

Individual Professional Development Plan

Your Individual Professional Development Plan is your roadmap to integrating your coursework, law school experiences, summer employment and ultimate job search into a unique plan for the beginning of your legal career.

Each fall, the Career Development Office sponsors its Professional Development Series which provides a broad overview of legal practice as a means of helping you use this tool to chart your future. Come and learn about how and where you might proceed and use that knowledge to complete this tool!

Name:

Email:

Your Individual Professional Development Plan

This Individual Professional Development Plan seeks to assist students at Notre Dame Law School in planning the initial stages of their legal career beginning from their earliest experiences at NDLS and into the early years in the workplace. This “IPDP” will form the cornerstone of your initial interactions with the Career Development Office that will take place during the fall of your 1L year.

It is important to note that your participation and disclosure of information here is completely voluntary. At the same time, we at the CDO have come to understand the importance of thoughtful planning in pursuing an effective job search. For many of you, developing this IPDP so early in your law school career will seem daunting, but remember that this is simply your initial plan. Your interests and preferences are likely to change as you engage in your coursework and internships, and your IPDP is meant to evolve along with them.

The IPDP consists of four parts:

- 1. Self-Assessment.** First, you will need to do a self-assessment, exploring your strengths and weaknesses, values, goals, beliefs, and life preferences. You will later need to evaluate how you will incorporate these into your future career.
- 2. Initial Employment Preferences.** Second, you will explore your employment preferences by considering career options, practice settings, geographic locations, workplace environments, and compensation benefits.
- 3. Mentorship and Networking Plan.** This section outlines the mentorship opportunities available at NDLS and introduces the importance of mentorship and networking to your professional life. Completing this section will be an ongoing exercise throughout your law school career.
- 4. Career Path Plan.** In this section, you will develop an initial plan for your career path. You will complete it during your initial one-on-one meeting with a CDO counselor and continue to update and revise it throughout your law school career.

Section 1: Self-Assessment

1. Baseline Professional Development Assessment

1.1. Motivation to Attend Law School. As discussed during Welcome Week, experience teaches that there are four basic motivations to attend law school. Please indicate the degree to which these motivations impacted you. There are no correct answers here...only honest ones:

- ***“This was the best option that I had or could create upon completing my undergraduate education.”***

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

No Motivation -----> Some Motivation -----> Strong Motivation

- ***“I believe that work as a lawyer will help me to create and live a financial lifestyle that I would enjoy.”***

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

No Motivation -----> Some Motivation -----> Strong Motivation

- ***“I have an understanding of how a lawyer functions as a professional (perhaps in contrast to other types of jobs) and seek that level of responsibility and activity in my work life.”***

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

No Motivation -----> Some Motivation -----> Strong Motivation

- ***“I want to make changes in society and believe that legal skills will be a valuable tool in these efforts.”***

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

No Motivation -----> Some Motivation -----> Strong Motivation

1.2. *Baseline in Key Early Workplace Skill Areas*

The ABA Legal Career Center has identified six skills that create a foundation of success in the initial phases of your legal career <http://www.abalcc.org/2015/11/30/law-students-need-professional-development-too/>

In this section of the IPDP, you will be asked to assess your baseline level of skills in each of these areas. With respect, then, to the skills listed below select the appropriate description as follows for each:

1 = I Don't Have a Lot of Experience Yet

2 = I Have Some, But Not a Lot of Experience Yet

3 = My Experience Before Law School Allowed Me to Develop This Skill

1 2 3 **Listening Effectively:** Gathering the information needed to undertake legal analysis is an acquired skill.

- Are you familiar with the process of active listening? See video here: <https://bit.ly/1J2hEMl>
- What professional or personal experiences have you had in which active listening played an important part?
- How have you had to listen actively in other areas of your life?

1 2 3 **Expressing Cogent Conclusions:**

- Have you had the opportunity to present ideas, research, project summaries or the like in the past?
- How would others describe your skills in this area?

1 2 3 **Managing Projects Efficiently:** Lawyers typically work for many clients at the same time. Managing competing, equivalent priorities forms a key skill in the success of lawyers.

- Have you had to manage multiple projects in the past?
- Have you worked for multiple supervisors simultaneously?

1 2 3 **Conveying Complex Information Clearly:**

- What experience have you had explaining complex information to those with no prior understanding or knowledge of the subject?

1 2 3 **Understanding Financial Documents:** Many practices areas require at least some basic understanding of financial documents and terminology

- What is your comfort level with financial terminology and concepts?
- What experience do you have working with financial documents?

1 2 3 **Posing Practical Solutions**

- Have you had the opportunity to develop workable solutions to difficult problems involving divergent interests?

- If so, did you successfully implement those solutions?

1.3 Professional Values and Life Preferences

One of the most important aspects of professional development resides in understanding what you value in your profession. Review the following list of values as a starting point in determining what will be important to you in your professional life.

Description of Potential Professional Values

1. **Achievement:** Your professional work accomplishes demonstrable outcomes.
2. **Location:** Your career choices allow you to choose where you live.
3. **Service:** Your work focuses on benefits to other individuals or society as a whole.
4. **Loyalty:** Your profession and life involve a series of deep and ongoing relationships.
5. **Balance:** Your work facilitates maintaining a health “work/life” balance.
6. **Leadership:** Your work allows you to function in roles in which you lead others.
7. **Personal Development:** Your work allows you to grow continuously and avoid routines.
8. **Security:** Your work follows an established, known pattern with predictable personal outcomes.
9. **Competition:** Your work takes place in a competitive environment.
10. **Community:** Your work and life place you in an important role within your community.
11. **Wealth:** You receive high compensation for your work and accumulate wealth.
12. **Expertise:** Your work allows you to develop as an expert in your field.
13. **Contentment:** Your work environment is more tranquil and/or little pressure.
14. **Recognition:** Your work brings personal recognition from peers and others.
15. **Prestige:** Your work places you among ‘elite’ members of society.
16. **Power:** Your work places you in a position to influence significant events and outcomes.
17. **Independence:** Your work allows you large control of financial outcomes and your time.
18. **Integrity:** Your work environment places great weight on your personal values.
19. **Challenge:** Your work presents continuing intellectual challenges and growth
20. **Creativity:** Your work allows you to try new things, use your ideas and follow new paths.

