



St. Mary's University School of Law

Office of Career Services

Sarita Kenedy Law Library, Room 216

http://www.stmarytx.edu/law/career_services/

Guide to Career Planning for the Evening Program Student

I. OVERVIEW

Welcome to being a student in the Evening Program! It is easy for Evening Program students to feel overwhelmed by the many demands that are placed on their time. As an Evening Program student, full- or part-time work, family and friends, community service activities, maintaining a home and recreational activities must be juggled while staying current with the rigorous coursework of law school. Although graduation seems a distant four years away when an Evening Program student begins a law school adventure, it is never too soon to begin the journey of planning a legal career. It is imperative to an Evening Program student's success in achieving a satisfying legal career to create career goals, plan a career strategy in advance to reach those goals and understand the necessary steps that must be taken. The sooner an Evening Program student evaluates his or her legal career objectives and begins implementing a career strategy, the more the likelihood of success in finding a fulfilling legal career. The Career Services Office (CSO) has created this Guide in order to direct and assist you, as an Evening Program student, in your career assessment and career goals. This Guide will introduce you to the services offered by our office, help you plan job strategies and assist you with drafting resumes and cover letters. Our office has additional resources and handouts that are available to you in the Resource Center located in our office and on our website located at http://www.stmarytx.edu/law/career_services/.

II. CAREER SERVICES

The CSO provides the following services to accommodate Evening Program students:

- A career professional will be available to help you with individual career planning via special office appointments, phone or email.
- Some programs will be held from 5:00-6:00 p.m. and over the lunch hour.

The services provided by our office are further detailed below.

Hours: The CSO is open from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. with abbreviated summer hours. Our office is extremely flexible, and our staff are willing to accommodate schedules on an individual basis.

Counseling: The CSO provides counseling to students to discuss any issues students have regarding employment. The staff will help you create a legal resume (which is different than any other resume you have created!), draft cover letters and provide interviewing strategies. Appointments to meet with the staff can be made to accommodate your schedule. We encourage you to take advantage of email whenever possible. Appointments can be scheduled through our office at 210-436-3511 or via email with Administrative Secretary Alicia Mendoza at amendoza1@stmarytx.edu. Counseling is offered via email or phone and in person.

Resource Center: Our office maintains reference materials that are of particular interest to those looking for legal and law-related work. A list of the holdings in our Student Resource Center, which is a library located within the CSO, can be accessed at http://www.stmarytx.edu/law/career_services/pdf/OCSresources.pdf. We encourage you to peruse the CSO website to become familiar with our other resources as well.

Programs: Throughout the academic year, our office provides programs that inform students of various issues related to career planning, job searches, interviewing skills, summer clerkship information, judicial clerkship information, as well as a variety of other topics of interest that help law students with their career planning. The CSO also presents programs providing students with an opportunity to network with local attorneys, many of whom are alumni. We try to accommodate the Evening Program students by scheduling these programs during the lunch hour or in the early evening so that you will be able to attend. Notices of upcoming programs, events and general

information from our office are on our website and calendar located at <http://www.stmarytx.edu/law/index.php?site=careerServicesCalendar>.

On-Campus Interviews (OCI): On-campus interviewing is a program in which employers, during a set time period, come to campus to interview pre-selected students generally for summer and post-graduation jobs. The jobs may be for pay or are volunteer opportunities. Evening Program students are encouraged to participate in Spring OCI during their first, second, third and fourth years of law school and in Fall OCI during their second, third and fourth years. Fall OCI is attended usually by employers seeking students who will complete either their second or third year of law school by the spring, and therefore will be eligible for a summer clerkship following their second year or permanent employment following their third year. This presents some confusion to Evening Program students who have completed one year of law school, but who have not completed their first year coursework or hours to be considered second year law students. Evening Program students who are in their second year of law school (and have not finished their first year coursework) may participate in Fall OCI, if an employer indicates they will accept submissions from 2LE students. On campus interview policies and procedures will be located on our website.

