

Duquesne University
School of Law
Evening Student Handbook



Duquesne University School of Law

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If it's all you read, read these four things

This handbook is about you and your needs. We have tried to break it out into sections/topics that are easy to access and that make sense based on our experience, surveys, and what has helped students at this law school, as well as other schools. The idea is to give you tools and examples that let you actually do the things we are talking about, not just read about them.

We care about your grades, but we do not care about your grades. It is true that grades matter, that many employers pay attention to them, and that they can impact the opportunities you have available now and at graduation. All that said, we do not care what your grades are. What we care about is you and your individual success. We take an individualized approach to helping all students, no matter if you are in the top, middle, or bottom third of the class. Students who work towards finding a job will get one; it takes some people, regardless of grades, a longer time to find their job than others. Keep at it.

We are here to help you personally in whatever way works best for you. If the ideas or tools in this handbook don't make sense to you or this is not the way you prefer to get information, then we are personally asking you to come into the CSO and let us help you directly. Even if you think this is a great tool for you, we want to talk with you (in person, on the phone, or via Zoom). We love what we do, and helping you is the best part.

The Buck Stops Here. If this handbook is confusing or missing something you wish it had, if you feel we are helping others find their path, but not helping you, if you see a gap in the programming we put together (like the kinds of legal and nontraditional career areas you want exposure to), or if you sense these kinds of frustrations from your classmates, we want you to come tell us. We want to know, it will not offend us, and it matters. We love what we do, and we always want to do it better.

Evening Student Handbook

We recognize that Evening Division Students have unique circumstances while attending law school. Not only do you have to prepare for classes, attend those classes, and complete assignments, you most likely also have professional and personal responsibilities and obligations outside of school. All of this requires a tremendous amount of balance, commitment, and dedication. The Career Services Office is here to help you tackle yet another component of your legal education: finding a job and making professional connections. Every Evening Student's interactions with us is different because the ability to have a legal job or internship, attend our programs and events, and have time to meet individually with us varies from person to person. We are here to help you when you are ready. This Handbook is meant to give you some things to think about.

What can I do to bolster my resume?

Whether you are able to pursue a legal job or internship or not, consider the following ways to add some law-related weight to your resume:

Check the Postings on DuqLawConnect – You will have access to [DuqLawConnect](#), our on-line job portal, beginning in the Fall Semester of your 1E year. If you are in the market for a change in your full-time job, be sure to check the postings. Some employers specifically seek Evening Students for full-time positions, such as Tip Staffs in a judge's courtroom or Paralegals/Legal Assistants at a law firm. If you are not in the market for a change in employment, perhaps you can fit a limited, project-based position or a pro bono activity into your schedule.

Research Assistant Positions – Faculty hire research assistants all the time. If you see a posting from a professor you know, and whose area of research is of interest, apply. If you do not see a posting, you still might go ask the professor, because maybe they have the funds to hire someone and just haven't posted yet, and now they will have you in mind. While face-to-face meetings with the professor might be necessary at times, most of this work can be done remotely.

The great thing is not just being able to put this on the resume, but if you do a good job, you can ask that faculty member to be a reference for you down the road. We cannot tell you the number of students who have landed jobs because a professor got to know them, and even if the student's grades were not at the top of the class, the professor could speak to their character and quality of their work.

Explore Possibilities with Your Current Employer – If possible, talk with your employer about ways in which you might gain legal experience. Things to consider:

- **Legal Departments:** If your employer has an in-house legal department, consider asking to get some projects from that department. If splitting your work is not an option, seek out members of the legal department and ask to meet with them over coffee. This allows you to build your network, seek advice about your long-term job search, and hear suggestions that may be valuable to you.
- **Extended Leaves:** Students have been able to take leaves of absences from their permanent employer so they could engage in a legal internship or Summer Associate Program at a large law firm. This is not an option with every employer, so take careful consideration when determining if a leave might be possible for you.
- **Flexible Work Schedules:** Some students are able to work 4-day weeks with their employers, allowing them to take part in a law clinic or internship on the freed up work day.

Publish for a Bar Organization – Bar organizations, like the Pennsylvania Bar Association, Federal Bar Association, American Bar Association, and others, are always looking for articles. Maybe it is profiling a judge, maybe it's about the change to a rule, or maybe it is about your experience in law school. In any case, it gets you exposure to the bar organization, a great line for the resume, and your name out in front of all the members. You can even look at co-authoring with a fellow student or faculty member.

