

# Chicago Daily Law Bulletin®

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## Building a network helps the job hunt

If you're about to enter law school and haven't yet decided on a specialty, there's no need to worry.

One of the best things for law students to do is make an effort to identify two or three areas of law that they would like to consider as potential specialties. Then, the networking and exploration can begin.

The key is for students to get involved and take advantage of opportunities for experiential learning; try out areas of law that you might be interested in for a career.

At The John Marshall Law School, students have many opportunities to get hands-on experience working under the supervision of practicing attorneys — at the Fair Housing Legal Support Center and Clinic or the Veterans Legal Support Center & Clinic, for example.

If your interests lie elsewhere, there's also the Trial Advocacy Clinical Extern Program, the Pro Bono Program and the Sustainability Externship through the Center for Real Estate Law, among others.

There are enough options to try out more than one specialty.

Internships, externships and even pro bono work can be valuable in helping law students de-

cide on a specialty.

Sometimes, finding out what you don't want to do can be as valuable as finding the best fit for your interests. With a specialty in mind, students should continue to pursue the experiential learning opportunities that can make them practice-ready attorneys.

Not only does the hands-on experience contribute to students' preparedness for a career in the law, it also makes for excellent networking opportunities.

Even if the place you're working is not where you want to be after graduation, it's ripe for making connections. Do a good job and when you end your time there, ask for a letter of recommendation.

Stay in touch with your connections by letting them know

what other possibilities you are exploring. If they were happy with your work, they just might pick up the phone and call a colleague on your behalf.

Even at the beginning of law school, networking is important: It's key not only to getting your first job, but also for subsequent rungs on your career ladder. Law school is the time to start. I like to tell my students that networking is not a one-night stand, it's a relationship that needs to be nurtured.

Networking doesn't have to take a lot of time, but you need to put in the effort, just like a relationship.

John Marshall students, and those at other schools as well, have myriad opportunities to connect with practicing attorneys — either at career events, bar association meetings or through contact with professors who are also working attorneys.

But connection is just the first step; students need to follow up with the lawyers they've met and begin to develop and maintain a relationship.

Students who take advantage of these connections and build a network will be more successful in the job hunt.

### LETTER TO THE EDITOR

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