

THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF AMERICA COLUMBUS SCHOOL OF LAW

Navigating

Today's Legal Employment Market



[Dear CUA Law Community]



No one would have seen these words coming just a year ago, but they appeared nonetheless in *Legal Times* on March 2, 2009: [A major national law firm] is laying off 190 associates, or about 12 percent of the firm's associate base... the layoffs are the most dramatic cuts so far announced by an AmLaw 100 firm." Sadly, as economic events have unfolded over past months, a growing number of firms, large and small, could be substituted in that sentence.

To state the obvious, the legal profession is not insulated from the negative economic trends that have troubled our nation and the world in 2008–2009. Our graduating students face a daunting employment outlook. No one can say with certainty when this recession will run its course and when the economy will begin to recover.

The eternal nature of economic booms and busts indicates that this too shall pass, although it is difficult to predict which changes will prove temporary and which will not. In the meantime, the Columbus School of Law is committed to doing everything within its power to assist graduating students and alumni gain, or regain, legal employment.

We have resources, tips and stories to share with you. That is the purpose of this special publication, especially for those members of our community who are currently facing uncertainty in the labor market. This booklet is unlike anything we have offered before to our alumni. I hope that you will find something useful in these pages.

A majority of our graduates have chosen to practice in the greater Washington, D.C., area. Our alumni network can be found everywhere, in government, in large and small firms, in trade associations, in NGOs, in consumer groups and in the judiciary. More important, Catholic University law school graduates like to help each other out, as attested to by the number of graduates who return to offer advice, mentoring and guidance.

Put our superb alumni network to work on your behalf. If you've lost touch with former classmates, seek them out again. Talk to people. Build your network. Take advantage of the law school's terrific Office of Career and Professional Development.

Above all, never forget that you have a degree from an excellent law school and access to all the resources that it affords you.

With best wishes,

Dean Veryl V. Miles

“Put our superb alumni network to work on your behalf. Build your network. Take advantage of the law school's terrific Office of Career and Professional Development.”

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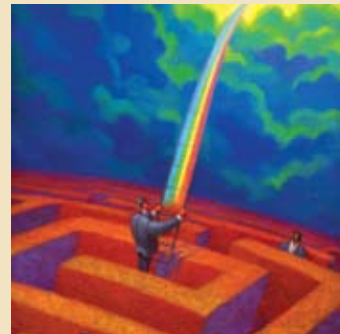
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What Are We Dealing With?

Heading into the unknown: The Class of 2009 faces the most uncertain legal job market in many years. However, careful planning, networking and outreach and the ability to remain flexible about short-term goals may yet prove to be the ticket to success.



“This economic crisis doesn’t represent a cycle. It represents an emotional, social and economic reset.”

— Jeff Immelt, CEO of General Electric, November 2008.

Immelt would know better than most. His company, for decades a reliable barometer of the strength of America’s economy, has lost \$380 billion in value in the past 18 months, the greatest wealth destruction by any stock in history.

Immelt went on to predict that the biggest impact of this “reset” will be greater government involvement in the economy and in the affairs of business, as has already come to pass.

“People who understand that will prosper,” Immelt said. “Those who don’t will be left behind.”

Many legal employers today would be forced to agree with Immelt: The imploded economy amounts to more than just a natural dip. The U.S. legal sector has lost 33,500 jobs in the last 18 months. As of late March 2009, more than 9,000 people, including attorneys and staff, had been laid off by AmLaw 100 firms alone. Demand for legal services overall is at its lowest since 2001.

However, this is not the same thing as saying the legal profession is dying, or that the country needs fewer attorneys. Far from it, in fact. According to experts, firms and practitioners that are nimble and able to adjust their services to reflect changing client needs could enjoy growing business and robust economic health in the months and years ahead.

For perspective’s sake, it is worth keeping in mind that while the deflating wave of layoffs affecting staff, associates and partners in even the biggest and best-known law firms comes as a continuing shock, the legal profession as a whole is still faring better than many others.