Having completed this evaluation as an initial step, now rank the items on the list using the Values Prioritizer Tool on the next page. How to use the Prioritizer?

Step 1. Compare the first entry in Row 1 to the entry in Column 2. (Column 1 should contain the same name as Row 1!). If the Value in Row 1 is more important to you than the Value in Column 2, mark an “X” in the box in where Row 1, Column 2 intersect.

Step 2. Repeat the process across the page for each item in Row 1...and then for each successive Row.

Step 3. When completed, total the number of “X’s” for each Row.

Step 4. Rank each Row in rank order by number of “X’s.” You have now ranked your Values!

Professional Values Prioritizer Worksheet

Enter each row below in sequence and then move left to right. If the item naming the row (below) is MORE important than the item naming the column (across the page), mark the column with a "X". If less important, leave a blank. Total the "X's" for the row. When done, move down to next row and repeat.	1. Achievement	2. Location	3. Service	4. Loyalty	5. Balance	6. Leadership	7. Personal Devel.	8. Security	9. Competition	10. Community	11. Wealth	12. Expertise	13. Contentment	14. Recognition	15. Prestige	16. Power	17. Independence	18. Integrity	19. Challenge	20. Creativity	Total X's This Row	Rank Order of This Row (by number of X's)	
1. Achievement	X																				1	1	
2. Location		X																				1	2
3. Service			X																			1	3
4. Loyalty				X																		1	4
5. Balance					X																	1	5
6. Leadership						X																1	6
7. Personal Devel.							X															1	7
8. Security								X														1	8
9. Competition									X													1	9
10. Community										X												1	10
11. Wealth											X											1	11
12. Expertise												X										1	12
13. Contentment													X									1	13
14. Recognition														X								1	14
15. Prestige															X							1	15
16. Power																X						1	16
17. Independence																	X					1	17
18. Integrity																		X				1	18
19. Challenge																			X			1	19
20. Creativity																				X		1	20

Enter each row below in sequence and then move left to right. If the item naming the row (below) is MORE important than the item naming the column (across the page), mark the column with a "X". If less important, leave a blank. When you reach the far right side, move down to next row and repeat.



**Professional Compass
Values Priority Worksheet**

Enter each row below in sequence and then move left to right... If the item naming the row (below) is MORE important than the item naming the column (across the page), mark the column with a "X". If less important, leave a blank. Total the "X's" for the row. When done, move down to next row and repeat.	1. Friendship	2. Location	3. Enjoyment	4. Loyalty	5. Family	6. Leadership	7. Personal Devel.	8. Security	9. Wisdom	10. Community	11. Wealth	12. Expertise	13. Service	14. Pers. Accompl.	15. Prestige	16. Power	17. Independence	18. Integrity	19. Health	20. Creativity	Total X's This Row	Rank Order of This Row (by number of X's)
1. Friendship	X																					
2. Location		X																				
3. Enjoyment			X																			
4. Loyalty				X																		
5. Family					X																	
6. Leadership						X																
7. Personal Devel.							X															
8. Security								X														
9. Wisdom									X													
10. Community										X												
11. Wealth											X											
12. Expertise												X										
13. Service													X									
14. Pers. Accompl.														X								
15. Prestige															X							
16. Power																X						
17. Independence																	X					
18. Integrity																		X				
19. Health																			X			
20. Creativity																				X		



Enter each row below in sequence and then move left to right. If the item naming the row (below) is MORE important than the item naming the column (across the page), mark the column with a "X". If less important, leave a blank. When you reach the far right side, move down to next row and repeat.

Work Across the Row, Then Do the Next Row
Ex. In Row 1, If "Friendship" > "Location", Mark with "X"



Professional Compass Values Priority Worksheet

Enter each row below in sequence and then move left to right. If the item naming the row (below) is MORE important than the item naming the column (across the page), mark the column with a "X". If less important, leave a blank. Total the "X's" for the row. When done, move down to next row and repeat.	1. Friendship	2. Location	3. Employment	4. Loyalty	5. Family	6. Leadership	7. Personal Devel.	8. Security	9. Wisdom	10. Community	11. Wealth	12. Expertise	13. Service	14. Pers. Accompl.	15. Prestige	16. Power	17. Independence	18. Integrity	19. Health	20. Creativity	Total X's This Row	Rank Order of This Row (by number of X's)
1. Friendship	X	X	X								X	X		X	X	X					7	3
2. Location		X										X			X	X					3	7
3. Employment		X	X			X					X	X			X	X					6	T4
4. Loyalty				X							X	X			X	X					5	6
5. Family	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X			X	15	1
6. Leadership	X			X		X					X	X			X	X					6	T4
7. Personal Devel.	X		X			X	X				X	X	X	X	X	X				X	10	2
8. Security							X															
9. Wisdom								X														
10. Community									X													
11. Wealth										X												
12. Expertise												X										
13. Service													X									
14. Pers. Accompl.														X								
15. Prestige															X							
16. Power																X						
17. Independence																	X					
18. Integrity																		X				
19. Health																			X			
20. Creativity																						

Enter each row below in sequence and then move left to right. If the item naming the row (below) is MORE important than the item naming the column (across the page), mark the column with a "X". If less important, leave a blank. When you reach the far right side, move down to next row and repeat.

1.4 Personal Situation and Financial Responsibilities

Each of you has certain personal and financial responsibilities that will impact your professional development. These factors can include:

- Existing family obligations
- Existing or anticipated financial commitments (including student loan debt)
- Personal health limitations
- Existing or future dependents
- Spouse, significant other (health, career)
- Geographical limitations
- Existing financial assets
- Ability to call upon family for financial support

What aspects of your personal or financial life will influence the course of your early career?

How will any of these factors influence decisions you might make about your career?

In what ways does your potential student loan debt influence your thinking about compensation for your work?

How do you think your personality type will influence the decisions you might make about your career?

Section 2: Initial Employment Preferences

2.1 General Preference of Substantive Legal Settings

Litigation

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

No Interest -----> Some Interest -----> Strong Interest

Expert Knowledge

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

No Interest -----> Some Interest -----> Strong Interest

Transactional

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

No Interest -----> Some Interest -----> Strong Interest

At this early point in your legal career, which substantive setting, or combination of settings, appeals to you most? Why?

