

Interview Preparation Packet

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Some of the material in this packet was taken from "Interviewing Savvy," by Marcia Fox, New York University; "Questions Not To Ask," by Josh Leyitt, New York University; "The Campus Interview," by the Career Placement Council; and National Association for Law Placement publications.

DURING THE INTERVIEW THE FIRST IMPRESSION IS VITAL!

APPEARANCE

- Wear conservative business apparel. A suit is best for both men and women. Gray, blue, or black are traditional, although women may wear other colors. The cut of your suit should be traditional; men should not wear double-breasted suits.
- Avoid anything flashy, "trendy," or appropriate only for a young person. You are not trying for the most up to the minute look; you want clothes which are in style now but which look as if they could also have been worn several years ago and will still be in style several years from now.
- Wear conservative shoes appropriate for business. Men should wear black shoes and socks. Women should wear shoes in a dark color; pumps with a low to medium heel are appropriate.
- Women should not wear anything with a low-cut top. Avoid skirts with slits. Be sure that your skirt is not too short when you are seated, probably no more than 3" above the knee. Look at yourself in a mirror from all angles to spot any inappropriate gaps before wearing the skirt to an interview.
- Avoid wearing anything which calls attention to itself rather than to you as a whole. This means that a woman should choose a simple hairstyle which is flattering but does not cause the interviewer to focus on her hair. Jewelry should be minimal; no dangling earrings or bracelets.
- Makeup should be unobtrusive. Men should have neat haircuts; beards and even mustaches may turn off many employers.
- You are trying to be hired as a lawyer. The idea is to look as if you fit that role.

ACTIONS

- Enter the interview room with a smile and a look of enthusiasm and confidence. Be sure to look the interviewer in the eye.
- Offer a firm, but not crushing, handshake. If you are unsure of your handshake, practice with classmates; ask for and give honest feedback. Practice shaking hands with both men and women.
- Be sure to say your name when you enter the room. If you want to be called by a nickname, make sure the interviewer hears and understands that name. "Hello, I'm Robert Doe, but I'm usually called Rob." Have a copy of your resume ready, in case the interviewer has misplaced his or her copy. You don't want any confusion about who you are. Also, listen for the names of the interviewers.
- Don't smoke just before an interview; the smell of smoke will enter the room with you. Also avoid perfume or aftershave which will linger in the interviewing room. Do not chew gum.

WHAT DO EMPLOYERS LOOK FOR?

CONFIDENCE is very important. If you were a client looking for a lawyer, would you choose one who appeared timid or insecure? Although you will probably be nervous, look as self-assured as possible. While it is possible to overdo confidence and appear too brash, this is not a problem for most law students. Unless you are normally a very assertive person, you are more likely to appear insecure than overconfident. Those with many years of work experience sometimes come across as overconfident. If you are unsure of your image, ask for honest feedback from classmates.

ENTHUSIASM is equally important. Show an interest in the employer and in your future career. You may not know exactly what you want to do, but you should at least be enthusiastic about the possibilities. Enthusiasm is expressed not only in what you say, but also in whether you appear interested in what the interviewer has to say. Do you sit stone-faced, or do you nod, smile, and react to what is being said? Several employers have commented about how they liked "the ENERGY level" shown in an interview, or had chosen someone because the student "had such energy." This is another way of saying the student was eager and enthusiastic.

Employers look for **SOMEONE WITH WHOM THEY WILL ENJOY WORKING**. This is why interviewers may ask you about sports, current events, or any other topic. They want to get you talking! Whether you are responding to questions about why you came to law school or how you liked playing on the college intramural volleyball team, the interviewer is getting an idea of the person behind the resume. What is your personality like? Are you a leader or a follower? What excites you? How well do you communicate with others?

HOW WELL DO YOU COMMUNICATE?

Whether lawyers appear in court or advise business clients in an office setting, verbal and written communication is important. A lawyer must be able to express thoughts clearly and convincingly.

Strive to have a **CONVERSATION** with the interviewer, rather than thinking only of answering each question as it is asked. If you are asked to choose your favorite class or professor, don't just give a name; talk briefly but enthusiastically about why you like that person or class. Ask questions which allow the interviewer to talk about him/her or the practice of law. Try to enjoy meeting this new person, rather than focusing on being hired. If the interviewer feels good about himself or herself at the end of the session, then you have made a good impression!

SIT AND STAND UP STRAIGHT and KEEP EYE CONTACT throughout the interview. For some employers, you will interview with only one person; other employers use a team of two or more. If there is more than one interviewer, try to look primarily at the person who asked the question to which you are responding, but also include the others by shifting your focus to them occasionally. If you are asking a question or volunteering information, be sure that you include both interviewers.

OTHER TIPS

Keep your composure during the interview. You don't have to have a ready answer for every question. It is more important to be able to smile, appear confident, and try not to be flustered if you are asked something you can't answer or if you feel you have "flubbed" an answer.

Remember that you are SELLING yourself. The interviewer cannot really get to know you in the short time available, but must make a decision based on your resume and on the impression you make in that short time. You cannot sit back quietly and hope that the interviewer will find a way to discover your hidden personality. If you are normally a quiet or reserved person, you will have to push yourself to be more outgoing in the interview. While you must "be yourself," you must find a way to show that self in a short interview.

Be sure to know your professors' names. Many interviewers will be USC graduates and will ask about former professors. You will often be asked to name all your professors or a favorite professor.

Be ready with some response to the question about what you would like to do after graduation. The "I'll go anywhere or practice any kind of law" type of response will NOT get you a job. Students looking for work in the summer after their first year can be less certain about goals; those closer to graduation should be more focused. If nothing else, know some areas in which you might like to practice.

You should have researched the employer before your interview. If the employer does primarily plaintiffs' personal injury work, insurance defense, or family law, you should be able to express a genuine enthusiasm for that type of work. If you do not like the kind of work available with this employer, you should not be in the interview! Bear in mind that sports and entertainment law, labor law, and international law are specialty areas not available in most firms and limited to a few attorneys in many other firms; unless you would not consider other types of practice, be sure the firm is likely to have a need for lawyers in one of these areas before telling the interviewer this is what you would like to do.

Remember that not all interviewers will be skilled; they are lawyers first and interviewers only incidentally. Because of this, some interviewers will put everyone at ease, while others may make everyone uncomfortable. It is often hard to tell whether an interview has gone well.

All employers will interview many more people than they can hire. If you do not get an offer, it does not mean that you have done something "wrong" or that the interviewer was not impressed with you; at that particular time on that particular day, someone else made a stronger impression. Each interview is a new opportunity, and it is important to keep up your confidence and maintain an optimistic attitude.