Job Listings: The CSO receives many job listings throughout the year for both students and alumni. All jobs are posted through the job bank at <https://law-stmarytx-csm.symphlicity.com/students/>

III. ISSUES FACING THE EVENING PROGRAM STUDENT

As an Evening Program student, you face a special set of challenges. You are required to devote countless hours and an amazing amount of energy to preparing for law school classes, synthesizing classroom material, preparing writing assignments and studying for exams, while continuing your high level of performance at your current job. Chances are that you are involved in balancing these expectations with a demanding personal life. The prospect of taking on another task can be daunting.

The biggest issue facing an Evening Program student is whether or not to seek legal experience through traditional clerkships offered by employers. For many Evening Program students, this is very real problem. Most Evening Program students work full-time during the day in jobs and careers that are established and well-paying. The notion of quitting a job or taking a significant amount of time off from it presents a difficult dilemma. On the one hand, the legal experience gained from clerkships increases marketability by showing potential employers that you are serious about a legal career, capable of handling legal work, and able to do so with legal skills acquired during a clerkship. Yet, many of the Evening Program students are not in a position to quit their full-time positions for a brief summer clerkship.

As an Evening Program student, you must decide what are your career options and what you, as an individual, are able to sacrifice. You may not be in an economic position to quit a well-paying job to gain legal experience. The salary for a legal position throughout the school year will most likely be less than for an existing full-time job. Also, there are no employment-related benefits in part-time work during the school year or in the summer clerkships. However, legal employers want to make permanent hiring decisions with the confidence that you can apply the skills you've learned in law school to the legal task at hand. They want to know that the excellence you've demonstrated in your current career will extend beyond the law school classroom and into the practice of law. They want to see proof that, given a legal job, you'll hit the ground running. If you do not gain legal experience throughout law school, you will be competing for permanent legal employment with those who do have legal experience; therefore, your job search may be more challenging and require more effort than for many of your classmates who have legal experience. Obviously, this is an individual decision to be made only after careful thought.

Due to your unique circumstances, we suggest that you meet with a professional in our office as early in your legal education as possible. We will help you tailor your job search strategy and identify ways you can complement your professional experience with experience in the legal community. In addition, we will help you revise your resume and incorporate either law-related work you currently perform or identify transferable skills that you want to market to legal employers.

IV. GETTING LEGAL EXPERIENCE

The following list of ways Evening Program students can develop practical legal experience is by no means comprehensive, but is designed to give you a starting point. As always, you should schedule an appointment with a professional in the CSO to receive more directed information tailored to your personal situation, as well as to take advantage of additional resources.

Clerk for a law firm during law school. Working part-time or full-time for a law firm will help you develop the job skills important to success in law practice. Some Evening Program students opt to find full-time employment as a law clerk or paralegal for a law firm during their four years in law school. This is an excellent means of acquiring practical legal experience. In some instances, employers have offered attorney positions to their clerks or paralegals once they

have completed law school. Another approach is after the first, second or third year of law school, you can plan to obtain a full-time or part-time law clerk position and keep it for a defined period of time, such as a summer. If possible, try to work one or more summers for different employers. This gives you a broader experience, can get you multiple references and can help you assess your own career path.

Take a sabbatical to clerk for a law firm over the summer. If you decide not to obtain a clerking position during the academic year, you can plan to take a sabbatical or leave of absence or use accumulated vacation time and personal days to take time off from your current job to clerk the summer after your second and/or third years of law school. Many summer clerkships are for 6 weeks but a few will offer even a shorter period of time.

Participate in a law-related project in your present position. Your company's legal department might be willing to assign you a short-term project involving legal research or writing. If your company does not have a legal department, consider whether there are other ways you could do legally-related projects, such as contract review or due diligence. Contact the person in your company who is in charge of legal matters to discuss this possibility.

Take a temporary position with a law firm. These range from one-time only research assignments to involvement in month-long legal projects. Sometimes these opportunities come through the CSO, but more often students find them on their own by asking attorneys they know about opportunities to do project-by-project work. Let everyone you know that you are available to do short-term legal projects. You may be able to draft motions and briefs, conduct due diligence or work on other matters according to your own schedule.