Volunteer Opportunities – Your membership in bar organizations is normally free or heavily discounted. In either case, the point of being a member is not so much about putting that on your resume, but leveraging that membership into networking and exposure. Make a point of volunteering to help on projects even when they don't ask. Many bar associations engage in pro bono activities, such as Wills for Heroes programs, and they often seek law students to volunteer with them. These activities are usually one-day commitments which makes them manageable for Evening Students. You can add this to your resume, meet attorneys and other law students, and give back to our community all in a day's work.

Leadership Opportunities – You should also look for leadership opportunities. The law school's student organizations and bar organizations off-campus look for members to take on leadership roles. Maybe its treasurer of WLA (Women's Law Association) here at Duquesne Law, or a committee with the Young Lawyers Division of the Allegheny County Bar Association. In all cases, you will get experience, exposure, and expand your network.

Attend Continuing Legal Education (CLE) Courses – CLE courses, about a variety of topics, are offered by law schools, bar associations, and professional organizations. Discounted student registration rates are often available. CLE's in Pennsylvania may be offered as in-person or on-line programs. Both options will allow you to learn about subject matters of interest, and attending an in-person or virtual course offers another way of meeting like-minded people.

Students have added CLE course attendance to their resumes, and this is especially helpful if you attend courses that are aligned with your long-term employment or practice area goals.

Updating Your Resume, Elevator Pitch, and Cover Letter

How to describe what you do.

Talking about your transition from your current job to a legal one may be new to you. It is important to take full advantage of all you do by incorporating it into your resume, your elevator pitch, and your cover letter.

Here is an example to think about:

- The text inside the quotation marks is what you might tell us or a local attorney if we asked you about your job.
- Next is the elevator pitch. It assumes you have already looked an attorney in the eye, given them a solid hand shake, introduced yourself, and asked their name if you don't know it. Keep in mind that your goal is to make a good first impression, find common ground, and then make the ask (i.e. learning about them and what they do, asking for their advice, or even setting up a meeting over coffee sometime down the road.)
- Finally, we show you how you might put the experience into your resume.

Give it a try on your own, and then talk with us so we can help you refine these skills.

Example 1 – Marketing associate at a local company

“I work full-time at the XYZ Company as a Marketing Associate. I work with a 3-person team, and we handle all of the company’s marketing – online, social media, print, and TV. I do market research, draft pitches and memos, and work on long-term projects. I often present or co-present my work at monthly executive committee meetings; I’m fortunate to have the opportunity to present and advocate for – or defend – my positions.”

New Elevator Pitch and Resume Section:

“I’d love to know about your litigation practice. I am an Evening Student at Duquesne Law, and I work full-time at The XYZ Company as a Marketing Associate. I work in a corporate setting, and I’ve often been interested in

litigation the company is a part of. How did you decide on a litigation practice?"

The XYZ Company, Pittsburgh, PA

Senior Marketing Associate (September 2014-Present)

- Perform market research and draft proposals for online, print, television, and social media.
- Prepare presentations for monthly executive committee meetings and answer high-level questions about the findings.
- Analyze company data for long-term projects.

How can I leverage the experience I have so I can do something totally different after law school?

First and foremost, value the non-legal work that you have done during and prior to law school. Many employers will appreciate that you have developed transferrable skills, such as teamwork, solid judgment skills, time management skills, taking initiative, and strong work ethic, in the professional setting in which you have been employed. These essential skills are often sought after by employers. Show an employer that you have the capacity to put the law into practice by highlighting your achievements that put the spotlight on these skills. The resume format we use is focused on functional skills that it normally works well for Evening Students.

Use your cover letter to tell the story of "why" you are making a change to the law. Why the change, why this new area, why the experience you had applies, why you are the perfect candidate...and so on. Try drafting up a new cover letter, remembering to:

1. Keep it under one page.
2. Tell a story, don't list facts (the resume tells the "what" and the cover tells the "why.")
3. Avoid saying things like "I am a hard worker" or "I am a good team player" without backing those statements up with very specific examples.
4. Be authentic.

We suggest you take a couple hours, no more, and get the draft of your new cover letter into a document, not worrying about how long it is or what it says: just write it. Put the letter in a desk and then pull it out the next day and spend one hour editing. After that, STOP and come in to see us and we will help you get to a final draft quickly.