Know and use the correct terms for companies (e. g. Coca Cola), government agencies, solicitors' and public defenders' offices, and law firms.

INTERVIEWING SAVVY: "HOW TO PLAY THE GAME TO WIN"

There is probably no more anxiety-provoking element in law students' job hunt than the interviewing process. This is unfortunate, for approached in the right spirit, interviewing can be a highly positive and enriching experience. Not only does it provide an important test of one's intellect and skill as a lawyer, but it affords the opportunity for the student to demonstrate personality, poise, tact, maturity, and sophistication, which are important qualifications for a successful lawyer.

What follows is, hopefully, a useful guide to the interview process. What is important is to familiarize yourself with the general principles of interviewing; once you do this you should find it relatively easy to adjust to the specific demands of any employment.

1. *No one gets hired on sheer merit alone.* The interview is not an objective process as most students seem to think, but a highly subjective encounter in which the interviewer is trying to evaluate whether he or she likes you enough as a person to want to associate professionally with you. So, first and foremost, realize that personality, presence, and charisma count for a lot. Although most lawyers would readily admit the unfairness of evaluating someone on the basis of a twenty-minute on-campus interview, when the time comes to decide who shall be invited back for a second interview, they invariably choose those students they liked the best. There is simply no other way for them to choose from among a group of equally well-qualified people. And choose they must.

To be sure, employers may openly state their objective criteria in advance, and restrict their consideration to those students who fulfill them. But once you fall within the boundaries of those criteria, the selection process comes down to chemistry. Lawyers will rarely admit this for fear that it is indefensible, but it influences their hiring decisions just the same.

We all know people who are likeable and who make a positive first impression. Generally they are responsive, good-humored, and interested in others. They project self-confidence; they are at ease and considerate of others. For most students, there is no need to develop a new personality, but rather to avoid freezing up - just be themselves.

2. *The interviewer is in a stressful situation.* Very few students realize how exhausting and often tedious it is to interview. This is especially true for lawyers, who are neither trained personnel people nor necessarily skillful in putting others at ease. Add to this, their annoyance at all the billable hours or trial preparation time they have lost by interviewing. Then add to that witches' brew their fear that their colleagues will ultimately blame them for any hiring mistakes and you have the elements of disaster. Imagine their relief when someone walks through the door with a manner so reassuringly professional, with poise so clearly impressive, and with a personality so distinctly appealing that deciding to hire him or her is instinctive and easy. This is why your behavior counts for so much.
3. *If it is obvious that students play an active role in an interview, why are so many passive?* One of the most frequent complaints that employers make about law students is that they are too passive; that too much of the burden has to be assumed by the interviewer; and that students assign the interviewer the talking and questioning role and take for themselves the listening and answering role.
4. *The best interviews are always superb conversations.* And that is the goal towards which you should be striving. Ideally, the conversational ball should be jumping back and forth between the two of you. Not only should you be picking up on all the conversational cues thrown out by the employer, but in turn you should initiate some of your own. When you are asked what you are looking for in an employment situation, you might add to the end of your answer an inquiry as to what the employer is seeking in an employee. Then, when he or she tells you, you might point out the ways in which you think you fill the bill. Above all, when enumerating your assets do it with subtlety. But do not hesitate to make positive statements about yourself.
5. *You are not powerless in an interview.* In fact your judgement of the interviewer counts almost as much as his or her judgement of you. What if you receive several offers? Aren't you also going to decide in part on the basis of a gut-level reaction to these people? Take solace, also, from the thought that if Employer X doesn't want to hire you, Employer Y may. All too often, inexperienced law students tend to project to the interviewer inordinate power and authority. When people assign themselves the role of a helpless child pitted against a powerful father-figure, the outcome of the encounter is predestined. Forgetting that their role must be that of the professional, they react to the employer with extremely misplaced awe, fear, or timidity.

Needless to say, such behavior is hardly what the employer is seeking. If this is the way you react to him, how will you present yourself to other lawyers or to clients? Remember that he has no other basis for judging you except for the way you interact with him. So prior to any interview, be sure to “psych” yourself up. Enumerate to yourself all your strong selling points. Do whatever you can to bolster your feeling of well-being.

6. *Try to get some interview practice before you see the firm or agency you truly care about.* Participate in the video mock interview program offered by the Career Services Office or ask a lawyer you know if he or she will give you a mock interview and evaluate your performance. Or ask another law student, one who has already done considerable interviewing and received an offer or two. Don't ask someone who knows as little as you do. *Above all, avoid taking up valuable interview slots at your campus in order to get this experience.* Chances are you will perform badly because your insincerity will undermine your performance. Also, you will not get the feedback that is so critical for improvement.

Now that some of the essential components of the interview process have been outlined, here are some specific nuts and bolts suggestions. Your homework preparation for the interview should be three-fold: a review of questions to ask, questions not to ask (they do vary considerably depending upon the individual employer), and the content for a “sales pitch” which you will smoothly and subtly infiltrate into the conversation.

TYPICAL QUESTIONS FOR YOU TO ASK

Law students often find this the most difficult aspect of interviewing. Basically, your questions should evolve naturally from the conversation or interview. You should be prepared to ask a number of questions which indicate that you have prepared for the interview. You can prepare yourself by reading the employer's website, reviewing recent cases, and talking with faculty, students, and attorneys. Some of your questions may be quite specific, relating to facts you were unable to discover in your initial research about the employer. Some sample questions might be:

1. How does the firm determine what type of work a new associate is to be assigned? How is the work of the new associate supervised? Are the evaluations of the work communicated systematically to the new associate?
2. How are new associates trained? Are there formal in-firm training programs? Are new associates encouraged to attend outside seminars? Are they usually assigned to one partner or do you have a rotating system (asked of large firms)?
3. Does the firm require its attorneys to specialize? When does the decision to specialize occur? Is the decision made by the new associate, the firm, or both?
4. What flexibility is there within this firm to allow transfer between one specialized department to another? (Asked of a large firm), If I develop strong preferences in the course of my association with the firm, would there be a reasonable chance that I'd be allowed some exposure to my area of interest? Are you looking for any specific professional interests on the part of associates? (Be careful, and try to get employer to state his preferences before you state yours.)