2.2 Indications of Interest: Traditional Practice Areas¹

Place a check by areas that you think would interest you. Over time, as your interests evolve, you can return to this list to update your selections.

Academic Law	Family Law (Divorce/Custody)
Administrative Law & Regulatory Practice	Food & Drug Law
Adoption Law	General Practice
Agricultural Law	Government Contracts
Air, Sea, & Space Law	Government Service/Relations
Alternative Dispute Resolution	Health Care Law
Animal Rights	Housing/Homelessness
Antitrust/Competition Law	Immigration/Refugee Law
Appellate Law	Insurance Law
Banking and Commercial Finance	Intellectual Property law
Bankruptcy Law	International Law
Business Law	Juvenile Law
Children's Advocacy/Juvenile Justice	Labor & Employment Law
Civil Litigation	Legislative Practice
Civil Rights/Civil Liberties	LGBT+ Law
Commercial Law	Litigation, General
Communications/Media Law	Malpractice
Community Economic Development	Migrant Worker Advocacy
Constitutional Law	Military Judge Advocates/JAG
Construction Law	Municipal Finance Practice
Consumer Protection	National Security Law
Consumer Regulatory	Poverty/Legal Services
Copyright/Trademark/Patent	Prisoners' Rights
Corporate Practice	Privacy Law
Criminal Law	Probate
Cyberspace Law	Public Defense/Death Penalty
DUI Debtor/Creditor	Real Estate & Property Law
Disability Law	Securities Law
Drug Law	Tax Law
Traffic	Telecommunications Law
Education Law	Tort Law
Elder Law	Trusts and Estates Law
Election Law/Voting Rights	Utilities Law
Election Campaign Finance	White Collar
Employee Benefits	Women's Rights
Energy Law	Worker's Compensation
Entertainment & Sports Law	Workplace Disability/ADA
Environmental & Energy Law	Zoning & Land Use
Estates, Wills and Trusts	

¹ Capital University School of Law, Individual Development Plan, <http://law.capital.edu/IndividualDevelopmentPlan/>, accessed August 3, 2018

Employment Settings

Choose 3-5 preferred practice settings to explore further:

Academic

- General Counsel's Office
- Administration/Staff
- Faculty/Teacher

Business

- In-House Counsel
- Government Affairs

Government Agencies

- Federal
- State

Prosecutor/Public Defender Offices

- Federal
- State
- Local

Judicial

- Trial
- Appellate

Law Firms

- Solo Practitioner
- Small (up to 10 attorneys)
- Medium (more than 10 but less than 50 attorneys)
- Large (more than 50 attorneys)

Non-Profit

- Legal Services
- Public Policy
- Advocacy

Location

Choose the location of the employer that best describes your preference

Region

- Northeast
- Southeast
- Midwest
- Central
- Northwest
- Southwest
- Foreign Country

Locale

- City
- Suburb
- Rural
- Combination

Specific Location(s):

Employment Environment

Check the following employer characteristics that best describe your environment preferences.

- Conservative
- Liberal
- Team Oriented
- Independent Work
- Social
- Family Oriented
- Rigorous
- Laid Back
- Flexible
- Individual Office Space
- Challenging Work
- Sufficient Salary
- Interesting Work
- Varied Responsibilities
- Creative
- Structured
- Authority

Other Characteristics:

Salary & Benefits

Prioritize the following salaries and benefits using the following system:

1 = Very Important

2 = Important

3 = Not that Important

1	2	3	High Salary (\$120,000+)
1	2	3	Average Salary (\$55,000+)
1	2	3	Medical Benefits
1	2	3	Retirement Benefits
1	2	3	Vacation Time
1	2	3	Flex Time
1	2	3	Tuition Reimbursement
1	2	3	Loan Repayment
1	2	3	Program
1	2	3	Option for Equity

Other Benefits (*List below*)

My Dream Initial Career Setting

Section 3: Mentorship and Networking Plan

As a law student and a young lawyer, it will be important to develop strong mentors and a deep professional network. NDLS has several programs outlined below that will give you a head start in this regard.

CDO Mentorship Program: The CDO coordinates an annual mentorship program with Notre Dame Lawyers throughout the country. Students who participate are paired with an alumnus or alumna in a geographic and/or practice area that matches their interests. You will receive an email inviting you to register for the program this fall.

CDO Mentor(s): _____

Faculty Advisors: Each student receives a faculty advisor during their 1L year to help guide them through their law school career. We are blessed with an amazing faculty at NDLS, and your faculty advisor can be a terrific mentor if you take the time to engage with him or her. Beyond your faculty advisor, we encourage you to get to know your professors, particularly those who teach in areas that interest you, as they can be great career resources.

Faculty Advisor: _____

Faculty Contacts: _____

SBA Mentorship Program: The SBA coordinates an annual mentorship program that pairs 1Ls with a 2L or 3L based on common backgrounds and interests. Your fellow students are a valuable (and often underutilized) resource when it comes to your professional development, so please take the time to get to know them and ask them about their experiences with networking and the job search.

SBA Mentor: _____

Student Contacts: _____

CDO Summer Mock Interview Program: The CDO coordinates an annual summer mock interview program that enlists Notre Dame lawyers across the country to conduct mock interviews with students working in their geographic area over the summer. The program is designed to prepare students for the fall recruiting season (and all rising 2Ls are required to participate) by giving them opportunities to sharpen their interviewing skills with practicing attorneys in their target market, but it also serves as a powerful networking opportunity.

Mock Interviewers: _____

Developing Your Professional Network

At Notre Dame, we are fortunate to have one of the best and most loyal alumni networks in the world, and that network will be a critical resource in your professional development. Review the practice areas and geographic markets in which you indicated an interest in Section 2 and identify ten potential alumni contacts who work in those practice areas and/or geographic markets to begin your networking efforts. The CDO can help you do this when you meet with them. You should also consider alumni of your undergraduate institution, family members, friends, and any other people with whom you share a meaningful connection.