So far, the legal industry nationwide is down in profitability over the past year from about 2 to 10 percent. This can be cause for alarm, and even prompt downsizing by some firms, but the statistic hardly foreshadows the demise of an industry.

As firms ponder ways to shrink payroll and contain other costs during this lean economic time, it is important to note that many legal employers consider layoffs a last resort, not a first. Some firms have chosen instead to subsidize public service fellowships, by which young associates take one year at a reduced salary to work for a nonprofit. Others are hiring new graduates, but have decreed one-year deferments before the start of employment. At many firms, salaries are frozen for all and even reduced for beginning associates. In some cases, nonequity partners have been asked to make capital contributions to the firm’s coffers. The best firms have strived to be responsible and compassionate in the face of hard fiscal reality. To the extent possible, they have tried to help employees adjust to the new legal employment landscape. It’s a sensible approach, one that law schools have chosen to emulate.

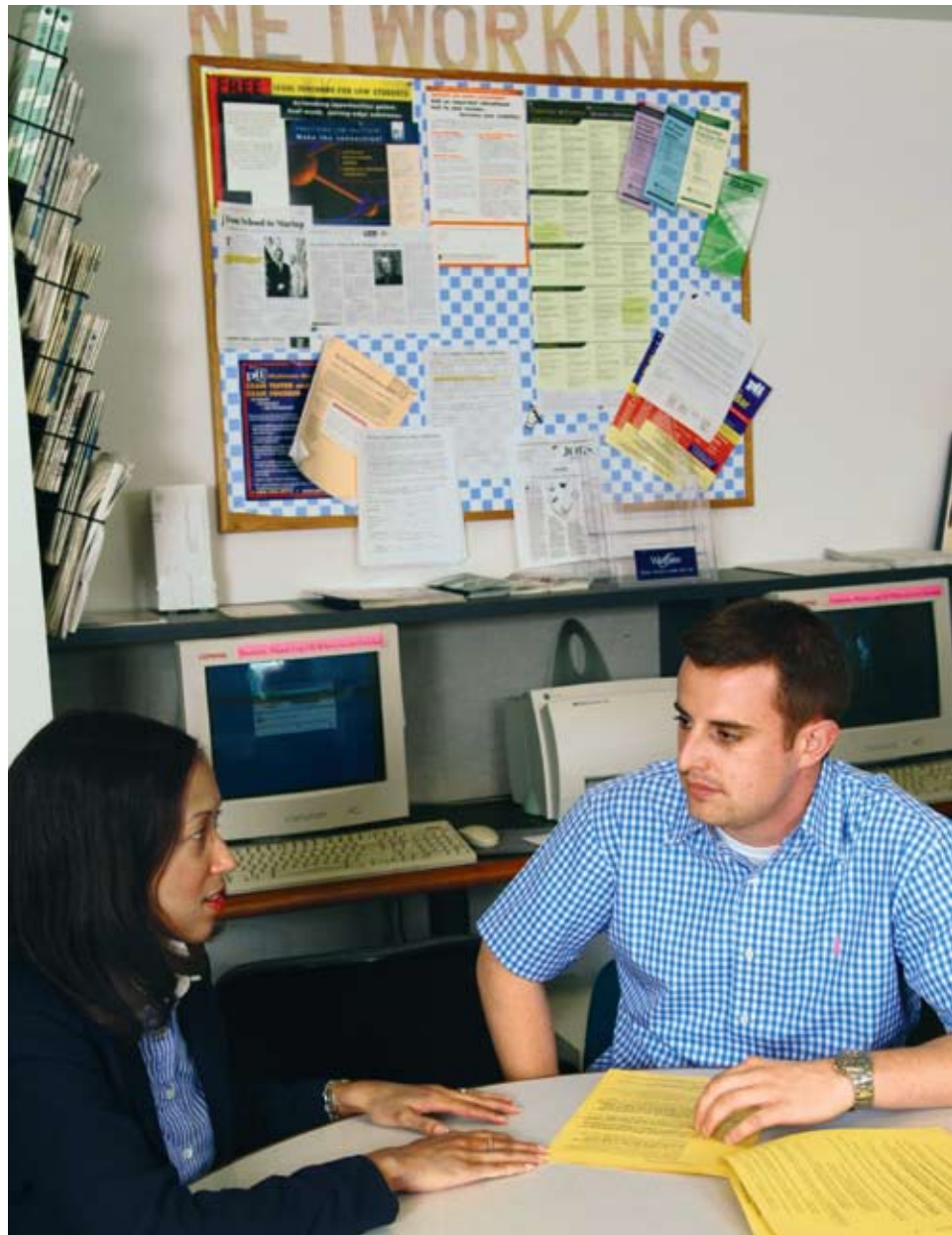
[Office of Career and
Professional Development]