5. What types of clients does the organization serve? (If not available from employer literature.) I was interested to see that your firm represents Client X; what kind of work does the firm do for that client?
6. How soon does the new associate get direct client contact and substantial responsibilities or have the opportunity to appear in court? How much case involvement will I have?
7. How many years, on the average, does it take to become a partner?
8. What are the criteria for advancement?
9. What is the specialty of the interviewer? (This should be on the website, and will not be asked in most situations.) What type of work does he/she do in a normal day? How long has the interviewer been with the firm? What made him/her decide to join the organization?
10. What is the history of the firm? What are the firm's expectations with respect to further growth? How many new associates does the firm anticipate hiring? How many associates has the firm hired in recent years?
11. What kind of outside activities do the lawyers participate in? (county bar, clubs, athletics)
12. How would you describe your firm? What is unique, if anything? Why do you like working there? What can your firm provide the young associate with that he or she might not get elsewhere?
13. What kind of associate are you ideally looking for? (Good because it indicates a critical mind on your part. Should be asked very pleasantly because otherwise it can smack of rudeness.) Your object here is to see if you would "fit in" with such an atmosphere.
14. Is your firm still involved in the Brown-Smith case? (Or some such question. Shows intellectual familiarity with the firm.)
15. At some point say that one of the reasons why his/her firm appeals to you is because of its prominence in the corporate field (your involvement in _____; your reputation for _____, etc.). Be prepared to be very knowledgeable when you bring this up. You might mention some scholarly research or past work experience that tie into this statement. Perhaps you know someone in the firm?

QUESTIONS TO ASK DURING AN OFFICE INTERVIEW

In order to make the second or call-back interview more dynamic and interesting, we recommend that you ask questions that are specific to the department or individual with whom you are speaking. This not only gives you a broader range of topics to discuss, but provides you with valuable information about the organization which you will need in order to make a wise employment decision. Since the call-back interview is used to measure mutual fit, you should prepare yourself to become more integrally involved in the interviewing process.

Organizational Structure

- How is the organization departmentalized? Size of departments?
- Do associates/summer associates rotate? Length of rotation period?
- Are offers extended by a particular department? Once you join a department/ group, is there mobility?
- Are attorneys asked to specialize? How soon?
- How are assignments distributed (summer and permanent)? Does this vary by department?
- Are new attorneys' preferences accommodated? (Ask a young attorney if his/her preferences were.)
- In what areas does the organization need attorneys?
- What is the rate of growth? To what is the growth attributed? What are the future growth areas of the firm?
- Does the summer program have a "buddy" or mentor (big brother/sister) system?
- How independent are the branch offices? If you are interested, can you spend part of the summer in a branch office?
- What are the opportunities for advancement within the organization? (How many years until partner or member of senior staff, what percent of summer associates! attorneys receive offers?)

Organizational Life

- Get a tour of the offices (where would you be working, library, etc.)
- Note the office atmosphere: new lawyers on first name basis with partners/directors?
- Is travel required? (Remember that "travel" is not "vacation." Be careful asking about this.)
- To what extent are partners/directors working with junior level attorneys? Are they involved in the training?
- Does the organization have a posture regarding your involvement with a particular party? Are former politicians affiliated with the organization? What is their party affiliation?
- What has the attrition rate been in the last few years? How many attorneys left? Why? Where did they go? Have there been any major spin-offs or defections from the firm in the last few years? Why? (Be careful with these questions.)
- How does a summer associate's life differ from that of a permanent attorney?

Responsibilities/Evaluation

- What is a typical day like?
- What are specific areas of practice: types of cases, specific cases you have read about?
- How are cases staffed?
- How soon did the interviewer (if junior attorney) do the following: take depositions, draft interrogatories, conduct trials, talk to clients, etc.
- Do summer associates work exclusively on research memos? Can they attend trials, closings, etc.?
- What's the most interesting project you've worked on (or in your first-year)? Tell me what types of things you're working on now.
- How often will you be reviewed (including summer program) and by whom?
- Is "pro bono" work encouraged? Does "pro bono" work get billed to the firm and does it count toward "required" billable hours?

QUESTIONS FOR SUMMER PROGRAM APPLICANTS

1. How many participants does the firm anticipate having in its summer program? What percentage of the persons participating in recent years' summer programs have become associated with the firm?
2. What kind of work are summer associates/clerks engaged in? Is there a rotation among departments? If so, how is the choice of departments made?
3. What kind of supervision and responsibilities can a summer associate/law clerk expect to receive?
4. What is the relationship between the number of people in the summer program and the number of associates hired each year?
5. To what extent does the summer program involve activities other than pure research?
6. Is there an evaluation process? How is performance communicated to the summer associate/law clerk?

QUESTIONS NOT TO ASK

(Compiled by NYU graduate, Josh Levitt)

1. Don't ask about salary in the initial interview with any firm or legal employer unless you absolutely can't find out from any other source. And even then, don't unless you have a superb reason for doing so. There will be time enough to ask about that later when they make you an offer.
2. How hard do associates have to work? A crudely put question that should never be asked directly of anyone at that firm, even a young associate. If you want to find out the answer without asking, there are other ways. Try to schedule any second interview with a firm or agency during the late afternoon. Then, chances are you'll still be there at 6:30, and you can see for yourself how busy the place is. Another way to find out is to ask a young associate (during the second interview) or perhaps an especially pleasant first interview, "How would you describe the life of a young associate at your firm?"
3. "Do associates have to attend a lot of mandatory social activities?" An important question, but don't ask it. Again, you can hope it comes in a second interview.

YOUR SALES PITCH

Even if you have a beautifully organized and impressively written resume, study any obvious weaknesses in your record so as to prepare yourself for your interview "sales pitch." Don't ever point out the weaknesses in your background to an interviewer. You should always be positive about yourself.

Being positive does not mean suggesting such overwhelming self-confidence that you admit no flaws; you should acknowledge your weaknesses when they are pointed out to you, but also make intelligent statements about them that are designed to impress an interviewer with your maturity, your stability, and your self-knowledge. For example: if you had a poor record as a first-year student but have since made drastic improvement, make sure that your resume reflects this improvement. Nearly everybody sympathizes with someone who got off to a slow start, provided she or he improves. Or let's say that you have a fine academic record but your legal experience has been poor. Does your resume account for all those summers when you might have been working? Is it clear that you have?

spent your time responsibly? And if you worked your way through law school as a highly paid summer carpenter, make certain the employer knows it.

Also you can lead into such a weak spot in your resume by asking if they prefer people with substantial work experience. If the interviewer says yes, ask him to elaborate, and try to pick up on some good cues to show him that although professionally inexperienced, you have the ability to work hard (as demonstrated by your record), to show professional seriousness (Moot Court), and to impress others with your sense of responsibility (cite your undergraduate "Outstanding Student Leader" award).

