

2-11-2014

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Boston College Law School

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1L Bootcamp 'Networking with Practitioners' Event Draws Crowd

2014 NEWS ARCHIVE

02/11/14

Newton, MA--On January 30, 2014, Boston College Law School hosted the first "Learning and Networking with Practitioners Event" as part of its 1L Boot Camp Series. Launched this fall, the 1L Boot Camp is a joint partnership between the Law Student Association (LSA) and BC Law's Career Services Office that picks up where case law leaves off and helps prepare students for a successful career in today's legal market.

Over the course of the two-hour event, forty practitioners participated in thirteen small practice area panels. More than 165 first-year students attended the practitioner panels where they learned about areas such as criminal prosecution, intellectual property, and financial services. During the panel presentations, students had the opportunity to hear from alumni and other friends of BCLaw in senior attorney positions both in the public and the private sector. After the panels ended, the alumni joined the students at a cocktail reception where the students put their newly learned networking skills into practice.

"Working with the LSA to revamp our 1L professional development series has been an incredible opportunity," said Heather Hayes, Assistant Dean of Career Services. "I don't know of any other professionalism program that includes this kind of true partnership between the school and its student leaders. Our students recognize how important this is—and our colleagues at other schools marvel at our attendance numbers because they are off the charts for a non-mandatory series. The turnout by the alumni for this event and their response to the program was fantastic. Our alums are incredibly passionate about their experience at the school and they genuinely want to do all they can to help the students in their careers. They can't wait to come back and do it again next year!"

Stephen Bernstein '88, partner at McDermott Will & Emery and participant in the Healthcare Law Panel, agrees. "The overall program and the BC Law spirit and energy were phenomenal," he said. "It seemed clear to me that the 1Ls appreciated the program and it was a nice and active way to engage alumni."

"From figuring out how to navigate our alumni networks to creating new contacts in cities across the country, the 1L Bootcamp is helping us bring the wider and quickly transforming legal community closer to our fingertips," said first-year student Adil Ahmed. "With every person we meet, we learn more about the practice of law and form a relationship that becomes just a phone call away. I think this spirit of mentorship and camaraderie is contagious, and I find that us 1Ls are all sharing these new conversations with one another to help each other go in the direction we want to go."

The 1L Boot Camp started out as an OCI prep program for students who didn't have work experience because they came straight through from undergrad, but it grew to become a yearlong program. Jason Triplett, LSA class president, and Jasmin Ali, 3L career services student intern, were instrumental in developing the Boot Camp and reaching out to the alumni who attended.

"I wanted to teach the 1Ls everything I wish someone would have told me my first year," said Triplett. "I met with Heather Hayes on what felt like her second day on the job and began

unloading ideas on her before she even had her office set up, and she was so receptive to everything. I knew right away that the LSA had a partner in the Career Services Office.”

Ali and Triplett drew on their background in sales before law school, hoping they could help first-years realize that networking and interviewing are opportunities to sell the most important product they can - themselves - to employers.

“With networking there is always a certain amount of dread, but it takes practice and you have to be willing to put yourselves out there,” said Ali. “That discomfort is always going to be there, but you’re going to become more comfortable if you practice—and the 1L Boot Camp can give you the tools to make you more comfortable.”

The 1L Boot Camp is a monthly skill-building and practice area exposure series undertaken by Triplett, Ali, and Career Services. This fall, they launched a variety of interactive programs to help students understand why they need to network and how to do it effectively, learn what works and what doesn’t on resumes with a “tell all” panel of recruiters, and gain a sense of practices that peak their interest by hearing 40+ 3Ls describe their summer work experiences. The early exposure to practice areas is intended to help 1Ls make the most of their time when the practitioners came to campus in January. Each event has a different hook to make it more fun and appealing – including a ‘Family Feud’ match and the acting out of an “all that can go wrong” networking skit.

“This semester we are going to hold new workshops on building a student’s personal brand, writing more effective cover letters, and then conclude the 2013-2014 series with Jasmin’s unbelievable Interviewing Techniques presentation,” said Triplett. “It’s our goal to hand off the 1L Boot Camp Series to the next class of BC Law students so that it may continue to grow.” Hayes reports that the next class of students has already begun volunteering to do just that.