MOVING FORWARD by Getting Back to Basics



*Questions, Assistance
and Resources:*
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Office of Career & Professional Development



Career services staff members go the extra mile to ensure that graduating students leave prepared for success in the search for rewarding legal employment.

“The Office of Career and Professional Development provides individualized career advising (including conducting mock interviews) and access to online job postings. We also have partnered with an outplacement specialist who will be working with recently displaced alumni.”

—Jessica Heywood, Director

In the current legal job market, an increasing number of alumni return to take advantage of OCPD's counseling and resources, assistance that the law school is pleased to extend.



Within the Columbus School of Law, no one has watched the reversal of fortune in the legal hiring market more carefully, and with more concern, than the Office of Career and Professional Development (OCPD). After all, its primary purpose is to prepare graduating students to launch their legal careers equipped with the best job possible, and also to provide legal employment resources for Catholic University law school alumni.

The office has succeeded magnificently in both of these goals. OCPD has helped graduates enjoy a postgraduate employment rate (at nine months) hovering around 94 percent for the past few years. It has steered students and recent alumni into coveted judicial clerkships, attracted top-notch firms to interview CUA law students and helped graduates at every stage of their career take advantage of the robust alumni network in Washington, D.C., and elsewhere.

Faced with the unexpected flip in legal hiring that has challenged the outplacement offices of every law school in the country, OCPD has stepped up its response in creative new ways, including:

- Providing specialized training for OCPD staff
- Increasing outreach to small and mid-size firms

- Assigning each graduating student a particular career adviser
- Creating a listserv for graduating students
- Accommodating a dramatic increase in counseling appointments for alumni

The steps above are in addition to its normal complement of employment preparation programs, such as mock interviews, legal job fairs and instruction in how to secure judicial clerkships. Still, Director Jessica Heywood realizes that the current economy calls for something more.

"In these times, it's more important than ever for graduating students, and all alumni, to remain aware of two things," said Heywood. "The first is to avoid doing anything that makes a person less attractive to employers in this tight and competitive market. The second is to understand and act upon the critical concept of networking."

In short order, her office organized a series of four impressive programs that emphasized these lessons to attending students and alumni. Spaced throughout the 2008–2009 academic year, the special-focus programming has been marked with equal doses of realism, practicality, humor and hope.

1 Rules of Engagement

"In every situation, your client is always, always, always the most important person in the room."

Job Fair Tips

- No limp handshakes.
- Always attend networking events with a specific goal in mind.
- Punctuality matters. A little late is okay, more than 20 minutes is not.
- Wear nametags on the right side of your chest, where they are easiest to read.
- To help remember someone's name, try to use it in a natural way three times during a conversation.

The first program, offered on Jan. 13, 2009, was based on the recognition that competence in the social arts is not necessarily a part of a sound legal education, but perhaps it ought to be. Students were asked by the guest lecturer to imagine themselves in this situation:

You scan the room at a networking reception, finally spotting the VIP you were hoping all along to meet. Sure enough, you're introduced moments later and as you extend your hand to shake, you realize that it's slick with grease from the scrumptious chicken fingers at the buffet table.

That's why one never goes to a reception hungry, advised Mary Crane. The nationally famous business etiquette adviser said that such common scenarios are easy to avoid with a little advance thinking.

Crane spoke to students about "The Rules of Engagement: Recession-Proofing Your Career." She reminded the future attorneys that a full set of legal skills absolutely includes such talents as effectively working a crowded room, managing a business lunch and learning how to build a personal network.