Do I need a specialized resume for each kind of employer?

Maybe. While you may be tempted to adapt your resume into specialized versions, it also

increases the likelihood of a typo or of sending an old version. Your typical law school resume ought to work for 95% of law openings. Potential exceptions are highly specialized practices, like intellectual property, where you may want to spend more time on your technical background. In some cases, having one version for the IP jobs and another for everything else might make sense. Also, by your 4E year, when you are applying for post-grad positions, a specialized resume may be the right approach if you are targeting a specific type of employer.

One case where you definitely want to create a specialized resume is if you are applying for a post-graduate federal job, like being an ERISA investigator with the Department of Labor or FOIA Reviewer with the Department of Immigration and Naturalization. In this instance, you need a long-form resume. A long-form resume covers your entire work history, in much more detail, and is tailored to the position you are applying for. The reason you do this for federal jobs is that your pay grade is based on the sum total of all your experience. Leaving things out now may start you at a lower rank, either now or when you graduate and join full-time, and once you are hired it is very hard to leapfrog levels. Also, because there are so many applicants for federal jobs, the first pass at culling through applications is often done by a computer that scores your application based on how closely it matches the terms and requirements of the job posting. Come see us and we can help you look at the job posting you are applying for and see how you might set up your resume. It is also good to remember that these federal job postings are often open for just three or four days, so you need to look often and apply quickly!

What experiences do I drop or streamline so I can stay on one page?

Congratulations on having real and relevant experience to add to the resume! Now the question is what to do about the information that leaked over to a second page. Some attorneys are of the opinion that everyone should have a one-page resume, without exception; while others will accept a two-page resume as long as the information on it is meaningful and important. Remember, a resume is a writing sample, and you can use it to show your ability to be clear and concise in your writing. While some will read a two-pager, you have to assume that some attorneys might never realize there is a second page or that it gets lost. If that happens, then have they missed something important? There are exceptions to this rule when applying for positions like federal jobs or some judicial clerkships, for work in IP, or if you have an extensive employment background prior to coming to law school. Many Evening Students have two-page resumes. We can work together on this to make sure your resume allows you to put your best foot forward with employers.

Sample resumes can be found on the last two pages of this Handbook.

Below are 5 “Dos” and “Don’ts” to get you started, but if you send a copy of the resume to us, we can help you look at it in other ways in order to decide to keep it at one or two pages.

Dos . . .

1. Get rid of old and irrelevant jobs. This is a job that you had on your resume that has only limited relevance to a legal employer. For example, you might drop that job bagging groceries or hosting at a restaurant in college.
2. Get rid of blank lines. If you are hitting the return key twice as a way to put space between sections and subsections, there is a better way. First, get rid of the extra spaces. Next, go into the paragraph settings in Word and add in smaller spaces by putting in a 0.6 space using the “Space Before” and “Space After” commands. This gets most people four or five lines back.
3. Be concise. Like everything else you write, go back and make sure your bullet points are clear, crisp, and efficient. This is especially true for those points where just one or two words push into a second line.
4. Consolidate jobs where it makes sense. Maybe you worked as a waiter at three restaurants in undergrad. That is great experience and shows you at least paid part of your way through school. But instead of listing each one separately, you might combine all three into one heading. Maybe the heading is now Various Restaurants, the position is Assistant Manager/Waiter, and then the first bullet says “Oversaw front-of-house staff as manager at Applebee’s,” and then lower bullet might say “Wait-staff at Olive Garden and The Porch, working multiple shifts and training new hires.”
5. Consolidate experiences where it makes sense. Instead of using a separate bullet point for every memo, pleading, and motion you worked on, cluster them. Try saying “Researched and drafted memoranda on various topics, including adverse possession, changes to retainer rules, and zoning for group homes” or “Drafted answer portion of motion for summary judgment, motion to dismiss, and request for admission.” If you did a bunch of motions, for example, but there was one really big one you want to emphasize, then you can still give that its own bullet point, for example, “Major project involved multimillion-dollar products liability case, drafting key legal and fact sections of motion for summary judgment of same, as well as performing attendant research.”

Don'ts . . .

1. Never get below an 11-point font. Hiring professionals and lawyers tend to read many applications at once, so don't make them work harder to read yours. So, depending on the font you are using, keep it at a readable 11-

or 12-point size.

