Purpose

The Career Development Office (CDO) 3L Alumni Advisor Program is designed to build connections between students and alumni, expand students’ knowledge of the norms and expectations within the professional world, introduce students to potential networking contacts and support soon-to-be graduates as they continue the search for post-graduate employment.

The Program pairs students within two semesters of graduation with alumni working in the students’ preferred practice area or industry, employment setting and geographic location. Students and alumni advisors will be paired based on students’ responses to an application form and alumni’s professional experiences. Because the pairings depend in part on shared professional interests, students whose interests are defined (even loosely) will be able to make the most effective use of the program. While the CDO will seek alumni participants who meet each students’ preferences on more than one dimension, forming a pair is the primary goal. Participation in the program is voluntary. The Alumni Advisor Program’s success for each pairing depends on the commitment of both the student and advisor.

Application Process

To sign up for the program, students should complete the following steps by 5 p.m. on August 29th: (1) Complete the survey titled “3L Alumni Advisor Program Student Application” on Symplicity, found under the “Surveys” tab; (2) Bring an updated copy of your resume and a brief summary (of no less than 250 words) explaining your career goals and interests, and how you intend to use the program effectively.

Matches will be distributed at the Alumni Advisor Pairing Program: Developing a Meaningful Relationship at 12 p.m. on Friday, September 26th in room 205. All participating students are required to attend this session. Alumni advisors are welcome to participate if they wish.

Students are responsible for initiating contact with their alumni advisor within three business days following the Pairing Program. Students should let their alumni advisor know whether the student will be attending Fall Gathering on Friday, October 24th, as this annual alumni event provides a wonderful venue for an initial introduction. Further, students should initiate contact with their alumni advisor again early during the spring semester to begin coordination of a spring semester activity.
Activities

Alumni advisors and students should agree to have at least one in-person meeting each semester, for a total of two such meetings during the 2014 – 2015 academic year. If the student is not geographically close to the alumni, it is anticipated that the two will make best efforts to coordinate an in-person meeting during a school break. Also, the participants agree to have email, telephone or in-person communications at least once every six weeks. In-person interactions should include a visit to the advisor’s office (or, if this is not possible, another mutually convenient location) during fall semester and a meeting at a bar luncheon or reception, continuing legal education seminar, civic club meeting, professional association or other networking event during the spring semester.

Optional suggested activities include meeting for the following:
- coffee or lunch;
- a court proceeding, deposition or closing;
- an hour or two of “shadowing” where the student can experience a typical work day;
- resume and cover letter review; and
- mock interview.

Talking Points

Alumni advisors and students may find it helpful to discuss the following topics, among others:
- alumni advisor’s practice area and setting;
- alumni advisor’s career path;
- navigating law school, including course selection and recommendations;
- student co-curricular activities such as journals, clinical placements and competitions;
- student extra-curricular activities such as clubs, affinity groups and other associations;
- study habits;
- employment market trends;
- professional organizations and other community involvement;
- advice on professional behavior and protocols; and
- networking tactics.

Alumni advisors are not expected to find employment for their student, only to provide information, advice, support and networking opportunities. The Alumni Advisor program is not designed to guarantee a job or even an interview for a student, but to offer practical insight into the legal profession. Students will promptly return calls and emails from advisors and will arrive at scheduled meetings in a timely manner. Either party may discontinue the relationship at any time by notifying the CDO.

Please contact Liz Jones in the CDO at 287-6426 or ljones5@richmond.edu, with any questions.