Lawyers' Professional Development Matrix

	Introductory	Intermediate	Advanced	Masters
Core Lawyering Skills	<p>Old and New: Best Practices Basic Structures and Forms Public Speaking Fundamentals Intro to Theory and Process</p> <p>Managing Multiple Deadlines Principles/PROFESSIONAL The Four Expectations Plan, Process, Polish Internet for Lawyers Developing Personal Systems Introduction to Etiquette</p>	<p>Written Advocacy Best Practices Oral Advocacy Best Practices Getting to Yes Intro to Mediation/Arbitration Project Management Systems Texas Lawyer Tips Power of Positive No</p> <p>Basic Excel Spreadsheets Systems Best Practices Accounting for Lawyers</p>	<p>Negotiation Practicum Mediation vs. Arbitration Decision Theory and Process Civility in the Profession Managing the 4 Expectations</p> <p>Basic Powerpoint Group Systems Development MBA Concepts</p>	
Personal Development	<p>Your MBTI and the Workplace Time Budget Process Developing a Personal Budget</p>	<p>Type Talk at Work Speed of Trust: Covey Investment Fundamentals</p>	<p>Skills Finder 2.0 7 Habits: S. Covey Trusted Advisor: Maister Stress Reduction/Workplace Introduction/Participation</p>	<p>Working From Strengths Health Assessment Master's Forum Preparation for Retirement</p>
Management and Leadership Training		<p>Principled Accountability Law of Employment</p>	<p>360 Profile and Analysis Overcoming Barriers to Change Good to Great I Best Practices in Perf. Appr.</p>	<p>Polarity Management Good to Great II First Among Equals: Maister</p>
Business of Law		<p>Principles of Bus. Development Retainer Agreements Effective Billing Practices</p>	<p>Business Develop Workshop Lead, Silver, Platinum Overview of Law Firm Finances Alternatives to Hourly Billing Integrated Decision Making</p>	<p>Budgets and Performance Creating Firm Financial Security Law Firm Decisions Practicum SWOT: Creating a Plan Compensation Models</p>

Lawyers' Professional Development Matrix

	Introductory	Intermediate	Advanced	Masters
Values and Purpose	Your Mission: Bolles Introduction to Diversity	Personal Values Assessment True Professional: Maister	Spirituality in the Workplace You and the Legal System Trusted Advisor: Maister Leading a Diversity Program	Your Mission: Bolles Leading the Profession Half Time: Buford
Ethical Practice	Ethics in the Real World	Ethics in the Client Relationship	Counter-Intuitive Ethics	
Career Management	The Evolution of a Legal Career	Pathway to Partnership What Color is Your Parachute?	Your Career Strategic Plan WCYP Workshop Experience	
PRACTICE AREA SKILLS				
Litigation	Basic Discovery Techniques Introduction to Deposition	Taking and Defending Deposition Effective Mediation Strategies Trial Advocacy Practicum From the Bench: Courtroom Advocacy Creating the Appellate Record	Winning in Arbitration Jury Selection Appellate Techniques	
Transactional	Anatomy of a Contract Introduction/Choice of Entity Introduction to Personal Tax Entity Organization/Ops.	Power of Boilerplate Principles of Business Funding Principles of Owners' Agreements Intro to Bankruptcy Practice	Mastering Purchase Agreements Resolving Owners' Disputes Advanced Business Taxation Advanced Personal Taxation Intellectual Property	



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The Law School

Networking Guide

Career Development Office

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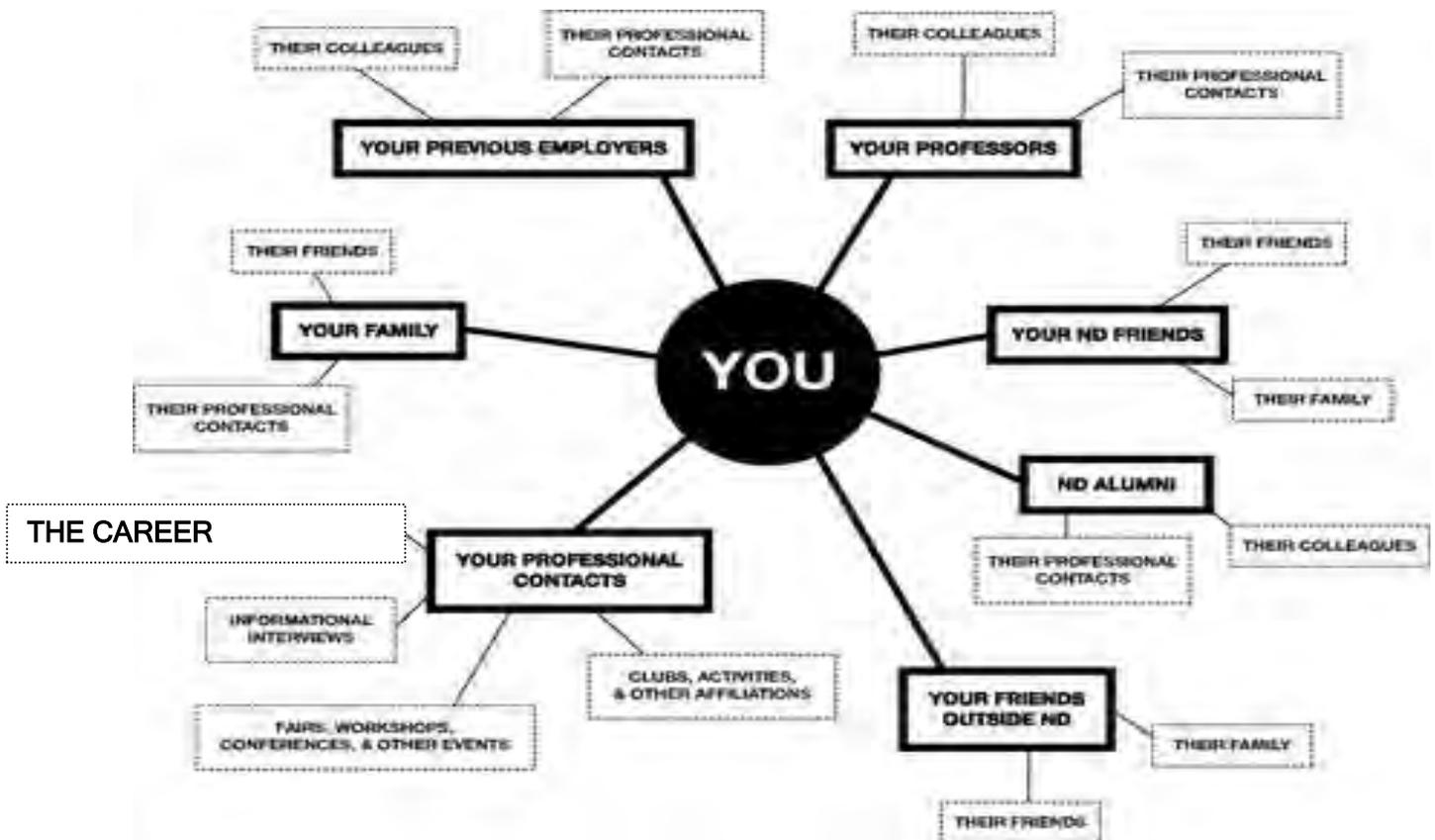
Email: lawjobs@nd.edu | Website: law.nd.edu/careers

