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BC Law Teaching Program Shows Results

Boston College Law School

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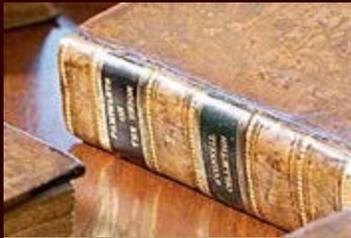


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BC Law Teaching Program Shows Results

BC LAW MAGAZINE WINTER/FALL 2010

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Newton, MA--Professors Frank J. Garcia and James R. Repetti were serving on the Appointments Committee looking for new faculty hires when they noticed that a number of BC Law alumni were on the market for jobs as law professors. Unfortunately, many of those alumni were making rookie mistakes that could stymie their ambitions. "We realized that a little bit of coaching at the front end could make a difference," Garcia says. With a \$15,000 grant from Boston College, Garcia launched the Law Teaching Program in 2009. The program reaches out to alumni who seek law professorships and guides them through the hiring process.

Many top-tier law schools have formal programs to actively groom interested alumni to careers in legal academia. In BC 's program, faculty mentors help candidates shape their applications, provide guidance about recruitment, and invite mentees to the Law School for a full day of mock interviews, practice job talks, and feedback. Associate Professor Mary-Rose Papandrea, the current program director, says, "To be successful on the academic job market, you need a lot of guidance because it is a tricky process."

Zoe Argento '07, now an assistant professor at Roger Williams University School of Law in Rhode Island, got the program's full range of coaching and wound up with four call-backs out of eight interviews. "I'm sure that having that experience helped with my call-back rate," she says.

Typically, the path to a law professorship begins with a strong academic record and a portfolio of published scholarship. With those credentials in hand, candidates enter the job market by filing an application with the Association of American Law Schools' Faculty Appointments Register (FAR). Those plucked from the register by law schools attend AAL S's annual Faculty Recruitment Conference, known as the Meat Market, for initial interviews. Second interviews are rigorous, day-long, on-campus affairs in which candidates are interviewed by faculty, student groups, and deans, and present job talks—lectures about their scholarship followed up by intense questioning by faculty.

So far, BC Law has identified roughly a dozen alumni headed for legal academia. Several have landed faculty positions. César Cuauhtémoc García Hernández '07, an assistant professor at Capital University Law School in Columbus, Ohio, was mentored in the Law Teaching Program for his second interviews. "This program gave a very clear picture of the expectations and how to present myself to get an offer," he says.

Brian Sheppard '01, now an associate professor at Seton Hall Law School, recalls the leg-up he got from BC Law's program. At one point, he was among a handful of alumni on a conference call hearing directly from Dean John Garvey on how to handle their interviews with law school deans.

It's that kind of intimate attention, Sheppard says, that makes the Law Teaching Program valuable.

—Jeri Zeder