Graduate without legal experience. Some students who graduate without legal experience take the next several months after graduation to work as a law clerk before seeking a permanent position. Many do this while waiting for bar exam results. The danger in waiting until after graduation to clerk is that you will be competing in a very tight market against candidates who have legal experience that they gained during law school.

V. ALTERNATIVES TO LEAVING YOUR NON-LEGAL JOB

Most Evening Program students will be able to offer a legal employer attractive education and experience. Specialized education and training, as well as business contacts, are valuable assets and may compensate for an inability to have a traditional clerkship during law school. However, should you decide to continue to work in your non-legal position through law school, please consider the following other ways to become marketable to legal employers:

Participate in bar association activities. Become an active member of the [San Antonio Young Lawyers Association](http://www.sayla.org), (<http://www.sayla.org>), the [State Bar of Texas](http://www.texasbar.com/) (<http://www.texasbar.com/>), and the [American Bar Association](http://www.abanet.org/) (<http://www.abanet.org/>). Volunteering for one or more of these organizations allows you to work side-by-side with attorneys who practice in the areas of law in which you are interested. Conveniently, many committees meet during the lunch hour.

Network/conduct informational interviews. If your schedule is too busy to allow you to gain any direct legal experience, informational interviewing is a crucial tool. It allows you to gather information so you sound knowledgeable to prospective employers, and helps you develop a better understanding of the practice of law. Learn what issues are central to your practice areas of interest, and what kind of experience employers are seeking so you will know how to counter concerns about any lack of direct experience. Once you are ready to look for a legal job, talking with practitioners, classmates, alumni/ae and others will make you aware of position openings and allow you to meet persons with the ability to assist you in meeting your career goals. Networking and informational interviews also can accommodate your schedule in that you can contact persons by phone or e-mail, and then follow up with a meeting (perhaps during your lunch hour).

Evaluate your transferable skills. Carefully examine your skills, experience, and expertise that could be transferable to the practice of law. Consider positions that combine your past experience and education with the practice of law.

Volunteer to do legal work with a public interest organization or government agency. One excellent way to obtain legal experience is to volunteer with a public service organization or government agency. Public sector employers often give their interns direct client contact and significant responsibility, and this experience is impressive to private sector employers. You'll also develop practical legal skills and relationships with attorneys who will attest to your legal abilities. Contact organizations in which you are interested to learn whether they have evening or weekend hours. You can also gain experience by participating in one of the programs, such as Ask-A-Lawyer and the VITA (volunteer tax preparation assistance programs, sponsored by the *Pro Bono* Fellow, who can be reached at 210-431-5765.

Participate in a program through the Center for Legal and Social Justice (also known as the Clinic). The Clinic has programs in Immigration and Human Rights, Civil Justice and Criminal Justice. For more information, see http://www.stmarytx.edu/law/?go=clin_prog

Work as a Faculty Research Assistant. Students hired for these positions assist professors with their research. The assistantship can give you the chance to sharpen your research and writing skills and develop closer contact with a faculty member. Additionally, many professors are willing to accommodate Evening Program students' schedules. During the legal job search, it can be very helpful to have a faculty member who has worked closely with you speak about your analytical and writing ability. Faculty members can be excellent networking contacts as well.

Work as a clerk at the Center for Terrorism Law. Research and write about the hot topics generated at the Center for Terrorism Law. For more information, see <http://www.stmarytx.edu/ctl/> To be considered for a position, contact Director Jeffrey F. Addicott at 210-431-2219 or at jaddicott@stmarytx.edu.

Try to write onto either the St. Mary's Law Journal or Scholar and/or write articles for other publications. Write a law-related article for publication in a legal or non-legal journal. An article is a great way to show a prospective employer that you have a sincere interest in a particular area of law. Legal employers recognize the time and commitment that go into writing a publishable article. Publishing an article can help you transition from your current career to your legal career by demonstrating your high degree of interest in, and level of commitment to, the legal profession.

Join law school organizations. This is a great way to learn about different practice areas and to develop additional contacts. For information about student organizations, see the St. Mary's University School of Law Student Bar Association.

