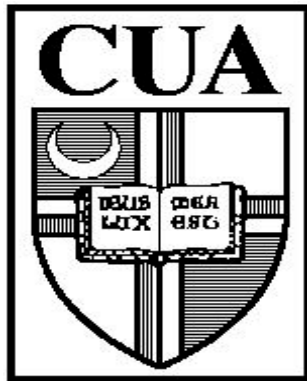


# FIRST YEAR CAREER HANDBOOK



## **Office of Career and Professional Development**

Suite 163

202-319-5132 (phone)

202-319-4734 (fax)

[jobs@law.edu](mailto:jobs@law.edu)

<http://law.edu/career/>

Dear 1L Students:

The Office of Career and Professional Development (OCPD) officially welcomes you to the Columbus School of Law. We are excited to now extend our services to you.

Staffed by career planning professionals with advanced degrees in law, OCPD provides individual and group advising, workshops, panels, instructional materials, job opportunities, and a variety of other services to you. We are dedicated to assisting you gain the professional skills necessary to secure employment, whether during the academic year, summer, or after graduation.

Enclosed in this manual is a sample of introductory handouts to guide you in your 1L job search. OCPD has compiled a variety of handouts in addition to those included here addressing multiple aspects of the job search and different substantive areas of work. We encourage you to use these resources as well. Below please find some general information about the services we offer.

**Hours:** OCPD is open from 8:00 am – 5:00 pm Monday, Thursday, and Friday and from 8:00 am – 7:00 pm Tuesday and Wednesday. To schedule an appointment please call our office at (202) 319-5132.

**Résumé and Cover Letter Editing:** OCPD offers a 24-48 hour turn-around service for editing résumés and cover letters. Please drop off a draft or email it to [jobs@law.edu](mailto:jobs@law.edu). Edited versions may be picked up at our office or emailed to you directly. Please specify how you would like the revisions received.

**Mock Interviews:** We encourage you to schedule an appointment with one of our career advisors to practice your interviewing skills or prepare you for an upcoming interview.

**Individual Advising Sessions:** We strongly encourage you to schedule individual meetings with our career advisors. This is the most successful way to tailor your job search to your interests, strengths, and goals.

**Job Resources:** OCPD relies on several different means for publicizing opportunities including our online jobs database, Symplicity.

We hope that your law school experience is off to a strong start and look forward to working with you to launch your legal career.

The OCPD Staff

## SUMMER JOBS FOR 1Ls

The summer after your first year of law school should be spent working in some type of legal environment where you can begin to build your résumé and obtain substantive legal experience. While you likely will spend the summer after your second year working in an area you hope to pursue after law school, this summer you have the opportunity to broaden your résumé to include other types of experiences. For example, if you think you ultimately want to work for a law firm, you might intern with a government agency. *Please note that, for the most part, summer jobs for 1Ls are not paid positions.* In the event you are working in an unpaid capacity and not receiving credit, consider participating in the **Pro Bono Challenge**.

Keep the following goals in mind for your first year summer: (1) gain practical legal experience; (2) develop a strong legal writing sample; and (3) walk away with a good legal reference from your employer.

### GREAT RESOURCES FOR THE IL JOB SEARCH (and beyond!)

**Symplicity** – OCPD uses Symplicity, a Career Services Management System, to communicate with students about announcements, programs and employment opportunities. Many students find their summer jobs through Symplicity which can be accessed via the OCPD webpage at <http://www.law.edu/career> under **Students** or via the link below. Employers forward job opportunities to OCPD on a regular basis, which OCPD makes available to students only through Symplicity. Each student is provided with a login and password to access to the site. Please note that you will see a marked increase in the number of jobs posted on Symplicity as the summer approaches. To access Symplicity go to: <https://law-cua-csm.symplicity.com/student>. Once on Symplicity you will find that the **Home Page** contains OCPD’s announcements to students and the event calendar; the **Profile Tab** is used to change your email address, password and other student information; the **Document Tab** is used to upload a résumé or other required documents to attached to jobs when applying online; the **Document Library Tab** is a sub-tab within the **Document Tab**, which allows students to view select OCPD handouts; the **Jobs Tab** is used to search for positions; the **Employers Tab** is used to look up employers who have posted jobs at CUA; and the **OCI Tab** is used for our Spring (Jan-April) and Fall (Aug-Nov) Recruiting Program.

