

**University of Dayton School of Law**  
**Leadership Honors Mentoring Program**  
**Academic Year 2016-17**  
**Topics for Discussion\***

## **The 1-L Year: Introduction to the Legal Profession and Law Practice**

### **First Semester**

*No meetings. The 1-L Program begins after students have completed their first semester of law school.*

### **Second Semester (meet 3 times)**

*The focus of the second semester meetings is to introduce students to the legal profession and law in practice.*

### **Welcome to the Profession**

- Meet your mentor/mentee and get acquainted;
- Discuss what law practice is and the purposes of the legal profession;
- Discuss the role of lawyers and the judiciary in our society;
- Discuss ways to maintain balance in one's life during law school; and
- Discuss the Student's law school study habits, including what strategies have been successful and which are less helpful.

### **Career Overview**

- Discuss differences between large firm, small firm, government, in-house and non-profit practice as well as non-traditional legal positions;
- Discuss the Student's long-term career goals and ways to achieve those goals; and,
- Discuss different career paths and identify resources for exploring options.

### **Networking**

- Discuss the role of networking throughout one's legal career;
- Discuss specific examples of how the Mentor's networking has helped his or her career;
- Discuss the pros and cons of social networking;
- Evaluate the Student's social networking and identify best practices;
- Discuss how the Career Services Office can support networking efforts.

*\*These topics are modeled on materials generously provided by our colleagues from the Professional Mentoring Program at the University of Denver's Sturm College of Law.*

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**The 2-L Year: Interacting with Clients & Other Attorneys and Refining Career Goals**

*The 2-L Program is designed to educate students about interacting with clients and other attorneys and to focus on exploring a career path.*

**Third Semester** (meet at least twice)

**Career Paths**

- Discuss the Student's career goals before law school, during his or her first year, and currently, identifying how and why the goals have changed;
- Discuss resources available to the Student to pursue his or her current goals;
- Discuss reconciling job expectations with actual experience and routes to achieving career satisfaction; and
- Discuss the role and value of 1Ls, 2Ls, 3Ls, First Year Associates, and Third Year Associates to employers.

**Interacting with Supervising Attorneys**

- Discuss the "soft skills" that are important for new associates, externs and law clerks to employ during their first year at a job; and
- Discuss how new associates and externs can develop a friendly, yet professional, relationship with supervisors.

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**Fourth Semester** (meet twice)

**Ethics**

- Discuss common malpractice and grievance traps and ways to avoid them;
- Discuss the role of Ohio's Office of Disciplinary Counsel, the grievance and investigation process, and malpractice insurance;
- Discuss potential resources for dealing with complicated ethical issues, including conflicts of interests; and
- Discuss practices to maintain client confidentiality.

**Case Evaluation**

- Discuss the Mentor's process for evaluating and engaging clients;
- Discuss the best ways to evaluate a potential case and how to decide whether to represent a client; and
- Discuss specific examples of times when the Mentor misevaluated a case and what the Mentor learned from this experience.

**Practical Aspects of Working in a Law Environment**

- Discuss the roles and responsibilities of paralegals, secretaries and other administrative personnel and how to establish good working relationships support staff, colleagues, and senior attorneys;
- Discuss office politics and common pitfalls to avoid while working in a law office; and
- Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of different types of employment: traditional firm, solo practice, public interest practice, in-house counsel, career judicial clerk, state or federal government work, others.

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**The 3-L Year: Finding a Job and Transitioning to Practice**

*The 3-L Program strives to bridge the gap between law school and the legal profession. Discussions focus on job searching and transitioning from law school to practice.*

**Fifth Semester** (meet twice)

**Making the Transition: Job Searching & Finding Balance**

- Discuss job-search strategies, identifying what is effective and less effective;
- Discuss techniques for finding a balance between career and personal life;
- Discuss the Mentor's non-legal formal and informal extra-curricular activities and how they are integrated with professional life; and
- Discuss good time management skills and techniques.

**Client Communication**

- Discuss the importance of client communication and how to maintain a sound professional rapport, including the use of retention and fee agreements, keeping clients informed about matters, confirming things in writing, being on time, and other practices;
- Discuss proper legal counseling techniques, and duties and responsibilities of advising clients;
- Discuss techniques for dealing with an unreasonable, dishonest, or otherwise difficult client; and
- Discuss the responsibilities of the client and the lawyer in decision-making and the best ways to involve a client in his or her case.

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**Sixth Semester** (meet at least once)

**Entering Law Practice**

- Discuss the Student's short-term and long-term goals for the first job after graduation;
- Discuss the prospects of the Mentor and Student participating in the Ohio Lawyer-to-Lawyer Mentoring Program or a similar program in another state; and
- Discuss how the Mentor-Student relationship will change after the Student graduates.