A Strategic Vision for Employment

With disruption comes opportunity. Emerging service industries and a growing underserved market for affordable legal services reveal a consistent need for lawyers and our services. Three-quarters of parties in Massachusetts’ housing and family and probate courts are unrepresented. Technological innovation produces an ever-growing list of new legal and law-related service companies and jobs in the business and tech sectors. Existing practices and businesses continue to seek lawyers capable of leveraging technology and business skills to improve client service.

So, what can we do to prepare our students to take advantage of these opportunities?

Over the past year, Suffolk Law’s newly reconstituted Professional & Career Development team has completed a strategic review of our industry and graduate employment statistics and devised a plan to move forward. We’ve decided we need to:

• Engage students to develop professional skills and goals by providing accessible and effective services, programming and individual counseling;
• Educate students to master the skills and competencies required to succeed as lawyers in the 21st century.

Working with faculty and administrators, we’ve begun to do just that. It starts with engagement. We’ve launched new online tools available to students on demand—any time of the day or night—on the law school’s redesigned website. The Resume Builder formats a student’s resume to ensure that it’s a high quality representation of his or her skills and experience. Students can practice for interviews using another tool, Interview Stream, that allows students to answer sample interview questions appropriate to specific legal fields, watch a video of their answers, and then email the video to counselors for additional feedback.

We’ve also launched new job search tools, also available 24/7 on the website, to further engage students in the process. Career Shift, mines the web for all posted jobs to provide students with one-stop global shopping for internship and postgraduate job opportunities. Providing online career supports to students in addition to effective programming and counseling services will enable students to compete more effectively for the existing pool of traditional entry-level legal positions.

We’re empowering students to get the jobs they want by expanding opportunities for practical experience. To start, we’re expanding our first-year summer internship program—which places more than 110 students in judicial internships—to also include government and public service employers. We’re creating a new summer internship program for small- and medium-sized firms and corporations to provide students greater opportunities for practical training and post-graduate employment. We’re also working with Professor Andy Perlman and our new Institute on Law Practice Technology & Innovation to create new internships in law-related technologies, practice and knowledge management.

Finally, we’re working to train students in professional communications, legal technologies and project management. Of course, we’re doing this with and for you, our alumni community. Visit www.suffolk.edu/law/careers to access our on-demand services for alumni. Also, please join our mentoring programs and hire Suffolk Law students as legal interns.

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