**Summer Experience Evaluation Forms** – OCPD requires returning students to submit a “Summer Experience Evaluation Form.” Students are asked to describe the application and interview process for their summer position and provide contact information (email address or phone number) as well as a general job overview. OCPD keeps the forms in a binder for your reference. Look through the binder at the various summer jobs previously held by 1Ls. Some students may allow you to contact them directly to get more information or you may apply through the same channels that student went through to obtain the position. *This is among the best resources for 1Ls!*

**Networking** – Another great way to find a position, either permanent or temporary, is through networking. If there is an area of law that interests you in particular, think about the people you know who practice that type of law and contact them. Let them know what type of job you are looking for. See if they know anyone who is looking for summer interns. If you don’t know anyone, a search can be done for CUA alumni who practice in the areas that interest you.

**OCPD Listservs** – One of the most effective ways for OCPD to let you know about job opportunities that fit with your interests is by e-mail. OCPD keeps listservs for most types of employers and areas of the law (e.g., judicial internships, securities law, public interest jobs, government positions, etc.). **Note: Do not use this service as a replacement for checking Symplicity on a regular basis. We do not forward all job postings to the listservs.**

### **COMMON 1L EXPERIENCES**

**Judicial Internship** – The benefits of a judicial internship are numerous. Nowhere else will you gain better firsthand exposure to the inner workings of the court and the judicial process. Depending on the judge and his or her docket, you may have an opportunity to observe court proceedings, conduct legal research, write memoranda, and perhaps edit or draft judicial opinions. Both federal and state judges offer summer internship opportunities to 1Ls. See our handout, “Judicial Internships” for the application process and timing (for federal judges, apply in December or January – some judges will make their decisions early, for others, you may need to follow up; state judges may hire a bit later). Students should also check Symplicity regularly. Also see BNA’s Directory of State and Federal Courts, Judges, and Clerks (located in OCPD’s offices on the judiciary shelf) for contact information for all judges and courts. Note: The American Bar Association Section on Litigation offers a Judicial Intern Program to first- and second-year law minority and/or economically disadvantaged law students. Please see an OCPD career advisor for details.

**Internship with the Federal Government** – Working at a government agency provides the opportunity to participate in the regulatory process from the inside and to gain valuable expertise in both administrative law and in the substantive area of the law administered by the agency. It is best to choose an agency based on your interests and career goals. The Government Honors and Internship Handbook, published by the University of Arizona School of Law, lists summer internships at government agencies. You can access the handbook at [www.law.arizona.edu/career/honorshandbook.cfm](http://www.law.arizona.edu/career/honorshandbook.cfm). This year’s login name is “snicker” and password is “doodle.” The handbook lists the internships by agency. If you scroll to the bottom, you will find a series of tables for reference. One table, titled “1L Deadline Dates,” gives you a quick reference list of all agencies that hire 1Ls, their application deadlines, and whether the positions are paid. In addition to this resource, students should feel free to call contacts at federal agencies to secure internships. Also check the Summer Experience Evaluations binder for jobs held by 1Ls from last summer.

**Internship with an Office of Local Government** - If you think you may have an interest in public defense or prosecution (either civil or criminal), it is wise to get some experience with either a public defender’s office or a prosecutor’s office. Offices of local government are often leanly staffed and rely heavily on interns. Regardless of which office you work for, you will likely get strong hands-on experience throughout your internship. See OCPD’s handout, “Legal Offices Within Local Government: District of Columbia, Maryland & Virginia” for a description of each office and the application process.

**Internship with a Public Interest Organization** – There are few better ways to demonstrate your commitment to public service than to intern with a public interest organization. Future employers in the public sector (and even some in the private sector) will value this addition to your résumé. Choose an organization that matches your interests and career goals. Two very good on-line resources for public interest jobs are [www.pslawnet.org](http://www.pslawnet.org), where you select your own password, and [www.equaljusticeworks.org](http://www.equaljusticeworks.org). There is also a public service career fair where you can meet prospective employers. The fair will be on January 27, 2012 at George Mason School

of Law. Go to [www.fedbar.org](http://www.fedbar.org), or stop by OCPD for more details. If you are interested in public interest work, it is also a good idea to get involved in SPIL, Students for Public Interest Law.

**Public Policy Internship** – Students often find their way to public policy because of an interest in a particular substantive area. Public policy work can be found in virtually any subject areas. The Public Policy Handbook, published by the University of Arizona School of Law, lists over 150 internship and fellowship postings at public policy organizations. You can access the handbook at <https://www.law.arizona.edu/PublicPolicyhandbook/loginform.cfm>. This year's login name is "world" and password is "peace." The handbook lists internships alphabetically by organization name. If you scroll to the bottom, you will find a series of tables for reference, including a deadline chart and listing of organizations by subject matter.