2. Don't get rid of the personal interests/community involvement section. You would be amazed how these sections can make all the difference. They can take an interview that was going to be the longest 20 minutes of your life and make it into the best interview ever. In fact, we think the best interviews are often the ones where you never even got to a discussion about classes, grades, or what you worked on last summer, and instead talked about spending holidays building homes for the poor or training for a half marathon during the summer.
3. Avoid more when less will do. Sometimes you will have four bullet points, and the last one is something like "Observed hearing and trials" whereas the other three are more substantive. If that's the case, you can drop this last bullet point. It is likely the least impressive bullet point, and many interviewers will assume that if you did a bunch of motions and similar work, your summer employer took you to watch them in court.
4. Don't lose the white space. Hold your resume (or cover letter, even) out at arm's length. Does it look like a document that someone can scan quickly or like a page out of an experimental stream-of-consciousness novel? White space is critical for readability, and readability matters to lawyers.
5. Don't forget to double-check everything. Make sure the resume is perfect. Check to make sure the font is the same, the point size is the same, the margins all line up, each section is formatted the same as every other section, the bullet points either all have a period at the end or do not have a period at the end, the names are all spelled correctly and you didn't type a word like "form" when you meant to type "from." The CSO is happy to review your drafts.

Networking

How to Network

Stop thinking about networking as “selling yourself” and start thinking about it as “making friends in the professional world.” Lawyers lead full lives outside of their practice areas, and usually they are social, community-minded folks involved in plenty of activities in which you can also be involved. You might bond over a common interest in cooking, scuba diving, travel, needlepoint, Netflix originals, sports (does anyone out there like football?), or a myriad of other activities and interests. Think of it this way: when you are networking at an event, you will probably spend about 10% of your time talking about the practice of law and 90% talking about the outside interest and experiences (both theirs and yours). Don’t be intimidated, you are a natural at being you!

10 Ice Breakers When You Meet Someone

1. I don’t believe we’ve met, but I wanted to introduce myself...
2. What do you enjoy most about what you do?
3. I’d love to hear about the most interesting project/case you have worked on this year.
4. Is this what you thought you’d be doing when you first decided to go to law school?
5. What is the most challenging part of your job?
6. How did you choose this area of law?
7. What do you like to do outside of work in your free time?
8. Are you from this area originally or did you move here for law school/when you joined the firm?
9. Did you start out in this area of practice?
10. Why did you decide to go to law school? Any tips on classes to take/organizations to join?

Networking Opportunities

Every time you interact with others, you are networking, but opportunities to meet attorneys, judges, and legal professions exist during the school year. Whether you attend events in-person or virtually, connect with people afterwards so you can start or continue conversations. Here are just five examples to take advantage of:

1. Offer to help with a CLE, bar association, or alumni event where you will come into contact with the expert presenters and the attending practitioners.
2. Attend CLE’s, which you can sometimes do for free or very little just by asking for a student rate, at the Allegheny County Bar Association or Pennsylvania Bar Association, for example.
3. Attend bar association events, which often offer free or discounted admissions, especially if you volunteer to work the door or spearhead promotion to students. Check DuqLawConnect and the bar associations’ websites for upcoming events.

4. Connect with law alumni, where you identify the practice area focus and connect via DukesConnect or with the assistance of the CSO.

The Kevin Bacon List

Our friends at Kansas Law came up with the “Kevin Bacon” list. This is a riff on the old “Six Degrees of Kevin Bacon” game, where any actor in any film, ever, can be linked to Kevin Bacon in six steps or less, and we thought it was a fun and productive exercise to share! The point is that the world is whole lot smaller and more connected than we think. (Hint: This could also be called the “Six Degrees of Duquesne University” as you will often meet people who are connected to Duquesne in some way, illustrating it is, indeed, a small world.) Putting together a Kevin Bacon List is really powerful, even though it can seem so simple, but to get the benefit you have to actually fill it in because it is way too much info to take in, much less keep track of, in your head. Here is the process and an example in Excel.



