EIW Tip Sheet:
Maximizing Your 1L Summer for a Private Sector Job Search

OFFICE OF CAREER PLANNING

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FOUR GOALS FOR YOUR 1L SUMMER

1. **USE YOUR JOB TO GAIN NEW PROFESSIONAL SKILLS AND EXPERIENCES:**

   This sounds obvious, but it doesn’t always happen without effort. Consider what gaps you may have on your resume and be thoughtful about the experiences that would best round out your resume as you apply to firms for a 2L summer position. For example, if you are interested in pursuing corporate work, but don’t have much experience in that area, are there opportunities that will expose you to corporate-related legal work? Be proactive about seeking out the work that best serves your purposes. After observing the range of work available in the office, if you find that your work is not sufficiently varied—for example, you have only been doing research mid-way through the summer—seek out and ask (politely) for new assignments.

   One trick to make sure you are getting an impressive range of work is to draft your resume bullet points as your summer progresses. Your goal by the end of the summer should be to have 3-4 good bullet points describing varied tasks that transfer to the law firm setting. Your bullets might include research, analysis, writing/drafting, observing trials, reviewing materials, client communication, and project management. You should also aim to complete a writing sample during your 1L summer. If your primary projects are too confidential to use as a writing sample, your supervisor may agree to work with you on a side project that can serve as your writing sample.

2. **GET TO KNOW PEOPLE**

   Why is this important? First, practitioners are your primary source for researching and identifying answers to critical questions like: *What kind of law do I want to practice? Where do I want to practice? What firms will be a good fit for me? What are the people like at this firm?* Second, meeting with attorneys from firms you would like to interview with in advance of EIW also demonstrates your interest in the firm, may give you insights into that firm, and perhaps even create advocates for you in the hiring process. And finally, you never know where you will find professional mentors. There are many opportunities to meet people during the course of the summer; some are organized events, and others you’ll need to make the effort to create.

   … In Your 1L Summer Organization: Chances are good that you will be working with lawyers who are well connected to law firms and may have previously worked at firms you are targeting for your 2L summer. Tell the attorneys with whom you work about your career goals. (Note: not applicable if you are at a large law firm that gives return offers for 2L summer.) These attorneys may be able to connect you with former colleagues, make helpful suggestions for your job search, and serve as advocates for you. Make sure to impress them by doing a terrific job!

   … During Informational Interviews: Beyond your existing network (friends, parents’ friends, relatives, professors, classmates past and present), we recommend connecting with associates at the firms you most wish to join for your 2L summer. Reach out to an MLaw alum, ideally one roughly 2 to 5 years out of school and working in a practice area and at a firm you might like to join, and ask if they’d be willing to talk. If you are in your target market over the summer, you can propose coffee in person. If you are not in your target market, you can request a brief phone conversation with alums in your target market. These kinds of meetings are frequently referred to as “informational interviews.”
... At Summer Receptions: The Law School, law firms, and local bar associations will all host summer events where you can meet law firm attorneys. Firms will usually host receptions in their offices, but sometimes will have them at local venues. You will likely receive email invitations directly from the firms but if firms share these events with OCP, they will be viewable as Information Sessions via Symplicity. Please follow all RSVP instructions listed in each event. If you RSVP “yes,” firms are expecting your attendance. If you are unable to attend, please contact the firm directly.

Similarly, you may also attend MLaw alumni receptions (these are listed on the alumni events page). These are similar to the law firm receptions, but obviously the audience is limited to our alumni.

When you attend these receptions, make sure to make the most of your time. Seek to have a few substantive conversations at a reception rather than just joining a giant circle around one partner or worse – just a group of MLaw students. And be sure to always follow up with attorneys with whom you had a good conversation!

For more information, OCP’s networking guide contains detailed advice including how to locate alumni, sample outreach emails you can tailor, and questions to ask during an informational interview. Networking links can be found on our website.

3. CONSIDER ALTERNATIVES TO EIW

Summer Interviewing: Over the past few years, more students are interviewing with firms prior to EIW (this can include firms that attend EIW as well as those that don’t). These early interviews are most common in New York. There are pros and cons to early interviewing with EIW firms that should be carefully considered on an individual basis. PLEASE schedule an appointment with an attorney-counselor BEFORE you contact a firm to set up an interview. While this strategy works well for some students it is not advisable for everyone.

Resume Collects: Rather than attend EIW, some employers request that OCP electronically collect students’ application materials. This is called a “Resume Collect.” These opportunities are listed in the MLS Job Bulletin on Symplicity (Symplicity > jobs/resume collection > MLS Job Bulletin). Use the "advanced search" and select “Resume Collect = YES” to view these opportunities. Check these postings regularly as employers may remove the job posting before the stated deadline. Also, firms tend to give out offers on a rolling basis so it’s in your best interest to apply as early as possible. Resume collects for 2019 will open in Symplicity starting June 1.

Non-BigLaw Firms: Many students obtain great jobs with employers that do not specifically recruit Michigan students either at EIW or through resume collects. Those firms are particularly important to consider if you are interested in markets with little representation at EIW or if you are focused on small- and medium-sized firms. Start contacting those firms over the summer and try to schedule interviews with them before EIW, especially if you are in, or have plans to be in, their market during the summer. Find the contact information for the head of recruiting on Symplicity, on NALP, or on the firm’s website.

And, please remember to report any callbacks and/or offers.

4. PRACTICE AND IMPROVE YOUR SELF-ADVOCACY SKILLS
Even if you have already done a mock interview, we strongly recommend doing another one over the summer with OCP. It's very important to practice your narrative about your career goals, the skills you have developed at your summer job, and why the firm you’re interviewing with is a good fit for you.

Improving your interview skills through a few half hour mock interviews can have significant positive effects on your interview outcomes. OCP can conduct these interviews by phone or Skype.

CONCLUSION
For more detail on topics covered here, consider watching/listening to this presentation from 2018: "What to do During 1L Summer to Find Your 2L Firm Job".

Go make the most of your summer!