Your record in law school does not reflect your natural ability. In fact, you are impatient with law school largely because of an eagerness to get out into the real world. Assume that you are dealing with an employer who is not exceedingly rigid about the importance of grades. Clearly, there is room for you to make an impression. So make it. Point to your great work record. Say that you like law school but you can't wait to practice. Talk about your wonderful legal experience. Cite your writing ability (always bring a writing sample to interviews, especially if you feel that your writing is more impressive than your grades).

Another example: you are interviewing with a small town firm and you are from a big city. How are you going to persuade them to hire you? How do you convince them that you will be happy there, and that you plan to build your practice in that town? First of all, does your resume clearly indicate any previous connection with small towns? If there is anything in your past, including summer experiences working in small towns. You might discuss how much you enjoyed your experience working in a small town and how you immediately felt that you would build your career in a small town.

There are obvious differences in working in a large city versus a small town. Small town lawyers are typically more informal, more direct, and more down to earth. They are also far more concerned with social conformity than a big city firm. Small town lawyers are usually less concerned about grades and resumes than they are about interpersonal skills. This is why networking and requests for informational interviews are very helpful in obtaining jobs with small firms. Many of them will not post a job opening or readily admit that they are interested in hiring.

Speaking of small town practice, more often than not, these are among the most "conversational" interviews you will ever have. The content of the interview may reflect local interests. Be prepared to discuss local subjects of interest. Be aware that underneath the informality projected by these lawyers, there is a great deal of close scrutiny going on.

Perhaps the best preparation for any interview you are apt to have is to think out in advance an answer to this question: "Why should we hire you?" That is the all-time killer question that is designed to catch you off guard, fluster you, and test your ability to think on your feet—another important lawyerly skill. Moreover, in asking you such a question, an employer is curious to see whether you have sufficient self-confidence to answer positively. Imagine his or her disappointment, then, if you answer, "Well now, that's a good question." Remember that humility and modesty have their important place in life, but not during an interview situation. Concentrate on your more obvious selling points. Stress your motivation, your ability to deal with people successfully, your diligence, your willingness to take criticism, your innate intelligence, and your skills of articulation. Even an answer as vague as "You should hire me because I intend to be a superb lawyer" will do fine. More important than what you say is the conviction with which you say it.

TYPICAL QUESTIONS ASKED BY EMPLOYERS DURING INTERVIEWS

1. Why did you decide to come to law school? What prompted the decision? Did you see yourself in any particular role as a lawyer at the time of the decision?
2. What was your reaction to law school? Was it what you expected? What classes do you enjoy most?
3. What are your long range and short range goals and objectives, when and why did you establish these goals, and how are you preparing yourself to achieve them?
4. What specific goals, other than those related to your occupation, have you established for yourself for the next 10 years? (Don't respond with things that will interfere with your law practice.)
5. Do you have a particular career objective? What do you see yourself doing five years from now?
6. Why did you decide to interview with us? What do you know about our firm?
7. What do you really want to do in life?
8. How would you describe yourself? How would your friends/family describe you? What are your strengths and weaknesses?
9. Why should I hire you?
10. What qualities do you have that make you think that you will be a successful lawyer?
11. What two or three accomplishments have given you the most satisfaction? Why?
12. What is the greatest obstacle you have had to overcome in your life/career?
13. Describe your most rewarding law school experience.
14. What are your grades? Do you think that your grades are a good indication of your academic achievements?
15. Could you explain the grading system to me? (Remember, USC has a Grade Distribution policy).
16. What have you learned from participation on a journal or in a clinical program?
17. Do you have any idea of what area of practice you would like to go into?
18. In what kind of environment are you most comfortable?
19. What two or three things are most important to you in a job?
20. In what ways do you think you can make a contribution to our agency/firm/company?
21. With what other kinds of employers are you interviewing? Do you have any pending job offers? If so, where?
22. Is there anything I should know about you that we haven't covered?
23. Why did you decide to seek a position with this firm/agency/company?
24. Do you have a geographical preference? Why? What ties do you have to X city?
25. Why do you think you might like to live in the community in which our firm/agency/company is located?

IMPORTANT POINTS OF INTERVIEWING

1. Don't write anything down during the interview.
2. Don't write out questions. Memorize them in advance.
3. Be on time and be unflustered.
4. Smile when you meet your interviewer. Give a firm handshake. (Women should initiate this if the interviewer doesn't). Look the interviewer in the eye.
5. Show enthusiasm and interest by your verbal and nonverbal communications. Don't be afraid to sound excited about your chosen career. Enthusiasm is extremely contagious.
6. Dress conservatively.
7. Have a second resume with you just in case they misplace yours.
8. Don't hedge about your past failures. Don't raise them, but be honest if asked.
9. Avoid nervous mannerisms. Keep your hands quiet in your lap (appropriate gesturing is fine, of course), and keep your legs still.
10. If one half of the interview has proceeded and you haven't had a chance to say anything, you must politely break in. You don't want the interviewer to leave without a sense that you are assertive. Some interviewers will deliberately talk a lot to test how you are going to interrupt them. "Yes, I have a question on that very issue." This also helps an interviewer who is talking because he/she is nervous and unskilled at interviewing.
11. Your answers should reflect the employer's needs. Be honest but focused.
12. Some interviewers use shock tactics just to see how you will respond. Parry back as cleverly as you can, and smile. Realize it is part of the interview game.
13. Try to see each interview as a learning experience. Chances are you can learn from each if you evaluate your performance honestly. This is why mock interviewing can be so helpful, because rarely will an employer give you any feedback.
14. Remember that you aren't going to fit in everywhere. Try to restrict your interviewing to places that seriously interest you.
15. In case we have overlooked the obvious, the most important thing you can do besides getting an employer to like you is to convince her or him that you are very smart and articulate. Leave all your slang, informality, and legal jargon at the door when you go interviewing. Speak clearly, beautifully, and with self-confidence. Don't mumble.

One final word: Interviewing is a skill. That means that you can learn it the same way you have learned to do many other things. All it takes is motivation, practice, feedback, and a sense of humor.

TYPES OF INTERVIEWS

The interviewer's ability to conduct an interview will range from very well to very poor and each interviewer will have his/her own style. You must be prepared for the best and the worst interviewer. If you happen to be with an inexperienced interviewer, you must be prepared to take charge of the situation in a tactful way, and if possible, make the interviewer look good in the process. Most interviews will follow a simple question and answer format. However, you should be aware of the different types of interviews.

- **Screening Interview**

This type usually lasts 15, 20, or 30 minutes. The purpose is to screen out applicants. On-campus interviews usually fall in this category.