Twitter: [@NDLawCareers](https://twitter.com/NDLawCareers) | Facebook: [NDLawCareers](https://www.facebook.com/NDLawCareers)

Notre Dame Law School Career Development Office Networking Guide

Approximately 80% of all jobs are found through networking, rather than on-campus interviews or job postings. Most career counseling professionals estimate that at least 50% of the jobs that are filled are never advertised. Smart networking helps you identify this “hidden job market” and maximizes your chances of securing employment. Some experts put that number between 70% – 80%. Even if a position you desire is advertised, networking can make the difference between being selected for an interview and being just another resume in the pile.

Networking, in reality, is simply relationship building. Whether you realize it or not, you already have a network in place. Your family, friends, previous employers, and other existing contacts form the foundation of your professional network. As a law student, your task is to grow your network by forging new contacts who will be beneficial to you in your search for a post-graduation position, your work as an attorney, and future career transitions.



What is Networking?

All facets of your life can be helped by a strong networking base. Think about how many times in your life you have asked others for assistance and how often they do not relate to the job search:

- Could you recommend a good restaurant?
- Could you refer me to your insurance agent/mechanic/plumber/etc.?
- I need a favor. I remember you said you know...
- I could use some help with...

The outcomes of all these scenarios would be enhanced with a solid core of networking contacts. The people who can recommend a good place to eat, a friend in a certain professional field, or someone who can help you get tickets to the big game are your networking contacts. The Career Development Office would like for you to think of networking in a different light that can be summarized in two words: Building Relationships.

Networking is an important component of any job search. Many law students secure their summer and full-time positions through networking. Generally, experienced attorneys will make lateral career changes based on networking connections.

In its truest form, networking is when people meet to exchange ideas, information, and contacts. It can take place in a formal networking meeting, an office, an airplane, bar, holiday party—anywhere two people are talking and building a relationship. Sending a letter to a guest speaker letting her know how much you enjoyed the event, and asking if she may have fifteen minutes to speak with you by phone so that you may gain insight into her specialty area is networking. The topic of conversation is irrelevant as long as people are building a rapport, a level of trust, or a bond with each other.

Why Should You Learn to Network?

In this technology-driven age, networking has become even more valuable in distinguishing yourself from other applicants. It is not unusual for a firm to place a job announcement on a website and within days have hundreds of resumes from that single posting. Having network connections can allow for your resume to receive consideration it otherwise would not have. Consider the following

- A referral generates 80% more results than a cold call.
- Approximately 80% of all jobs are found through networking.
- Most people have at least 250 contacts.

Also, consider it from the employer's perspective. If you were a hiring partner at a law firm and had trusted attorneys around you, would you rather spend thousands of dollars

advertising a job, sift through hundreds of resumes, conduct multiple interviews, then hire someone and hope he/she is a good employee, OR interview candidates referred to you by your trusted partners and associates who put their good reputations on the line for their referrals?

Because you are currently a student, imagine this example: Your professor tells you that 50% of the final covers material you have never seen and will never see unless you attend a review session. In this case, you would certainly attend the review session. Fifty percent of the jobs that are filled in America are never publicly advertised, you can find out about this “hidden job market” through networking.

You may prefer to think of networking as a treasure hunt. It is unlikely that any one person will lead you to the perfect opportunity, but each person you meet will likely give you ideas, advice, and insight that will lead to your next contact. If you are gracious and proactive, the relationship you build will eventually lead to referrals and opportunities.

Law firms hire associates they trust. Clients give work to attorneys they trust. Attorneys refer work to attorneys they trust. Partners give work to associates they trust. This trust grows and flourishes thanks to networking.

How to Network

The following steps will help you begin building a successful professional network.

1. Be able to articulate who you are. Know your past experiences, the lawyer you want to be, and what you have to offer.
2. Call or e-mail the networking contact requesting a meeting or phone conversation. Ask for information and *not* a job.
3. Conduct your meeting/informational interview.
4. Send a thank you note after you meet with a contact.
5. One month later, send a follow up e-mail, letter, or phone call to networking contacts with whom you have had a positive experience. The conversation is simply to update the networking contact of your progress. This step is often forgotten, but it will produce better results.
6. Maintain contacts. Repeat the step above on a monthly or bi-monthly basis. Major calendar events can give you a reason to contact someone (e.g., the holidays, end of a semester, or upcoming break).

Preparation for Your First Outreach

Before you get started, you need to prepare by addressing some of the basics.

Prepare Yourself and Your Image

To prepare yourself and your image, you should focus on (1) how you present yourself in person and (2) your public image online. First, look at how you present yourself. Always dress for your audience and not yourself. Polish your shoes. Dress in a professional manner. If you are going to a law firm where there is a dress code, wear business attire. It is always better to be slightly overdressed than too casual.

Second, run a search of your name, including your maiden name if applicable, and any other personally identifiable information on different search engines (e.g., Google and Yahoo!). You might be surprised about what you find discoverable online. Take the time to review every search result to see what an employer might see. Are there inappropriate photos? Comments? Language? If so, then you should assume that an employer will see this same inappropriate information. You want to be sure that a potential employer sees your best professional image. If you belong to any other online sites, check those. Edit what needs to be edited and check your privacy settings.

