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# Career Corner

## Career Tips

### ***Preparing for the Insensitive/Prejudiced Interviewer***

By: *Pamela Hyland, Assoc. Director for Career Development*

It can be difficult to distinguish between a poor interviewer - one who has either an unpleasant personality or no training in the legalities of interviewing - and one who is downright prejudiced against certain candidates. Some interviewers are thrown into the process because someone more experienced has been called to court, a client conference or a closing. Others simply have personalities that can be off-putting. Some really are prejudiced and letting those prejudices show. Finally, some are employing "pressure tactics" to see how students will react under stress.

Sounds pretty grim, doesn't it? Well, there are effective ways of responding to these kinds of interviewers that may well get you the job but, even if they don't, you will feel proud of how you handled yourself.

The ticket is to remain calm and to preserve your professionalism even if the interviewer doesn't. For example, if someone asked a Latino student in an interview, "My clients are all Anglos - how are you going to relate to my clients?" the student might reply, "I understand that your clients may doubt my abilities as with any new attorney at first. However, when I show them through the

excellence and professionalism of my work that I'm a good attorney, they will relax. I've worked with people before that I've had to work hard to impress and I've always convinced them that I'm good at what I do."

In another scenario, however, the question could be even rougher. "Why do you insist on wearing a yarmulke every day? Isn't that a little much?" Here, you can clearly see a prejudice is in action or, charitably, that the interviewer is interested in seeing how you react under pressure. You might say something like, "Wearing a yarmulke is a signal that I'm serious about my religion. I'm also very serious about my work, and I do the best job for all my clients regardless of their religious affiliation. It also signals my strong ties to my religious community and that can mean reaching out to new clients for your firm."

If you encounter prejudice or unprofessional behavior in interviewing, it's an important signal about what it might be like to work at that firm or organization; if your gut reaction is to avoid that employer, listen to it. However, some students acknowledge that reaction and decide to confront it by accepting a job when it's offered and working within the organization to change perceptions. The choice is, of course, your own.

If you encounter prejudice or insensitive interviewers, we in Career Services need to know about it. We can pass along feedback to the organization about the bad reputation such interviewers give the firm among students and, in documented cases, even bar the



organization from interviewing on the Hastings campus. Please come to any of us counselors if you experience bad interviewing practices and let us help you process the experience, even if it's not as extreme as the preceding examples.

Want to make an appointment with a career counselor?

Call the CSO Front Desk at **(415) 565-4619**.

Everyday, the Career Services Office receives new listings. Log onto [HastingsCareersOnline.com](http://HastingsCareersOnline.com) and check often for new postings. Just a few highlights:

### SUMMER 2008

**Law Office of Ilson W. New** (San Francisco). PT Law Clerk. In need

### Alumni Mentor Program Orientation

Friday, 2/29  
12:40 – 1:30 p.m.  
Room 312, 198 Bldg.

**Advance Sign Up Required!**  
Sign up on:  
[www.HastingsCareersOnline.com](http://www.HastingsCareersOnline.com)

(AMP orientations are scheduled every week)

of a student to perform elementary research and also to compose memoranda on a particular subject, usually of the summary or overview nature. **Years Required:** 1L, 2L, 3L. **Materials Requested:** Fax a resume to 415-567-7594 and follow up with a phone call to 415-567-7595. **Deadline:** 4/08/08

### **Wilson, Elser, Moskowitz, Edelman & Dicker, LLP**

(Washington, DC). Currently recruiting for our Summer Law Clerk Program in our Washington, DC and McLean, VA Offices. The program serves as an introduction for our Summer Law Clerk(s) to experience our practice and immerse in the Wilson Elser culture. Summer Law Clerks are assigned to a specific practice team which allows them to actively participate in many practical, professional and team legal work activities. Applicants must be a 2<sup>nd</sup> year in the top 1/3 of his/her class; prior relevant legal or business experience required; must possess excellent oral and written communication skills, writing sample required. **Years Required:** 2L. **Materials Requested:** Resume, cover letter and writing sample to: [recruiter@wilsonelser.com](mailto:recruiter@wilsonelser.com). Please indicate DC or McLean in the subject line of your email. **Deadline:** 4/15/08

### **California Legal Assistance, Inc.**

(Modesto, CA). Intern. FT, 37.5 hrs/week. Under the supervision of the Modesto Directing Attorney, the Intern will assist the Modesto CRLA Directing Attorney, Staff Attorneys, and Community Workers on various security and housing. Responsibilities: assist in conducting client

interviews and intake; assist in research and writing on issues projects related to client issues in labor, civil rights, education, family affecting client labor, civil rights, education, family security and housing rights under state and federal law; assist the Community Worker in field sanitation and safety inspections; assist the Directing Attorney, Staff Attorneys, and Community Workers with community education in CRLA's priority areas and perform other duties and projects as assigned. **Years Required:** 1L, 2L, 3L. **Materials Requested:** Mail resume, cover letter writing sample and transcript to: 801 15<sup>th</sup> St, Suite B, Modesto CA 95354. **Deadline:** 5/01/08

### **This Week's Events:**

**Client Service and Employer Expectations: What Does It Really Mean to Be a Professional?**  
Mon., 2/25; 3:40 - 4:30 p.m.  
Panel/Room F

**Advice for 3Ls in the Job Market from Recent Grads**  
Tue., 2/26; 3:40 - 4:30 p.m.  
Panel/Room F

**Kimm Walton; Guerrilla Tactics for Getting the Legal Job of Your Dreams**  
Wed., 2/27; 3:40 – 5:00 p.m.  
Special Speaker/ARC

**Using Spring Break to Find a Great Job**  
Fri., 2/29; 12:40 – 1:30 p.m.  
Workshop/Room K