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.
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.
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 with support staff, colleagues, and senior attorneys;
- Discuss office politics and common pitfalls to avoid while working in a law firm; 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.
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.
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.