law student (full-time or part-time) who has completed two-thirds of his or her legal education and has taken Evidence and Professional Responsibility. But most of all, it is an opportunity to apply what you have been studying to the problems of real people, to give serious consideration to the how and the why of the practice of law, to provide a valuable and much-needed service to the Camden community and to bear primary responsibility for the representation of clients who are looking to you for answers. The Civil Practice Clinic involves both client representation and a seminar component. Students provide representation in civil cases under the supervision of an attorney. Working with a student partner, you will undertake all the steps necessary to representation, including interviewing clients, making strategic decisions, drafting documents and briefs, conducting negotiations and making all court appearances. The seminar focuses on the skills necessary to your client representation, the ethical issues that arise in the cases, and your role as attorney and counselor.

The Domestic Violence Clinic provides legal representation to victims of domestic violence who are seeking restraining orders against their abuser. Students, working in pairs, have the opportunity to represent clients in at least two final restraining order hearings.

VIII. Summer Legal Positions

Some evening students use vacation time, with their employer's consent, in order to work in a summer position. Other students negotiate with their employer for part of a summer off, or for a schedule that allows a day or more off each week.

Finding jobs & applying

I. Job Listings

Check Symplicity job listings on the Career Planning webpage <https://law.camden-rutgers-csm.symplicity.com/students> (click on jobs/resume collection) for various types of job openings, and PSLawnet.org for public interest and government positions, but be aware that *only about 20% of all job openings are advertised*.

II. Direct targeted mailings

Since most job openings are not advertised, use Martindale Hubbell, martindale.com, and the NALP Directory, nalpdirectory.com, to research law firms for direct mailings to firms that did not post a job opening. You can search on the NALP directory for law firms that hire 1Ls. Be aware that the NALP directory is not a comprehensive database of all legal employers and contains primarily large law firms and some government organizations.

Use PSLawnet.org to research government and public interest organizations and the Government Honors & Internship website (linked on the Career Planning website at

<https://camlaw.rutgers.edu/site/i-students/cservices/gov.shtml>) for government and public interest organizations for direct mailings to employers that did not post a job opening and to view job listings.

III. Networking

Networking is the process of establishing links with individuals in a position to connect you with the job you want. Networking is particularly important for evening students who may not be able to fit a legal job into their schedule until later on in their law school education. While networking does require more effort on your part, it is the single most effective way to land a job. Networking takes time, so start early and take advantage of these and other networking opportunities:

- Career Planning Fall & Spring Symposiums (our Spring Symposium is schedule for Saturday 1/26/08)
- Career Planning mock interview program in the early Spring semester
- Bar Associations events & memberships
- Informational interviews
- Career Planning's Mentor Program
- Dinners and events sponsored by the law school and student organizations

IV. How to apply

Most positions just require a resume and cover letter, often followed by interviews. Some positions require writing samples. In some agencies, the odds are improved by a personal visit.

Quick Employment Facts

- The majority of Rutgers Camden students and graduates work for small or mid-sized law firms, at government organizations and public interest agencies.
- Large Law firms represent approximately 15% of the legal market.
- Nationwide, only a small percentage of law school graduates work at large firms.
- Small or mid-sized law firms, government organizations and public interest agencies generally hire only a few months in advance of when they need someone to begin working (Late Fall Semester and Spring Semester for Summer Jobs)
- Most employers DO NOT advertise their available positions.
- The majority of successful candidates obtain employment through direct targeted mailings & networking.
- The majority of 1Ls who find summer legal employment work for government organizations or public interest agencies