Resume

Have your resume reviewed by a career counselor so you are ready to pass it along if one of your contacts should request it. You want to make a positive impression and having a clean, tailored resume helps convey the message that you are serious about this networking interaction.

Meeting Request

Have your networking message looked over by a career counselor in order to manage the tone you are setting. We have included sample text later in this guide for you to use when creating your networking correspondence. If you make it clear in your initial correspondence that you are looking for information rather than a job, then your potential contact will be more likely to agree to a meeting.

Research

Before contacting anyone for networking purposes, be sure to conduct research on the person, his/her employer, his/her practice area, his/her job, his/her city, etc. This research will also help you formulate questions to ask the networking contact. A sampling of basic networking questions to help you start tailoring your research is included later in this guide.

Building Your Contacts

Networking can appear frustrating if you feel you have no one with whom you can network. Believe it or not, virtually everyone has known or knows a lawyer. Do you know your dentist well? Do you know your family minister/priest/rabbi? Start with the people with whom you already have a relationship and who know you well and are willing to ask for some assistance. Family, friends, neighbors, parents of your friends, professors, etc. – write the names of all the people you know well. This should be the first group to approach in

networking because you have an existing relationship with these people, and they are usually willing to help.

Now think of everyone with whom you have ever worked or from whom you can gain industry knowledge, contacts, and job leads. These people may use or know a lawyer that practices the type of law that you find most interesting.

Finally, contact people with whom you have something in common. Notre Dame alumni, including both NDLS alumni and ND undergraduates who attended other law schools, are great people with whom to network because you have Notre Dame in common. Fellow church members may be willing to have a conversation because they recognize you from the ten o'clock service. Fellow members of social clubs or service organizations share an immediate common interest with you. Networking with these groups requires more effort because you have to first build a relationship with these people, but these groups can be a very diverse and powerful resource to use in your career exploration and job search.

Informational Meetings

Informational meetings are one aspect of networking in which you, the interviewer, are asking for information, *not a job*. The knowledge gained from an informational interview can help you determine which courses and qualifications are necessary for a specific career path and the types of firms, jobs, companies, or organizations best suited for you.

Informational interviewing can also aid your job search by

- Discovering jobs that are not publicly advertised.
- Expanding your knowledge of the job market in the field you want to explore.
- Learning how to make yourself a more qualified candidate.
- Building support for your job search.

Thirty-Second Message (the Elevator Pitch)

You are in an elevator and happen to strike up a conversation with the person standing next to you. Can you give a thirty-second speech that will let that person know who you are, what you do, and what your career interests are? Can you quickly articulate your personal brand eloquently?

Often people can and want to help you, but they will not know how unless you communicate this information to them. By developing a “thirty-second message,” you will make a good impression and increase the likelihood of making a new contact.

A good thirty-second message includes

- Relevant background information, including your education and experience;
- Summary of your career interests; and,
- A question or request for assistance from the other person.

Networking with Notre Dame Alumni

Notre Dame has some of the most loyal alumni in the world. Connecting with Notre Dame Lawyers provides students with an excellent network of contacts. Notre Dame Lawyers include NDLS graduates, as well as Notre Dame undergraduates who attended law school elsewhere. They serve as a valuable resource to our students, offering insights into the legal market in a particular city and helping connect them with professionals who attended other institutions and may be able to assist in their job search. Below are some resources to use to identify Notre Dame Lawyers in your geographic and/or practice area(s) of interest.

Notre Dame Lawyer Committees

Notre Dame Lawyer Committees have been formed in cities across the United States. These groups are comprised of NDLS grads or lawyers who have a Notre Dame degree, but obtained a law degree from a different institution. The goal of the Notre Dame Lawyer Committees is to connect Notre Dame Lawyers in a specific geographic area for networking and social events. One of the stated goals of each group is to assist students, so this is a great place to start networking. To find contact information on the Notre Dame Lawyer Committees go to <http://law.nd.edu/alumni/directory-and-networking/notre-dame-lawyer-committees/>.

IrishCompass

IrishCompass is Notre Dame's Professional Online Community which the Notre Dame Alumni Association launched in the summer of 2017. This platform will give you access to ND alumni who have volunteered to be contacted and allow you to filter by industry and location. The platform will match people based on interest and career goals with mentorship opportunities. You can join Industry Groups to chat with people doing the work that interests you, and explore the library of helpful videos, webinars, books, articles, guides and worksheets that address a variety of career-related topics. To start using IrishCompass go to IrishCompass.nd.edu.

Martindale and Westlaw

Martindale and Westlaw are online resources that allow students to identify Notre Dame Lawyers. Through Martindale (www.martindale.com), you can search for NDLS alumni by geographic area and practice area. Westlaw has a Directories database that includes biographies of attorneys and judges nationwide. After signing in to WestlawNext, simply click on the "Directories" link and then the "Attorney & Judges" link. You will arrive at a search page that will allow you to identify Notre Dame Lawyers by geographic area and practice area. Simply select the city and state you are targeting, the practice areas that interest you, and input "Notre Dame" in the "Key Search Terms" field. This method can also be useful for identifying alumni of your undergraduate institution.

myNotreDame Alumni Directory

NDLS students can have full access to the Notre Dame Alumni Association's online directory by creating their own accounts at mynotredame.nd.edu. Once logged in, you can search for Notre Dame alumni by degrees earned at Notre Dame (e.g., NDLS graduates),

degrees earned at other institutions (e.g., Notre Dame undergraduates who attended law school elsewhere), geographic area, employer name, or any other element from alumni profiles. If you have any questions or trouble, contact the myNotreDame Help Desk at 574-631-1579 or onlinehelp@alumni.nd.edu.