- **Call-Back or Second Interview**

The second interview is an opportunity to visit the office and typically interview with a number of individuals. Detailed information in regards to arranging these interviews and making travel arrangements is provided later in this packet. Some call-back interviews are very intensive with perhaps one or two members of the staff. Others may seem like a series of screening interviews back-to-back as you may talk with 7 or 8 people in a day. Lunch or dinner may be provided by the employer. First interviews with small firms are often similar to call-backs from large firms (although meals and expenses are not provided.)

- **Group Interview**

In this situation, more than one candidate is interviewed at the same time. This is designed to identify natural leaders or to find a person who works well as a team member. In this situation, it is best to concentrate your attention on one person (the one who is the interviewing team leader), but be careful not to completely ignore the other people in the group. Another variation of this technique is there is only one applicant, but a group of interviewers.

- **Stress Interview**

Used to deliberately place the applicant in a stressful situation to see how the student works under pressure. This is accomplished in several ways, e.g., sudden silence on the interviewer's part, challenging your opinions or statements, seeming to be unfriendly or brusque, or using an attitude that causes you to be uncomfortable. Since this may occur at any time during an interview, you should learn to recognize this technique and be prepared to handle the situation. Employers will often give students hypothetical situations to respond to. Usually students find these types of questions very stressful as there is not necessarily a right or wrong answer.

- **The Marathon Effect**

By the time you have interviewed with 5, 10, 15 or more attorneys, you may feel that you have just completed the Boston Marathon. During the call-back interview, you can expect more in-depth questions than you received during on-campus interviews; in many cases, you may find yourself answering the same questions for a number of attorneys in the same organization.

Some students have commented on the difficulty of "staying fresh" for a series of interviews comprised of the same questions. There is no magic formula or special technique to suggest other than to keep telling yourself that to each member of the organization, the information you provide is new and you should try not to get exasperated by repeated questions.

In meeting the different members of the firm, you may feel that you are required to ask different questions of everyone. While you should try to vary your questions somewhat, do not hesitate to repeat some questions -- especially those of a subjective nature. For example, you might want to ask several attorneys what he/she likes best about the firm.

- **The Recruiting Lunch**

Your lunch escorts will usually be associates, rather than partners, and this is a prime opportunity to get the real "scoop" on the organization. However, as relaxed as the recruiting lunch may seem, don't let down your guard - you are still "on trial" and, in most firms, associates do participate in the hiring decisions and complete evaluation forms following lunch.

When ordering lunch, please bear in mind the following:

- Alcoholic beverages, particularly on an empty/anxious stomach, result in a loose tongue and fatigue.
- Spaghetti and other saucy dishes stain and make a mess. Since you may have interviews following lunch, items of the sort should be avoided.
- Hard rolls always result in piles of crumbs.

Remember that the luncheon is an occasion for the members of the organization to get to know you as a person "beyond the resume" -- will you be someone with whom they enjoy spending 10+ hours per day? If the formal interview process was too constrained for your personality or sense of humor to emerge, this is a great opportunity to express other aspects of yourself -- use it wisely and to your advantage!

THE CALL-BACK OR SECOND INTERVIEW

The purpose of the second or call-back interview is to further explore the "fit" between a job candidate and a prospective employer. So you've been invited downtown (or across the country as the case may be). Once you've crossed this first hurdle, your chances of being offered a position have improved dramatically. Naturally, you should prepare for the visit by reviewing your prior research on the employer as well as your own self-evaluation.

The following section will discuss those questions which you will undoubtedly have about the etiquette of the process. If you have specific questions which are not answered, please feel free to contact the Office of Career Services. Note the items you should be prepared to discuss/provide:

- Letting the employer know if you will be on a tight schedule.
- Indicating an interest in a specific department (if asked).
- Providing an original writing sample, law school transcript, and the names/telephone numbers of two or three people with whom you have worked who can serve as references.
- Notifying the organization promptly and courteously if you do not intend to interview.

- **Arranging the Interview**

If your invitation for a second interview comes by mail, you should immediately call the employer to make arrangements for the interview. Emails and calls should be returned the same day. If your call-back is with a large law firm, there is probably a Recruitment Coordinator with whom you will deal. In some instances with larger firms, all of the arrangements (hotel, plane tickets, etc.) will be made for you.

Find out exactly what plans they have made for you, including how long you will be there and what, if any, social plans they have in mind. (You need to know what clothes to take among other things.) Once at the firm, someone (probably a younger attorney or the Recruitment Coordinator) will see that you get from one appointment to another. After making the arrangements, it is a good idea to confirm them in writing.

The Career Services staff recommends that if the firm has a Recruitment Coordinator, you ask him/ her for the names of the partners and associates you will be meeting during your call-back interview.

This information will enable you to familiarize yourself with the pronunciation of the names and attorney backgrounds as well as provide an accurate record for your follow-up. However, be aware that the coordinator may not have this information at the time you are making arrangements. Also, client or court demands on the attorneys may require last minute changes in the list of attorneys you will meet.

KEEPING PERSPECTIVE

For those of you who are interviewing on campus - do not panic during the interviewing season if you are not receiving positive feedback from your interviews. Please keep in mind:

- The average firm which comes on campus in the fall interviews many students, and some interview at several law schools. This means that several hundred students are considered for a few positions.
- Usually the students who are having success interviewing are the ones you hear about. You are not alone if you have received many rejection letters without one positive reply. If you are discouraged by the interviewing process, make an appointment with the Office of Career Services. Perhaps there are changes that can be made in your resume or tips on interviewing techniques which may increase your chances of success. Keep in mind that most opportunities are found with employers that do not come to campus to interview.

REASONS WHY CANDIDATES RECEIVE REJECTION REPLIES

1. Lack of proper career planning -- purposes and goals ill-defined.
2. Lack of knowledge of field or specialization -- no background, or seeks specialty not needed by employer.
(Ex. Saying "I would love to handle divorces." to a firm that specializes in commercial real estate.)
3. Inability to express himself/herself clearly.
4. Insufficient evidence of achievement or capacity to excite action in others.
5. Not prepared for the interview -- no research on legal employer.
6. Shows no real interest in the firm, corporation, or agency -- seems merely shopping around.
7. Narrow location interest -- focus of job search on geographical areas where market is particularly tight.
(Ex. Indicating that you must live in New York, but having no answer about where you plan to rent for the summer, etc.)
8. Little interest and enthusiasm -- appears indifferent.
9. Overbearing -- over aggressive -- conceited.
10. Asks no or poor questions about the job.
11. Unwilling to start at the bottom -- expects too much too soon.
12. Makes excuses -- evasiveness -- hedges on unfavorable factors in record.
13. No confidence and poise -- fails to look interviewer in the eye.
14. Poor personal appearance.
15. Interested only in best dollar offer.