**Law Firm Clerkship/Summer Associate Position** – Most large law firm *summer associate* positions are for students completing their second year of law school. Some firms, however, do consider applications from 1Ls for summer clerkships. These are paid positions. For a complete list of large firms in DC (or whatever city you may be interested in, please visit [www.nalpdirectory.com](http://www.nalpdirectory.com)). Applications are usually due immediately after December 1<sup>st</sup>. These are extremely competitive positions.

A more viable option for first-year law students is to seek employment as a law clerk with a smaller or mid-size firm. Begin checking Symplicity in December. Be sure to continually check Symplicity because you will see job postings throughout the spring. Students should also check OCPD's Summer Experience Evaluation Forms binder.

**Study Abroad** – If you have an interest in international work, or if you would like to broaden your academic experiences to include studies in another country, there are a number of options for overseas study over the summer. CUA offers a summer law program in Cracow, Poland at The Jagiellonian University as well as The International Human Rights Summer Law Program in Rome, Italy. Classes are taught in English and credits are applied to your degree. See the law school's web site for more information, how to apply, and application deadlines. You can also apply for overseas programs offered by other US law schools, but check with the Academic Affairs office regarding transfer of credit.

**Directed Research Project** – Working under the direction of one of your law school professors, you can do a directed research project. Students generally approach professors with their interest in researching a particular subject. At the end of the summer you will have a paper that might ultimately be published.

**Internship on Capitol Hill** – These positions tend not to be legal positions, but if you have an interest in legislative work, you can get great experience interning in the office of a senator or representative. Look for job postings at [www.hillzoo.com](http://www.hillzoo.com) and [www.hillnews.com](http://www.hillnews.com). See the OCPD handout, "Capitol Hill Job Search Guide" for more information, as well as alumni contacts on the Hill. The information in the handout is geared a bit more to finding a permanent position, but can be helpful, regardless.

**Internship with the ABA** – There are numerous summer internship opportunities with the American Bar Association. Go to the "student resources" section at [www.abanet.org](http://www.abanet.org). Click on "Career Opportunities" under the "Law School Student" section. Note: Only some of the internships involve legal work.

**Fellowships** – Fellowships provide funding for students to work over the summer for a variety of causes, generally non-profit. An excellent resource for finding fellowships is [www.pslawnet.org](http://www.pslawnet.org).

**Internship with Corporations** – If you have an interest in working in-house for a company, as opposed to a law firm or the government, try to get an internship in the general counsel’s office of a corporation. These positions are most often landed through personal contacts, so think about the people you know and contact them about potential summer internship positions. Check Symplicity regularly as the summer approaches; some corporations do reach out to law schools when recruiting summer interns.

\*\*\*\*\*

### **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES**

**Pro Bono Work** – Columbus School of Law offers a range of experiential learning opportunities, including the clinics and externships. The Law School’s pro bono program offers another avenue for you to gain hands-on legal experience. Pro bono projects enable you to engage in impactful work, develop practical legal skills, build your résumé and create a network of contacts and references you can use in job searching long into the future. Pro bono work will also bring you incredible personal fulfillment. As a future lawyer, you have a special set of skills, and you have an obligation to use those skills to help those in need. The ABA’s Model Rule of Professional Responsibility 6.1 encourages every lawyer to participate in pro bono work on a regular basis. That responsibility starts now, in law school. You may opt to sign on for a one-time, day-long project, or you may find a project of interest that spans 10 weeks. Possible opportunities might include helping with client intake at a local legal services clinic, performing research for a pro bono attorney or non-profit organization or conducting “know-your-rights” presentations to underrepresented groups. For more information, contact our Pro Bono Coordinator, Jen Tschirch, at [jtschirch@law.edu](mailto:jtschirch@law.edu). To access upcoming pro bono opportunities and events, sign up for the TWEN page: “Pro Bono at CUA Law.”

**Pro Bono Challenge** - The Pro Bono Challenge is dedicated to promoting pro bono legal work within the law school and throughout the legal community. Through the Challenge, students commit to completing anywhere from a minimum of one pro bono project on up to 75 hours or more of pro bono work. The Pro Bono Challenge is open to all class years, there are no negative consequences to not meeting one’s pledge goal and students have their entire three or four years at the Columbus School of Law to complete the work. In addition to the experience gained through pro bono engagement, participating students receive recognition from the law school upon graduation. Visit <http://www.law.edu/career/probono/index.cfm> for more information.

**Internship with Columbus Community Legal Services (CCLS)** – Consider working at CUA’s in-house legal clinic, which is one of the best in the nation, during your second and third years of law school. CCLS offers legal services through four clinical course offerings: Families and the Law Clinic, General Practice Clinic, Advocacy for the Elderly and the Consumer Protection Project. This is a unique professional opportunity to gain practical legal skills and yet another way to demonstrate your interest in public service to future employers. It is also great experience if you might be interested in public defense, prosecution or general litigation work.