| Who I Know | What They Do | Who I Want to Know | What They Do | Notes |
|---------------------|------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------------|--|
| Saturnina Milbrandt | Lawyer Firm 1 | Norah Stormont | District Attoreny | Speaking on 30th at ACBA |
| Chris Armentrout | Lawyer Firm 2 | Elmer Godin | Associate Firm 1 | Duquesne Law Alum, Speaking on 2nd at school |
| Birdie Ralls | Engineer Goodyear | Fletcher Colligan | Partner Firm 2 | Duquesne Law, 1987, Uncle of Pok Ovit, Labor Law |
| Scarlett Junge | Pilot SWA | Otelia Detwiler | Federal Judge | Duquesne Law, 1982 |
| Neomi Whitham | Starbucks Barista | Alphonso Shemwell | Associate Firm 2 | Duquesne Law, 2015, Labor Law |
| Von Fancher | Assistant DA | Sheridan Hinerman | Partner Firm 4 | Duquesne Law 1993, Commercial Litigation |
| Antoine Huntsberry | Graphic Designer | Marcellus Eck | Ethics Expert | Duquesne Law 1980, Adjunct Prof. |
| Cynthia Goris | Travel Writer | Scindy Shedd | Justice PA Supreme Court | Duquesne Law, 1983, Sam Kerrit is her law clerk |
| Kai Charity | 2nd Grade Teacher | Joye Finchum | Partner Firm 1 | ERISA |
| Roxanne Dezzuitti | Delivery Driver FedEx Ground | | AG for PA | Need name and contact info |
| Nita Polston | Army | | | |
| Richie Carron | Navy | | | |
| Randi McElveen | Lawyer Firm 3 | | | |
| Daisy Shoenrock | Professor Duquesne Univ. | | | |
| Pok Ovit | Grad Student at DU | | | |
| William Devin | Dentist | | | |
| Betsy Saunder | Accountant | | | |
| Oliver Eyre | Technical Writer | | | |
| Kathleen Trexler | Chef | | | |

1. Make a list with five columns, labeled “Who I Know,” “What They Do and Where,” “Who I Want to Know,” “What They Do,” and “Notes.” You can use whatever program you like, but we prefer Excel because you can sort it or add other columns later.
2. In the first column, “Who I Know,” list out everyone you know. This means that person from fifth grade who you friended on Facebook, even if you maybe send them one message a year.
3. In the second column, list out their job title and location. Shorthand is fine here, like Lawyer/Kansas or Teacher/Pittsburgh.
4. In the third column, make a list of who you aspire to know. An actual person, like the head of a practice group at a firm, is best, but even a title is fine if you don’t know a person’s name.
5. In the fourth column, list out what the folks who you want to know do.

6. The fifth column is just for you to keep notes as you find info or learn something about people you want to know.

Now the trick is to think about the people in column one, which will grow as you meet more people, and the people in column three, and think about how they might be connected. Look for patterns, shared interests, and so on. In the example we shared, the student knows someone at a firm where there are both a partner and an associate the student wants to know. The student also knows a grad student at Duquesne whose uncle is a partner at a firm that she wants to know.

Even if you don't see the connections now, getting it down on paper will put you in a position to recognize connections as they emerge. When a friend mentions a name or firm or event, you will have a context for it and how it ties to others. Eventually you will start to find ways to connect with the folks in column three, and move them into column one.

Kevin Bacon Factoids

Well, if we are going to name the list after him, we ought to know something about him...

The Oracle of Bacon is a site dedicated to identifying the links between Kevin Bacon and all others, check it out at <http://oracleofbacon.org/>.

Apparently, Kevin Bacon was "horrified" by the game at first, but has now embraced it, see <http://www.cnn.com/2014/03/08/tech/web/kevin-bacon-six-degrees-sxsw/>.

Kevin Bacon's credits include *Animal House* (1978), *Diner* (1982), *Footloose* (1984), *Tremors* (1990), *A Few Good Men* (1992), *Apollo 13* (1995), *Frost/Nixon* (2008), and *X-Men: First Class* (2011).

Bacon was born in Philadelphia, where his mom taught elementary school and his dad was an architect. He was one of six siblings, and one brother, Michael, is a member of the eponymously named band The Bacon Brothers along with Kevin (see <http://www.baconbros.com/>).

CSO-Sponsored Programs to Register for Today!

We can help you take the “People I Want to Know” in your Keven Bacon list and move them into the first column through our Career Services programs and bar association events. Check DuqLawConnect for a list of upcoming events and programs. These events are great ways to connect with someone who does what you want to do and who may have had some similar experiences in school. Please note that Evening Students are always welcome to attend as much of any of our programs as your schedules permit. If you need to arrive late or leave early, that is perfectly fine. If you need to leave early and don’t have time to talk with the presenters, email us so we can make an email introduction for you.