INTERVIEW CHECKLIST

The following items will give you an idea of what interviewers notice (pro or con) during the interview. Please review the list before going on an interview.

CON:

- Applicant fidgeted with hands during the interview.
- Applicant used clichés to excess.
- Applicant kept hand(s) over mouth while talking.
- Applicant gave such comments as "yeah" instead of "yes."
- Applicant seemed confused and made contradictory statements during the interview.
- Applicant clutched some object and fidgeted with it during the interview.
- Applicant kept repeating qualifying phrases such as: "you know" or "I mean."
- Applicant gave too brief responses to answer questions completely.
- Applicant's hair was not neat.
- Applicant did not maintain good posture.
- Applicant did not maintain good eye contact.
- Applicant made excuses about unfavorable school or employment record.
- Applicant's hands and/or other parts of body were noticeably shaking.
- Applicant continually adjusted glasses or hair.
- Applicant's facial expression did not change during the interview.
- Applicant ended statements with laughs or giggles.
- Applicant verbally overwhelmed the interviewer.
- Applicant became unnerved when the interviewer added "stress" to the interview.
- Applicant said that he/she would not relocate.
- Applicant over-stressed money and/or fringe benefits.
- Applicant gave impression that he/she was merely "shopping around."
- Applicant indicated an (appropriate amount/too much) interest in outside activities and organizations.
- Applicant displayed a negative attitude.

PRO:

- Applicant did not hesitate about answering personal questions.
- Applicant used hand gestures to supplement verbal responses.
- Applicant indicated that he/she researched the organization by asking about firm/agency programs and/or policies specific to the organization.
- Applicant asked intelligent questions about the organization to help make an informed decision.
- Applicant gave responses which indicated confidence in his/her ability to succeed.
- Applicant stuck to the subject and did not wander off on tangents.
- Applicant thanked the interviewer for his/her time and consideration.

DURING OR AFTER THE JOB INTERVIEW: EVALUATING THE FIRM

The suggestions below are provided to help you evaluate the criteria which are important in your decision making:

- a. Your own satisfaction with the size and character of the community
- b. How pleasant the relations within the firm would be
- c. The future condition of the firm
- d. The extent and quality of the training given by the firm

- e. The quality of the business that would be referred to you by other members of the firm
- f. How much freedom you would have to experiment and to develop the type of practice you prefer
- g. How much freedom you would have to choose your own lifestyle

Bear in mind that some questions are sensitive, and should not be asked directly. Some can be asked only after you have received an offer of employment.

1. Find out as much as you can about the reputation of the law firm from written or on-line materials, professors, and any other contacts you have. To some extent, a new associate will be judged by the reputation of the employer.
2. Find out how associates are trained. More importantly, find out how much freedom of access there is to the senior members of the law firm.
3. To find out how well the senior members can train the associate, it is necessary to try to evaluate both the ability of the senior members and their willingness to share their experience with associates. Separately ask as many of the members of the firm as possible to describe what each of the other members of the firm does and the extent of their specializing, etc. Be sensitive to what is said -- and perhaps more importantly, what is not said -- the descriptions of the other members of the firm, the extent of their cooperation with new associates, and how the members of the firm regard the ability and productivity of each other.
4. Find out who appears to manage the firm and who really makes the decisions in the firm. They may not be the same person. It may be difficult to find out the power structure in the firm, but you can determine whether there are any relationships among the firm members by blood or marriage, which members have similar outside activities, etc.
5. Find out how active the members of the firm are in bar association or other professional or service activities. This is some indication of the vitality of the firm and also some indication of the standing of the firm with fellow lawyers and judges.
6. How does the firm feel about political activity on the part of associates and members? Does the firm permit freedom in choosing which political party to support? Does the firm object to active political involvement? How does the firm feel about an associate or member running for political office?
7. Does the firm have a particular type of practice in mind for the new associate? How much freedom is there for the associate to eventually choose his or her own type of practice?
8. How stable has the membership of the firm been in the past? Have any members left the firm and, if so, why? Are any members likely to leave in the future? Is anyone seeking to become a judge?
9. How much risk is there that the associate will not become a partner in the firm within a reasonable time? In the past, have many associates left without becoming partners, and if so, why? What has been their experience in the past as to how long it took for an associate to become a partner?
10. To what extent does each of the members of the firm participate in continuing legal education and, if so, what types? How much continuing legal education on the part of the associates is permitted and expected? This is some indication of which members are likely to be helpful to associates and what expertise they have to offer. The quality of the law library may be some indication of the type of work product turned out by the firm and will also indicate what resources are available to you for learning. However, don't expect a smaller firm to have a large library.

11. Since the law firm spends considerable time in recruiting and training a new associate, it is to their advantage to find a person who will succeed. Otherwise, the law firm has lost the time invested and the program of bringing in a new associate has been delayed. Therefore, a law firm should be open and frank with applicants. The beginning salary should not be an influential factor from the point of view of the associate. It should not be low enough to discourage any applicant or so high that it would be a factor in a decision to join the firm. Remember that starting salary may be less important than potential for later earning power. After an offer is made, the law firm should be willing to discuss openly and frankly its type of organization and give a general indication of the income levels of the associates and partners. The law firm should also be willing to discuss its strengths and weaknesses. What provisions are made for retirement or disability on the part of members? Are there any profit-sharing or pension plans? Maternity/paternity leave and/or benefits (be careful asking this)?
12. To what extent will the law firm be involved in suggesting or dictating the social life and lifestyle of the associate and any spouse? Does the firm suggest or require membership in any clubs, lodges, or organizations?
13. If a firm, as a social unit, has a history and some aspects of being a family, what other traditions are there?
14. There are some questions you cannot ask, but you can make observations. Among the members of the firm, are there any health problems, drinking problems, marital problems, or outside activities that interfere with their ability to devote full-time to law practice? These factors may be important in predicting the future of the firm, but may be difficult to ascertain. Try to evaluate the impact of the death or retirement of each of the senior partners on the relationships within the firm and the clients of the firm.
16. Consider how efficiently the firm is operated. Are the computers, copy machines, printers, etc. new? Are legal assistants and law clerks employed? How are time records kept? What type of software are they using? How sophisticated is the bookkeeping? Is there an employee handbook? Does the firm have a brief bank and retrieval system? Does the firm have its own forms? Are there minimum billable hour goals for associates?

DECIDING IF A PARTICULAR LAW FIRM IS THE BEST ONE FOR YOU

Furnished by the hiring partner of a large Wall Street firm.

NOTE: While the following questions are relevant for large practice, many are also applicable to smaller firm practice.