## **RÉSUMÉ WRITING: CREATING A PROFESSIONAL RÉSUMÉ**

### **I. INTRODUCTION**

A résumé is your initial introduction to employers; its purpose is to convince them to meet you. In creating a résumé, be accurate, focus on strengths, highlight significant achievements, and have your résumé reviewed in OCPD.

Because a résumé is your individual statement it can take many forms and shapes. There are, however, general guidelines to follow in résumé writing. In many instances, your résumé will receive only a twenty or thirty second review. Therefore, it needs to be **concise** but sufficiently informative. If you are interested in more than one type of employment, consider developing more than one résumé tailored to each type of employment, rather than trying to appeal to all employers in a one-size-fits-all résumé.

### **II. FORMAT**

#### **A. Headings**

The legal field tends to be more conservative than others, so there is little room for dramatic creativity. Begin your résumé with your name, address, telephone number and e-mail address. If you are planning to move to an area where you have a permanent address which you can use to demonstrate a connection to that area, list both a current and permanent address. Otherwise, use only your current address and telephone number.

#### **1. Education**

Law students should place their educational qualifications as the first heading. List educational institutions in reverse chronological order (most recent first). Include the schools you have attended since high school, degrees earned, months and years of graduation or expected graduation, locations of the schools (city and state), and any honors or activities worth highlighting (see sample résumés). You may want to highlight or downplay certain items. For instance, although high school information would typically not be included on a professional résumé, if you graduated from a prestigious or *very well known* high school, it may be included in hopes of impressing or having a connection with employers.

When drafting your résumé note the following:

The *official name* of the law school is “**The Catholic University of America, Columbus School of Law**”, and should be referred to as such.

If you are a *certificate candidate* for any of the law school's specialized programs you should reference your program as follows:

Comparative and International Law Institute  
Institute for Communications Law Studies  
Law and Public Policy Program  
Securities and Corporate Law Concentration

The Summer Program in Cracow or the International Human Rights Summer Law Program in Rome, Italy should be listed under Education, under the law school entry as:

The International Business and Trade Summer Law Program, Cracow, Poland  
(Courses taken in that program can be listed if you prefer but it is not necessary.)

Example #1:

**The Catholic University of America, Columbus School of Law**, Washington, DC  
J.D. and Certificate, Institute for Communications Law Studies, anticipated May 2014

Example #2:

**The Catholic University of America, Columbus School of Law**, Washington, DC  
J.D. and Certificate Candidate, Comparative and International Law Institute, May 2014  
Activities: Moot Court Associate, International Law Society, Phi Alpha Delta

Example #3

**The Catholic University of America, Columbus School of Law**, Washington, DC  
Juris Doctor expected May 2014  
Securities and Corporate Law Concentration

i. G.P.A. and Class Rank

To some employers, G.P.A. and class rank are important and decisive criteria. If they are not included on a résumé, employers may assume your academic performance was poor. There are a number of schools of thought on this issue, so you need to think carefully about the type of employers that you are pursuing and decide what works best for you. **As a general rule, if you are in the top half of the class or have a G.P.A. above 3.0, you should include that information. To include your G.P.A. and/or rank on your résumé, you are obligated to report it exactly as it is provided to you by the Office of Academic Affairs.** Official ranks and cumulative G.P.A.s are calculated once a year in July. Failure to report this information as provided is a violation of the Honor Code.

**G.P.A.:** Your G.P.A. is calculated to three decimal places. *It will be reported to you in that form, and MUST be printed in that manner on your résumé.* It is never acceptable to “round” your G.P.A. or rank. For example, a G.P.A. of 3.267, may not be rounded to 3.3, it must be written to three decimal points as reported.

**Rank:** Your rank may be expressed as the ratio that is provided to you, i.e., 98/200, or as a percentage or fraction, i.e., Top 50% or Top Half. Again, it is never acceptable to “round” your G.P.A. or rank. Therefore, if you are ranked 40 out of 263, this translates to Top 16%, because the calculation results in 15.20912. This does not equal Top 15% because you are below the top 15 percentile.

## ii. Course Work

Another means of indicating academic performance is to list grades in particular courses. It is recommended that this method be used in two instances: (1) For first-year law students after completing their first semester because they will not yet have an official G.P.A., and (2) To list grades in courses which are **relevant** to a certain type of employer or particular position. In this case, grades should be listed only if they are above 3.0. Therefore, you may need to revise your résumé to apply for different types of positions in order to report various course grades. Another possibility is to list relevant coursework without indicating grades received. Listing individual grades that have no correlation to the employer or position for which you apply may raise the assumption that you did poorly overall, so use this method only when logical to do so. This information may also be indicated in a cover letter.