Dealing with grades that were not what you hoped.

Recognize the challenge, then work the problem.

There is a managing partner at a Pittsburgh firm that we have met with. What is interesting is that the firm this alum now runs rejected him when he interviewed there after graduation because they thought his grades were too weak. He discovered, as have many others, that once you have practiced for a few years, no one cares what your grades were. They care about the work you have done in practice. The key is to be resilient, knowing that the grades may affect your choices now and at graduation, but they do not dictate your career and the options you will have as you gain experience and build a reputation.

For starters, don’t hide from your grades. You don’t need to share them with your classmates, but you want to tap into the resources the school has to offer from Academic Excellence, and your professors, to the CSO and beyond.

Academics – Succeeding in law school!

The first step is thinking about what did and didn’t work in your prior semester and then changing your approach in a way that incorporates new strategies while improving on the ones you keep. The old cliché’ is true; success in law school is really about “working smarter” and not just “working harder.” For example, some people find being part of a study group helps to drive them to study longer and in a more focused way. For others, study aids, like hornbooks, can make all the difference. In all cases, a little expert advice and guidance at the start can make all the difference.

The place to start? If you are struggling with classes, unsure of which study technique you should try, puzzled why you did well in one exam but not another, or can’t figure out why you bombed the exam you were sure you were going to ace, then contact the Law School’s Academic Excellence Office.

Careers – finding a great job, no matter your grades and beyond OCI.

Like we said above, grades may impact where you start your career, but they do not decide where you finish. So while improving your grades matters, you also need to embrace where you are academically and put a plan together for what to do next. If this seems like a huge endeavor, it is; but it is also one that is probably a lot easier to work through than you imagine. The first thing is to come see us in the CSO so we can set a time to meet and figure out where you are and where you want to go. You should also look at the Developing a Career Strategy section below, where we walk you through a step-by-step approach to developing a plan.

While some firms, especially the bigger ones, may limit applicants to the top 25% of the class, they do not represent a majority of legal employers. Now is the time to take advantage of all the ways to find the position you really want. Best of all, the time you spend exploring options and meeting people helps build the network of connections you need for success, no matter where you ultimately launch your career.

5 Reasons to Visit Career Services

1. **Time is your friend, until it is not.** As we noted at the beginning of this Handbook, every Evening Student has unique circumstances to navigate as you think about your job search. If you don't have time to talk during the academic year, consider scheduling a time to talk (in person or on the telephone) during the summer. The CSO reserves time in the summer months especially for Evening Student meetings that are held at lunch time or later in the day. The thought with this being that you may have "extra" time in the summer when you can talk with us during your lunch break or after work, rather than studying or racing to school for your six o'clock class. We are here for you whenever you are ready to talk about your employment goals and strategies.
2. **You don't need to know the right question, much less the answer.** Lots of students don't come into the CSO or go to see their faculty because they don't know what to ask, how to express what they are feeling, or they feel their question is too small or silly. If this is you, then you MUST come in and see us. Turns out that we have a lot of experience and training, including knowing a lot of the questions worth asking and how to help you figure out the ones you didn't even know you wanted to ask yourself.
3. **Experience eclipses grades quickly.** Remember the story about our alum who's now the managing partner of the same firm that rejected him when he applied to work there after school? You would be surprised how many alumni have told us similar tales of career success. We are not saying it is easy, but if you are serious and committed to a particular career you can make it happen. We may be looking for a side door instead of the front door, charting a path that takes you in another direction now but that you can bend back toward the job you had always envisioned.
4. **Don't ignore the opportunity you never knew you wanted.** In other words, while you want to focus your efforts, be willing to be surprised by a job that at first glance seems totally wrong, not what you wanted, and in an industry you know nothing about. It might turn out that your thinking is driven by never having been exposed to that kind of career option.
5. **What you think you want and what you really want may be totally different things.** Until you work somewhere, you won't know how much you'll like it. Is the work/life balance what you thought it would be? Do you want change course and start your own practice or go in-house? Be flexible in your thinking and in your experiences.

Developing a Career Strategy Customized for You

Personal and Professional Interests – What you want to do and why!

Maybe you always knew what you wanted to do after law school. Maybe you had no idea when you came to Duquesne Law for the first day of classes. In either case, there is a really good chance

that you have changed your mind. Now is good time to take a moment and think about what you have learned, what motivates you, and where you want to go. Whatever brought you to law school, no matter your grades and regardless of what you want to do, there is probably a way to get there. The route may just be a little less direct than you imagined.

