The Externship Program

The School of Law offers students outstanding opportunities to gain "hands-on" legal experience by working side by side with highly skilled practitioners of the law in the community. Through its Externship Program, Chapman allows students to earn academic credit while working part-time in government agencies, judge’s chambers, and public interest organizations. Students who extern in these off-campus activities receive valuable instruction that supplements the legal education they receive in the classroom. Many externships allow students to engage in direct client contact and make court appearances.

Chapman students extern in a variety of agencies. Judicial externships are available to students interested in learning more about the judicial process and improving their legal research and writing skills. Students who enroll in judicial externships are assigned to clerk for a judge or a panel of judges; they conduct legal research and draft memoranda and opinions for actual cases. Judicial externships allow students to see how judicial decisions are made and to understand the pressures and considerations that influence those decisions. Judicial externships are available in a number of federal and state courts including the United States District Court, the United States Bankruptcy Court, the California Court of Appeals, and the Orange County Superior Court.

Students interested in criminal law or litigation find externship placements in the District Attorney’s Office or the Public Defender’s Office to be invaluable experience. Students work directly with supervising trial attorneys and are given opportunities to interview witnesses, prepare motions, participate in trial strategy discussions with attorneys, and receive extensive training in oral and written advocacy skills. With adequate training, certified students may make appearances in court and argue motions on behalf of the agencies.

Career Services

Chapman University School of Law provides students and alumni with comprehensive career services that aid them in selecting career directions and achieving professional goals. The Career Services and Externship staff specialize in helping students make the transition from law student to lawyer. In keeping with the Chapman mission of providing personalized education, the assistant dean and assistant director meet personally and often with individual students to review resumes and cover letters; to aid in self-assessment and goal orientation; to discuss specific opportunities unique to the student’s needs; and to provide training, support and encouragement in exploring career options. The Office is open four evenings during the week to accommodate part-time students.

The office staff actively markets the School of Law and its students and graduates to employers. Available recruiting programs include on-campus interviewing and off-campus resume forwarding. In only its third year of operation, the office developed a program for on-campus interviewing that continues to attract a wide array of employers.

The number of employers who utilize the Career Services and Externship Office continues to increase during each recruiting season. The Office’s goal is to continue to attract employers from all segments of the legal and business community, thus providing students with a time efficient and cost-effective means of seeking employment in a convenient...
location during a concentrated period of time. Additionally, the School of Law is committed to hosting and participating in regional job fairs designed to centralize and streamline the interviewing process.

To make students aware of the myriad options available to them, the office sponsors an array of career panels, mentor programs and networking events. Through these interactions with practicing attorneys, students are able to assess their interests and skills and subsequently set their own career goals.

Additionally, the office sponsors workshops that teach, in a step-by-step manner, how to draft a resume and cover letter, develop good interviewing skills and establish networking connections that can lead to employment.

Savvy job seekers know that networking is the key to success. The Career Services and Externship Office and student-led organizations, such as the Tax Law Society and Student Bar Association, co-sponsor several events to provide all students with multiple networking opportunities. Students have the opportunity to meet professionals at the Law School’s annual Winter Golf Classic, Minority Law Student–Attorney Mixer and Career Fair. Additionally, the Career Services and Externship Office, sponsors a mentoring program that matches students with local attorneys based on practice type, as well as weekly informational interviewing sessions. The Career Services and Externship Office is equipped with an excellent resource library of publications, including those published by the American Bar Association and the National Association for Law Placement (NALP), manuals, legal directories, computerized job and employer databanks, employment practice guidelines, career development texts on a variety of legal and non-traditional practice areas and other useful tools. In addition to the resource library, the Career Services and Externship Office also prepares and publishes The Legal Career Planning Guidebook and The Job Hunt Book. Each publication is designed to help students successfully navigate their job search, make them aware of various resources, and inform them of job openings. As the first step in the career-planning strategy, each first-year student receives the Legal Career Planning Guidebook. The Guidebook directs students through the job search in a logical manner.

Both the Career Services and Externship Office and the computer lab offer students access to electronic legal employment databases, such as Martindale-Hubbell and NALP’s Directory of Legal Employers. Career Services compiles and constantly updates listings of internet employment sites. For the convenience of Chapman students and alumni, Career Services posts all job notices on its website in addition to job bulletin boards and notebooks. Prospective students are invited to become better acquainted with the Career Services and Externship Office website at www.chapman.edu/law.

To further develop opportunities for students and alumni, Career Services enhances its visibility with the legal community through a series of outreach activities including visitations to law firms, mailings and development of corporate and governmental contacts.

**PART-TIME EMPLOYMENT**

Career Services maintains a listing of part-time employment opportunities available to students during the academic year. Students engaged in full-time legal studies are cautioned that the American Bar Association (ABA) prohibits employment from exceeding twenty hours weekly. Since law school is a demanding activity, full-time students are discouraged from accepting any employment during their first year of law school. Because academic standards are not altered to take account of demands imposed by employment, full-time students are advised to consider enrolling in the part-time program if their personal situation requires employment.

**EMPLOYMENT AND BAR PASSAGE RESULTS**

Chapman students and graduates have successfully secured employment with an array of legal and corporate entities. To date, a significant number of Chapman Law’s graduates have chosen to remain in Southern California. However, Chapman graduates have successfully obtained satisfying employment throughout the United States. Representative employers of Chapman students and graduates include:

- Bures & Tucker
- Knobbe Martens Olson & Bear
- Berger Kahn et. al.
- Public Law Center
- Kirkland & Ellis
- Morrison & Foerster

When I decided to pursue my law degree at Chapman, I thought of it as a means to an end. Even though I’d always heard nothing but wonderful things about the university, I considered it a stepping stone, a process that would help get me from where I was to where I wanted to be.

Frankly, I’m surprised at how much I’m enjoying the process. I thought the material would be dry and boring. It never occurred to me it would be so stimulating. Chapman has introduced me to a whole new way of thinking and viewing the world, and the professors and administration possess a passion for what they do that makes being here a joy. The new law building is breathtaking, but it’s the people who walk through its doors every day who make this school what it is. After I graduate, I plan to practice health care law. I’ve been a registered nurse in the pediatric and neo-natal intensive care for twelve years. I know firsthand how decisions made in corporate meeting rooms can impact the health care delivered in emergency rooms. People who make these decisions but have never talked with or touched a patient don’t have the same understanding. I want to make a difference. With the situation I’m getting at Chapman, I know I can.
Employment statistics for the class of 2000 are as follows:

- Size of class: 36
- Number of graduates whose employment status is unknown: 0
- Percentage of graduates employed as of February 15, 2001: 89%
- Percentage of graduates not seeking employment: 6%


The composite pass rate for first-time takers for the six bar examinations administered during this period (July 1998, February and July 1999, February and July 2000, and February 2001) is approximately 31%. The composite overall bar passage rate for the California Bar Examination during this time was approximately 46%.

(This percentage includes first time and repeat test takers.)