## iii. Honors and Activities

Activities engaged in and honors received while in college and law school belong in this section of your résumé. You may create subheadings under the heading of EDUCATION to highlight your activities or honors. See sample résumés for guidance.

## 2. **Experience**

This heading is entitled “Experience” as opposed to “Employment” because “Experience” allows you to include volunteer, clinical or school experiences that are relevant to future employers. Your goal is to concisely describe each relevant experience. Use **specific** examples – specifics will distinguish you from other law students. You need not record every task associated with every job, just those you think are most valuable to your targeted employers. It may also be helpful to separate the Experience section into subsections, for instance, “Legal Experience,” “Other Experience,” “Additional Experience,” or “Business Experience” to distinguish between newly-gained legal experience and former employment. If subsections help you get your point across more quickly, use them.

It is imperative to always be aware of who your audience is. What skills and abilities would targeted employers look for in a law clerk, summer associate, experienced attorney, lobbyist, etc.? They are likely to be looking for evidence of good “lawyering” skills, such as research, writing, analytical, communications and management skills, in general. Think about how you can show that you have these skills/qualities. If you have trouble demonstrating “lawyering” skills, demonstrate your ability to get the job done, whatever the field. For example, if as a sales representative, you consistently exceeded your quota and were the recipient of the Salesperson of the Month award twice—say so! If your efforts reduced costs, increased productivity, or generated new clients, quantify your success if possible. Employers may also be looking for someone with exposure to, or knowledge of, a certain industry or type of law. Highlight those skills and experiences that demonstrate your ability to do the job.

Try not to leave chronological gaps in your experience section. You should use present tense verbs for any jobs that you currently hold; past tense applies to all previously held positions. The preferable order of presenting employer information is as follows:

Name of Employer, Location  
Title of Position Held, Dates

## 3. **Optional Headings**

The headings below cover most of the additional information you may want to convey to a potential employer. Carefully judge the relevance of the information you list. Some of the information

in these categories can act as “icebreakers” during an interview. Others are more skill-driven and more relevant to your candidacy for a position. Choose an appropriate heading that encompasses as much of your additional information as possible. Too many headings can be distracting.

i. Interests

Choose activities that show leadership, growth, and initiative because employers value these qualities. Activities that indicate a competitive spirit and teamwork, such as sports, working on a school newspaper, and participating in a debate team, reflect valuable attributes. Only indicate interests or activities in which you are *genuinely interested*; be prepared to discuss these as well as everything else on your résumé. Activities you are involved with during college or law school are to be included in your EDUCATION section (see above).

ii. Community Involvement/Service/Volunteer Work

If you are pursuing public interest/sector employment, it is critical to include your community service activities on your résumé. Public interest and governmental organizations particularly value volunteer activities that demonstrate a commitment to public service.

iii. Language

If you speak a foreign language that should be included under a category entitled “Languages” or “Language Skills.” Qualify your language skills to denote your level of proficiency. Do not exaggerate your skill level. For example: Conversational French; Proficient written Chinese; Familiarity with Japanese; Beginning Spanish, Fluency in French.

iv. Other Skills

Computer skills and unique/special skills may be included under a category entitled “Skills.” Because you are a law student, it is assumed that you are proficient with both on-line research and word processing software and so *it is not necessary to include this information.*

v. Travel

Extensive foreign travel is at times of interest to employers in the international business and international law fields.

vi. Professional Memberships

## **B. Length of Résumé**

You should strive to include all your relevant information on a one-page résumé. **The rule of thumb is one page for every ten years of experience.** If you have had significant, relevant experience you may want to use a second page. Keep in mind that most résumés are reviewed in less than 30 seconds. If you have a second page, include a header with your name and page number.

## **III. REFERENCES**

Most job candidates have the names, addresses and telephone numbers of three or four professional references on a *separate sheet*, as opposed to on the résumé. Make sure **your name, address and telephone number** appear on the sheet, as well. Never include a sentence on your résumé stating “References will be provided upon request.” That is understood and including such a phrase just fills valuable space.

## **IV. FINAL STEPS**

Have someone review your final version before you send it out. Typographical and grammatical errors will almost always lose you the interview.

OCPD recommends that you use quality bond paper for all résumés sent to employers. Use a laser printer to produce the original. Cover letters, thank you notes, reference lists and envelopes should match your résumé. Writing samples may be printed on standard paper.