Below are some tools to help you think this through, plus we are here to help.

1. Take five minutes and picture yourself 5 or 10 years from now. Don't worry about the job title yet, just picture your typical day and what you do and ask a few broad questions like: Do you see yourself in an airport or hotel most of the time, or commuting from home to an office? Do you work from home? What time does your day start and end, or does it? Do you see yourself spending your off hours with your colleagues from the office, with your family, or maybe playing in a band?
2. Okay, with the image in your mind, let's think about what motivates you. Remember, there are no right or wrong answers, so trust yourself. Look at the list below and rank them by saying "The most important thing to me is..."
 - a) **Geography** – the community or region I will live in. If this is a priority, can you identify the specific place, like Pittsburgh, DC or New York? If it is not that specific then is there a region, like Midwest or the Rockies?
 - b) **Work/Life Balance** – a balance between my time spent working and my personal time with friends and family. If this is a priority, then think about what that balance looks like. How many hours a week do you see spending working versus doing the other things that matter to you, like coaching your kid's soccer team, playing competitive tennis, or learning tai chi?
 - c) **Career Field** – the field that I practice/work within. If this is your priority, what is the law practice or other career field that drives you? Maybe it is commercial litigation or prosecution, maybe it's M&A or tax. Maybe it is sports management, business consulting, politics, or international relations.
 - d) **Cause** – serving the cause I believe in. If this is your priority, what is that cause? The way to distinguish this from Career Field is that if you are cause-oriented, the actual title, role you play is secondary to the mission. Maybe you are committed to a needy population, like the homeless, or veterans. Maybe your calling is in the arts or healthcare for the poor. In any case, the cause is more important than your title, and you are as content to serve the cause by becoming an executive director or policy researcher as by practicing law in the traditional sense.
 - e) **Culture** – the organizational culture I work in and how I interact with colleagues. Do you envision working on your own or collaborating with others? Do you like having autonomy or are you the kind of person that needs a clear set of directives coming from a well-established hierarchy? Is your ideal environment a little more raucous or do you prefer a quieter office? Understanding the environment and social structure of your ideal working environment will help you identify a culture that enables you to succeed professionally and personally.

3. Now you need to order the priorities. The key here is to make a choice about which is first, then second, then third, and so on. Think hard about the ranking but trust your gut. Once you know your priorities, it makes the rest of your planning a whole lot easier. You should also keep in mind that just because one priority is ranked higher than the other, it does not mean you ignore the lower one. Instead, think of this as framework you can use to answer the more specific questions about what to do now, where to invest your time and efforts this fall, this year, and beyond.

The Plan – Making and executing a plan to get you where you want to be!

Time to take all this thinking and turn it into a plan you can act on. The first step is probably setting up a meeting with us, if you haven't already. We can help you work through the strategy development part, putting together the plan then executing it.

Now take a look at your priorities. What did you rank first? Write it down below. Underneath, you want to make a list that defines what that priority means for you.

For example, if your first priority is Geography and your second is Career Field, your list might look like this:

Priority 1 – Geography

1. Pittsburgh
2. Philadelphia

Priority 2 – Career Field

1. Labor Law
2. Commercial Litigation
3. General Litigation
4. Insurance Defense
5. Family Law

Now we know where to look, and what to look for: attorneys in Western or Eastern PA who practice labor law. You can refine that further adding your analysis of the other priority areas, and even adding in new ones. The point is to rank them so you know what you want to focus on first.

Ok, here is the hard part. You need to look in Pittsburgh for firms with labor law practices and the lawyers who are in those practices, listing out the first 10 of those lawyers you want to meet. When you are thinking about who makes the list, look at big and small firms, boutiques, and shops with a general practice that includes labor law. Don't avoid someone because you think their firm would not consider you, but don't ignore smaller or less well-known firms. Also, while the

senior partner in charge may be a good choice, there may be a good reason to meet with the third-year associate instead. Pick the one you think you can connect with and who has the greatest value over time.

No matter how you order your priorities, the same basic process applies. It will help you get a clear picture of what you want and what matters to you most. This will let you focus on executing your plan in the most efficient and effective way possible. Also, this does not mean you ignore things that come your way unexpectedly. If there is an opportunity that you see come available that you think might be of interest, you can use this framework to consider it and decide if you want to go after it.

