

CAREER DEVELOPMENT

A MANUAL FOR JD, JOINT DEGREE AND LL.M STUDENTS

OFFICE OF CAREER SERVICES

VERMONT LAW SCHOOL

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I. INTRODUCTION

This manual serves as a reference for the career development process. It includes both substantive information and sample documents. The substantive information is designed to provide an understanding of the legal employment environment and the process for obtaining positions within it. The sample documents are examples of both the content and format of résumés, cover letters, thank you notes, etc. Personalize these documents as much as possible and review the additional tips provided on the pages preceding the samples. We hope that this manual will assist you as you prepare for your entry into the legal profession. The Office of Career Services stands ready to help you at each stage along the way.

II. OFFICE OF CAREER SERVICES – WHO WE ARE & HOW WE CAN HELP YOU ACHIEVE SUCCESS

The Office of Career Services is here to assist you in every facet of your professional development -- from defining your career goals to drafting effective résumés and cover letters, from establishing a professional network to obtaining internships and post-graduate employment. The Office is not, however, a "placement" office that simply distributes job offers to the students who appear in its doorway. The state of the employment market prevents that from being the case. Furthermore, we believe that we have a responsibility to teach you about the employment market so that you can be independent job seekers throughout your professional career.

Looking for a job requires energy, creativity, and a commitment to the process. Fortunately, opportunities for professional development occur in a variety of settings: in the classroom, in discussions with professionals, in internships, and in the process of learning about yourself as you progress through your degree program. The Office of Career Services is committed to helping you during this process.

Office Hours: The Office is open on weekdays between 8:00 and 5:00.

Where We're Located: The Office, including a spacious and well-equipped Career Resource Room, is located on the second floor of Dearing House, above the Barrister's Bookshop on Chelsea Street. If you are unable to navigate the stairs, please call so that we can make alternative arrangements for your convenience.

Who we are:

Abby Armstrong, Director of Career Services

X1208 / aarmstrong@vermontlaw.edu

Abby has worked at VLS in various capacities since graduating with her JD in 1984. She has been in the Office of Career Services since 1991, serving as its Director since 1994. Prior to that, she taught Torts, was the Director of the Legal Writing Program, and served as a reference librarian.

Matthew Houde, Associate Director of Career Services

X1241 / mhoude@vermontlaw.edu

Matthew is a graduate of Dartmouth College and the University of Connecticut Law School. After working in private practice in Connecticut and New Hampshire, Matthew returned to the Upper Valley and joined the Career Services Office in 2003. Matthew also serves in the NH State Senate and is primarily focused on our employer outreach and on campus interviewing efforts.

Shelly Parker, Assistant to the Director

x2249 / sparker@vermontlaw.edu

Shelly has worked in the Career Services Office since 1985. In addition to making sure that the Office runs smoothly, she is responsible for Symplicity, our online job listing database, and coordinates our on campus and employer relations programs.

Barbara Lernihan, Administrative Assistant

X1243 / blernihan@vermontlaw.edu

Barbara has worked in legal education for a number of years and joined the VLS Office of Career Services in 2006. She is the point of first contact for most students and schedules appointments, answers questions about our services and helps students with job-related mail merges.

What we offer: OCS offers services to both current students and Alumni, including:

1. Individual career counseling appointments;
2. Assistance with résumé writing, cover letters, interview techniques, and job search strategies;
3. Guidance with judicial clerkship applications;
4. Interview programs including on-campus interviewing, off-campus interview programs and résumé collection for employers;
5. Participation in national and regional off-campus job fairs and recruitment programs, including the Equal Justice Works Job Fair and the New Hampshire Job Fair;
6. Job postings for students and alumni, which are available online through Symplicity;
7. Online resources that provide information on areas of interest to students, including judicial clerkships, public interest careers, international employment, etc.;
8. Career planning resources, including books and directories, located in the OSC resource room;
9. Mock interviews with members of the OCS staff and alumni; and
10. Free use of the OCS's resources, including computers, photocopiers, and fax machines for job search-related activities.

How to reach us: OCS maintains a 24-hour voicemail service on the telephone number listed below so that you may leave a message at any time. We will return your call as soon as possible.

Vermont Law School
Office of Career Services
P.O. Box 96 Chelsea Street
South Royalton, VT 05068
(802) 831-1243
FAX: (802) 763-3217
Careerservices@vermontlaw.edu

II. A SEMESTER-BY-SEMESTER JOB SEARCH TIMELINE: WHEN YOU SHOULD BE DOING WHAT

The following recommendations are guidelines to give you an idea of the job search timeline as you progress through law school. Note: the job search market and timeline of an LLM candidate is addressed at the end of the JD section. Each student is encouraged to schedule a counseling appointment with the OCS staff to discuss your particular situation.

a. First Year JD

- i. **First Semester:** Due to National Association for Law Placement (NALP) restrictions, first year law students are not eligible to access career services until November 1 of their first year. As a 1L you should focus almost exclusively on your course work. Strong academic credentials will increase your chances of obtaining your dream job.

1. **Résumé Review from November 1 Through December:** Your résumé is your most important job-related document and you should make sure you have a professional looking résumé completed by the end of the first semester. To begin the process, consult the samples in this manual or on the VLS web page at www.vermontlaw.edu/x799.xml. Make an appointment with an OCS counselor to review your résumé if you have questions.
 2. **Attend Introduction to Career Services sessions** scheduled during Legal Writing class periods in November.
 3. **Meet with Career Services** to discuss future career plans, areas of interest, and how to gain legal experience during the summer following first year.
 4. **Monitor jobs and internships on Symplicity**, which is our password protected online jobs database. Password information will be sent to your VLS email account after November 1. We encourage you to explore this site to become familiar with the different types of positions and application processes. To access Symplicity, click on <http://www.vermontlaw.edu/x1415.xml>.
 5. **Identify potential legal employers and geographic locations of interest.** Identify people who can provide information about possible opportunities (family, friends, professors, alumni/ae from your college or VLS, etc. are good informational resources). Focus on smaller firms, state and local government agencies, judges, and public interest agencies that are more likely to hire first year students.
- ii. **Second Semester: If you are not participating in MELP summer courses**, your goal is to obtain legal employment (paid or unpaid) to make yourself more marketable for your second summer. In addition to enhancing your résumé, some type of legal employment will help you to build contacts and develop important skills. The following are strongly suggested guidelines:
1. **If you haven't already, Make an Appointment with an OCS Counselor to Finalize Your Résumé.** Develop a job search strategy and discuss summer educational opportunities.
 2. **Gather References:** Typically three will suffice. For 1Ls that are coming directly from college, obtain one VLS professor, an undergraduate professor, and a previous employer (even if the employer is not a legal one). For 1Ls with some work experience, a VLS professor and two previous employers are suggested. Make sure you ask each reference for permission before he/she is listed as a reference.
 3. **Request Your Transcript from the Registrar.** Some positions will require an official or unofficial copy of your transcript. You can request a pdf version of your résumé from the Registrar.
 4. **Make an Appointment with the Writing Center or Your Legal Writing Fellow to Review Your Writing Sample:** As 1Ls, you are all in the same boat – your likely writing sample is the one you prepared during your first semester. For certain positions, a writing sample will be required.
 5. **Participate in the spring on campus recruiting program** that brings area government agencies and public interest groups to campus to recruit 1Ls and 2Ls.
 6. **Meet with Career Services to discuss possible volunteer options** with judges, public interest organizations, and government agencies.
 7. **Attend OCS Workshops:** Email announcements and updates to our website will be made accordingly.

8. **Participate in a Mock Interview:** This can be arranged with an OCS counselor and/or alumni. A mock interview is helpful as it alleviates some nervousness and allows you to practice and refine your answers.
 9. **Obtain summer public interest fellowship applications** from the Office of Financial Aid and submit the application by the March (typically) deadline.
 10. **Consider being a Research Assistant to a Professor:** Watch campus bulletin boards for announcements of opportunities to conduct research for professors on campus.
 11. **Joint degree students** meet with Career Services to discuss your job search, the MELP internship and the 7th Semester option.
 12. **Finalize summer plans** and confirm starting date with employer.
 13. **Advise Career Services of your summer plans** and provide the office with your summer address. Discuss with staff how to maximize the benefit of your summer experience and plan for the fall of your second year.
 14. **Make an Appointment with Your Academic Advisor in April Prior to Course Registration:** If you have questions about your schedule and/or what classes to take, schedule an appointment with your assigned academic advisor.
 - a. **If You Have Not Found Employment Post-Finals:** Not all 1Ls will find summer employment by this time. If you have not found a position, please contact the OCS immediately, so we may assist you in your search.
- iii. **Summer:** Work hard and make an effort to network to increase your contacts and references.
1. **Be Aware of Deadlines for Upcoming 2L Summer Employment Opportunities:** If you are applying for large firms and/or government honors programs, application deadlines are as early as July and August. Make sure to contact the OCS with questions or concerns.
 2. **Update Your Résumé to Include Your 1L Summer Work or Educational Experience:** Also, even if you are out of the area, send your résumé to the OCS for review via email.
 3. **Check VLS Email and Symplicity for Announcements of Job Fairs and On-Campus Recruitment Efforts**
 4. **Network:** Talk to professionals in the field: not only can it be informative, it can often lead to employment.
 5. **Begin to identify prospective employers and geographic locations** for the following summer. Conduct informational interviews, particularly if you are spending the summer in an area far from South Royalton and you would like to return there.
 6. **Consider Registering for the Multistate Professional Responsibility Exam (MPRE):** This is the ethics exam that most state bar examinations require. Some states, including Massachusetts, require that you have receive a score of 85 or higher on the exam before you can sign up to sit for the bar exam. In contrast, New Jersey does not require the MPRE at all, as long as you received a C or higher in the required Legal Profession course. The MPRE is typically offered in August, November, and March, so plan accordingly. If you are not sure about what bar exam you are going to take contact OCS to discuss when you should take the MPRE. For more information on the MPRE, go to www.ncbex.org/multistate-tests/mpre/.