Mary Crane said every job seeker must realize social skills can count as much as a great work history when landing that next position.

During an energetic and creative presentation, Crane walked the audience through common social conundrums, such as deciding who should be introduced to whom when two people meet for the first time.

A graduate of George Washington Law School, Crane later worked at the White House as an assistant chef. Today, she runs Mary Crane & Associates, traveling throughout North America to deliver high-impact, high-energy programs to Fortune 500 companies and more than 50 percent of the AmLaw100.

Most of all, said, Crane, "In every situation, your client is always, always, always the most important person in the room."

2 Law Firm Etiquette



Experienced recruiters reminded job seekers that the easiest mistakes to avoid, such as typos on résumés, are also the most common they see.

A second program, offered by OCPD on Jan. 26, carried the theme a bit further. Students were again reminded that what may seem like minor points sometimes matter the most and can be the difference between receiving an offer or not.

Columbus School of Law alumnus Philip Feigen, 1993, was one of the

two presenters of "What They Didn't Teach You in Kindergarten About Law Firm Etiquette," a tutorial with a bottom line message: You cannot control the economy, but you can control how you are perceived by potential employers.

Now the hiring partner at Patton Boggs, Feigen covered such basics as not submitting résumés to recruiters that contain spelling or typographical errors. Despite the belief held by most job seekers that they would never make such an amateurish mistake, Feigen said his hiring committee sees

“There are so many people looking for jobs. **We** don’t have a lot of opportunity to make missteps [in hiring for Patton Boggs], so **you** don’t have a lot of opportunity to make missteps.”

a disturbing number of résumés riddled with careless goofs.

“There are so many people looking for jobs. We don’t have a lot of opportunity to make missteps [in hiring for Patton Boggs], so you don’t have a lot of opportunity to make missteps,” cautioned Feigen.

Kara Reidy, Patton Boggs’ recruitment coordinator and discussion co-presenter, was even more blunt, saying that no matter what a candidate’s qualifications, any résumé with a typo or spelling error is guaranteed an express one-way trip to the wastebasket.

Job Seeker Tips

Check for any CUA Law alumni connections you can work in your target firms.

Always find out the latest news about the firm you’re speaking with. Spend time on its Web site prior to the interview.

Time gaps on résumés are okay but be prepared to explain them. You are likely to be asked about that year spent back-packing in Europe.

Do not inflate your achievements, degrees or titles. You want to make yourself look great, but little white lies are never acceptable.

3 Searching for a Legal Job in a Tight Market



Educational Tips

Land a spot on the law review.
Get an advanced degree in tax law.
Specializations in energy and utilities law, anti-trust; ERISA (pension fund law) and construction law are currently in hot demand.

Begin a career with the federal government as good training for a move to private practice later.

Imagine being interviewed for a law firm partnership and still being asked about your law school grades all those years ago! It happens. Grades follow you for longer than you think, said intellectual property attorney Paul Higgins, 1995. He was among four alumni to coach students on Jan. 29 about

“Searching for a Legal Job in a Tight Market,” an open discussion moderated by law school Board of Visitors member Nancy Palermo, 1997. The

CUA Law alumni urged students to consider carefully how the choices they make while in law school will impact their later careers.

panelists, all of whom earned their law degrees from CUA within the past dozen years, offered many helpful suggestions based on their own experience about the smartest moves a law student can make. Some were obvious—land a spot on the law review if you can; it’s a career-long boost—but other tips were less intuitive. For example, not all LL.M. degrees are equally marketable, according to Anu Anand, 2002. An advanced degree in tax law, however, is a magnet for employers, she believes. Anand, director at Mestel and Company, also counseled that specialized expertise in energy and utilities law, anti-trust; ERISA (pension fund law) and construction law are currently in hot demand.

For her part, Palermo spoke highly of beginning a career with the federal government as good training for a move to private practice later.

“That experience could lead you, a few years later, into that dream position you were always hoping for in law school,” she said.