### **REMEMBER...**

- Proofread and have others proofread
- Use action verbs
- Do not abbreviate, if possible
- Be consistent; for example, if you spell out months on some dates, spell them out throughout
- Do not use personal pronouns
- Do not list marital status, physical characteristics, health status, etc.
- Never include an “Objective” section; this type of information is appropriate content for a cover letter, not a résumé
- Market yourself; only you know what you have done and accomplished
- Spell check your document (but do not rely solely on this method!), before you submit it to OCPD
- Have an OCPD career advisor review your résumé at any and all stages; it is an ever-evolving document
- Do not use a résumé service to prepare or mail your résumé

© 2007 The Catholic University of America. All Rights Reserved.

Updated: October 21, 2011

## **FRANCES SWAIN**

1111 North Capital Street  
Washington, D.C. 20004  
(202) 555-1212  
35swain@cardinalmail.cua.edu

## **EDUCATION**

**The Catholic University of America, Columbus School of Law**, Washington, D.C.  
J.D. and Certificate Candidate, Comparative and International Law Institute, May 2012

- Moot Court Associate
- Founder of National Indian Law Student Association
- Member, Phi Alpha Delta Law Fraternity

**University of Virginia**, Charlottesville, Virginia

B.A., May 2008

Major: Foreign Affairs; Minor: Asian Studies

## **LEGAL EXPERIENCE**

**American Bar Association**

Washington, D.C.

**Center on Children and the Law**

June 2011-Present

*Legal Intern*

Research and edit memorandum on interstate and international jurisdictional issues concerning parental kidnapping. Edit papers prepared for the North American Symposium on International Child Abduction and attended the Symposium.

**Superior Court of the District of Columbia**

Washington, D.C.

**Multi-Door Dispute Resolution Division**

September-November 2010

*Intern*

Assigned mediators to cases. Corresponded with parties concerning missing data and accuracy of information. Observed mediations and mediation training.

**U.S. Department of Transportation**

Washington, D.C.

**General Counsel's Office of International Law**

January-April 2010

*Legal Intern*

Researched and analyzed treaty accession and succession methods to aid in departmental policy decisions regarding newly reorganized East European States. Participated in international aviation treaty negotiations. Analyzed historical treaty denunciation methods.

**Leslie Byrne for Congress Campaign**

Annandale, Virginia

*Issues and Policy Coordinator*

July-November 2009

Coordinated research and advised candidate on issues ranging from health care to defense spending. Compiled and analyzed strengths and weaknesses of the opponent's policies.

## **SAMUEL ATKINS**

3425 LIVINGSTON STREET, WASHINGTON, DC 20066

202/888-9999 ~ 15atkins@cardinalmail.cua.edu

### **EDUCATION**

#### **THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF AMERICA, Washington, DC COLUMBUS SCHOOL OF LAW**

Juris Doctor expected May 2013

Certificate Candidate, Institute for Communications Law Studies

Class Rank: Top Half; G.P.A.: 3.045

Member: Federal Communications Law Student Association

#### **GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY, Washington, DC**

Bachelor of Arts in Government, May 2009

G.P.A.: 3.4/4.0

Honors: Dean's List, 6 Semesters

Selected to participate in Constitutional Law Seminar

### **EXPERIENCE**

#### **NORTEL COMMUNICATIONS, Washington, DC**

*Telecommunications Policy Intern*, Summer 2011

- Analyzed legal, regulatory and technological trends
- Provided briefings on emerging issues to attorneys

#### **THE GEORGTOWNIAN, Washington, DC**

*Editor-in-Chief*, August 2008 through May 2009

- Managed daily operations of student paper with circulation of 10,000
- Spearheaded campaign that increased advertising dollars by 15%
- Supervised a staff of 20
- Elected Editor after serving as Reporter, Sports Editor and Columnist

#### **WASHINGTON NATIONAL AIRPORT, Washington, DC**

*Translator*, Spring 2009

- Processed international passengers with U.S. Customs and Immigration Officials
- Translated for German passengers entering and leaving the United States
- Granted security clearance for U.S. Customs Office

#### **TONY & JOE'S, Washington, DC**

*Waiter*, Summers, 2007 – 2010

- Waited 15-20 tables per night in busy, upscale restaurant
- Trained new wait staff and served as night supervisor one night per week

### **LANGUAGE**

- Fluent in German



# THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF AMERICA

## *Columbus School of Law*

Office of Career and Professional Development

### THE COVER LETTER

#### **What is the purpose of a cover letter?**

- Display your writing ability and attention to detail - it's a writing sample!
- Highlight significant achievements
- Encourage the reader to look at particular information on your résumé
- Answer questions the reader may have based on a quick review of your résumé, e.g., Why are you looking for a job in New York when you went to school and lived elsewhere? Why are you looking to leave your current employer? Why are you interested in this particular organization?
- Interest the reader in talking with you to learn more.