7. **Joint Degree students:** Meet with Career Services to discuss the process for your job/MELP internship search and general career planning.

b. Second Year JD

- i. **First Semester:** Arrive at VLS prepared for on and off campus interviews and job fairs, which all take place between August and October. Your résumé, cover letters, writing sample, references, and transcript should be finalized. The following are strongly suggested guidelines:

1. **Attend Workshops and/or Meet with an OCS Counselor to Develop Job Search Strategy**
2. **Update your resume** based upon your summer experience. If joint degree, consider listing course work indicating how you spent your summer.
3. **Be Aware of Deadlines and Application Procedures:** Review positions listed on Symplicity. Note application dates that occur early in the fall semester and whether application should be made through Career Services or directly to the employer. If you are interested in working for the federal government or a large firm, remember that application deadlines are as early as July and August.
4. **Check Symplicity on a Weekly Basis** - To access Symplicity, go to <http://www.vermontlaw.edu/x1415.xml>.
5. **Become familiar with the NALP Directory** – www.nalpdirectory.com – which focuses primarily on large firms with summer associate programs
6. **Become familiar with the University of Arizona's Government Guide** - www.law.arizona.edu/career/honorshandbook.cfm - which includes all the major summer job and internship listings with federal and some larger state government agencies. The site is password protected. For 2008-2009, the user name is graham and the password is cracker.
7. **Participate in OCS Panels and Workshops**
8. **Consider Enhancing Your Résumé:** Participating in a clinic, an externship for credit, or working part-time during the academic year can lead to summer and/or permanent employment.
9. **Participate in a Mock Interview:** This can be arranged with an OCS counselor and/or alumni.
10. **Continue to Network and Request Informational Interviews.** Attend the Equal Justice Works Career Fair in Washington, DC if interested in public interest law.
11. **Schedule interviews with potential employers for January break.**

- ii. **Second Semester:** This is when most second year students obtain their summer jobs.

1. **Research Employers You are Interested in Targeting:** In January start applying for small to mid-sized law firms, public interest organizations, government agencies, and corporations. Keep in mind that not all places of employment post jobs and often openings come about on an "as needed" basis. Thus, applying to employers of interest in January may lead to employment a few months later.
2. **Participate in a Mock Interview**
3. **Check Symplicity on a Weekly Basis**

4. **Review the Judicial Clerkship Manual** at <http://www.vermontlaw.edu/Documents/040208-judicialClerkshipInfo.pdf> for information about state and federal judicial clerkships and attend the Judicial Clerkship Panel. Revise/create cover letter, resume, and writing sample appropriate for judicial clerkship applications. Request references for federal clerkships.
5. **Continue to Network**
6. **Expand employer search** to include smaller firms, government agencies, and public interest groups.
7. **Joint Degree students:** Meet with Career Services staff to discuss internship/job search and general career planning. Finalize internship arrangements.
8. **Prepare summer public interest fellowship application** materials for VLS fellowships for submission in mid-March (usually).
9. **Discuss with the Office staff how to maximize your summer experience and plan for the fall of your third year.**
10. **Advise Career Services** of your summer plans and provide the Office with your summer address.
11. **If you do not have a law-related position by the end of exams,** notify the Office of Career Services and plan to stay in touch. Historically, employers will contact the Office in late May or early June wishing to hire summer law clerks. The Office staff will contact you directly about these opportunities if you provide the Office with a current address and phone number.
12. **Register for the MPRE:** This is the multiple choice ethics exam that most state bar examinations require. Some states, including Massachusetts, require that you have receive a score of 85 or higher on the exam before you can sign up to sit for the bar exam. In contrast, New Jersey does not require the MPRE at all, as long as you received a C or higher in the required Legal Profession course. The MPRE is typically offered in August, November, and March, so plan accordingly. If you are not sure about what bar exam you are going to take contact OCS to discuss when you should take the MPRE. For more information on the MPRE, go to www.ncbex.org/multistate-tests/mpre/.

iii. Summer

1. **Be Aware of Deadlines for Upcoming 3L Employment Opportunities:** If you are applying for large firms and/or government honors programs, application deadlines are as early as July and August. Make sure to contact the OCS with questions or concerns.
2. **Update Your Résumé to Include Your 2L Summer Work or Educational Experience:** Also, even if you are out of the area, send your résumé to the OCS for review via email.
3. **Check VLS Email and Symplicity for Announcements of Job Fairs and On-Campus Recruitment Efforts**
4. **Apply to judicial clerkships that have summer deadlines.** See <http://www.vermontlaw.edu/Documents/040208-judicialClerkshipInfo.pdf> for more information.
5. **Research and begin applying for post-law school public interest fellowships.** See <http://www.pslawnet.org/postgraduatefellowships> for more information and deadlines.
6. **Continue to Network**
7. **Register for the MPRE if you haven't already** For more info on the MPRE, see number 12 above.

c. **Third Year JD**

i. **First Semester**

1. **Follow the Guidelines for the 2L Year:** Consider externing or working part-time to network and enhance your legal experience.
2. **Meet with an OCS Counsel to Revisit or Begin developing Your Job Search Strategy**
3. **Apply to judicial clerkships that have fall deadlines.** See <http://www.vermontlaw.edu/Documents/040208-judicialClerkshipInfo.pdf> for more information.
4. **Apply to federal agencies** (PMF, Justice, SEC, IRS, DOD, . . .) offering entry-level Honors Programs. See www.law.arizona.edu/career/honorshandbook.cfm, which includes all the entry-level attorney programs with federal and some larger state government agencies. The site is password protected. For 2008-2009, the user name is graham and the password is cracker.
5. **Complete applications for post-law school public interest fellowships.** See <http://www.pslawnet.org/postgraduatefellowships> for more information and deadlines.
6. **Research Bar Exam requirements.**
7. **Continue to Network**
8. **Attend Equal Justice Works Conference and Career Fair** in Washington, DC if interested in public interest law.
9. **Register for the MPRE:** If you have not taken the MPRE, or did not receive a sufficient score, make sure you are aware of the requirements of the state bar exam you plan to take. If the MPRE is required, be sure to register for the October exam.

ii. **Second Semester**

1. **Expand employer search** to include smaller firms, public interest groups and government agencies. Identify employers for possible mail merge focusing on geographic areas of interest.
2. **Develop follow-up strategy for employers contacted.** Contact employers for informational interviews in areas of the country where you would like to practice.
3. **Monitor Symplicity** for employers listing positions. Begin to review newsletters and websites announcing available positions for graduates such as **Environmental Career Opportunities**, www.idealists.org, to identify potential employers.
4. **Focus on small firms, small government agencies, and non-traditional employers** (insurance companies, consulting firms, etc.) that tend to hire on an as-needed basis.
5. **Finalize Bar Exam plans.**
6. **Expand search activities as needed.** Mail merge to smaller firms focusing on Bar plans and geographic location. Follow up with visits to employers and make contact with local bar association.
7. **Follow state budget process** to identify government agencies likely to be able to hire after adoption of budgets. Monitor the state's government hiring page and make preliminary contacts.
8. **Give Career Services your summer address.** Ask Office of Career Services to request reciprocity services for you with law schools located in areas of the country where you will take the Bar.
9. **Plan strategy for post-Bar exam job search.** Identify resources (alumni/ae, bar newsletters, publications) to be utilized during your search.

III. AN INTRODUCTION TO COMMON SETTINGS FOR PRACTICING LAW

A Juris Doctor is a versatile degree and can be used in traditional legal employment, non-traditional legal employment, and non-legal employment. While it is common for law students to change their focus throughout law school, an overview of the types of employment in which lawyers are typically involved is helpful to focus your job search. The following sections provide an introduction to the most common areas for practicing law. To further enhance your understanding of these areas, contact the OCS, alumni, and practitioners.

- a. **Law Firms:** A law firm is a for-profit business, with partners as co-owners and associates as employees. Law firms include all associations of attorneys that are engaged in the private practice of law, whether in partnerships or in-house for corporations. Firm sizes range from solo practitioners to partnerships with hundreds of attorneys, and can be found in every state as well as foreign jurisdictions. There are two different basic types of firms, those that provide a range of legal services for their clients and substance-driven boutique firms that specialize in one practice area, such as environmental law or bankruptcy. Principal practice distinctions include: Litigation (i.e., research and writing, drafting pleadings, and trial and/or appellate advocacy); Transactional (i.e. real estate, corporate, trusts and estates); and Regulatory (i.e., environmental, health care compliance matters).
 - i. **Large:** A large firm has more than 100 lawyers with organized departments, i.e., a litigation department, a tax department, or an international department. An associate is assigned to one department and does not typically have the opportunity to rotate to other departments.
 - ii. **Small:** A small firm has several different definitions. In a large city, a small firm can have between 2-50 attorneys; in a small city, between 2-25 attorneys; and in a rural area, between 2-5 attorneys. The type of work at a small firm varies and often includes real estate, family law, criminal law, and wills and trusts. A smaller general practice firm will have a mix of smaller businesses and individuals as their client base.
 - iii. **Boutique:** These are firms that specialize in a specific field such as environmental, criminal defense, or oil and gas rights.
 - iv. **Solo Practice:** This is where you are your own boss! As an aspiring solo practitioner, you must prefer to work alone and have an entrepreneurial spirit. You can “hang a shingle” and develop your own client-base or you can go into an office-sharing agreement with another attorney, firm, or company that is renting space.
- b. **Government:** If you are looking for work-life balance and great hands-on experience, then the government may be the place for you. While the pay is not as high as it is for some private employers, there are many interesting opportunities within the federal, state, and local government. These jobs typically provide excellent training and specialization in a specific area of law. Also, government jobs may open the door to the private arena or quick advancement (in terms of responsibility and pay) within the government.
 - i. **Federal:** The federal government is the largest legal employer in the world. Most agencies, departments, commissions, and boards hire attorneys, including law students during the summer and academic year. Most entry-level attorney positions require a JD, one year of experience, and membership in a state bar. Exceptions to this rule are the entry-level “Honors” programs, which allow students to be hired during their third year of law school.
 - ii. **State & Local:** There are many attorney positions at the state, county, and city level. Typically, the Office of the Attorney General is the primary state employer of attorneys, however, there are multiple other departments including health and

family services, the environment, education, and employment, etc. In addition, there are county and city attorneys' offices, district attorneys, and public defenders. These positions are not advertised on a regular basis, and in most instances, these employers hire based on the needs of the agency/department.