There is no question that academic performance, affiliations choices and other decisions that face every law student impact their immediate postgraduate careers and beyond. Higgins

reminded the audience what while strategy is one part of the equation, the other is outlook.

"Stay positive. It's a huge bonus. You may have to take less than you dream of right now. But the sky is still the limit."

"Stay positive. It's a huge bonus. You may have to take less than you dream of right now. But the sky is still the limit."

4 Networking is the Key to Success

It's advice that law students cannot hear often enough: network, network and network. The message was sounded again on Feb. 3 by six CUA law alumni who returned to discuss careers in international law with current students.

The panelists represented a broad array of professional backgrounds, specialties and experiences. Many were fluent in at least one other language. Others had lived overseas. Still others were policy stars, such as Karen A. Tramontano, 1982, who played an influential role in some of the most important issues of our time when she served as deputy chief of staff to President Clinton from 1997 to 2001.

Despite their impressive qualifications for the practice of international law, only one among the group had ever landed a desirable position through a legal jobs posting. The others said that networking was the key to their successful careers. Put yourself in situations where you can meet other legal professionals, they urged, and make a point of staying in touch with the appropriate people.

Networking Tips

Networking is the key to a successful career. Put yourself in situations where you can meet other legal professionals. Make a point of staying in touch with the appropriate people.

The panelists included:

Admir Serifovic, 2002, founder and managing attorney of The Serifovic Law Firm, P.C.

Hon. Jonathan B. Kramer, 1994, administrative law judge, Board of Veterans' Appeals.

Leslie E. Velez, 2002, director for access to justice/legal programs, Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service.

Cortney O'Toole Morgan, 2001, associate in Barnes/Richardson's Washington, D.C., office.

Casey Richter, 2006, associate in Neville Peterson's Washington, D.C., office.

By organizing opportunities for real-world employment strategies like these, which are also open to alumni, the Office of Career and Professional Development is trying to provide every possible tool to assist students and alumni in mounting an effective, strategic and successful job search. It has also reached out to those who may have employment to offer, or know someone who does.

OCPD has asked the nearly 50 men and

women who constitute the Columbus School of Law's Board of Visitors, an advisory group made up of highly successful alumni, to each accept a copy of a "résumé book," which contains the CVs of those members of the Class of 2008 who are still searching for legal employment. As a group, the BOV members are well placed to suggest names for openings, provide mentoring advice, and to otherwise assist their younger classmates.

Selected OCPD Career Programs 2008–2009

FALL SEMESTER 2008

- Boston Lawyers Group Job Fair
- How to Interview in a DA's Office
- Presidential Management Fellows
- New Hampshire Legal Job Fair
- Congressional Research Service
- Patent Law Career Program
- Judicial Clerkships

SPRING SEMESTER 2009

- The Rules of Engagement: Recession Proofing Your Career
- Employment Opportunities at the DOJ
- What They Didn't Teach You in Kindergarten about Law Firm Etiquette
- Searching for a Legal Position in a Tight Job Market
- International Law Career Panel
- Environmental Law Career Program
- Alternative Careers in Law
- Intellectual Property Law
- Diversity in Law Firms
- Incorporating Pro Bono Work into the Life of a Corporate Attorney
- Securities Law Career Panel
- CIA Informational Session
- Navigating the Path of the Summer Associate
- How to Make the Most Out of Your Internship and Networking Opportunities

Institutional Support



“It’s very important for us now to do what alumni did for us when we were students,” said moderator Ron Whitworth, 2006. “In times like these, it’s very important to be aware of your resources, and to take advantage of them. It’s one of the greatest assets that the school offers you.”

Catholic University’s law school is blessed with a large, influential and supportive alumni network. That is especially true in the greater Washington, D.C., region, where so many graduates have established their lives and careers.

Within the Columbus School of Law, the institutes and special programs have created enviably effective alumni support systems of their own. In particular, the communications law and securities law programs have built cohesive, connected networks of practitioners who support each other’s careers to an unusual degree.

In February, for example, six CUA law alumni returned for an afternoon to discuss “Getting Your Signal Through: Communication Law Job Hunting in a Tough Economy.” The event, billed by Professor David Irwin, director of the Institute for Communications Law Studies, as “probably the most important job discussion we’ve ever had,” was intended to help current students appreciate the resources available to them.