Executing the Plan- Translating your plan into action.

Ok, we are almost there!! Put the top 10 list (of attorneys to meet) into a spreadsheet so you can track your progress, the employer's name, contact info, address, date contacted, date followed up, and any notes. Begin sending emails/letters to your 10 contacts. A sample outreach/networking letter is included on the next page.

In a week, as you promised in your letter, you are going to call the folks you sent emails/letters to the week before with the goal of setting up a meeting over coffee in or near their office. Our recommendation is to send 1-2 notes per week so that you can manage your follow-up. Then you add two new names to the list, and send letters to #3 and #4. Then you repeat the process each week. Even if you took ten weeks off for vacation and finals, you will have still managed to reach out to more than 80 people – an amazing result for a very small commitment of time and effort.

When you meet with attorneys, ask about them, what they do, how they got there, why they chose their firm or practice area or industry, or what they wish they had known on day one that would have helped them. If you meet them at their office, make sure you thank them and be incredibly polite to the staff, including the receptionist. If you are in their personal office, look around and see what it might say about them, what mementos they have and where it might indicate a common interest or something worth asking about. And after the meeting, be it on the phone or in person, send them a brief thank you note.

Even if you ultimately find your job in some other way, you have established a network of some of the top folks who do what you want to do, some of whom will doubtless become important mentors and contacts in practice. Simply put, you have already made the kinds of connections most third and fourth-year lawyers are still struggling to put together.

SAMPLE EMAIL/LETTER TO NETWORKING CONTACT

[INSERT CUSTOMIZED LETTERHEAD IF SENDING A LETTER - SAME HEADING AS YOUR COVER LETTER]

September 16, 2019

Kendall Lee, Esq.
Edwards & Lewis, LLC
123 Fourth Avenue
Pittsburgh PA 15219

Dear Ms. Lee:

I am currently a Second Year Evening student at Duquesne University School of Law, and I am interested in pursuing a career in Criminal Law in the Pittsburgh area. Through a search of our alumni database [or if through another network contact, state the individual's name], I learned that you practice in this field and I would very much appreciate the opportunity to speak with you about your career.

The combination of my work experience and educational background demonstrates my strong interest in Criminal Law. After completing my undergraduate degree in Criminal Justice, I started work as a Tipstaff for Washington County Court of Common Pleas, where I have worked for the past five years. I have taken Criminal Law, and I will participate in Duquesne Law's Veteran's Court Clinic this year.

I would enjoy the opportunity to talk with you about your experiences as I plan for a career as a criminal defense attorney. If you have some time to talk with me over the phone or on a Zoom meeting, please let me know. Thank you very much for your time and consideration of this request. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,
Law Student

SAMPLE RESUME (with bullet points)

Joseph A. Henry
139 Meadow Lane
Pittsburgh, PA 15205
412-555-9876
Jahenry24@gmail.com

EDUCATION

Duquesne University School of Law (Pittsburgh, PA)
Juris Doctor Candidate, Expected June 2023 (Evening Division)
G.P.A.: 3.153

Slippery Rock University (Slippery Rock, PA)
B.A., Sports Management, *cum laude*, May 2010
Honors: Dean's List, every semester
Activities: Sports Management Alliance – Treasurer (2008-2010)
Baseball Team – Captain (2009-2010)

EXPERIENCE

Duquesne University School of Law – Unemployment Compensation Clinic (Pittsburgh, PA)
Student Advocate (Fall 2019)

- Represented clients at unemployment hearings
- Drafted case memos, questions for direct and cross examination, plausible objections, and related documents

Duck's Sporting Goods, Inc. (Pittsburgh, PA)

Marketing Director (August 2014 – Present)

- Develop and execute marketing plans for the products produced and sold by the company
- Develop and execute a comprehensive brand advocacy strategy with a focus on increasing consumer engagement
- Create and implement new digital media platforms
- Coordinate marketing plans involving sponsorship deals with legal department
- Promoted from Marketing Coordinator position in 2016

Easy Car Rentals, Inc. (New Castle, PA)

Branch Manager (July 2010 – July 2014)

- Managed daily branch functions
- Developed a highly effective sales team culture, exceeding annual goals
- Implemented strategies to enhance employee development and profitability

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

Allegheny County Bar Association, Student Member
Pennsylvania Bar Association, Student Member

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