- c. **The Judiciary:** Attorneys are employed throughout the judiciary as judges, law clerks, magistrates, referees, prosecutors, and staff attorneys.
 - i. **Judges:** While this will not be your first legal position, if you aspire to be a judge, consider clerking after school to learn how the court works, to network, and to gain practical legal experience. The easiest way to understand what types of judges there are is to think of them in terms of federal and state judges.
 - 1. **Federal Level:** These judges are appointed by the President and are not required to have prior judicial experience.
 - a. **District Court Judges** (trial)
 - b. **Appellate Court Judges** (circuit)
 - c. **Supreme Court Judges**
 - d. **Specialized Court Judges** (tax, international trade, bankruptcy, etc.)
 - 2. **State Level:** The structure varies by state, but generally it models the federal system, including a trial level, appellate, and supreme court. Also, there are specialty courts, including land, juvenile, probate, etc. State judges may be elected or appointed depending on the state.
 - ii. **Judicial Clerks:** A judicial clerkship is an opportunity to work directly for a judge after the completion of law school. Judicial law clerks assist judges with a variety of tasks, including conducting legal research, drafting opinions, editing, writing memoranda, analyzing legal issues, performing cite checks, and presenting oral briefs. A clerkship is considered to be a prestigious position and can be quite competitive, especially in the federal system. A clerkship typically lasts one or two years and is an excellent way to bridge the gap between law school and the practice of law. For more detailed information on judicial clerkships, go to <http://www.vermontlaw.edu/Documents/040208-judicialClerkshipInfo.pdf>.
 - iii. **Magistrates & Referees:** Magistrates and referees preside over pre-trial proceedings and offer clerkships on a case-by-case basis.
- d. **Public Interest:** The role of public interest lawyers is to promote the representation of the underrepresented, ensure equal access to the legal system for all, and to raise society's consciousness regarding social and political issues that affect all of our lives. Public interest lawyers typically represent the poor, the homeless, minorities, the elderly, veterans, workers, and consumers. In addition to representing a diverse group of people, public interest lawyers perform a wide range of law-related activities and their work embraces a wide diversity of issues, including: immigration, the environment, employment, housing, civil rights, First Amendment rights, consumer rights, education, and child abuse prevention. Public interest practice settings can be broken down into three categories:
 - i. **Public Interest Organizations:** These include civil rights groups, legal services corporations, legal aid societies, public defender offices, children's rights centers, prisoners' rights centers, disability law centers, social action organizations and other specialized law centers that work to protect the rights of the under-representation of clients.
 - ii. **The Private Bar:** Some law firms across the country devote a substantial amount of their practice to civil rights law, plaintiffs' tort cases, union-side labor law, prisoners' rights and tenants' rights. Public interest law firms may also represent cities and counties or public organizations and agencies in the area of

municipal law. In addition, some firms devote some of their resources to pro bono cases and allow attorneys/associates to spend time on these cases.

- iii. **Non-Practicing Legal Positions:** There are alternatives to practicing traditional law in public interest organizations or law firms. These include policy, management, and legislative analysis positions.
- e. **Corporations:** Corporations typically hire lawyers with at least three to five years of legal experience for in-house counsel positions. In-house attorneys may work on issues and projects inherent to a corporation's general operations, such as purchase/sale agreements and employee contract negotiations or in areas specific to a corporation's products or services, like patent applications and regulatory compliance. Depending on a company's structure, lawyers engaged in tax, personnel, and risk management functions may also be included in the legal department. Many corporations prefer to recruit experienced attorneys from the law firms which serve as outside counsel for the corporation, both for their substantive expertise and their ability to understand and control the law firm's functions and costs. As in-house counsel, the company is your sole client and your job is to serve that client in a variety of ways, including by monitoring compliance with relevant regulations, minimizing liability, and preventing costly litigation.
- f. **Legislature:** Many lawyers work on Capitol Hill or for the state government as aides to elected representatives. In addition to supervisory duties and speech writing, they participate in committee and subcommittee activities in which their employers are members. Working in this field requires extensive networking. Most legislative aides begin their careers as interns and work toward obtaining full-time paid employment. Some aides become politicians themselves, others take administrative or executive office positions, or they create or join lobbying firms for the institutions they support.
- g. **Academia:** Positions in academia include staff, faculty, administration, and university counsel. Faculty requirements vary by school, however, law school grades are very important for most positions as is the writing experience (journal/law review) you gained during school. It is important that some of your writing be published. In addition, many professors have clerked for a federal judge, worked for the federal government, and/or worked as an associate at a large firm. Also, lawyers can be found in many administrative positions, such as career services, admissions offices, and other student and alumni offices. In these positions, you can expect to have direct contact with current students, prospective students and those who have already graduated. The skills needed to succeed in these positions can be honed through legal practice, including organizational, counseling, and analytical skills. Librarians (with JD and MLS degrees) give lectures and publish in journals. Universities also hire in-house counsel to give advice on a full range of legal and other issues confronted by the school administration.
- h. **Non-Traditional/Alternative:** Alternative law-related positions are found in every employment sector and in virtually every industry, including corporations, trade associations, professional associations, government, foundations, colleges and universities, accounting firms, hospitals, banks, museums, insurance companies and law firms. In addition, lawyers are lobbyists, politicians, campaign managers, and fundraisers.

IV. NETWORKING & DEVELOPING AN EFFECTIVE JOB SEARCH STRATEGY

Searching for a job is an ongoing effort that requires self-analysis and persistence. Designing an effective job search strategy differs for each individual and is a constantly evolving process. As a general rule, most lawyers change jobs at least four times in their lifetimes. Thus, there are many paths to your dream job.

- a. **Networking:** The most important thing you can do is network, which is essentially building professional contacts for business or employment purposes. It also is an effective way to learn about your chosen career and about opportunities that are not advertised.
 - i. **How to Start Networking:** Once you have made the decision to go to law school, make a list of the all the people you know, including friends, family, professors, social acquaintances, etc. Then make sure that everyone on the list knows that you are searching for a job, regardless of whether it is summer or permanent employment. Consider joining professional organizations to meet people with similar interests and goals. In general, networking is just talking to people who share a similar interest, and while it may seem daunting, at the very least, you will learn a great deal about your chosen career path or profession.
- b. **Designing A Job Search Strategy:** As a 1L, keep a broad list of employers of interest, unless you are absolutely certain of your career goals. You do not want to preclude yourself from a solid legal experience. Remember, there are many paths to your dream job!
 - i. **Identify the Type of Experience you are Looking For:** For instance – are you interested in working for a law firm? Government? Public Interest?
 - ii. **Who Does This Type of Work:** Research employers who engage in the type of work you are interested in pursuing. Send a targeted cover letter to each potential employer of interest.
 - iii. **Network:**
 - 1. **Make a List of Contacts:** Talk to professors and alumni in your field of interest. Ask the OCS and the alumni office for alumni contacts.
 - 2. **Contact Employers and Request an Informational Interview:** Remember to send a thank you letter after the informational interview.
 - 3. **Attend Meetings of Professional Organizations:** Consider joining the bar association of the state in which you are planning to take the bar exam.
 - iv. **Be Mindful of Deadlines:** Make sure you are aware of when applications are due to employers. Also, if you are a 1L or a 2L, keep in mind that the vast majority of students find jobs between spring break and the end of exams so do not panic if you are not employed by the end of the first semester.
 - v. **Send a Résumé & Cover Letter a Few Weeks Before You Plan to be in the Location in which you wish to Work:** Be organized and plan to follow-up with employers to set up interviews.
 - 1. **Address Your Correspondence to an Attorney or the Stated Contact Person**
 - vi. **Prepare for Interviews:** See the Interview section for specifics.
 - vii. **Follow Through:** Be professional and polite. Always send a thank you note or email when appropriate to an employer that has taken the time to interview or speak with you about a position.
 - 1. **After the Interview & Thank You Note:** Upon completion of an interview, ask the hiring authority at the close of the interview what the next step is.

V. WHAT DO I NEED TO APPLY FOR A LEGAL JOB: APPLICATION CHECK LIST

Applying for jobs requires attention to detail and preparation. Generally, each individual employer will request specific documents including a résumé and cover letter. Thus, it is important that you submit a complete application for each job, and equally as important, that you do not submit additional documents. Many employers are interested in hiring lawyers/employees that can follow a

simple set of instructions, which begins with the job application process. The following is a set of guidelines for your applications to employers:

- a. Résumé:**
 - i. Should be printed single-sided on bond paper;
 - ii. Should not exceed one page in length;
 - iii. Should include your contact information including name, address, email, and telephone number.
- b. Cover Letter:**
 - i. Should be printed on bond paper;
 - ii. Should include a date;
 - iii. Should include the employer's complete address;
 - iv. Should be signed in blue or black ink between the closing address ("Sincerely") and your printed name; and
 - v. Should not exceed one page.
- c. Transcript:** Request a copy of your grade report or official transcript (if requested by the employer) from the Registrar's Office. It is strongly suggested that you request your transcript at least two weeks in advance of the application deadline.
- d. Writing Sample:**
 - i. Should be no more than 10 pages long, ideally 3 – 5 pages. If your writing sample is longer than 10 pages, you should:
 - 1. Excerpt a section of the writing sample that highlights your legal analysis skills; and include a cover sheet, describing your sample so the reader can quickly understand the issue being discussed. Include your name at the top of the cover sheet.
 - ii. Should be printed on plain, copy paper and may be double-sided.
- e. References List:**
 - i. Should be printed on bond paper;
 - ii. Should list three references, including their name, title, mailing address, phone number, and email address. Include your résumé heading at the top of your references list.
- f. Letters of Recommendation** (may be required for some job applications):
 - i. You should request letters from your recommenders well in advance of the deadline date and provide them with a job description, contact information, and deadline date for the position you are seeking.
- g. Method of Applying to Jobs:**
 - i. Mailing Applications: Completed applications may be mailed directly in a business or manila envelope. The address should be typed on the outside or typed on a label affixed to the outside of the envelope. Unless otherwise noted, the deadline date is the "received by" date, not the postmarked date.
 - ii. Emailing Applications: Many employers request that your application be submitted via email, especially federal agencies. Your entire application should be professional – this means the email should be addressed to the appropriate contact person.
 - iii. OCS Résumé Collection: Certain employers request that the OCS collect application materials for employers interviewing on campus. Any questions regarding on campus interviews should be sent to Shelly Parker at sparker@vermontlaw.edu.

VI. MARKETING YOURSELF: THE EFFECTIVE LEGAL RÉSUMÉ

Your résumé is a marketing tool used to present your qualifications and credentials to obtain the prospective employer's attention and to secure an interview. A résumé must be a clear, directed,

and persuasive communication. It is not, however, an exhaustive list of everything you have done. A résumé should make the employer want to meet you.

- a. **Important Considerations for Drafting Your Résumé:**
 - i. **Your Résumé is Designed to Accomplish One Goal, to Compel an Employer to Invite You to an Interview:** Be focused and selective. Each item on your résumé should be carefully chosen to support your career direction. Your résumé must be well-organized and without mistakes.
 - ii. **Convince the Employer that You are a Perfect Fit for the Job:** Consider the position that you are applying for and tailor your résumé to that position by conveying that you have specialized work experience as well as an understanding of the position requirements.
 - iii. **Note to 1Ls - Prior Legal Experience is Beneficial but Not Required:** Employers want to know if you have acquired skills that are transferable to the legal workplace. Your résumé should indicate that you have the skills to succeed on the job.
 - iv. **A One Page Résumé is Ideal:** The general rule is no more than one page of résumé for each ten years of relevant and substantive work experience. If your draft exceeds one page, we will help you edit your résumé. Sometimes, a two-page résumé is acceptable; however, a second page should be used only by those with significant past experience or accomplishments relevant to the position sought.
- b. **Writing Style:** The writing style must be active. When writing job descriptions, use active verbs and descriptive terms; avoid using phrases such as “responsibilities included.”
 - i. **Job Description Example:** You were responsible for legal research and writing during your 1L summer clerkship position. Your job description would read as follows: “Researched legal issues and wrote memoranda.” You can improve this statement by adding an element of interest: “Researched law governing corporate liability and the violation of human rights; drafted memoranda presenting certain human rights and environmental issues.” Now, your job description describes your responsibilities and lends some interest by identifying the issues involved.
 - ii. **Quantifying Language Lends Interest, Substance, and Project Accomplishment:** For example, “maintained client contact,” can be stated as follows, “maintained case load of twenty clients.” Similarly, the phrase, “assisted attorneys in medical malpractice suits” can be rephrased as “provided research to support five attorneys involved in a multi-million dollar medical malpractice suit.”
 - iii. **Avoid the Use of Personal Pronouns:** You are implied as the author of the résumé. For example, do not say, “I drafted...,” just say, “Drafted...”
 - iv. **Use of Paragraphs or Bullets:** If using paragraphs, they should be easy to read and quickly scanned; therefore, they should be no more than three or four lines. If your thought surpasses four lines, then construct a full paragraph and break it into several components. Use bullets as an alternative to paragraph format. Bullets should break job/skill descriptions into easy-to-read component parts that begin with eye-catching action verbs.
- c. **Other Guidelines:** Your résumé should be aesthetically pleasing. Employers generally scan résumés to determine whether the candidate is qualified. Thus, résumés should be organized to carry the eye from one major point to the next. The following techniques are useful in creating an easily scanned résumé:
 - i. **Fonts:** Choose a simple, conservative font, such as Times New Roman, Tahoma, or Arial. Do not combine several fonts on one résumé.

- ii. **Margins:** Margins should be at least one inch and spacing should be used to provide an organized look.
 - iii. **Highlighting:** Significant points may be highlighted in some way (underline, ALL CAPITAL LETTERS, *italics*, or **bolding**).
 - iv. **Consistency:** Place information consistently, allowing the reader to anticipate where certain information will be found. The most relevant and significant information (names of employers, job titles) should be on the left side of the page. Less important information (dates and geographic locations of employment) may be placed on the right.
 - v. **Paper:** Use standard-sized 8 ½ x 11 bond paper in a neutral tone. Use the same paper for cover letters and reference lists for a coordinated, professional look.
- d. **Reverse Chronological Format:** List your most recent position first. This format is generally used in the legal employment market and is most effectively used by those who have established/are establishing credentials within a particular field, or whose credentials show career growth and direction within one particular employment sphere.
- e. **What to Include on Your Résumé:**
- i. **Identification:** This section should be centered at the top of your résumé. Include name, address, phone number, and email address. Accurate information is critical so that an employer may contact you to schedule an interview or ask for additional supporting materials.
 - 1. **Address:** Use your current address unless you are applying to a position in your home state (if so, then use both your current and home addresses). Using that address shows ties to the area. However, make sure you list a phone number where you can be reached.
 - ii. **Education:** If currently in school, this section goes first.
 - 1. **List Schools Attended in Reverse Chronological Order:** List the name of the institution, city and state, and date the degree was conferred in reverse chronological order. The education section should include the school's name, city and state, and your graduation date. Under your school listing, include your GPA, class rank, scholarships, honors and/or awards, i.e. "Full Tuition Scholarship: Awarded and renewable on the basis of grades; one of X distributed to incoming class." The specific degree obtained should also be listed as follows:
 - a. Vermont Law School, South Royalton, VT
Juris Doctor expected, May 2011
 - b. Gettysburg College, Gettysburg, PA
Bachelor of Arts *cum laude*, English, May 2008
 - 2. **Secondary School Information:** This information should be excluded, unless you attended a well-known school, and you are hoping to make an alumni/geographic connection with an employer.
 - 3. **Grade Point Average (GPA) and Class Rank:** As a general rule, you should disclose your GPA if it is higher than a 3.0 and class rank if it is above the top 1/3 of your class. If your GPA is below a 3.0 for any degree you received (or are in the process of receiving) then all GPA's should be left off the résumé. For example, if the undergraduate GPA is a 3.2 and the law school GPA is a 2.91, then both GPAs should be left off of the résumé. You do not want to highlight the fact that you did well in one program and not as well in another. Also, if you are in the top 1/3 of the class, then you can (but need not) list class rank; otherwise, it should be left off. If you are uncertain, discuss it with a career counselor.

- a. **GPA Should be Identical to Your Transcript**, i.e. 2.87/4.00. Do not round up any portion of your GPA.
 - b. **Class Ranks:** When including your class rank on your résumé, you must give the number last computed by the school, which is calculated at the end of each semester. Do not estimate your class rank.
 - c. **Joint Programs:** Joint degree students cannot average their GPA's from both schools. Each GPA must be listed separately next to the appropriate school.
 - d. **Coursework:** It is generally not necessary to include courses taken from an institution that did not grant you a degree. However, include coursework that you believe should be emphasized to an employer, such as study abroad programs.
- 4. **Academic Achievements:** As a bullet under the educational institutions, include academic awards and achievements (national honor society, nationally-recognized scholarships). Lesser-known honors and awards, such as Dean's Fellow may require additional explanation. The following are considered academic achievements:
 - a. **Journals and Law Review**
 - b. **Moot Court**
 - c. **Trial Competition(s)**
 - d. **Advanced Writing Requirement (AWR) for JD Students:** Your completed AWR is an academic achievement. When choosing your topic, consider researching an area of law that interests you and discuss it with potential employers that are interested in new developments in their field of law.
 - e. **Student Associations**
- 5. **Non-Academic Extracurricular Activities:** These activities may be listed under the educational institution or included in the Community Involvement/Personal Interests section. See a career counselor if you are uncertain as to the best route.
- iii. **Experience:** Include full-time, part-time, summer, temporary, educational internship, and/or practicum information. The experience may be paid, voluntary, or for academic credit. Jobs should also be listed in reverse chronological order. Do not assume the reader is familiar with activities usually performed by law clerks and/or legal interns. An effective résumé conveys a uniqueness of credentials that is not achieved by listing a set of duties. Describe how you performed the duties rather than just what duties you performed. Unless a job is current, use active past tense verbs to describe skills developed. For example, a description should read as follows, "Researched and wrote memoranda on..." rather than "Duties included researching and writing memoranda..." Again, avoid using a narrative voice in the explanation, such as, "I researched the law and then wrote memoranda."
 - 1. **Job Information should be Organized in the following Hierarchy:**
 - a. **Accomplishments**
 - b. **Range**
 - c. **Skills Acquired**
 - d. **Duties/Responsibilities**
 - 2. **Organization of Legal and Non-legal Experience:** You may want to organize your résumé by dividing your experience into these two sections because it highlights more relevant and recent legal experience. Legal experience includes clinics, researching for a professor of the law school, and intern/externships.

- iv. **Publications Section:** The practice of law requires solid writing skills; thus, evidence that you write well is important. Publications, including those outside the legal profession, can be impressive and may selectively be included in your résumé. However, several listings outside the legal profession might suggest a particular interest or career path. Some balance in perspective should be maintained by selecting only those publications that best support the predetermined legal career direction.
- v. **Professional Associations, Skills, & Licenses Section:** This information may further support your capabilities in a certain field and may include qualifications such as Certified Public Accountant and Series 7 certified.
- vi. **Languages Section:** Languages may be indicated in a separate Language or Skills section. A language may be extremely relevant to certain positions. It is very important, however, that you accurately represent your language ability. There are several ways to state your language ability; generally, one is either a beginner, intermediate, conversational, or fluent. If you are currently taking a language class, this should be indicated as well.
- vii. **Community Involvement & Personal Interests Section:** Personal interests can help to create an image of the applicant, and, during an interview, frequently serve as “ice-breakers.” Likewise, community involvement/volunteer work may give a prospective employer insight into your work habits, leadership potential, motivation level, and community ties. Items typically included in this section include significant sports achievements, substantial travel, and volunteer activities. While you are expressing who you are remember to strike a balance; only include things that are unique or to which you have a demonstrated commitment.
- viii. **What Not to Include on Your Résumé:**
 1. **Objective or Goal Statements:** These are unnecessary and not used in legal résumés. That is what a cover letter is for.
 2. **Abbreviations:** These should be avoided.
 3. **References Available on Request:** Including this line is a waste of space and is unnecessary, as you will provide references if they are requested.
 4. **Résumé:** There is no need to put this label at the top of the page.
 5. **Salary Information:** Salary information should not be disclosed on a résumé; employers place importance on experience gained, not on whether the position was paid or unpaid.
 6. **Date of Birth, Height, Weight, and Health Status:** This information should not be included, as it constitutes a sensitive area of inquiry that may be used to restrict or deny employment.
- f. **Review Your Résumé:** Review a printed copy of your résumé at least three times prior to sending it to an employer and/or contact. Next, ask your peers and/or practitioners to critique your résumé.
- g. **Sample Résumés:** Use the résumés on the following pages as a guide to draft your own résumé:

ISOBEL G. NIELSEN
lgnielsen@vermontlaw.edu

P.O. Box 1
South Royalton, VT 05068
(802) 763-1111

5 Tracy Street
Spokane, WA 99210
(509) 222-3333

EDUCATION

Vermont Law School, South Royalton, VT

Juris Doctor anticipated, May 2003

- Received Pass With Honors in Legal Writing I
- First Year Class Representative, Student Bar Association
- Member, Equal Justice Society
- Member, Ultimate Frisbee Team

Amherst College, Amherst, MA

Bachelor of Arts *cum laude*, Medieval History, May 2000

- Dean's List, 4 of 8 semesters
- Recipient, Rose Academic Scholarship, 1994
- Member, Women's Lacrosse Team, 1993-1995
- Disc Jockey, WAMS, Campus Radio Station, 1994-1995

EMPLOYMENT

The Corner Book Store, Spokane, WA

Clerk, Summers 1998 and 1999

- Assisted customers by recommending and finding books, and served as cashier

The Spokane Bird Sanctuary, Spokane, WA

Teacher/Naturalist, Summer 1997

- Assisted in planning and implementing day camp program for children ages 7-12

The Harvest Inn, Spokane, WA

Waitress, Summers 1993-1996

COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

Head Start, Holyoke, MA, 1996-1999

Pioneer Valley Battered Women's Hotline, Amherst, MA, 1998-1999

Vermont Public Interest Research Group, Montpelier, VT, Fall 2000

SKILLS AND INTERESTS

Proficient in written and spoken Spanish

Interests include Hiking, Cross Country Skiing, Sailing, and Photography

AMOS HORN
P.O. Box 3
South Royalton, VT 05068
Phone: (802) 763-3333
Email: Ahorn@vermontlaw.edu

EDUCATION

Vermont Law School, South Royalton, VT

Juris Doctor anticipated, May 2010

Master of Environmental Law and Policy anticipated May 2010

- Received Honors in Legal Writing I, Fall 2007
- Summer 2008 Master's course work included: Environmental Law, Water Law, Environmental Health Law Risk Assessment, CERCLA, and Land Use

Boston University, Boston, MA

Bachelor of Arts, Political Science, May 2006

- Minor: Ecology
- 36 credits in Natural Sciences
- Teaching Assistant, Chemistry, 1997-98

University of York, York, England

Fall Semester 1997

RELEVANT EMPLOYMENT

US Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Inspection Service, Pittsburgh, PA

Quarantine Aid, August 2006-July 2007

- Served as environmental monitor on federal pesticide spray projects throughout PA
- Wrote "Environmental Monitor's Field Guide"
- Wrote environmental assessments which included NEPA and ESA research

South Shore Natural Science Center, Norwell, MA

Intern, Summer 2005

- Researched and wrote articles for environmental organization's quarterly newsletter
- Assisted executive director in areas of scenic protection and land acquisition

Massachusetts Public Interest Research Group, Boston, MA

Legislative Assistant, Spring 2005

- Researched proposed legislation on solid waste management
- Wrote fact sheets on recycling for legislative and community groups

COMMUNITY SERVICE

Member, Environmental Law Society

Member, Big Brother/Big Sister Program, 2007 to present

INTERESTS

Snowboarding, Winter Camping, Fly Fishing and Mountain Biking

BARBARA J. FINN

P.O. Box 000 / South Royalton, VT / 05068
Phone: (802) 763-0000 / E-Mail: Bfinn@hotmail.com

EDUCATION

Vermont Law School, South Royalton, VT

Juris Doctor and Master of Environmental Law and Policy Candidate, May 2009

- Class Rank: Top 18% (31/ 177); GPA: 3.47/4.00
- *Vermont Journal of Environmental Law*, Staff Member, 2007-2009
- Summer 2007 Master's course work included: Environmental Law, Mediation, Conservation Land Trusts, Biotechnology, Science of Risk Assessment, and Tribal Environmental Programs

San Diego State University, San Diego, CA

Bachelor of Science, Biology, May 2005

- GPA: 3.23/4.00
- Selected coursework included:
Physics, Chemistry, Organic Chemistry, Biochemistry, Genetics, Ecology, Calculus

WORK EXPERIENCE

Smith, Jones & Smith, New Orleans, LA

Summer Associate, Summer 2008

- Researched and wrote memoranda on a range of issues, including environmental remediation, CERCLA, corporate environmental compliance, and land use.
- Assisted attorneys with trial preparation and observed several trials and administrative hearings

Professor Kenneth Kreiling, Vermont Law School, VT

Research Assistant, Part-time, Summer 2007

- Researched Forensic DNA Typing, with a focus on the validation of the PCR/ STR method

South Royalton Legal Clinic, South Royalton, VT

Legal Intern to Clinical Professor James May, Part-time Summer 2007

- Helped develop a grant to fund a legal aid services clinic in Karelia, Russia as part of VLS's on-going relationship with Karelia
- Researched various topics related to traditional legal services, including Medicaid policies
- Interview clients and drafted an Irrevocable Burial Trust

San Diego Zoo, San Diego, CA

Behavioral Researcher, 2005 - 2006

- Assisted in an extensive study that focused on increasing reproduction rates of Giant Pandas in captivity by eliminating stereotypic behavior through an Enrichment Program.
- Spent two years as an observer and recorder of data

San Diego Pediatric Dental Group, La Jolla, CA

Clerk, 2004 - 2005

- Worked 35 hours a week as a clerical assistant

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Black River Partnership, La Jolla, CA

- Volunteered as a water quality monitor for a local watershed management group, 2005

SKILLS AND INTERESTS

- Proficient in Macintosh and IBM Compatible Computers
- Amateur ornithologist and herpetologist (reptiles)

JOANN ROBERTSON

1000 Biltmore St. NW • Apt. #1 • Washington, DC 20010 • (123) 361-1245 • jrobertson@gmail.com

BAR AFFILIATION

Admitted New York, December, 2006; and District of Columbia, March, 2007

EDUCATION

Vermont Law School, South Royalton, VT

Juris Doctor *cum laude*, May 2005

Master of Environmental Law and Policy *magna cum laude*, May 2005

- Spent Spring 2004 studying international law at McGill University, Montréal, Québec

Central Washington University, Ellensburg, WA

Bachelor of Arts, Geography and Business Administration, June 2002

- Minors: Sociology and Economics
- Graduated *summa cum laude*; President's Scholar (top 1% of graduating class)

RELEVANT EMPLOYMENT

Arnold and Porter, LLP (via HIRECounsel), Washington, DC

Document Review Attorney, March 2006-present

- Reviewing documents in two corporate matters for responsiveness, significance, and privilege and helping to prepare documents for depositions

Environmental and Natural Resources Legal Clinic, South Royalton, VT

Student Clinician, spring 2005

- Researched and drafted legal memos, complaints, and briefs in cases at the administrative and Federal levels regarding RCRA violations at a waste disposal site in Vermont

POCH y Asociados, Santiago, Chile

Full-Time Semester in Practice Extern, fall 2004

- Worked with legal department staff on a range of research and memo writing
- Observed how the free-market mechanisms of the Kyoto Protocol are being implemented by private organizations in the developing world

Philippine Rural Reconstruction Movement, Quezon City, Philippines; *Policy Intern*, summer 2004

- Interviewed farmers' organization leaders, members of the local community, the NGO community, and the government in the Philippines about their views on genetically modified organisms
- Wrote paper on GMO policy in the Philippines to the Management Committee of the PRRM, a national NGO, so they could develop their institutional policy on GMOs

Lancey Foundation, Northern Jiaotong University, Beijing China

Environmental Researcher, summer 2001

- Researched environmentalism on Beijing college campus
- Researched, wrote, and presented a paper on *The Changing Form and Focus of the Chinese Danwei and its Ecology*, which was subsequently published in NCUR proceedings, Spring 2002

COMMUNITY SERVICE, SKILLS AND INTERESTS

- Volunteer, Habitat for Humanity, Spring 2000
- Language: Intermediate Spanish

VII. LEGAL CORRESPONDENCE: HOW TO WRITE A COVER LETTER, WHY YOU SHOULD SEND A THANK YOU LETTER, AND ACCEPTANCE & REJECTION LETTERS

As a law student you are your own best advocate. When drafting your cover letters you must attract your reader's attention by keeping your letter short and concise. A cover letter must accompany each résumé sent to an employer. This letter acts as an introduction of you to the employer, highlights your background and accomplishments, and is a request for an interview or informational meeting. Samples are included at the end of this section and serve as a guide.

There are many good reasons to send a thank you letter after an interview. Thanking the interviewer(s) is polite; it gives evidence of follow-through and attention to detail, and provides an excellent opportunity to remind the interviewer briefly of your qualifications or experiences. Finally, the letter is another chance to reaffirm your interest in the position. Keep in mind, however, that a poorly written thank you note can hurt your chances of getting an offer.

If you have received a job offer, it is suggested that you contact the person who made you the offer to arrange for a follow-up meeting or telephone call to clarify your unanswered questions. After your questions are answered, ask the employer to put an offer in writing. If you are so inclined, you should then accept the offer first on the telephone and then in writing.

