



Career Development Office

GETTING THE MOST OUT OF A CAREER FORUM

THERE ARE TWO MAIN PURPOSES OF A CAREER FORUM. CAREER FORUMS ALLOW YOU TO:

- **Network:** Remember, most people get positions through other people, not postings. While this is not a formal recruiting fair (resume exchange is not allowed), some students have gained employment through meeting people at this forum and following up with them on their own. Remember, these alums have volunteered for this program. They want to help and they are waiting for you to approach them!
- **Explore:** This is a time for you to explore many different legal practice areas and different career paths. You will find out what areas are growing and declining. You will learn practical information and gain realistic insights on what you can do now to prepare for future internship and job opportunities. You will also learn how SULLS alumni got their first job and/or how they came to practice what they practice.

GENERAL TIPS

DO...

- **Dress in appropriate business attire.** You will probably meet some people who you want to impress.
- **Take your time.** Don't try to push through the tables too quickly, you won't make any connections or learn anything. Give yourself the full two hours if you can; this is a once-a-year chance to gather a large amount of important information.
- **Be aware of how much time you are spending with one person!** At this forum, 5-10 minutes is enough. If someone is waiting, keep in to 5. If nobody is waiting behind you, a little bit longer is okay.
- **Be open minded in choosing who you speak to.** You may receive excellent advice on how to get a job from someone who is practicing in an area that you have no interest. You may also become interested in areas that you haven't explored yet!
- **Collect business cards from participants.** If you develop a good rapport, follow-up with the alum in the future.
- **Listen in on the conversation of others when next in line.** You will learn more this way, and you won't want to ask the same questions to which you just heard answers.

DON'T...

- **Bring a resume to this Career Forum.** Collect business cards to follow-up with someone in the future.
- **Ask for a job!** This is not a job fair. Focus on information, knowledge, and contacts you will be making, not the job you hope to gain.

- **Feel like you are asking “stupid questions.”** There is no such thing as a stupid question. For example, there are many aspects to practicing business/corporate law. The simple question of: “Just what does a corporate attorney do anyway?” is a great way to start a conversation.
- **Be too narrow minded about who you speak with.** Look around, see who has nobody at their table, go to them, and strike up a conversation. Even if you are positively sure you have no interest in their practice area, they may be full of great general job search information, or you may learn of a new area of interest.
- **Feel like you are “schmoozing” people.** People love talking about themselves. You are allowing them to do this! Also, alums remember what it was like to be a student, this is pay back time for them, they want to help!

INTRODUCTIONS AND ENDINGS

- First, introduce yourself and give the participant relevant information such as your class year, and your interests.
- Use the list of questions below for ideas, but don’t read the questions you ask them from this list.
- Ask for a business card from the participants. Some participants may not want to give them out, but most will.
- Be aware of the time; don’t spend more than five minutes with someone if there are students waiting.

SUGGESTED QUESTIONS TO ASK PARTICIPANTS

Exploring different fields:

- What is, if any, a typical day for you?
- I think “business law” sounds interesting, but I am sure what I am learning in school is different from what it will be like to practice. Can you share some of the practical aspects of “corporate/finance” law?
- What does an “intellectual property” lawyer do all day?
- How did you become a “family/domestic relations” lawyer?
- If I am interested in “tax law,” what can I do to make myself an attractive candidate by the time I graduate?

Breaking into certain fields:

- How did you get your first job in “construction law” after law school?
- Did you work while you were a student? Where? Did it help you get into “real estate?”
- I have had two experiences within “public interest.” What should I do now?
- How did you get into a medium sized firm? What do they look for?
- How important are grades to get my first position in a “small, medium, large, government...?”
- How important is it for me to get my name and face out there (network) to enter into this field?