

OCS Weekly Bulletin

March 11, 2008

Upcoming OCS Programs, Firm Events & Career-Related Articles

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About OCS

The Office of Career Services (OCS) serves as a bridge between students, alumni and employers. The staff helps students and alumni to shape and realize their career goals. We also provide counseling, workshops and resources on judicial clerkships, international opportunities and non-law alternatives.

OCS is open Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. The office is located on the first floor in Room 143 in the Law School's office building on Nathan Abbott Way.

Upcoming OCS Programs

OCS Alternative Careers Series: Business Development

NOTE-- This program has been moved to **Wednesday, March 12 at 12:45pm in Room 79B**

Join OCS for lunch with Alex Benn, SLS '95, now Sr. Director, Corporate Development at eBay, Inc. Learn about his path from school to firm to a company where he handles corporate development. Open to 1Ls, 2Ls and 3Ls. Space is limited, so please RSVP through Symplicity under the "Events" heading (<https://law-stanford-csm.symplicity.com/students>).

International Speaker Series Featuring Gary Born

Wednesday, March 12 at 12:45pm in Room 283

Gary Born is chair of the International Arbitration Practice at Wilmer Hale. He is one of the world's preeminent authorities on international commercial arbitration and international litigation. There are a few spaces left- email Laura Flores at lflores@law.stanford.edu if you would like to attend.

International Speaker Series Featuring Sergio Puig

Monday, March 17 at 12:45pm in Room 283

Sergio serves as counsel with the World Bank Group in DC, focusing on Latin America. He will also be holding individual appointments. Please sign up with Laura Flores at lflores@law.stanford.edu.

Upcoming Firm Events

Simpson Thacher 1L Reception- Tuesday, March 18 at 6:30pm

Stanford 1Ls are cordially invited to join attorneys from the Palo Alto office of Simpson Thacher & Bartlett LLP for cocktails and hors d'oeuvres at:

Simpson Thacher & Bartlett LLP
2550 Hanover Street, Palo Alto, CA 94304

RSVP to Lauren Cohen at (650) 251-5129 or lcohen@stblaw.com

Career-Related Articles

• **Study: Work Schedule Flexibility Key to Retaining Women Lawyers**.....Page 2

A study conducted by the Georgia Association for Women Lawyers concluded that flexible work arrangements are crucial to recruiting and retaining women lawyers and mitigating financial risk for employees. More than 60 percent of female attorneys leaving law firms cited the desire for a different schedule or professional dissatisfaction as their reason.

• **Law Firms Opening Up to the Idea of Attorney Re-Entry**.....Pages 3-4

While most law firms offer some form of maternity leave, few guarantee jobs for more than one year. Women who want to take off more than a year often sacrifice whatever job security they have to do so. And when they want to return, they face a host of formidable challenges, such as being intimidated by technological advances and being older than their peers. However, consultants and attorneys have advice for women looking to re-enter the legal world, like keeping in touch with your previous firm.

• **New Report of Fall 2007 Law Student Recruiting Now Available**..... Page 4

A new research report — *Perspectives on Fall 2007 Law Student Recruiting* — indicates that entry-level recruiting this past fall remained strong despite some overall weakening of the national and legal economies. Though the median class size remained unchanged from last year, the average summer program size in 2007 reached a level not seen since the late 1990s, the result of a few summer programs of more than 100. At the same time, offer rates from summer programs reached an all-time high.

Career-Related Articles

Study: Work Schedule Flexibility Key to Retaining Women Lawyers

The National Law Journal
Julie Kay / Staff reporter
March 5, 2008

A study conducted by the Georgia Association for Women Lawyers concluded that flexible work arrangements are crucial to recruiting and retaining women lawyers and mitigating financial risk for employees.

In the survey of 84 Georgia law firms, more than 60 percent of female attorneys leaving law firms cited the desire for a different schedule or professional dissatisfaction as their reason, according to the group.

The survey was released Tuesday and is available online (http://gawl.af-finiscape.com/associations/8500/files/ItsAboutTimeII_final.pdf)

GAWL's survey results show that lawyers' attitudes about part-time and flexible work schedules have progressed. Over 93 percent of all respondents look favorably on employers that allow part-time or flexible work arrangements while 86 percent

of women attorneys are interested in part time or flexible work arrangements.

Still, while perceptions are shifting as attrition increases, employers have been slow to adapt, the survey found. Both men and women lawyers believe working part-time or on a flexible schedule is career limiting; this dichotomy may be explained by firms' underwhelming strides to implement policies supporting flexible work arrangements. More than half of the firms surveyed have never employed a part-time attorney. Greater than 60% of law firms have no formal written part-time policy.

Other results of the survey: Due to accelerating attrition rates among women lawyers, law firms currently face challenges associated with employee diversity, increasing firm costs and client relationships. Women represent nearly one-half of U.S. law school graduates, but only 17% of partners in law firms. Such loss of

female associates may interrupt client-firm relationships, negatively impact fees, and increase firm operating expenses.

A law firm will spend an estimated \$280,000 to \$500,000 to replace a second year associate. While the costs alone are staggering, maintaining a diverse workforce is important for law firms wishing to promote themselves and benefit from a heterogeneous work environment. These factors highlight the business imperative for employers to implement retention policies and procedures.

Career-Related Articles

Law Firms Opening Up to the Idea of Attorney Re-Entry

Wendy Davis

New York Law Journal

Shari Solomon was going on her fourth year as an associate in the commercial real estate department of Wolf, Block, Schorr and Solis-Cohen in 1995, when she had her third child. While she was already accustomed to juggling life as a mother and a lawyer, her newborn required extra medical attention -- so much so that she couldn't imagine working again any time soon.

But 10 years later, with all of her children in good health, Solomon was ready to return. The problem was, she didn't know if the law firm world was ready to take her back.

"I did not presume that I would be returning to my practice after that many years out," she says. "It's not that I didn't consider it. But I couldn't imagine that after that many years out, it would be an option."

She was wrong about that. When she started searching for a job, Solomon invited a WolfBlock partner she had remained friendly with to lunch. The meeting resulted in an offer to take up where she had left off a decade before, as an associate in the Philadelphia office of the firm.

But it's not as easy for everyone to come back as it was for Solomon.

While most law firms offer some form of maternity leave, it's the rare firm that guarantees jobs for more than one year. The New York City Bar Association's Committee on Women in the Profession recently surveyed 43 legal employers on parental leave and found that almost all grant some form of maternity leave, with the majority of surveyed law firms providing 12 weeks' paid leave. Many firms also offered additional unpaid time off.

By and large, however, women who want to take off more than one year often sacrifice whatever job security they have to do so. When they want to return, they face a host of formidable challenges, say industry observers.

The most significant is simply convincing a law firm to hire them even though they veered off the conventional linear law firm up-or-out path. In addition, many who left before the technological revolution worry about their computer skills. Further, re-entering lawyers also

must come to grips with psycho-social factors, most significantly the fact that they're older than their fellow associates while their contemporaries are their bosses.

The ranks of women seeking to re-enter the practice of law have grown large enough that law schools and other groups are now addressing the issue. Pace Law School and University of California, Hastings College of the Law, have started programs aimed at helping attorneys return to practice after lengthy absences. Additionally, the New York City Bar recently kicked off a re-entry initiative aimed at assisting people who left the profession and are considering returning.

For firms looking to increase the ranks of women partners, reaching out to former employees is seen as one way of potentially recruiting experienced female lawyers. Some law firms have been mulling programs aimed at connecting with ex-employees since at least 2005, when a Harvard Business Review article about women in the workplace suggested that companies should maintain ties with off-ramped employees through alumni programs.

Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom recently started a program, Sidebar, which allows attorneys to temporarily leave the firm for three years. During that time, they're still welcome at continuing legal education classes and other firm-sponsored events on the premises.

MAKING YOUR MOVE

When returning to a former firm isn't an option, convincing a new firm to hire you poses significant challenges, says Deborah Epstein Henry, founder and president of the consultancy Flex-Time Lawyers. One key problem is that law firms tend to be "so linear and so traditional and so conventional" that they don't know how to view people who don't fit neatly into a lockstep classification based on year of law school graduation, Henry says.

She advises women in this group to figure out where they see themselves and then make that clear in their cover letters. "The first sentence of the letter should say, 'I'm interested in seeking a position

as a midlevel associate in your labor and employment group,'" she counsels.

Henry also tells women looking to re-enter to account for time spent out of the work force on their résumés, even if it's with a description like "primary caretaker."

Linda Marks, director of training and consulting at the Center for WorkLife Law at Hastings, adds that women who have served as presidents of various nonprofits or have done fundraising for their children's schools should include that information in their résumés.

Marks also tells women to reach out to their contacts and tell as many as possible what they're looking for. "People want to help other people," Marks says. "People love to feel that they made a difference in somebody's lives."

She also advises women who want to work at specific law firms to propose working as an independent contractor on a short-term basis. "Once they get to know you, they feel comfortable hiring you," she says.