Get to know your professors. Get to know your professors, especially those in the areas that are of interest to you and ask them for advice.

VI. JOB SEARCH TIMETABLE

Generally, evening students and their current job search goals fall into 1 of 7 categories:

- 1) Currently employed full-time and currently seeking summer work only
- 2) Currently employed part-time and currently seeking summer work only
- 3) Currently employed part-time and currently seeking additional part-time work during the current academic year
- 4) Currently not employed and currently seeking part-time work during the current academic year
- 5) Currently not employed and currently seeking full-time work during the current academic year
- 6) Currently not employed and currently seeking summer work only
- 7) Currently in last year of school (as measured by credits successfully completed) and employed full-time or part-time or not employed and seeking post-graduation position

NALP, The Association for Legal Career Professionals, of which St. Mary's University School of Law is a member, has guidelines as to when the CSO can put students in direct contact with employers by, for example, releasing passwords to protected sites. The table below indicates when the CSO may do this and when legal employers seek the students:

	Category of Student as listed above	Category of Student as listed above	Category of Student as listed above	Category of Student as listed above
Current Status	1) Employed Full-Time 2) Employed Part-Time 6) Not Employed	3) Employed Part-Time 4) Not Employed	5) Not Employed	7) Employed FY or PT or not employed
Current Goal a. Summer b. Part-time Academic Year c. Full-time Academic Year d. Post-Graduation	X a. Summer	X b. Part-time Academic Year	X c. Full-time Academic Year	X d. Post-Graduation
When CSO can put student in direct contact with	Dec. 1 (NALP regulation)	By appointment with CSO	By appointment with CSO	By appointment with CSO

legal employers				
When legal employers seek the students	<p>SUMMER POSITIONS As a general rule, the larger the firm, the earlier they interview and hire students for summer positions. Large law firms (more than 50 attorneys), some medium-sized law firms (20-50 attorneys), federal and state government agencies, corporations, and a few public interest organizations complete most of their hiring in the fall. Other organizations, including most public interest employers, associations, federal and state agencies, some medium-sized and most smaller law firms and corporations, tend to hire during the spring semester.</p>	<p>ACADEMIC-YEAR LAW CLERKS (Part-time) Most employers seek law clerks beginning in early to mid-August through mid-to-late September. Smaller employers (under 20 attorneys) seek law clerks whenever the need arises throughout the academic year, but still consider late summer to early fall as the height of hiring time. Most law clerk positions are with law firms. Nevertheless, government agencies, associations and public interest organizations also hire law clerks.</p>	<p>ACADEMIC-YEAR LAW CLERKS (Full-time) Most employers seek law clerks beginning in early to mid-August through mid-to-late September. Smaller employers (under 20 attorneys) seek law clerks whenever the need arises throughout the academic year, but still consider late summer to early fall as the height of hiring time. Most law clerk positions are with law firms. Nevertheless, government agencies, associations and public interest organizations also hire law clerks.</p>	<p>PERMANENT (POST-GRADUATION) POSITIONS The hiring timetable for permanent positions is very similar to the one for summer jobs. In addition to the fall and spring semesters of the last academic year, many small law firms, some corporations and government agencies hire recent graduates after they have taken and passed a bar examination. Post-graduation judicial internship application deadlines for most federal judges and many state judges is in the summer or early fall of the last academic year.</p>

Your own circumstances will play a large role in determining the best option for you to gain legal experience. Although you might obtain law clerk position before you have completed enough credit hours to be considered a second-year law student, as far as some employers are concerned, the year you have achieved enough credits to be considered a second-year student is the best time to begin a law clerk position. Most employers believe that first-year students (as measured by credits successfully completed) have not had enough law school course work to enable them to handle the duties involved in a clerk's position. Thus, after the successful completion of at least enough credits to be considered a second-year law student is the time to seek such a position.

Beginning in early August, the Office of Career Services receives many advertisements for part-time law clerk positions that are available during the academic year. The most advantageous time to have a summer associate position is the summer after you have completed enough academic credits to no longer be considered a second-year law student but to be considered a rising third-year law student. Since many summer positions lead to permanent employment, many employers prefer to employ students who are entering their final year of law school. Begin seeking a summer position in the fall of your next-to-last year through on-campus interviews, resume collections, and specific job listings posted by the Office of Career Services. Also, do not forget to use your own contacts and network, the #1 way to get a job for all students and graduates!

VII. JOB SEARCH STRATEGIES

Contacts: Contacts are your most effective job search tool as NETWORKING IS THE #1 WAY TO GET A JOB! Start putting together a list of all the people you know working in the field of law. You should consider family members, business associates, friends or alumni/ae from your undergraduate or other educational institution. Throughout school, add to and update your contact list. Contacts may also be made through members of various organizations in which you participate, such as the San Antonio Young Lawyers Association or student organizations. To find practitioners in special areas or locations you may conduct a search through reference resources such as Martindale-Hubbell AT <http://www.martindale.com/> or through the State Bar at http://www.texasbar.com/template.cfm?section=member_directory. By asking these individuals how you, as an Evening Program student, can make yourself more attractive and marketable to prospective employers, you can gain insight and advice on how to better posture yourself for employment. If you begin to develop these contacts at the outset of your program and continue to keep in touch with them, these individuals may remember you when they hear of possible job openings and opportunities.

Job Openings: Job openings are posted in a variety of locations. The Office of Career Services maintains job listings online through its job bank. The Career Services professional can assist you in learning about other password-protected job search sites. You might also want to consider local newspapers, state and federal bar newsletters and any legal publication in the geographical area where you are interested in working. Evening students also can use the University Career Services Center to look for non-legal jobs. Their website is <http://www.stmarytx.edu/careerservices/> and the tool you want to use to search for jobs is the Career Zone. You also may want to access their On Line Career Resources to get tips on constructing a non-legal resume.

The On-Campus Interview program provides specific job openings, as well. On-Campus Interviewing is not an exhaustive tool to use to secure employment, as many law firms do not participate. Fall OCI is predominantly attended by the largest firms seeking second year law students for traditional summer clerkships. These firms typically interview students whose academics are within the top 5% to 25% of their class. Evening Program students are eligible to participate in Fall OCI after their first academic year is complete. Spring OCI generally does not have many law firms recruiting; instead, generally government agencies, smaller firms and public interest organizations recruit then. Evening Program students may participate in Spring OCI during all calendar years of law school.

Helpful Hints for Job Search Success

- Your job search must remain a year-round activity. Most students consider the fall semester to be the most important job market time, but this is not necessarily the case. Many students procure employment during the spring semester. Keep your momentum going throughout the year! Regularize your job search. Decide when and how much time you will devote to the search and set specific time aside. This will insure that you are working toward your career goals and will take pressure off of you the rest of the time when you concentrate on work, studies, family and other activities.
- Be flexible. Consider different geographical locations (if possible), areas of practice and types of organization (such as firms, corporations, non-profits, government agencies and public interest organizations). Be as realistic as possible. Realize that the San Antonio market is very tight and without much growth or turnover. Know that this makes this a very competitive area in which to locate employment. If you are interested in a job in San Antonio, do not hesitate to apply for positions, but think about alternatives if you are not successful.
- Develop as many contacts as you can. The more people you know and include in your job search, the more opportunities that can exist.
- Your resume is a reflection of you. Make sure it is in legal resume format as legal employers have specific ideas about what they want to see (and not see) on a resume and how the information is presented. Be sure to access the handout regarding creating legal resumes at http://www.stmarytx.edu/law/content/careerservices/pdf/HowToCreateALegalResume_Packet.pdf. Your resume can make or break you in some instances as the market is very tight and employers can afford to be very picky. Make sure that it is not only an accurate reflection of your education and experience, but that it is an effective marketing tool for you.
- Promote your past experiences. Use your cover letters, resume and interviews to market all of your skills, especially those that are transferable from non-legal to legal employment. Always demonstrate the relevancy of your experience to the needs of the employer.
- Follow up with all the applications and resumes that you have sent out for jobs. If you have not heard from an employer within two weeks, call to inquire about the status. Remember that there is a fine line between appearing to be assertive and pestering an employer. Consequently, don't call before two weeks have passed.

- Do not forget to utilize your professors for their wealth of information.
 - Remember to check the job bank regularly for deadlines and job postings.
 - Utilize the Office of Career Services. As each job is different, so is each Evening Program student. Each of you has individual experiences, skills, interests, talents and needs. Let the Office assist you in designing a job search strategy that is appropriate for you. Communication is essential. Be sure to keep in touch with the Office in person or via email or phone to tell what is going on with your job search. After you follow the sample and instructions on how to create a legal resume at http://www.stmarytx.edu/law/career_services/content/pdf/HowToCreateALegalResume_Packet.pdf, a professional in the Office will review and tweak it.
 - Take advantage of the many recruitment fairs at which the School of Law participates.
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VIII. RESUMES AND COVER LETTERS

Resumes: Your resume needs to be in legal format regardless of any other format you may have utilized in the past. Your resume reflects you as an individual and should highlight the items that make you a qualified candidate for the types of positions you are seeking. You can access handouts regarding crafting your legal resume and view a sample resume at http://www.stmarytx.edu/law/career_services/content/pdf/HowToCreateALegalResume_Packet.pdf.

Cover Letters: Cover letters are an integral and important aspect of your legal job search as well. The cover letter is a short note explaining your interest in the firm, why you have the skills needed to do the job, and any other information that sets you apart for the position. Never send a cover letter “to Whom It May Concern”. Your letter should highlight particular aspects of your background that are relevant to the needs of the organization to which you are writing. Be sure to include information that may not be on your resume but is important, such as specific courses taken or projects completed during the semester. See the cover letter instructions at http://www.stmarytx.edu/law/career_services/pdf/Effective_Cover_Letters.pdf and the template at http://www.stmarytx.edu/law/career_services/pdf/cover_letter_template.pdf

Any further assistance with your resume and/or cover letter may be obtained from our Office. Email the office at amendoza1@stmarytx.edu, attaching your resume and cover letter, and make an appointment to review the edited materials.

IX. INTERVIEWING

In addition to the materials in the Office of Career Services pertaining to preparing for an interview, as an Evening Program student you should be prepared to answer some specific questions about your situation and your future plans. Below are some questions that you may be asked in your interview:

About Law School

Why did you decide to attend law school?

- Some employers may wonder why you have decided to switch careers and may fear that you are a career hopper in search of the ideal field for you. If you have more than one graduate degree, employers may see you as a professional student. Be prepared to answer with a concise explanation for your pursuit of a law degree and show confidence in your decision of such pursuit.
- This question is often asked of all students—not just second career students, so don’t treat it like an attack question. Consider it an opportunity to tell your story. Often second career students have chosen law school at great personal and financial sacrifice. This is your opportunity to introduce yourself and share your story and your values beyond the information on your resume.
- Be careful not to complain or speak poorly of previous careers or of the law school.
- Make it clear that you are a team player, willing to take direction while learning to be a lawyer. Although you may have risen in the ranks of your current profession, be prepared and willing to start at an entry-level position in the law.

Why are you enrolled in the Evening Program?

- Let the interviewer know that you are very serious about obtaining your degree, but have other obligations that preclude you from attending law school on a full-time basis.

Why aren't you writing for the Law Journal or Scholar or participating in more activities?

- Most Evening Program students find that time constraints do not permit them to become involved in many extracurricular activities, especially during the first two years.
- Many people in the legal profession believe that writing for the *Law Journal* or *Scholar* is an indication of strong writing skills. If you are not on law review, consider what past or current experiences you have had that have developed your writing ability.

About Your Experiences and Education

What in your prior education or work experience will benefit you in the practice of law? What do you plan to do with your expertise if you want to build on it?

- Think of your prior education and experience as a basis on which law school builds. Explain that because of your past experiences you have abilities and qualities that others do not. Discuss how these skills can enhance your legal career.
- If you have a specialty that you intend to combine with the practice of law, you must demonstrate your technical expertise, point to your accomplishments and describe your contacts in the field, while projecting your future ability to generate business. At the same time, you must make it clear that you are a team player who is willing to take direction while learning to be a lawyer.
- If the interviewer's professional background is different from yours, explain your technical experience without being condescending.
- Example: "Because of the nature of your business and my demonstrated experience doing _____, I would be an excellent addition to your firm because..." Support the premise that you would be an excellent addition to the employer's business.

If you plan to change direction in your career, what will you say about your former career?

- Remain patient as you repeatedly explain your story about why you came to law school to do something new and different. If you are not interested in a practice area that would seem logical based on your experience (for example, the accountant who is abandoning tax and the engineer with no interest in intellectual property), be vigilant in the pursuit of new opportunities and connections!

What are your transferable skills?

- You probably possess skills and expertise from your former career that are transferable to your legal career, such as advising, analyzing, writing, editing, advocating, lobbying and researching.
- TIP: To discover your transferable skills, write down 20 things you did/do on a daily basis in your former/current career. Think about the skills which are important to practicing law and then examine your skills to see which ones transfer to a legal career.

About Your Expectations

What are your salary expectations?

- Unless your level of expertise and professional reputation warrant it, as you are starting over in your new career you will be paid like an entry-level lawyer. However, often accepting a relatively low-paying entry-level job makes sense because it is the first step on your new career path.
- If you have been in a position that pays more than the current job for which you are interviewing, the employer may be concerned that you will expect more money than the other applicants. You need to express to the interviewer your understanding that you are beginning a new career path and that you will be taking a temporary pay cut. Let the interviewer know that you see this as a long-term commitment and that the salary is only a short-term factor.

Do you expect to be given more responsibility and autonomy because you held responsible positions in your prior career?

- Even if you are extremely experienced in a different field, you still need to learn about lawyering and the business and practice of law before being given responsibility and autonomy. Just the fact that you were once a boss doesn't mean that you will be a boss of lawyers or law clerks without proving yourself in this new career.
- Let the interviewer know that you are a team player who is willing to take direction while learning to be a lawyer, and that you are aware that you will be given responsibility and autonomy as your lawyering skills develop.

Are you willing to be a first year associate?

- This is like the question above in that you are starting over again. If you have held a position of authority and/or responsibility in your last profession, it may be difficult for you to start at the bottom again. You must come to terms with this in order to ensure a successful career in the law, and be able to convey your understanding of this to the interviewer.

How do you feel about working under someone who may be much younger but who graduated from law school before you have?

- Again, this is an issue of starting over in a new field, which may mean reporting to someone who is considerably younger than you are. Indicate to the interviewer that you make judgments about individuals based on their abilities and how they treat you—not by chronological age. Tell the interviewer that you have worked and attended law school with people who are both younger and older than you, and that age has never been an issue.
- Discuss your history as a team player (give examples) and respect for people from whom you expect to learn.

About Your Future Goals

Why do you want to practice law?

- Employers want to know that you do want to practice law and that you are committed to a legal career. You should be able to articulate your career goals in the interview.

Remember that you have an interesting story to tell that the employer will remember. You have an opportunity to impress the interviewer with your maturity, judgment and eagerness to bring life experience to the practice of law. Be prepared to articulate that story in your interviews!

If you have a difficult time in answering any of the questions above or if there are other issues not covered that could cause difficulty in answering questions in your interviews, please speak with a Career Services professional. The professional can also help you with any other questions that might arise during the interview process and can go over interview strategies with you to help you address any problem areas that concern you. If you have time to read nothing else, pick up a copy of *An Insider's Guide to Interviewing: Insights from the Employer's Perspective*. It is available in the Career Services Office or can be mailed upon request to amendoza1@stmarytx.edu. Mailing the Guide is restricted to St. Mary's Evening program law students only.

Contains excerpts, used with permission, from Annette R. Wilson, former director; the George Washington University Law School Law Career Development Office; and the Southern Methodist University Dedman School of Law Office of Career Services "Career Planning for the Evening Student" handouts.