“It’s very important for us now to do what alumni did for us when we were students,” said moderator Ron Whitworth, 2006. “In times like these, it’s very important to be aware of your resources, and to take advantage of them. It’s one of the greatest assets that the school offers you.”

Jim Frazier Collection/images.com

The panelists were happy to recount their own stories of what it took to land the positions they sought.

Danielle Benoit, 2007

Womble Carlyle, Washington, D.C.



Benoit described her career path so far as “nontraditional.” She interned at Comcast during her final year of law school, where she was often sent to attend industry events. She met and spoke with many people, and was ready when one person she chatted up said they were looking for a candidate in the telecomm practice. “I said, ‘I’ve got two years of experience in telecomm, why don’t you hire me?’ The moral of my story is, be aggressive, follow up and don’t sell yourself short.” Benoit also suggests attending industry functions solo because it forces a person to learn to network. “If you can show you have any kind of social skill, on top of intelligence, it sets you apart from everyone else.”

Patrick Donovan, 2004

FCC, Washington, D.C.

Now with the FCC, Donovan took advantage of mutual personal contacts to meet with the founder of Nextel (now Sprint) as he neared the end of law school. The two talked over coffee for more than an hour one afternoon, and Donovan wound up receiving his contact’s recommendation for a specific position within the company. “As far as advice on how to get a job right now, networking is without a doubt the best option,” he advised. Donovan assured students that the reputation of the CUA’s Institute for Communications Law Studies is “fantastic” and urged them to regularly attend the brown bag lunches hosted by the Federal Communications Bar Association.

Angela Kronenberg, 1995

FCC, Washington, D.C.

Kronenberg already had extensive internship experience on Capitol Hill and at the FCC by the time Wilkie Farr offered her a summer associate position. They clearly liked her, and the feeling was mutual, which led to the first postgraduate job of her career. Although her own path has so far been



fairly traditional, Kronenberg says, “Talk to as many people as you can and try to think outside of the box.” Exhibit A: Her own husband, who eschewed private firm practice and is instead a happily employed attorney with the Montgomery County, Maryland, Department of Parks and Planning.

Evan Morris, 2008

Harris Corporation, Washington, D.C.



By the end of law school, Morris had little interest in working for a law firm and knew he was attracted to regulatory work. He spotted an intriguing position with the Harris Corporation in an industry newsletter. Realizing how few jobs were out there, Morris utilized every avenue that he could to get his foot in the door. “A classmate put me in touch with the former attorney for Harris Corporation,” Morris told the audience. “We talked and he called them on my behalf. After I worked there my first week, my supervisor pulled me aside and said ‘I want to really commend you on your lobbying effort. That’s really what helped you get this job.’”

Most stories about successful employment strategies share common characteristics. They include perseverance, creativity and the willingness to reach out to others for information, mentoring and job leads.

As an alumnus or current student of Catholic University’s law school, you are fortunate to be part of a network that is wonderfully placed to assist you if necessary. Take advantage of it. Chances are you won’t be disappointed.

Bear in mind the words of Ron Whitworth, 2006, as he summed up for the audience the role that the law school’s alumni network can play.

“We have been overwhelmed with the support of alumni and the communications law institute network over the years. It continues from the time you join the institute until the end of your careers. Every step of the way, there will always be people from the institute and from CUA law to help you out. It’s a family; it’s a very tight network.”



THREE ORACLES SPEAK

A Legal Times roundtable Q-and-A
with managing partners from
three of Washington's largest law firms.

Life isn't always fair, as economic recessions remind us. One can work hard, make smart decisions and be a model employee, yet still confront an unsolicited employment search. If your position or even practice area has been eliminated, or you are starting to plan for such a development, you may be wondering which areas of the law show promise of flourishing through the bad times? Which practice areas are—as much as anything can ever be—recession proof?