- a. **Purpose of Cover Letters:** The cover letter is, in many ways, the most important component of your application materials. It introduces you to the prospective employer, it explains your interest in the organization, it highlights why you would be an asset to the organization, and it serves as the first sample the employer sees of your writing. The cover letter should reflect a considerable degree of thought as to why you are writing a particular employer. It should also spark the reader's interest so that he/she wants to review your résumé.
- b. **Tone of Cover Letters:** While there is no one perfect cover letter, the tone of your letter should always exude enthusiasm, sincerity, and genuine interest in the particular employer.
- c. **Format of Cover Letters:** A cover letter should be three or four paragraphs long. The basic format is as follows:
 - i. **Paragraph #1:** Explain why you are applying and include a sentence or two about your strengths, as well as the reason why you are the best candidate for the position. You should also indicate the purpose of your letter by conveying that you are a law student, interested in the employer's substantive area of practice, and if applicable, interested in the geographic location of the employer because of your personal/professional connections to the region.
 1. **For Example:** Please accept my application for a position as a legal intern with Vermont Legal Aid for the summer of 2008. I am a first year student at Vermont Law School with strong research and writing skills and a keen interest in gaining experience in representing disadvantaged individuals.
 2. **Address the Letter to a Real Person:** Always find the name of the person to whom you should write. If you can not find it online, call the organization and find out who the contact person is. Avoid using "Dear Hiring Partner" or "Dear Madam/Sir."
 3. **If You Are Writing at the Recommendation of Someone Known to the Reader Be Sure to Say so in the First Sentence.**

- ii. **Paragraph #2:** Explain in greater detail why you want to work with this organization or firm. Make sure to explain what is appealing to you about the organization. In order for this paragraph to be effective, you must first learn something about the organization. The closer you match your interests with their needs, the more interested they will be in you. It may also make sense to address the organization's location, particularly if it is a place that you plan to move after school.
 - iii. **Paragraph #3:** Address why you are the right person for the job by focusing on your academic and experiential background. Include your academic strengths (solid grades, strong writing skills, course work in a specific area, etc.). The goal is to demonstrate to the reader that you are prepared to perform the responsibilities of the job. To the extent that you have relevant experience, this is the place to discuss it. Avoid conclusory statements ("I am a self starter") without also providing specific examples that substantiate the statement. In addition, try to avoid simply repeating what is on your résumé. Rather, take the opportunity to "spin" your education and experience so it is clear why and how your background has prepared you for this job.
 - iv. **Paragraph #4:** You should request a personal meeting or interview and make sure that your contact information, including email and phone number is indicated. In addition, you may indicate that you will contact them "during the week of . . ." (usually 2-3 weeks). Finally, thank the reader for their time and consideration.
 - 1. **Do Not Forget to Contact the Employer Regarding a Meeting if you so Stated in Your Cover Letter**
 - 2. **NOTE:** You may reverse the order of paragraphs 2 & 3 depending upon whether you wish to emphasize your professional skills or your interest/commitment to the employer.
- d. **Sample Cover Letters:** Use the cover letters on the following pages as a guide to draft your own cover letters:

**Sample Cover Letter 1
(No Break Between College and VLS)**

P.O. Box 1
South Royalton, VT 05068
(802) 763-1111
email@vermontlaw.edu

November 11, 2008

Jacob Boyd, Esq.
Legal Aid Society of Seattle
534 Cushman Street
Seattle, WA 69402

Dear Mr. Boyd:

Please accept my application for the position of summer law clerk with the Legal Aid Society of Seattle. I am a first year law student at Vermont Law School with strong research and writing skills and a genuine commitment to using my law background in a legal services setting this summer.

My first year of law school has confirmed my awareness of the necessity of providing representation to the poor and under-represented in our society. I am eager to utilize the skills I am acquiring in a real world setting. As a native of Spokane, who intends to return to the Pacific Northwest upon receiving my Juris Doctor degree, I would be particularly pleased to work with your organization this summer. A position with the Legal Aid Society of Seattle would provide me with an outstanding legal experience while enabling me to contribute to the representation of Washington citizens.

I believe that my academic and practical experience make me well suited for a position with your organization. During my first year at Vermont Law School, I will receive two semesters of instruction in legal research and writing. As you will see from the enclosed résumé, I am currently a member of the Equal Justice Foundation and attained a leadership role in my class as a first year class representative to the Student Bar Association. While pursuing my undergraduate degree at Amherst College, I volunteered regularly at the Head Start program in nearby Holyoke, Massachusetts, and answered telephones for a battered women's hotline. I believe that these experiences can be well utilized in the public interest context and am eager to gain exposure to the functioning of a public interest law office.

I would welcome the opportunity to discuss a possible summer position with Legal Aid and to learn more about public interest opportunities in the Seattle area. I will be in Washington for the winter holidays and will contact you during the week of December 5th to see if we might arrange a time to meet in late December or early January. Thank you for your consideration.

Very truly yours,

Sign your name here

Isobel G. Nielsen

Sample Cover Letter 2
(Some work experience between college and VLS)

P.O. Box 2
South Royalton, VT 05068
(802) 763-2222
email@vermontlaw.edu

November 11, 2008

Katherine Costello, Esq.
Patent Law Associates
P.O. Box 413
Winsted, CT 06098

Dear Ms. Costello:

Please accept my application for a position as a law clerk with Patent Law Associates for the summer of 2008. I am a first year law student at Vermont Law School with strong research and writing skills and a genuine interest in using my diverse academic background at a law firm with a strong intellectual property practice.

After working for several years at LabTech of America, Inc., I entered Law School intending to pursue a career that integrates my education and experience in biochemistry with my law school studies, potentially in the area of patent law. I am particularly interested in the combination of scientific and legal disciplines as a way in which to assess the impact of current scientific progress. A summer position with Patent Law Associates would provide me with invaluable exposure to this exciting area of the law.

My strong science background, extensive experience in counseling business clients, and academic success make me well qualified to assume the responsibilities of a summer clerk with Patent Law Associates. In addition to my experience in both biotechnology and pharmaceutical research, I have enjoyed the opportunity to advise LabTech's clients regarding the most appropriate and efficient techniques to apply in their research. My education at Vermont Law School will complement my knowledge, skills, and experience in science. I am certain that a position with your organization will enhance my understanding of the legal aspects of science.

I am eager to begin applying my background in science to the legal field and would welcome the opportunity to discuss my qualifications with you. I will contact you during the week of December 5 to see if we might arrange a time to meet. Thank you for your consideration.

Very truly yours,

Sign your name here

Beatrice Dayton

**Sample Cover Letter 3
(Environmental focus)**

P.O. Box 3
South Royalton, VT 05068
(802) 763-3333
email@vermontlaw.edu

November 11, 2008

Matthew Hollar, Esq.
Hollar & Evans, PC
One William Penn Square
Pittsburgh, PA 15241

Dear Mr. Hollar:

I am writing at the recommendation of Elizabeth Tait, a former colleague from the U.S. Department of Agriculture in Pittsburgh. I will complete my first year of legal studies at Vermont Law School in May and am interested in obtaining a summer associate position with Hollar & Evans.

I believe that I am well qualified to assume the responsibilities of a summer associate with Hollar & Evans. In addition to my work with the Animal and Plant Inspection Service of the U. S. Department of Agriculture, I have completed environmental internships with the South Shore Natural Science Center and the Massachusetts Public Interest Research Group. While at Vermont Law School, in addition to a strong core of traditional legal courses, I intend to take advantage of the many specialized environmental law offerings that have earned the school the reputation of providing one of the finest environmental legal educations in the nation.

I am intrigued by the possibility of working with your firm because of its focus on environmental compliance and litigation. Your work in *Miller v. EcoDynamics* coincides with my own concern that Pennsylvania's waters be protected from pesticides and other toxins. In addition, after working on environmental issues as they arise in the public sector, I am particularly interested in experiencing an environmental practice in a private law firm setting. I believe that Hollar & Evans will provide me with excellent exposure to this area of law.

I appreciate your consideration of the enclosed résumé and would welcome the opportunity to learn more about your firm. I will be in the Pittsburgh area on January 2-6 and would be available to meet with you at that time. If another date is more convenient, please contact me and I will change my schedule accordingly. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Sign your name here

Amos Horn

**Sample Cover Letter 4
(Informational interview request)**

P.O. Box 4
South Royalton, VT 05068
(802) 763-4444
email@vermontlaw.edu

November 11, 2008

Erin R. Hall, Esq.
Colby, Robinson & Hall
365 Alpine Boulevard, Suite 476
Denver, CO 80203

Dear Ms. Hall:

Professor Kate Bosley suggested that I contact you regarding summer employment opportunities for first year law students in Denver. As a lifelong resident of Colorado, I intend to return to the Denver area upon graduation from Vermont Law School in May, 2011, and am eager to gain practical experience over the summers in between. I would value your opinion as to the best trial lawyers in the area and those who might respond most favorably to summer employment inquiries.

As an undergraduate I majored in criminal justice at the University of Denver and had the opportunity to serve as an intern with the Colorado District Court, Second Judicial District. In addition, during my first semester at Vermont Law School, I competed in the Jessup International Moot Court Competition. These experiences have heightened my interest in trial practice and my desire to work with a busy litigation firm.

I have enclosed a copy of my résumé to give you a better idea of my background and would welcome any comments you may have for its improvement. I will call your office on Friday, November 18, to discuss this further. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Sign your name here

George Higgin

Sample Cover Letter 5

P.O. Box 5
South Royalton, VT 05068
(802) 763-5555
email@vermontlaw.edu

August 30, 2008

Kyle Moody, Esq.
Moody & Moody
22 East State Street
Albany, NY 11105

Dear Mr. Moody:

Brenda Coffin, Esq. of Andrews and Jeffries in Albany recommended that I contact you regarding a position as a summer law clerk. Enclosed for your review is a copy of my résumé and an unedited writing sample.

I understand from my conversations with Ms. Coffin that your firm focuses on the representation of small business in a variety of legal settings. I am particularly interested in this kind of legal practice. In addition to my undergraduate degree in business, I am seeking to focus my law school curriculum to prepare me for a career in business law. During the coming academic year, I will take courses in tax, corporations, employment law, and secured transactions. As a native of Troy, I am eager to return to the Albany area next summer.

While at Vermont Law School, I have developed strong research and writing skills, which complement my professional experience and academic success. I am currently ranked in the top one-third of my class and received the highest grade in my first year legal research and writing course, which evidences my research and writing ability. During the recent summer months, I assisted Professor Alex Nicholas in the research, writing, and editing of a scholarly paper discussing the effect of the Delaware closed corporation statute on the ultra vires doctrine. My experience and education has contributed to my preparation for a legal career and I would welcome the opportunity to continue this development by working with Moody & Moody next summer.