On top of the hurdles of finding a job, many people who've been out of the working world for a while lack confidence in their technological skills, says Brande Stellings, who heads the New York City Bar's Committee on Women in the Profession.

Solomon, for one, says that was the case in her situation. While she wasn't anxious about the substantive law, she worried about adapting to the new technology now commonplace. "Technology had just changed the nature of law practice so dramatically, in a way I was unfamiliar with, and changed the nature of my practice specifically, because so much more is done remotely," she says.

Another challenge for Solomon was that her 10-year leave of absence made her feel like she had a lot to accomplish in a short period of time if she wanted to get ahead.

"I'm older. I want to get to a certain place. I don't want to leave it to chance," she says. So Solomon made a point of filling gaps in her experience by approaching a partner with a request to handle specific types of cases. For instance, while she had

Career-Related Articles (cont.)

Law Firms Opening Up to the Idea of Attorney Re-Entry

(continued from page 3)

been involved in many acquisitions and sales, she hadn't done legal work for leases, so she made it a priority to pick up some of those cases.

"It wasn't something I negotiated before I came back, but was a conversation I had almost as soon as I came back," she says.

STAYING IN TOUCH

Whether they're gone for months or years, women lawyers say that maintaining contact with colleagues is crucial.

"Even if it's just on an informal basis, you need to keep in touch with people," says Janice Mac Avoy, who took off five months from her position as a partner in the litigation department of Fried, Frank, Harris, Shriver & Jacobson after her second child was born in 2001. "They don't mean to, but they could forget about you."

My Chi To, who was elected to the partnership at Debevoise & Plimpton while on maternity leave three years ago, kept in close contact with friends from the office during her six-month absence. "I was certainly in touch with some of my

colleagues who are also friends, probably every week."

She also attended some firm events, including a dinner for all women partners and a party for clients. And even while focused on new baby, she kept up on at least some correspondence. "Every week, my secretary sent me all of my mail at home."

Wendy Davis is a freelance writer who reports on the legal profession.

New Report of Fall 2007 Law Student Recruiting Now Available

A new research report — Perspectives on Fall 2007 Law Student Recruiting — indicates that entry-level recruiting this past fall remained strong despite some overall weakening of the national and legal economies. Though the median class size remained unchanged from last year, the average summer program size in 2007 reached a level not seen since the late 1990s, the result of a few summer programs of more than 100. At the same time, offer rates from summer programs reached an all-time high. Perhaps revealing some signs of the weakening economy, however,

the acceptance rate on those offers jumped for the first time in four years. The average number of offers made by employers to 2Ls for summer positions also rose to a level not seen since before 2001. Here too the median remained unchanged, suggesting that a handful of offices and firms recruiting for very large classes are driving the average number up. Consistent with summer program offer acceptance rates, 2L offers were also accepted at a slightly higher rate in 2007. All indications are that law firms continue to hire carefully and are prepared to constrict the level of entry-

level recruiting should current economic weaknesses persist into 2008 and beyond.

The report is available as a PDF on NALP's web site under Research & Directories > Research > Recruitment & Hiring or http://www.nalp.org/assets/1055_perspectivesonfall07.pdf.

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Susan advises students and alumni on a wide range of issues involving career planning and job searches. She also works closely with employers to assist them in utilizing OCS resources to maximize the recruitment of SLS students and alumni.

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Elizabeth is responsible for all aspects of the judicial clerkship application process and manages the legal recruiting program for advanced degree students. She is available to counsel all students on career planning and job-search strategies for private sector as well as judicial clerkship and externship opportunities.

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Lee Kite is a Private Sector Advisor with more than 17 years of experience in legal recruiting and she advises students on private sector careers and options. She has reviewed thousands of resumes, interviewed and evaluated candidates, and served as an informal counselor to summer and new associates.

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Maureen advises students on international career strategy and development. She also oversees the legal recruiting program for foreign trained lawyers in the advanced degree programs and works with firms and organizations to expand international opportunities for Stanford students.

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Melissa Leger runs both the Fall and Spring Campus Interviewing Programs, and is the primary liaison between students and the employers who recruit them.

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Renee is the primary contact for the office and works closely with employers who wish to recruit Stanford Law School students and alumni. She also provides technical assistance with the online jobs search database and helps coordinate the spring and fall Campus Interviewing Programs.

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Deidre Sparks is a Private Sector Advisor who advises students on private sector careers and options. Prior to joining Stanford, Deidre was Special Counsel at Cooley Godward LLP. She practiced corporate law for a number of years and then moved into professional development. She has served on her firm's summer and recruiting committees, interviewed on campus and served as a mentor to summer and new associates.