LinkedIn (www.linkedin.com)

LinkedIn is a professional networking site with millions of experienced professionals. As a student, you can create a profile and join the “Notre Dame Alumni Network” group and the “ND Lawyers” subgroup to instantly be connected with thousands of Notre Dame Lawyers and other alumni. To find ND Lawyers in your target market, click in the search bar, click on people, click on all filters, and click on all connections. Type in the city name of your target market in locations, type Law Practice for Industries, and type, Notre Dame, Notre Dame Law School for Schools. This will generate a list of people who fit those criteria. Make sure you look through the list to make sure you are finding the best fit for your networking efforts. You should also search for lawyers who attended your undergraduate institution. People keep their LinkedIn files up to date, so this is an excellent tool for current information.

Alumni Clubs

Alumni clubs can connect you with people in your geographic area(s) of interest. Club websites allow students to seek out upcoming events that provide the opportunity to network with alumni – some sites even allow you to upload your resume and others even have job and internship postings. You can also try to connect with the young alumni representative of the club. Look up alumni club information at <http://www.mynotredame.nd.edu>.

Social Media

Step One: Edit your Online Presence to Reflect a Professional Image

Given increases in technology, you must consider your online image to be part of the complete application package that you provide to employers. What you post publicly online may be just as important as what you have printed on a formal resume. Therefore, you should clean up your online image and take advantage of the online privacy controls offered on certain social networking sites.

You should examine the information you have posted online, whether in the form of status updates, photographs or responses to friends’ comments. You do not have to be posting about illicit behavior to raise concern. For example, consider the following Facebook or Twitter updates:

“Just got an offer! I get to sell myself to the devil to pay my law school loans but at least I will have financial security.”

“I am stuck on a video interview with a moron.”

“Hey there ... I have an offer in Phoenix but I really want to work in Chicago.”

Just because you post something on a friend’s Facebook page does not mean that it will be kept private from people seeking information about you. Even if your pages are private, your friends’ pages may be public; consequently, any personal information may be discoverable. Similarly, Facebook friends may tag photos of you without your knowledge that may be discoverable online.

When interacting with a friend online, assume your friend has no privacy controls. You should assume that if you are telling a friend personal information online, the whole world will know your secret.

For example, beyond interacting on a friend’s page, a friend may post material on your page that you may not wish to be public such as:

“Wow! I cannot believe you had that many tequila shots last night and you made it to work on time.”

“Just heard the great news. You are going to be a GREAT mom!”

Think carefully about the image you convey online in any status update, photograph, or blog posting. You should review this information as if you are a hiring partner who is easily offended and delete permanently any material that would cause concern.

Step Two: Manage Your Online Image to Meet Your Social Networking Goals

You should implement a strategy that will take into consideration the perspective of an employer looking to hire. While you may not be able to erase all negative information that is found online, you still want to create positive online content through strategic networking that will mitigate any negative content.

For example, you should set up a professional profile on LinkedIn. LinkedIn has high search engine optimization, which means that it appears at the top of a list of search engine results. The higher on the list positive online content may be seen, the lower on the list negative information is likely to appear. Please check that your online information matches your offline resume. It is important that online information be accurate.

Further, Twitter caters to both professional and personal networking but there are ways in which you can use the site to emphasize your professional online image. You can use Twitter as the medium to brand yourself as an expert in a particular practice area. Similar to LinkedIn, Twitter has a high search engine optimization. If you choose to use Twitter professionally, it is highly recommended that you do not use Twitter personally unless you create separate accounts.

Additionally, “Google Alerts” allow you to sign up to receive e-mail updates based on your search criteria. Setting up an alert now will allow you to monitor your online image going forward. You should also conduct periodic searches independently to uncover any online information that could be damaging to your professional image.

Networking Resources

Request for Meeting - Initial Contact E-mail

To: Michael Simpson
From: Kelly Smith
Subject: Meeting Request from a Notre Dame Law Student and UCLA Alumna

Dear Mr. Simpson:

I am a second-year student at Notre Dame Law School, a member of Moot Court, and an alumna of UCLA. I grew up in San Diego and plan to return to the city to practice after graduation.

I am extremely interested in learning more about the practical aspects of the litigation field and specifically white-collar defense work. I would greatly appreciate the opportunity to hear about your experiences in the field of white-collar defense and litigation and would appreciate your suggestions on how I might best prepare for a career in these areas.

Would you be available to meet with me or speak with me over the phone? Thank you very much for your time.

Sincerely,
Kelly Smith
kelly@nd.edu
123-456-7890

- Be concise.
- Make a connection between you and the reader – e.g., alumnus of your school, mutual acquaintance, etc.
- State your purpose without pressuring the reader.
- Explain your situation briefly.
- Request a meeting at a mutually convenient time.
- Provide your e-mail address and telephone number so that the person knows how to contact you.

An e-mail should be crafted like a letter – there should be a proper salutation, body text

and signature. Spelling and grammar must be correct.

Sample Questions for Informational Interviews and Networking

Open-ended questions encourage people to speak freely and provide longer, more thorough answers. Starting a conversation with rapport-building questions to establish a connection is a great way to ease into conversational mode before progressing to more substantive work-related topics. By doing some research before your meeting, you will likely have discovered some good discussion topics: where your contact went to school, where they are originally from, common interests or experiences. Start with those more personal aspects to establish a comfort level.

1. Why did you choose _____ as a practice area?
2. What brought you to practice in _____ city?
3. What would you recommend someone in my position do in order to become an attractive applicant?

4. What are the trends you see developing in a [specific field]?
5. What is the future of [practice area/industry]?
6. What was harder than you expected in this field?
7. What do you like best about what you do? What do you like least?
8. What is the most interesting project that you are currently working on?
9. What practice areas are growing at the fastest rate?
10. If you were in my position, who else would you recommend that I speak with?
11. Do you mind if I mention to _____ that you gave me his/her name, or would you prefer to contact them before I do?

Sample Follow-Up Correspondence

Mr. Jones:

I would like to thank you again for meeting with me on Tuesday morning. Your advice was very helpful, and I have contacted Ms. Amy Smith as you suggested. In addition to that contact, since our meeting, I have actively pursued job openings with ABC Inc., XYZ Ltd., and the 123 Co.

From time to time, I would like to drop you a quick note to keep you updated on my progress. Thank you again for your time and insights.