#### **When should I use a cover letter and what should it contain?**

You should always include a cover letter when applying for a position or responding to an advertisement, even when it is not expressly requested. The cover letter should be a concise, well-written business letter that introduces you and requests an interview. Three paragraphs are usually sufficient to state your purpose for writing.

When applying to different types of employers, **develop several cover letters that are tailored** to the various types of organizations; do not write one cover letter to be used for every employer -- it will signal that you have not done your homework about a particular position/employer. At the very least, you should tailor your cover letters to the type of practice or employer; i.e., litigation or government, demonstrating that you are particularly interested in and qualified to work for a certain kind of employer. You should highlight those skills and experiences most relevant to the position sought or employer seeking. For example, if applying to a litigation boutique, you will want to highlight oral advocacy skills and client contact; if applying to government regulatory agency, these same skills are not as relevant and should not be given as much emphasis.

#### **What format should I use?**

Use standard business format in all correspondence with employers. That means indented paragraphs with address, date, and closing on the right half of the paper. Do not use the flush-left business format. If you send your cover letter via email, send it as a PDF if possible to maintain control over format.

**Address Block and Salutation: When addressing any business correspondence, be sure the employer's name is correct.** When writing to a law firm, this includes **appropriate placement of commas and whether the title includes an ampersand (&) or an "and" before the final name.** Your letters should be addressed to a specific person. If you cannot find a name of a recruiter or hiring partner, call the general number to the organization's switchboard to find out the name (and correct spelling) of the person responsible for hiring.

**Use of “Esquire”:** When including “Esquire” or the abbreviated “Esq.” after an individual’s name in the address block, never use Ms. or Mr. as a prefix. Esquire is used alone at the end of a person’s name to indicate that he or she is an attorney.

**Use of colon:** Because this is a business and not personal letter, **always use a colon** in the salutation and **never a comma**. For example:

John P. Smith, Esq.  
Smith, Smith and Jones  
100 Surrey Road  
Arlington, VA 20001

Dear Mr. Smith:

*For an unknown person:*

Dear Sir or Madam:

**Who is an appropriate person to contact within an organization?**

If the firm has a Recruiting Coordinator/Recruiting Manager, you should send your materials to that individual. All large law firms and government organizations likely will have an administrative person to handle applicants. Smaller firms typically will not have recruiting staff and so you will contact a lawyer who is the designated recruitment contact within the firm. To find this information, check the firm website or call the law firm receptionist.

**What kind of paper should I use?**

Use the same paper stock for your cover letters and envelopes that you use for your résumé paper; use 25% to 100% cotton paper in white, off-white, or very light gray.

**Are there any special tactics regarding out-of-town job searches?**

When applying to out-of-town employers, note in your letter that you plan to be in town “later this month,” “the week of October 17,” etc. Most employers will be more likely to interview you if you indicate that you will be traveling to their area. Also note why you are interested in that geographic region (e.g., you are a native, went to college in the area, have family/friends there); employers want to see a demonstrated commitment to their geographic area.

## SAMPLE COVER LETTERS

---

20 E. Maple Drive  
Bethesda, MD 90210  
November 12, 2011

Sam Seaborne, Esq.  
Executive Director  
Environment R Us  
10 M Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 90210

Dear Mr. Seaborne:

As a first-year law student at Catholic University's Columbus School of Law, I am interested in employment opportunities with your office next summer. I heard you speak at last month's Public Interest Panel Presentation and was impressed by your organization's work in the area of environmental conservation.

My volunteer activities as an undergraduate, coupled with my work experience with Trees International, have provided me with a strong background in environmental issues ranging from biodiversity to pollution control. At Trees International, I led the campaign to raise school children's awareness of biodiversity issues in the Amazon. In addition, I researched and evaluated legislative initiatives aimed at preserving diversity among species; thus, I am quite adept at swiftly gathering comprehensive information through legislative research. My volunteer work with the H2O Group further augmented my desire to work in the conservation field. This background in environmental issues, as well as the research and writing skills gained in law school, have provided me with a solid foundation that would allow me to make a valuable contribution to your organization.