I appreciate your consideration of the enclosed résumé and would welcome the opportunity to learn more about your firm. I will be in the Albany area from October 12 through October 15 and would be available to meet with you at that time. If another date is more convenient, please contact me and I will change my schedule accordingly. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Sign your name here

Julian Smith

Sample Cover Letter 6

P.O. Box 6
South Royalton, VT 05068
(802) 763-6666
email@vermontlaw.edu

August 30, 2008

Sarah E. Allen, Esq.
Allen and Associates
11 Hubbard Avenue
Milwaukee, WI 53202

Dear Ms. Allen:

As a third year student at Vermont Law School, I am looking forward to commencing my legal career after taking the Wisconsin bar exam in July. I would be pleased to have the opportunity to discuss a possible association with your firm upon graduation.

I was interested to read a recent article in the Wisconsin Law Journal highlighting your firm's general civil practice - particularly its commitment to serving the needs of the working poor. Throughout my studies, I have focused on preparing myself for a position with a general practice firm that, like yours, emphasizes landlord/tenant issues, employment law, and litigation. Having had the opportunity to live in Milwaukee this summer, I am eager to return upon receiving my Juris Doctor degree. I believe the opportunity to practice with a firm committed to the diversity of a general practice in such an environment would provide me with an excellent beginning to my professional career.

My broad legal experience, extensive client counseling skills, and focused curriculum has prepared me well to contribute to a general practice firm. While at Vermont Law School, I have studied advanced real estate law, family law, and employment law, and have participated in two moot court competitions. I was also selected to participate in the law school's General Practice Program, a program that exposes students to a variety of practice areas in a simulated law firm setting. During the summer of 2005, I worked for Vermont Legal Aid, where I worked closely with clients on family law cases. This summer, while working as a law clerk at Quirk & Ziarnik in Milwaukee, I was actively involved in all phases of civil litigation and had the opportunity to draft motions and memoranda to the court, interview clients, and attend depositions and hearings. I would be pleased to provide you with references from attorneys at the firm.

I would welcome the opportunity to discuss a possible association with your firm. I will contact you during the week of September 15 in this regard. I greatly appreciate your consideration of the enclosed résumé and look forward to speaking with you soon.

Very truly yours,

Sign your name here

Rachel Deemer

**Sample Cover Letter 8
(MELP Internship Request)**

CANDY SMITH
P.O. Box 414
South Royalton, VT 05068
802-763-4321
email@vermontlaw.edu

October 31, 2008

Michael Brands, Administrative Officer
Woodstock Town Hall
Planning and Zoning Office
P O Box 488
Woodstock, VT 05091

Dear Mr. Brands:

I am contacting you regarding an internship opportunity at the Woodstock Planning and Zoning Office. I am a Master's candidate in Environmental Law and Policy at Vermont Law School with strong research and writing skills and a keen interest in gaining experience in land use planning and sustainable development.

After graduating from Rollins College, I entered Vermont Law School intending to pursue a career that integrates my undergraduate education in environmental studies and sustainable development with my law school studies, potentially in the area of land use, zoning, and planning. I am particularly interested in learning how to combine scientific and legal disciplines to develop eco-friendly land use plans for our future growth and development. A semester internship with the Woodstock Planning and Zoning Office would provide me with invaluable exposure to this exciting area of planning.

My background in environmental issues, with a focus on urban planning, combined with my academic successes make me well qualified to assume the responsibilities of an internship. In addition, I enjoyed attending the Urban Land Institute: Greening Orlando, a conference held last year in Orlando, Florida, which presented alternative methods of construction and energy-efficient development. I believe the opportunity to intern with a municipal planning office like Woodstock's would better prepare me for a career in environmental urban planning.

I have enclosed a copy of my résumé for your review and would welcome the opportunity to learn more about your office. I will contact you during the week of November 4 to see if we might arrange a time to meet. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Sign your name here

Candy Smith

**Sample Cover Letter 9
(MELP Post-Graduate Position)**

P O Box 101
South Royalton, VT 05068

May 23, 2008

The Office of Molly Hyde
Landscape Architects and Planners
P O Box 316
Montpelier, VT 05055

Dear Ms Hyde:

Please accept my application for the part-time planning position available in your office. I am a graduate of Vermont Law School's Master of Environmental Law and Policy program, with strong writing skills and an interest in socially responsible design and community planning.

My study of land use law at Vermont Law School illustrated, among other things, the necessity of balancing land use and resource preservation. Through smart growth initiatives and socially responsible design, I believe environmental planning is effective in achieving that balance. I have recently been involved with a local brownfields project as a voluntary environmental consultant, and have enjoyed the collaboration between interested parties as well as the complex process involved in reclaiming a degraded landscape. As a result, I look forward to continuing my professional development with an office committed to the complexity of environmental planning.

I have developed strong writing skills, which complement my professional experience and academic successes. I graduated from VLS with honors and received the highest grade in my Environmental Research and Writing class. During the spring of 2007, I interned as a freelance reporter with the Vermont Environmental Monitor, covering Vermont regulatory issues including interstate interchange protection, storm water permitting, basin planning in the White River Watershed, and sustainable energy initiatives in the 2007 legislature. In addition, I have extensive experience writing and publishing newsletters, outreach materials, and online bulletins through my employment at the Wolf River Conservancy. As a result, my education and experience would enable me to make a substantial contribution in a planning position for your office.

I appreciate your consideration of the attached résumé and would welcome the opportunity to learn more about your office. I will contact you during the week of June 6 in this regard. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Sign your name here

John Baxter

- e. **Thank You Letters:** Thank you letters should be timely and tailored to each interviewer. Tailor your letters by including a specific reference of your discussion with each person you met during the interview and send that letter in a timely manner. Handwritten notes are generally viewed as a more personal form of written communication. Letters sent to senior partners and general counsel should always be typed. Finally, do not forget to send thank you notes to all the practitioners with whom you met or spoke with by telephone for advice or referrals as part of the networking/informational interviewing process.
- f. **Sample Thank You Letters:** Use the sample thank you letters on the following pages as a guide to draft your own thank you letters.
- g. **Sample Acceptance & Rejection Letters:** Use the sample acceptance and rejection letters on the following pages as a guide to draft your own letters.

**Sample Thank You Letter
(For 1L or 2L Summer Clerkship)**

P.O. Box 999
South Royalton, VT 05068
(802) 555-1212
akane@vermontlaw.edu

November 2, 2008

Ms. Linda Smith
Assistant Attorney General
State of Vermont Attorney General
333 State Street
Montpelier, Vermont 22222

Dear Ms. Smith:

It was a pleasure meeting you today to discuss the possibility of becoming a summer law clerk with the Vermont Attorney General's Office. I genuinely appreciated and enjoyed the opportunity to discuss my background and goals with someone whose career path has so closely paralleled my own aspirations.

I would like to reaffirm my interest in this position. My extended undergraduate internship with the New Jersey Public Defender's Office gave me a solid grounding in one form of public interest practice, and helped pique my interest in government service. You can be confident that the commitment you seek is matched in my established and active desire to succeed as a legal professional.

Please let me know if I can provide you with any additional information. Thank you again for your time and consideration. I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours truly,

Sign your name

Adam Kane

Sample Thank You Letter

P.O. Box 999
South Royalton, VT 05068
(802) 555-1212
akane@vermontlaw.edu

November 2, 2008

Mr. Greg Card, Esq.
Senior Attorney, Securities Department
State Lane Bank
8888 Park Avenue
New York, New York 99999

Dear Mr. Card:

I would like to thank you and you colleagues for taking the time to meet with me today. Your comparison of the atmosphere and practice between a corporate securities department and a typical law firm was insightful, and I am grateful for your candor in relating your experiences. Our discussion served to increase my interest in the position and your institution.

My paralegal experience with Mott & Mott has given me a solid grounding in the intricacies of securities rules and transactions that will allow me to produce work this summer that will be useful to your office. Furthermore, I believe that State Lane Bank would provide me an excellent environment in which to sharpen and refine my skills.

Again, it was a pleasure to meet with you and I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

Sign your name

Adam Kane

Sample Handwritten Thank You Note

January 5, 2009

Dear Ms. Smith,

Thank you for taking the time as a Vermont Law School alumnus to speak with me today concerning my employment search in the Washington, DC area. I followed your advice immediately with a telephone call to Mary Washington at Case & Case and have an appointment with her for next week.

Professor Longhorn sends his regards and said he would like to hear from you when you get the chance. His number is (802) 831-3333. I look forward to meeting you in person and will contact you when I reach Washington, DC to arrange a time that is convenient for you. Thank you again for your time and advice.

Sincerely,

Adam Kane

**Sample Acceptance Letter
(Summer Position)**

P.O. Box 999
South Royalton, VT 05068
(802) 555-1212
akane@vermontlaw.edu

March 2, 2008

Ms. Donna Reid
Law Job, Inc.
8999 Eagle Road
Concord, New Hampshire 44444

Dear Ms. Reid:

This letter will confirm my acceptance of your offer for summer employment with the legal department of Law Job, Inc. I am looking forward to meeting the rest of your staff as well as beginning my employment. At this point, I do not know the exact date when I will be free to start since the final exam schedule has not been posted. I will contact you in early April to finalize my start date and discuss any other logistical details that require attention. In the interim, please feel free to contact me if you need any other additional information. Thank you once again and I look forward to working with you this summer.

Sincerely,

Sign your name

Adam Kane

**Sample Acceptance Letter
(Permanent Position)**

P.O. Box 999
South Royalton, VT 05068
(802) 555-1212
akane@vermontlaw.edu

February 12, 2008

Mr. Peter Cone
Lety & Associates
8999 Common Avenue
Boston, MA 44444

Dear Mr. Cone:

I am writing to accept your offer of employment as an Associate Attorney with Lety & Associates following my graduation from Vermont Law School in May. As you know, I will be sitting for the Massachusetts bar examination in July and expect to commence my employment with you on Tuesday, September 10th.

Once again, I would like to emphasize my enthusiasm and desire to begin my legal career with Lety & Associates. I look forward to the challenges and experiences awaiting me as an Associate Attorney with the firm.

Prior to relocating to the Boston area in August, I may be reached at the number or email above. Please feel free to contact me if you need any additional information.

Very truly yours,

Sign your name

Adam Kane

Sample Rejection Letter

P.O. Box 999
South Royalton, VT 05068
(802) 555-1212
akane@vermontlaw.edu

February 19, 2009

Ms. Barbara Lee
Leen & Associates
8999 Common Avenue
New York, NY 44444

Dear Ms. Lee:

Thank you for extending an offer to join your firm as a summer associate. I regret that I must decline. I enjoyed my visit to Leen & Associates and was impressed by everyone I met. As a result, this decision was truly a difficult one to make.