Go Irish!
John Johnson

Maintaining Contacts

Whether you use your smart phone, Google Sheets, Excel, a three-ring binder, or note cards, be sure to have thought about how you would like to keep track of this information. Name, contact information, company, meeting notes, follow-up action, and the date of your last contact with that person are necessary entries for your management system. You may choose to be more detailed and include additional information, but at least have the basics. A sample contact sheet is included at the end of this guide and can be downloaded from our website.

Networking Success for the Job Search

Although networking can be the most powerful tool in your job search, it does require some key ingredients to yield the most effective results. Some important points to remember include:

1. Make at least one contact per week during the semester. Remember that looking for a job is like taking another class, so set time aside each week to conduct your search.
2. Set daily, weekly, and monthly goals for yourself. It is important to recognize the small steps you are making towards your goal.
3. Expect to call or meet with each contact at least three times to establish a networking relationship. Networking is not a one-time conversation, and thank you notes should be included after initial contact is made.
4. Keep notes on all conversations and correspondence in order to stay organized.
5. With follow-up calls or meetings, be prepared to ask for assistance in different areas by continuing to do research on other target firms or organizations.
6. Keep your contacts fresh – even those you do not think can assist you. An e-mail every month or so keeps your name on their brain.
7. Follow through quickly on the leads provided by your contacts. Be sure you have completed all you were asked to do by a contact before you contact them again for additional assistance. Remember to express your continued appreciation for their assistance.
8. Share good news along the way. Let networking contacts know of positive outcomes as they occur. If they referred you to someone who was helpful, let them know. The more interactions you have with people, the more they will be willing to assist you.
9. Be sure to thank each network member when you accept your position – and extend an offer of help to them should they or anyone they are assisting ever need it.

Problems with Your Networking Strategy

1. You are a Selfish Networker

When you are networking, don't think "How are you going to help me?" Instead, you should be thinking "How we are going to help each other?" Networking should not be seen as a one-way street where you do all the

asking and your contacts provide all the help and resources. You should be open to, and offer to, repay the kindness that has been extended to you by your contacts if they should ever need your assistance. A networking contact may ask you to speak to his college-aged son or daughter as to why you chose law school at Notre Dame, or a future NDLS student may ask you to assist her in evaluating your hometown as a place to work. Right now, you may not think you have much to offer your networking contacts, but you do and you will in the future.

If you are having a conversation with someone and making it all about you and your needs, you are probably not going to get too much support from the other person. We realize as a student early in your career this might be more difficult to do, but offering your support when the opportunity arises will prove that you are going to be a valuable connection in the future.

2. You Wait too Long to Follow Up

Don't you hate when you have a great conversation with someone and you never hear from them again? How about when they just wait too long to reach out to you and you do not remember what you talked about? Do not be that person. Follow up within 24 hours of your conversation and briefly refresh them on your conversation. Then, make a note of your conversation so that you can remember. Use the Sample Contact Management Sheet at the end of this guide to help you do this.

3. You do not Keep in Touch

Another thing that is frustrating is when people only reach out to you when they need something from you. It is important to nurture your network, even when you do not need it. Sending a friendly e-mail to see how business is going or sending an article that you think they might find interesting or giving them the latest news on their favorite sport or hobby is all you need to help you stay fresh in your connection's mind. Then, when you do need their help, they will not feel like you are just reaching out to them out of the blue and they will be more likely to help you.

Tips on Networking in a Group Setting

Body Language

- When you enter a room, do you look like you want to be there?
- Do you make eye contact and have a smile on your face?
- Are you aware of your gestures, postures, movements, and appearance?
- Keep an open body posture.
- Lean forward in your seat to show interest.

- Maintain consistent eye contact.
- Do not fidget or bite your lip.
- Do not put your hands on your hips.
- Do not cross your arms.
- Do not touch your face or clothing.

One-on-One Conversations

- Maintain eye contact.
- Use a warm tone.
- Extend your hand and introduce yourself using a firm grip.
- Use your elevator speech as your introduction.
- Ask questions and listen.
- Reflect on what the other person is saying by asking follow-up questions.
- Stick to safe topics. Stay away from discussions of religion or politics.

Group Conversations

- Position yourself at the edge of the circle.
- Make eye contact with the person that is speaking.
- Nod to acknowledge you are listening.
- Introduce yourself to the group if you do not know them.

Be Memorable

- Be clear regarding your unique value and interests
- After meeting someone, send a thank you card or e-mail. State a unique discussion point.

Prepare and Demonstrate Value

- Find out who will be at the event and who you would like to meet prior to attending the event.
- Research the individual or types of individuals that you are targeting.
- Customize your “elevator speech” to highlight unique attributes that are most relevant to the individual you are connecting with. Keep your message short and succinct.
- Show a connection to a person’s business, interests, or geography.

Transition between Business and Personal

- Keep a connection to the current conversation.
- Be prepared with open-ended questions.
- Confirm that the other person is interested in transitioning by asking a question about the new topic and actively listening to their response.

Exit a Conversation

- Thank the person for their time.
- Express that you have enjoyed meeting them or appreciated the conversation.
- If they are persistent and will not let you go, suggest others for them to meet or simply excuse yourself to get a beverage or use the facilities.
- Ask for their business card if you plan to follow up or feel that it is appropriate.

Section 4: Career Path Plan

In this Section, you will identify your long-term career goals and work backward to chart your career path. Consider the information you provided in Sections 1 and 2 of this IPDP. What do you hope to be doing ten years after you graduate from law school? In the space below, identify or describe the position you hope to hold and/or the type of employer you hope to work for. Be as specific as possible realizing that you can always change course as your goals and interests evolve.

10-Year Position:

Now that you have identified a long-term goal, work with a CDO counselor to develop a plan for getting there. Start by identifying post-graduation positions that align with your goal and work backward to your 1L summer.

Post-Graduation

Potential Positions:

Hiring Timelines:

Target Markets:

2L Summer

Potential Positions:

Hiring Timelines:

1L Summer

Potential Positions:

Hiring Timelines:

Use a spreadsheet to keep track of all your applications and employment leads.

Coursework and Externships

The courses you choose to take in law school can be used to help promote your career goals. Review the course offerings at NDLS, including the extensive experiential learning opportunities available through the clinics and externship programs. Make a list of courses and experiential learning opportunities that align with your intended career path outlined above.

Courses:

Clinics/Externships:
