**III. TIMING RECOMMENDATIONS - WHEN YOU SHOULD BE DOING WHAT?**

These recommendations are only intended as guidelines to give you an idea of the job search process as you progress through law school. Each student is encouraged to consult with the CSO staff to discuss his/her particular situation.

**A. First Year, First Semester (1D/1E/1PTD)** - During your first semester of law school, you MUST focus exclusively on your course work and on becoming acclimated to law school. Grades will influence future employment opportunities, so work hard to get off to a good start academically.

All first year students are encouraged to attend any of the CSO's workshops and seminars, but in accordance with the guidelines set forth by the National Association for Law Placement (NALP), the CSO does not offer individual counseling to full-time first semester students until after November 1. In early November, the CSO will hold a mandatory Career Services Orientation meeting for all first year students. During this meeting we will introduce you to the CSO, our resource materials, and the services we provide. All first years MUST attend this orientation meeting before they can schedule individual consultations, resume preparation sessions, mock interviews, or access Symplicity, etc. After attending this meeting, first year students are welcome to use all of the CSO's services and resources. First year students should begin to think about putting together a professional resume and a working cover letter.

If you are applying for a 1L summer associate position with a large law firm, prepare your application materials in November and apply on December 1st or shortly thereafter. Some government agencies and judges have fall deadlines for summer internships. You should consult the Government Internship & Attorneys Handbook, which you can link to from Symplicity, for up-to-date information about most agencies’ application processes and deadlines.

**B. First Year, Second Semester (1D/1E/1PTD/2E/2PTD)** - Now is the time (if you have not already done so) to draft a resume and cover letter and to compile a list of references that you will supply to potential employers. During the spring of the first year is when most first year law students obtain their summer jobs. But not all law students obtain legal positions the summer after their first year. This is especially true if you expect to find a paying legal job - opportunities for first year students are limited. And although a legal job after your first year is not essential to your future career success, any legal experiences that you can add to your resume will make you more attractive and more marketable when seeking that crucial summer legal job after your second year of law school. Working in some sort of legal job will also help you in building your network of contacts. Many Duquesne law students participate in the Law School's Externship Program the summer after their first year. The Externship Program allows you to earn academic credit while working for a non-profit organization such as a judge, government agency, or legal services association. The program only requires 140 hours (10 hours per week for 14 weeks); therefore, you may do an externship and have another job to earn money for your expenses. As mentioned above, another option is to volunteer some time to a non-profit entity to gain some experience. Students who work for public interest organizations and some government offices can also apply for a Summer Public Interest Fellowship or Summer Public Service Fellowships. Information about these fellowship programs is distributed by the Law Clinic each year.

**C. Second Year, First Semester (2D/3E/3PTD)** - Over the summer between your first and second years of law school, you will receive a letter that explains the On-Campus Interview (OCI) Program that takes place from August through November. If you intend to participate in the OCI process, you should be prepared with an updated resume, a writing sample, a copy of your transcript, and a list of references. You will have to be aware of the OCI deadlines and procedures. The first deadline for resume submission via Symplicity is generally in late July or early August.

Part-time work during the school year, OCI, job fairs, networking and individual job search efforts are all tools to be utilized in obtaining a position that may lead to full-time employment upon graduation. During the second year of law school, your job search requires a significant amount of time. There are ways to reduce the amount of time required to perform an efficient and successful job search. All students should: know how to access Westlaw and LEXIS job search databases; know the various deadlines and application procedures of employers in which you are interested; attend CSO workshops and presentations; consider working part-time during the school year; nurture your network of contacts; and participate in informational interviewing.

If you plan on practicing patent law, consider taking the patent bar while in law school. Having passed the exam makes you much more marketable.

**D. Second Year, Second Semester (2D/3E/3PTD)** - This is when most second year students line up their summer jobs. Take the time to evaluate what you are learning in your job search. What have you done to locate employment? What strategies have worked? Which ones have not?

In January, start applying for summer positions with small and medium-size law firms and other employers. Revise your resume. Review your cover letter and brush up on your interview skills. Begin to organize and prepare application materials for federal and state judges, fellowships and federal government honors attorney programs, all of which have late summer/early fall application deadlines.

**E. Third Year, First Semester (3D/4E/4PTD)** - Over the summer you will receive a letter that explains the On-Campus Interview (OCI) Program that takes place from August through November. Realize that far fewer opportunities will be available to you as a 3L because firms tend to hire from their pool of summer associates. If you know that you will not be working for a large firm, consider getting a part-time job; this will help to expand your network and will make you more marketable. Also, continue to follow all of the advice for other periods in your education – get involved in organization, conduct informational interviews, and take whatever other steps are necessary to identify opportunities in your area of interest. If pursuing a public interest career, don’t forget to look into fellowships. If seeking a career in government, apply for the Presidential Management Fellows Program and other federal government honors attorney programs.

**If you plan on applying for a federal judicial clerkship, now is the time.** Federal clerkship applications are due each year on the Tuesday after Labor Day. Also, if you would like to work for the federal government, many agencies' deadlines are in September and October.

**F. Third Year, Second Semester (3D/4E/4PTD)** – If you have not already done so, implement a specific plan for obtaining a permanent position. Make sure that you are really doing something about your career prospects and not just worrying abstractly about employment prospects. Job seekers often underestimate the real effort and time required to perform an effective job search.

Maintain a positive attitude and take responsibility for your situation. Obtain a part-time law clerk position, continue to network, attend local bar association functions (if you have not already done so, become a student member of the local bar association), contact any job leads that you learn about, and keep in touch with the Career Services Office staff.

Complete an Employment Status Form before you graduate. This will help us serve you better when you graduate. After graduation, you must concentrate on passing the bar exam. Resume your job search after the bar exam. After passing the bar, you will become much more marketable to small and medium size firms and to certain public interest employers who cannot afford to hire a new graduate who has not yet passed the bar exam.

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**SPECIAL NOTE FOR SECOND CAREER STUDENTS:**

* If you are in the evening program, consider when you will transition to a legal position; you should begin to seriously consider this at the beginning of your third year of the evening or part-time program.
* Understand that you are starting a new career and are likely to start at the bottom.
* Even though you may have had responsibility and autonomy in your prior career, you will have to prove yourself/pay your dues in the legal profession.
* When interviewing, be prepared to explain why you decided to become a lawyer and make clear that it was a well-informed and considered decision.
* Potential employers may be concerned about your ability to take orders from younger associates. Do not be defensive in interviews, simply provide anecdotes that relate your ability to work well with others and take instructions in a graceful and professional way.

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**Anytime after completing the first year:** Consider entering a writing competition. Each year Duquesne Law Students win or place in writing competitions, and the demonstrated writing proficiency and interest in an area has led to job opportunities. Writing competitions are listed on the CSO website, and an extensive list can be found online at [www.abanet.org/lsd/competitions/writing-contests](http://www.abanet.org/lsd/competitions/writing-contests).