1. What is the firm's general character -- its stability and reputation? Have there been any significant split-ups in its history?
2. What are its specialties and major areas of practice?
3. Are its clients solid and varied, with important and interesting problems?
4. Does the firm have an active international practice with substantial foreign clients and offices outside the United States?
5. Is the firm's success tied to many clients or a few? How is the firm affected by the business cycle, i.e., periods of recession?
6. Is the caliber of the firm's lawyers uniformly high -- with solid and able people at all age levels and in all important legal areas?
7. Are the firm's lawyers people in whose legal ability, judgement and standards you will have confidence and pride?
8. Are the firm's lawyers people you will enjoy working with? Are they of sufficiently varied types and backgrounds to make the office interesting?
9. Are the firm's organization and administration systems sound and apparently running smoothly? Are there signs of cliques or discord?
10. What is the firm's future? Is it getting and keeping new people of high caliber?
11. Has the number of the firm's partners and associates grown significantly in the past 15 years?

12. What do new associates do? How is their work determined and assigned? How do the associates' work and responsibilities change over the years?
13. When does an associate become a specialist? Who decides and how?
14. What about compensation -- initial, bonus, raises? What is the firm's general philosophy on this? And are there significant "fringe benefits"?
15. What emphasis is placed on getting new business -- and how does this affect compensation?
16. How is performance judged -- and by whom? What are the criteria for advancement? When does an associate become a partner?
17. Are partnership opportunities significantly affected by the business cycle, i.e., has the firm admitted fewer associates to partnership during periods of business decline?
18. On what basis is admission to partnership determined? Is it a "competitive standard," i.e., restricted to a small proportion of partners to associates in a given field, or is it available to those who "meet the firm's standard," i.e., all associates who meet the firm's standard of performance will become partners?
19. What does partnership entail -- compensation, responsibilities, contributions?
20. If an associate does not become a partner, what opportunities do the associate have available? Does the firm help in this regard? Does the firm have many prominent and successful alumni?
21. What is the relationship between younger and older lawyers in the firm -- the channels of communication (formal and informal), the degree of contact and formality?
22. What are the firm's prevailing attitudes -- and practices -- on such matters as pro bono work, community service and government service?
23. Does the firm have a friendly atmosphere -- is it a place where people can laugh and enjoy themselves in spite of their hard work or is it stiff and formal? Is there a spirit of cooperation among the lawyers -- a desire to help each other to get the job done well, or is there a harsh competitiveness? What type of relationship exists between lawyers and their staff?
24. Is the locality a good place to work and live -- with cultural and recreational activities, citizen interest, and convenient attractive residential areas with good schools?

EVALUATING A JOB OFFER

After weeks (or months) of placing your ego on the line in the job search, it is a great feeling finally to receive an offer of employment. When that moment comes, it is very tempting to accept immediately and have the job search behind you, but before committing yourself, you should make certain that the position is the right one for you. If you find yourself in a dilemma, consult with the Office of Career Services before acting in undue haste.

From the moment the offer is made until it is accepted, to some extent the balance of power in the employer-applicant relationship shifts in your favor. That is the time to pose the hard questions that you may have been too polite to ask in the interviewing process. If there is some condition of your employment that you are unhappy about, it should be discussed, and if possible negotiated while you still have some bargaining power.

To make a well-informed decision about whether to accept an offer, you must have learned as much about the employer, and the terms of your possible employment, as you can. Following are some ideas about information you might elicit before deciding to accept a permanent job offer.

Personal Goals

Before discussing the position with the employer, ask yourself whether the job you are considering either meets your personal goals or can serve as a stepping stone to their fulfillment. For example, if your goal is to litigate, it probably does not make sense to accept a position with a law firm where litigation is not a major part of their business.

If you break down your goals to their most basic, specific components and evaluate the job offer on that basis, you may find that a position you might at first reject is, in fact, a good opportunity for you. For example, if you desire to

stay in Columbia, but cannot find a position here and are offered a job elsewhere, consider what it is that attracts you to Columbia and examine whether the other location offers some of the desired attributes.

Salary and Bonuses

The figure that most students focus on in evaluating the economics of an offer is the starting salary. Starting salary is a major consideration in evaluating some positions, but not that important in looking at others.

The size of the starting salary can be very important in looking at government, public interest, and corporate positions, where future increases are often based on a percentage of the starting salary. However, if you are taking an entry-level position with good opportunity for promotion to a much higher pay scale, you should not be as concerned about the starting salary. Try to find out the salary range applicable to your position and ask for a salary at the top of that range. Along with salary, look at how frequently you will be considered for raises and/or promotions.

In evaluating an offer from a law firm, you should consider other economic factors that will have a much more important impact on future earnings than the starting salary, in particular the chances of becoming a partner and the length of time before you will be considered for partnership.

Be sure you know how many years it typically takes to make partner at the law firm you are considering and the approximate percentage of associates who become partners. You need to know not only how many associates are successful who come up for a partnership vote but also how many associates leave the firm before that decision is made. If good information on this point is hard to come by, look at the ratio of associates to partners: in general the higher the ratio, the fewer the number of associates who will become partners.

Also, keep in mind that the starting salary, while it will serve as a base, may not be indicative of salary increases you will receive in later years as an associate with the firm. A number of firms have increased their starting salaries while shrinking the size of associate salary increases from year to year. Ask how much third and fourth-year associates are making. A one-time bonus (also known as signing bonus) may be used to increase the amount you receive up front, but be sure to ask whether you will be eligible for bonuses in future years. If the firm awards merit bonuses, ask what percentage of associates receive them (another clue about the chances of making partner).

Bonuses are an important part of the compensation package in some corporate positions as well. If the employer offers a base salary with a large yearly bonus (10% or more of the base salary), find out whether the bonus has any guaranteed minimum and the standards considered in deciding the amount of your bonus. If you are given an employment letter or contract, be sure the terms of any bonus are included.

Small firms generally offer much lower starting salaries than larger ones, with the advantage of offering fewer years to partnership and in some cases a share in the profits while still working as an associate. The terms of employment with a small firm are generally more flexible than with any other type of legal position, and thus more open to negotiation. Some smaller firms may not offer the sophisticated practice of the larger ones, but the hours are usually more regular, the odds of making partner better, and the compensation surprisingly good after the first few years.

One employment consideration -- which was once somewhat unique to smaller law firms but is now almost universal -- is whether the firm expects you to bring in more business. If your personality is such that you would enjoy the chance to increase the firm's profit base as well as your own, go for it. If the thought of trying to drum up business makes you uncomfortable but the firm requires that all partners be rainmakers, you might reconsider whether you would be happy in the position offered. To some extent, all firms will probably expect some business development, however.