Some very informed perspectives on that question were provided by *Legal Times*, one of the most widely read industry publications both in Washington and across the country. On Feb. 23, 2009, it published “Managing Through the Downturn,” an editor’s roundtable Q-and-A with managing partners from three of Washington’s largest law firms, including:

Frank “Rusty” Conner III, DLA Piper, co-managing partner of the Washington office and a member of the firm’s executive and policy committees.

Mark Flanagan, McKenna Long & Aldridge, a managing partner since 2004.

Grace Speights, Morgan, Lewis & Bockius, managing partner in Washington since 2008 and a partner in the firm’s labor and employment practice.

Are there any opportunities for growth in this economic climate?

Flanagan: I think work in litigation will be going up, bankruptcy will be going up, work on behalf of distressed companies will be going up. Washington-based firms which have a hallmark in the combination of regulatory and administrative law actions, they’re going to be major beneficiaries.

Speights: To the extent that firms have broad practices and are willing to enter into alternative fee arrangements, things of that nature, there can be a real opportunity for that type of firm.

Conner: If you’re a large firm with scale, diversity of practice, diversity of geography,

and you have a very knit-together culture and that you’re solid from a balance sheet perspective, you will see remarkable opportunities to attract talent and to attract relationships with clients.

How are you controlling costs?

Flanagan: We completely reset our associate compensation system. It’s now merit-based. There are four levels based upon core competencies and whether you’ve achieved them or not. What it means for clients is that the billing rate will not jump just because you’re another year out of law school. It may seem like a small point, but you’re able to say to your clients, yes, sometimes rates are going up, but we are trying better to make sure that the person that’s associated it with deserves that rate.

“IF YOU’RE A LARGE FIRM WITH SCALE, DIVERSITY OF PRACTICE, DIVERSITY OF GEOGRAPHY, AND YOU HAVE A VERY KNIT-TOGETHER CULTURE AND THAT YOU’RE SOLID FROM A BALANCE SHEET PERSPECTIVE, YOU WILL SEE REMARKABLE OPPORTUNITIES TO ATTRACT TALENT AND TO ATTRACT RELATIONSHIPS WITH CLIENTS.”

—Frank “Rusty” Conner

Speights: In terms of our equity partners, we reduced our draw schedule. So our equity partners are taking home less money every month on their draw. In terms of our nonequity partners, we've frozen those salaries, so they're going to make the same this year as they made last year, and we've done that with our associates. We wanted them to understand that we're all in this together.

Does the presence of the federal government provide special opportunities for Washington-area lawyers in this economy?

Conner: We will see a lot of activity relating to health care reform. Certainly there's going to be a great deal of investment in the energy sector, particularly on the renewable side. Lawyers in those areas are going to be in high demand, both by their clients and by other law firms. I also believe that the SEC enforcement, white-collar and antitrust areas are going to be in a great deal more demand than they have been.

Speights: Firms that have government relations practices will be busy, although there are all kinds of limitations that are being imposed. We are looking to grow in those areas where we really believe there will be a lot of growth. Health care, FDA, we've always had that practice, but there's room to grow. Labor employment has always been a staple, and given the Ledbetter Act, we'll be even busier than we normally have been.

Flanagan: Washington is going to be more of a player from a regulatory perspective. That is going to churn additional work to Washington, whether it's the regulatory or the investigations or some of the other areas. I think that's all going to bode well for Washington-based firms.

What types of laterals and what kind of practices are you looking at?

Conner: We've brought on a couple of people already this year with World Trade Organization experience. We certainly are very interested in more SEC enforcement, antitrust and white-collar capability.

Speights: It's just amazing the number of lateral résumés that we are seeing. Most of it is because people are concerned about the platforms that they are on and they want to try and go to another platform. We're always looking for lateral partners as well as folks coming out of the government. The Department of Labor, the Federal Trade Commission, those types of agencies, we've been successful in attracting some people.

Your crystal ball says...?

Speights: I think the Washington practice is going to be more active and busier than it has been over the last eight years. There hasn't been a lot of environmental enforcement over the last eight years, that's going to change. To the extent people have environmental practices or they're looking to beef up their environmental practice, that's going to be a big area. We know that health care is always an issue, but I really think that in this administration we're going to see that.

Conner: Where the industry will go is driven by what our clients want. Right now they want efficiency and consistency of delivery of legal services across whatever their needs may be. I think that will ultimately drive the legal profession to look very much like some of the other professional service sectors, and that means large-scale global law firms where you can provide the breadth of services that the client needs wherever they're doing business. That doesn't mean all law firms are going to look like that. I think there are plenty of places and plenty of opportunities for boutiques.

A Parting Thought

Although some law firms have unfortunately chosen a reduction in force as a quick solution to financial stress, many of them may live to regret the action later when business picks up again but the talent is gone. Fortunately, other firms have elected to take the longer view. Their philosophy is to consider the fortunes of the firm and its employees to be one and the same.

“ONE APPROACH THAT WE WERE NOT IN FAVOR OF, AND THAT WE HAVE NOT EMBRACED, IS REDUCTION IN FORCE. WHEN THE BUSINESS STARTS TO COME BACK, YOU HAVE TO BE ABLE TO SERVICE YOUR CLIENTS WELL. YOU HAVE TO HAVE YOUR LAWYERS WITH YOU.”

— Mark Flanagan

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Not Everyone is Downsizing

Since the invention of the printing press, it's been a fact of life: bad news gets the most attention. Yet, as already discussed, the current picture in legal hiring is a mixed one. There are bumps and blights to be sure, but some bright spots as well.

One employer that has done exceptionally well by CUA law graduates over the years is, of course, the federal government. That is truer than ever now. Van Stewart, 2003, is counsel at the Board of Veterans Appeals. In February, he e-mailed Dean Miles to ask her to remind the CUA law community that his agency is still looking for a few good men and women.

"The Board of Veterans' Appeals, where I work, is still hiring and will continue to accept applications, interview and hire for the foreseeable future. The hiring here continues to be robust."

Stewart credits two ongoing wars and an aging veteran population for a workload of about 44,000 appeals handled last year alone. There are at least a dozen CUA law graduates working at the board, and Stewart would be happy to help more join its work force.

And if a paycheck from Uncle Sam lacks the glamour of one from a high-priced K Street firm, Stewart has a down-to-earth perspective about it.

"We are very comforted by the fact that we're not getting laid off," he said.

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Some Final Tips

Attorney search consultants and law school employment specialists have a vested interest in assisting lawyers at every stage of their career locate and secure professionally satisfying employment. They share a broad consensus about what is required for success. Among their insights:



- ✓ Do not network exclusively online. There are generational differences among practicing attorneys. Often a handwritten letter or a phone call will be more successful than electronic communication.
- ✓ Maintaining an updated LinkedIn.com account and/or Facebook account keeps you in touch with friends and classmates who may know of an opportunity or even be in a position to hire.
- ✓ If you are not being laid off, say so in your cover letter. By stating clearly that you are not being asked to leave, some employers will view this more favorably.
- ✓ Your résumé and other written materials must be pristine. To stand out at the interview you must prepare beforehand. Research the law firm or organization; know its signature clients and landmark cases or their core business lines. Be ready to state specifically why you want this job. Many interviewees forget to do this, yet it is one sure way to distinguish oneself.
- ✓ If you have been laid off for economic reasons, try to obtain any copies of prior performance reviews and other evidence of your success at the firm, such as a track record of merit-based bonuses or a history of high billable hours.
- ✓ A law school career services office should be at least one tool in your tool chest. There may be new resources for job hunting with which you may not be familiar.

Stop by

the Office of Career and Professional Development



Our students – current and former – are our legacy to the future.

**The Columbus School of Law's
Office of Career and
Professional Development
Director: Jessica Heywood,
202-319-5132
<http://law.cua.edu/career/>**

In the current legal employment market, the law school is committed to doing all it can to help everyone find and retain fulfilling employment. To that end, we have compiled the Class of 2009 Résumé Book, a collection of student CVs. We encourage all alumni to become familiar with this resource. Perhaps you know of an opening that is a good fit for one of our newest graduates. Please contact Jessica Heywood if you would like more information.



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