Enclosed is my résumé for your review. The opportunity to meet with you to discuss summer employment would be greatly appreciated. I will contact your office during the week of December 5 in hopes of scheduling an interview. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Josiah Bartlett

Enclosure

1234 University Way  
Arlington, VA 22201  
November 18, 2011

Charles Young  
Recruiting Coordinator  
Sampson & Lamp  
1236 Pearson Lane, Suite 210  
Richmond, VA 20000

Dear Mr. Young:

A native of Richmond, I plan to return to the area to practice securities law after graduation in 2014 from Catholic University's Columbus School of Law. I would like to clerk for Sampson & Lamp this summer following the completion of my first year of law school, as it is my understanding that Sampson & Lamp's Securities Group is one of the most reputable in Richmond. My interest in securities and financial institutions practice stems from my involvement as an active attendee at lectures and events sponsored by the Corporation, Finance and Securities Law Section of the District of Columbia Bar Association, of which I am a student member and my work experience in the banking industry.

I feel confident that my academic background and work experiences will allow me to make a positive contribution to your Securities Group. As a summer associate with two years of experience in American Security Bank's management training program, I am able to bring to the firm an insider's knowledge of a traditional lending institution. On the academic side, a rigorous, full year legal research and writing course and an undergraduate degree in English from the University of Richmond have sharpened my research and communication skills. In March, I will strengthen my advocacy skills by participating in the first-year moot court competition. I am looking forward to the challenge of applying my skills, interest and knowledge as a contributing member of a practical legal environment this summer and am confident in my ability to succeed at Sampson & Lamp.

Please find enclosed a copy of my transcript and a résumé for your review. The opportunity to meet with you to discuss your summer associate program would be welcomed. I will be in the Richmond area the week of December 20<sup>th</sup> and will call early next week in hopes of arranging a time to meet during that week.

Sincerely,

Madeline Hampton

Enclosures

1234 University Way  
Arlington, VA 22201  
May 20, 2011

Leo McGarry, Esq.  
General Counsel  
Child and Family Services  
Callahan Foundation  
1236 Pearson Lane, Suite 210  
Washington, D.C. 20000

Dear Mr. McGarry:

Cynthia Miller suggested that I contact you. Over the past semester, Cynthia and I have spoken extensively about her experiences as an intern with Child and Family Services. Because I hold a deep interest in the strengthening of American families, I would like to work for the Callahan Foundation this summer as a part-time clerk.

It is my understanding that your organization seeks a sharp, diligent and compassionate law clerk with excellent research and writing skills who is able to successfully prioritize and complete a variety of tasks under demanding conditions. I am confident that I meet the above criteria. My past work experiences have helped me to develop the skills necessary to perform well in an organization such as yours. For example, my work as an Account Representative at Leo Burnett strengthened my work ethic of persistence and attention to detail. It also taught me how to handle multiple tasks, to work well as a team player, and how to produce a quality product under intensely demanding time constraints. This year, in my lawyering skills class, I became very efficient at researching and writing on a wide variety of issues and was awarded "Best Brief" for my submission in the St. Ives Moot Court Competition. Further, my volunteer hours with the House of Ruth have helped shape my fervent desire to be an active participant in the movement to preserve American families. I have no doubt that I will be able to utilize these skills at the Callahan Foundation and make a valuable contribution to your staff.

I would welcome the opportunity to meet with you to discuss your summer law clerk program. I can be reached during the day at (202) 555-5555. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Josh Lyman

Enclosures

## TOP TEN COVER LETTER MISTAKES

1. **MISSPELLING A FIRM'S NAME** - Check the job listing, NALP Directory or organization's web site for correct placement of commas, etc.
2. **THE "BOTCHED MAIL MERGE"** - When a mail merge matches the wrong firm name with the right address, or vice versa.
3. **SENDING LETTERS TO AN OLD HIRING CONTACT** - Check the NALP Directory or the organization's web site for up-to-date information.
4. **MENTIONING PRACTICE AREAS NOT PRACTICED BY THE ORGANIZATION** - Shows you did not do your research.
5. **COURIER FONT** - CG Times New Roman is the appropriate font for a standard business letter.
6. **USING "MR. /MS." AND "ESQ." SIMULTANEOUSLY IN THE ADDRESS BLOCK** - If you use "Esquire" after the name of the hiring attorney, it is incorrect to use "Mr. /Ms." before the person's name.
7. **ARROGANT LANGUAGE** - By using concrete examples and/or anecdotes to support your assertions about your skills, you create an aura of objectivity.
8. **SENDING COVER LETTERS WITH TYPOS, MISSPELLED WORDS OR GRAMMATICAL ERRORS** – Don't forget - this is a writing sample!
9. **FORGETTING TO SIGN YOUR LETTERS** – Don't.
10. **SUBSTITUTING "Resume" FOR "Résumé."**