Employee Benefits

Employee benefits are an aspect of employment that will become really important to you once you are working, but that few students look at very closely in deciding whether to accept a job offer. Not only do employee benefits have a significant effect on your total compensation, but also the benefits offered or omitted can give you valuable clues about the organization.

Comprehensive medical insurance is important to everyone, but is particularly valuable to those with children. The size of the deductible, the inclusion of dental benefits, the amount of the co-payment, if any, required from the employee can affect your compensation significantly if you have (or intend to have) a family. Ask about them.

Pension plans sound incredibly boring, and are often ignored by those first entering the job market. Do pay some attention to how they will work. If a pension plan is not offered, you may want to consider whether your salary will be large enough for you to make your own deferred compensation arrangements.

If the employer does offer a pension plan, when do your rights to employer contributions under the plan vest? If they do not vest for a number of years, the pension benefits can tie you to a job you may otherwise have outgrown. It is also a good sign about an employer if the plan rights vest early: the employer probably suffers from very little attrition.

Some of the larger companies, and some government employers, offer other benefit programs that can considerably increase the overall value of your compensation, such as savings plans with employer matching provisions, stock option plans, etc. In a successful publicly-held company, stock options or other incentive plans based upon stock value can add significantly to the compensation of upper-level management.

One way to tell how much power the legal department has in the corporate structure is to ask how many lawyers in the department receive upper-level benefits. If a number of the members of the department receive stock options or participate in similar plans, the department is an important part of the organization and should be an interesting place to work.

Women should look at the employer's policy on maternity leave, whether or not they plan to need it. If no policy has been formed, or if little or no leave is given, the employer may not have very advanced ideas about hiring women, which could stall your career or make for an unpleasant work atmosphere.

Training

Believe it or not, you won't learn everything you need to know about practicing law in law school. A number of law firms, government agencies, and corporations have very well-structured training programs; most do not. Because training is such a grey area with many legal employers, you may find it hard to determine if you will receive the training and guidance you will need to be successful in practice.

In any employment setting, a successful training program will strike a balance between giving you responsibility for your own work and having your work supervised by someone more experienced. If the program errs too far in either direction, it may be up to you to correct the balance.

When considering an offer from a law firm, ask what kind of work the employer expects you to perform. If it appears that you will be expected to leap right in, make sure you can easily approach members of the firm with questions, or get assistance when you need it. If the employer expects you to do only research, writing, or title work at first, ask if you will have the opportunity to accompany members of the firm to meetings, closings, or to court to get a grasp of the "big picture." Also find out if and when you will be able to do those things yourself.

In a large firm or corporation with a number of practice areas, it is best to get as broad an experience as you can, particularly at first, so you can make the best possible choice about the area in which you may specialize. If you are not sure of the general area in which you wish to practice, ask if the employer offers a rotation program. A good rotation program will give you the chance to work in several departments in the firm where positions are available and the opportunity to select your department upon completion of the rotation.

If you have already selected a practice area, be sure you will be permitted to work with various members of that department on various projects. If you are assigned to work with only one partner, you may get to do only the type of work in which that partner specializes. If the department's major contribution to the firm's profit is in a particular area, be sure you are doing at least some work in that area.

Defects in the employer's training program often can be solved after you begin work, with some initiative on your part. If you find that you are not being exposed to the work that interests you, volunteer to assist the person doing that work. If you find that you do not know enough about the projects you are being assigned, ask for more information or more supervision: in the long run that will serve you far better than bluffing your way through. However, most employers appreciate a "can-do" attitude; don't allow initial insecurity to make you a person who has to ask for direction or approval on every project.

One axiom of legal training is that to reach the right conclusion, you need to know all the relevant facts. This is true not only about practicing law, but also about selecting a legal position. The best way to make your particular employment decision is to decide what factors are most important to you and be sure you have all the relevant information about them.

NEGOTIATING SALARY OFFERS

While some firms and corporations have established salary policies that are non-negotiable, other firms and businesses are willing to "negotiate" with you over your salary and benefits. Small firms are often more likely to negotiate than large firms; they may ask early what salary you expect.

Salary negotiation sessions (generally held at the end of the job interview in which you are offered the position) serve several functions:

1. They give the employer information about your own expectations regarding salary, benefits, promotion possibilities, etc.
2. They give you, the prospective employee, information about the employer's salary policies and ability/willingness to meet your expectations.
3. They establish a mutually-agreed-upon policy regarding your starting salary, benefits (vacation, pension, medical insurance, etc.), next salary review date, and expected performance measures.

You can prepare for your salary negotiation session now, by carefully considering the following questions before you begin to look for work:

1. What is the lowest salary I will accept? What will I initially ask for? What can I realistically expect to get? (Consider both your realistic expectations and your actual needs.)
2. What are competitive salaries for individuals with my level of experience? What is the present job market for individuals at my level? (Career Services has salary information.)
3. Of what value are my special skills and expertise? (Consider whether you have special skills, e.g., language skills, etc., which could be recognized by the company or firm.)
4. What other elements (beyond monthly salary) of a "compensation package" are important to me? (Consider Bar exam fees, annual bar dues, vacation time, pension plan, medical insurance, paid parking, paid educational benefits, year-end bonus, etc.). Would these compensations make up for a salary that was somewhat lower than what you had hoped for?
5. Ask yourself what you would do in the following situation: You have been offered two jobs. The first job has a reasonable starting salary with a salary review date in 12 months; the second job seems much more interesting to you, but it has a lower monthly salary.

REFERENCE MATERIALS AVAILABLE

The following books may be checked out in the Office of Career Services.

- Information Interviewing: What it is and how to Use it in Your Career by Martha Stoodley
 - Tips on how to create and utilize a network of contacts to locate and secure a job that is ideal for you.
- Stating Your Case: How to Interview for a Job as a Lawyer by Joseph Ryan
 - Written for law students and lawyers who are beginning their careers and are attempting to find positions with private law firms, corporate legal departments, and federal agencies. Offers interviewing tips on style and technique.
- Guerilla Tactics for Getting the Legal Job of Your Dreams...Regardless of your grades, your school, or your work experience! by Kimm Walton
- The Essential Book of Interviewing, Everything You Need To Know From Both Sides of The Table, by Arnold B. Kanter.
 - The author explains how job seekers and interviewers give and get information they need, ask the right questions, prepare for the interview, and make decisions after the interview.
- Sweaty Palms: the Neglected Art of Being Interviewed, by H. Anthony Medley.
- The Legal Job Interview, by Clifford R. Enrico.