I wish you much success with your summer program. Thank you again for your consideration.

Very truly yours,

Sign your name

Adam Kane

VIII. THE INTERVIEW PROCESS

You applied for a job and were selected for an interview. What do you do now? How do you prepare? What should you expect? If you are offered an interview, the employer has already determined that you have met the threshold requirements for the position to which you are applying. The interviewer's objective then is to assess: (1) whether you are the most qualified applicant for the position, and (2) whether you would "fit" into a particular work environment. Thus, you must persuade the interviewer that you are the applicant most qualified and best suited for the position.

- a. **Preparing for an Interview:** The key to successful interviewing is thorough preparation. Thorough preparation involves both self-assessment and research. Self-assessment means understanding yourself so that you can effectively articulate your goals (personal and professional) and your skills. Research in this context means learning about the employer so that you understand the employer's needs and objectives.
- b. **Assessing Your Preferences, Values, Interests and Skills:** In order to determine if a particular employment opportunity will be a good fit for you, you must have a clear understanding of your goals, preferred work style, the type of environment in which you feel comfortable working, the values you consider important in your work, the type of work in which you are interested, and your strengths and weaknesses. In addition, many of the questions which you will be asked in an interview will focus on your preferences, values, interests and skills. Therefore, to present yourself effectively in an interview, you must be able to articulate your personal and professional goals, why you are interested in the employer and the work they do, and why you are qualified for the position for which you are interviewing.
- c. **Developing A Personal Marketing Plan:** An interview provides you with an opportunity to demonstrate to the employer that you are the best applicant for the position. Depending upon the nature of the interview, however, you may only have a limited amount of time to sell yourself to the interviewer. It is essential, therefore, that you develop a marketing strategy, which will enable you to effectively "put your best foot forward" within the given time constraints. You will present yourself most effectively to an employer if you use the interview to tell the employer why, based on your skills and experiences, you are the best applicant for the position. Before the interview, you should go through your background and highlight your major relevant accomplishments and transferable skills. Be prepared to deal with any negative aspects of your application, such as poor grades or major gaps in your professional backgrounds. Practice stating the points you want to make about yourself to the interviewer, whether or not they specifically ask about these things. The interview is a discussion, not an oral presentation where you are allotted a certain amount of uninterrupted time to present your case. Do not assume that the interviewer will ask you questions to elicit the information that is most important for you to communicate. Be prepared to work that information into the dialogue or into a response to a general question.
- d. **Researching Employers:** Before you interview with an employer, you must do your research so that you understand the nature of the employer's work and the qualities and skills which they seek in an applicant. Researching an employer thoroughly will enable you to feel more confident and at ease during the interview. By obtaining general information about an employer's practice, policies, philosophies and clients, you will be able to ask educated questions during the interview. Moreover, an interviewer will be impressed by your

knowledge of, and interest in, the employer. Just as employers screen résumés and interview only a select number of applicants, you, too, should carefully review materials about employers and target those whose goals are similar to yours.

- e. **Appropriate Attire:** Appearance is very important for an interview because it is the interviewer's first impression of you. As you can imagine, different types of employers dress differently. In general, though, you should plan to dress in a conservative way, which typically means wearing a navy, grey or black suit with appropriate shoes. Consult with Career Services about specifics regarding your interview
- f. **Items to Bring to an Interview:**
 - i. **Résumé**
 - ii. **Reference List**
 - iii. **Transcripts** – unofficial copies are fine
 - iv. **Writing Sample:** Bring a writing sample that was derived either (1) through the school's writing program or other legal courses or (2) the course of legal employment. Before submitting work derived from your legal employment, such as a memorandum, you must request the employer's permission to use the sample. Your writing sample should be approximately five pages in length.
- g. **The Interview:** The first five minutes typically sets the tone for the remainder of the interview. Therefore in these five minutes you should complete the following:
 - i. **Greet the Interviewer by Name**
 - ii. **Firmly Shake the Interviewer's Hand**
 - iii. **Make Good Eye Contact**
 - iv. **Begin Conversation with a Discussion on a Current Event or an Item of Commonality Between You and the Interviewer**
 1. **NOTE:** The rest of the interview should be an active dialogue between you and the interviewer(s). Below is a list of questions that generally come up during interviews and you should be prepared to answer all of them, even though it is likely that not all of them will be asked.
- h. **Questions You Should Expect Employers to Ask:** While the following questions are divided into categories, you should read through and be prepared to answer all of them since it is not always predictable what an particular interviewer will ask.

GENERAL QUESTIONS

- What interests you most about our organization?
- Have you made a decision about the city or location where you ultimately wish to work? Why?
- How would you describe yourself? Tell me about yourself.
- What qualities do you have that will make you a successful intern/lawyer? Why would you be a good fit for our organization?
- What would you consider to be your greatest strengths? Greatest weaknesses? Why should I hire you?
- If I called your most recent employer, what three things would they most likely say about you?
- What two or three accomplishments have given you the most satisfaction? Are the most significant? Why? What did you learn most from a particular experience?
- What is the greatest obstacle that you have overcome in law school/your life/career? What is the most difficult decision you have ever had to make?

- With what other kinds of employers are you interviewing? Do you have any pending job offers? If so, where?
- Is there anything I should know about you that we have not covered? Is there anything about yourself you want to add?
- Does your law school have journal publications? Are you a member of a journal? If so, what is your Note topic? If not, why not?
- What persuaded you to become a lawyer? Why did you decide to go to Vermont Law School?
- What areas of the law particularly interest you? Why?
- What is your basic career objective?
- Where do you plan to be and what will you be doing five years after graduation? Ten years?
- In what kinds of permanent employment are you interested? What are you looking for in a summer job?
- How much significance do you think we should attach to your GPA and class rank? Please explain the grading system at VLS.
- Under what conditions do you work most effectively? (Do you prefer to work independently or with others? How do you respond to guidance and supervision?)
- How do you think the legal profession is viewed by the public? Do you think this is justified?

GOVERNMENT

- Why are you interested in this government agency?
- Tell me what you know about this agency.
- Why do you want a career in government?
- What educational/employment experience(s) qualify you for this job?
- What is your career plan?
- In what other government agencies are you interested? In what ways do you prefer this one over the others?
- What training do you have in administrative law?
- How much courtroom experience do you have?
- What have you learned from the clinic you participated in and how will you apply those skills/experiences to this position?

PUBLIC INTEREST ORGANIZATIONS

- How committed are you to service for the under-represented?
- What interest do you have in public interest generally?
- What are your practice interests?
- How much experience have you had in your field of interest?
- How much experience have you had with environmental issues?
- For how long a period would you be willing to commit yourself to work for this organization?
- How important to you is the amount of money you will make?

LARGE/MEDIUM LAW FIRM

- What in particular interests you about our firm?
- What part of our practice/mission is of special interest to you?
- What relevant educational/employment experience do you possess?
- Identify the personal qualities you possess that would make you successful with our firm.
- How are you prepared to devote yourself to the work of the firm?
- What practice specialties interest you?
- What type of work are you unwilling to do? What would you do if assigned work in that area?

- What can you tell us about your references?
- If we made you an offer, how soon would you be prepared to give us an answer?
- What are your salary expectations?
- What do you want to gain from working for a law firm?
- What are your expectations about the numbers of hours you'll be working at our firm/organization?

SMALL FIRM

- What ties do you have in this community?
- What is your understanding of how a small firm operates?
- How committed are you to working with a small firm? How hard are you prepared to work?
- How would our firm satisfy your interests? What specific aspect of our work would be agreeable to you?
- If we hired you, at what salary do you expect to start?
- How much court work do you expect to do? Is that experience essential to you?
- Do you consider yourself an easy person with whom to get along? Explain.
- In what environments do you work most effectively and efficiently?
- How much responsibility are you prepared to assume right from the start? Explain.

JUDICIAL CLERKSHIPS

- Explain your interest in working as a judicial law clerk.
- Why do you want a clerkship with me?
- Do you think a one-year term is long enough to make the job worthwhile? Explain.
- What are the particular aspects of a clerkship you would value?
- How far do you feel you have progressed in developing your writing skills?
- How valuable do you consider journal (i.e., law review) work in preparing you for a judicial clerkship?
- Have you looked into, and, if so, what have you discovered about the reputation of the judges to whom you are applying for a clerkship?
- What judges have you particularly admired – whether because of style, substance, or ideology?
- How important to you are the political views of the judges?
- How conversant are you with significant current decisions of this Court?

i. Questions You Should Ask Employers:

- How does the firm/organization determine what type of work an intern/beginning attorney is assigned?
- How is the work supervised? How are the evaluations of that work communicated to the new attorney?
- How is the entry level attorney trained/intern mentored? Are there formal training programs?
- Does the firm/organization require its attorneys to specialize? When and how does the decision to specialize occur?
- How soon does a beginning attorney have direct client contact?
- What are the criteria for advancement? To what extent is the development of new clients a prerequisite to advancement?
- In what departments has the firm experienced the greatest growth in the past five (or ten) years? What are the firm's expectations for future growth? How many new attorneys do they anticipate hiring?

j. Questions You Should Never Ask Employers:

- **Category 1:** What's-in-it-for-me questions. Examples include: what are the hours? How much vacation time do I get? What is the salary? What type of benefits do you offer?
- **Category 2:** Negative questions. For example, "I read in the paper that your firm lost a big case."
- **Category 3:** Questions that could be answered by simple research
- **Category 4:** Questions that indicate that you have not paid attention to the interview.

k. Questions You Can Ask After You Have Received an Offer:

- How much do you pay summer law clerks?
- When will I have a performance and/or salary review as an employee/associate?
- What fringe benefits do you offer?
- What is your pro-bono policy?
- How much latitude do attorneys have in choosing their own projects?
- Do attorneys generally work late evenings and/or weekends? Are they expected to see clients on weekends?

IX. CONCLUSION

We hope you find this manual helpful as you begin the process of looking for a job. Please feel free to contact us with questions or concerns. We will be adding information to this manual throughout the year. If you have suggestions for ways to improve it, please contact Abby Armstrong in Career Services at 831-1208 or aarmstrong@vermontlaw.edu. Good luck with your job search.