



FROM THE OFFICE OF DIVERSITY SERVICES

Welcome, everyone, to Academic Year 2011-12. We hope you are returning from exactly the summer you wished for. A busy year is shaping up already with a myriad of activities and opportunities open to students. Check occasionally the events calendar on the main website—particularly during spring Founders Celebration—to see what piques your intellectual, academic, or personal interest. Also watch the Diversity Services bulletin board outside suite 300 to see what we have scheduled, such as the Dean’s Diversity Council activities in October. And keep an eye on the Office of Career & Professional Development website. OCPD offers a variety of programs geared toward just that—your career and professional development. *Many Voices* will appear occasionally; we have no set schedule, just when time allows. Eliza Musallam of OCPD will be back offering no-nonsense counsel in her “Sidebar,” and we will highlight a person here, an organization there, or maybe a special event. Watch for us, and have a great year!

Sherry Weaver, Director, Rm. 300; 202.274.4032

She’s Back!

And we’re thrilled to have her. Nabila Isa-Odidi (WCL ’05) has returned to the law school as a practitioner-in-residence in the Glusko-Samuelson Intellectual Property Law Clinic. Prior to returning to WCL, Nabila was a member of the litigation group at Morrison & Foerster LLP. Her practice focused primarily on patent litigation suits before various U.S. District Courts and before the International Trade Commission. She also worked as a patent litigation associate at Sonnenschein Nath & Rosenthal LLP (now SNR Denton). Upon graduating from the Washington College of Law, Nabila served as a law clerk to Special Master Laura D. Millman of the Federal Vaccine Court within the U.S. Court of Federal Claims. Nabila received her B.Sc. in Human Biology from the University of Toronto. Nigerian-Canadian and soon-to-be American, Nabila was born in Kano State, Nigeria, and has lived in several countries, including Qatar, England, Saudi Arabia, and Canada. Nabila is fluent in Hausa, her native tongue. While in private practice, Nabila volunteered for 3 ½ years with Everybody Wins! DC, a non-profit organization that promotes children’s literacy by pairing students with reading mentors. She co-founded the Morrison & Foerster chapter shortly after arriving at the firm in 2008. Nabila is an active member of the Women’s Bar Association of the



District of Columbia. She served as a volunteer with the organization’s Diversity Committee from 2008-2009 and as a committee co-chair from 2010-2011. As both student and alumna, Nabila has been highly regarded by the community because she has consistently engaged in law school activities of both an academic and cultural nature. In recognition of her many contributions, Nabila was awarded the Joseph H. Hairston Alumni Award during the 2011 Sylvania Woods Conference on African Americans and the Law. And now Nabila Isa-Odidi returns to teach at the law school, and we welcome her with wishes for enormous success.

FEATURED ORGANIZATION:

SOUTH ASIAN LAW STUDENTS ASSOCIATION

(SALSA)

The South Asian Law Student Association (SALSA) at WCL focuses on succeeding in law school, balancing connecting with law school peers and making important connections with South Asian lawyers and professionals. SALSA provides many events and services throughout the year such as: the 1L student mentorship program; South Asian Bar Association (SABA) Mentorship Program; the Gandhi Day of Service; the Garba outing; SALSA Banquet with SALSA groups from other law schools in D.C.; networking opportunities with South Asian professional organization such as SABA and South Asian Americans Leading Together (SAALT); outlining panels; e-mail listserv with great internship opportunities. This year’s co-presidents are Bhavani Raveendran and Jennifer Koduru, both 2Ls. Look out for information about activities as well as general body meetings or email salsa@wcl.american.edu

Save the Date

Tuesday, October 25, 12-2, JD Lounge

Dean’s Diversity Council

Fall Speakers Luncheon

PROFESSOR EZRA ROSSER

“The Continuing Conquest of
Indigenous People”



What Not to Wear, How Not to Eat, and BTW...A Crash Course on Professionalism

Eliza Park Musallam, Esq.
Career Counselor & Diversity Liaison
Office of Career & Professional
Development

We live in a society where individuality and personal expression are encouraged. Ironically, we've chosen to work in one of the most conservative fields when it comes to personal expression. So as 2Ls and 3Ls are preparing for summer internship/externship interviews, just a quick reminder that every interaction with a potential employer – whether in person, spoken, or written – is a chance to showcase your professionalism and skills.

First Impressions Count: Research shows that it only takes 30 seconds to make a first impression. Think back to orientation week – what did you assume about your classmates before you even knew them? You most likely formed an opinion based on how they dressed and their overall physical presentation. It's human nature, and employers do the same thing as soon as you walk in the door. So here are some quick pointers to help you make the right first impression.

The Well Dressed Man: For an interview, a suit and tie are always appropriate – stick to navy blue or gray. Your tie should be conservative with a solid color button down shirt. If you wear a striped shirt, make sure the pattern is not too distracting. Match your socks to your pants, but your belt to your *polished* shoes. And please, cover any visible tattoos and remove any piercings. No matter how cool it looks, it's not a good thing if the employer can only focus on your eyebrow ring when talking with you.

The Fashionable Woman: Although a skirt suit is considered more traditional, pants suits are acceptable (however, if interviewing with a Judge, wear a skirt). Stick to dark colored, modestly cut suits; if you can see the start of your control top panty hose when you sit down, then your skirt is too short! Ladies, as much as we may hate them, pantyhose are a must – even in 90 degree weather. Change in and out of them right before/after the interview, and no one is the wiser. Save your flip flops, sandals, and stilettos for when you go out to celebrate landing the job; wear a simple closed-toe heel

to the interview. And just like the men – cover any visible tattoos or piercings.

Dressing Tips for Everyone: Clearly, grooming is essential. Hair and nails should be well kept, and clothes should be clean and pressed. Spend money on one good interview suit that fits. A well tailored \$300 suit can look just as good, if not better, than an ill-fitting \$800 suit. Remember the *Golden Rule*: Dress for the job you want, not the job you have!

Table Manners Matter: Your social skills are under scrutiny anytime you're with an employer. Dining out is still part of the interview – an employer needs to see how you act in a social setting since you could be their potential representative with a client. Order food that's easy to eat and NO ALCOHOL (even if your interviewer orders a drink). It's always polite to wait to eat until everyone is served, and remember to say *please* and *thank you*.

The Pen is Mightier than the Sword: We get it – you're busy with class, memos, studying, and activities. Sometimes it's just easier to text something short hand or not proofread a document before you send it out. Guess what – employers are busy too, and you make their decision a lot easier to put your application in the “no” pile when you can't take the time to communicate with them in a professional manner. Until you've secured the offer, treat every interaction, communication, and document as part of the interview process. Any typos, informal texting short hand, or inappropriate behavior are easy ways to eliminate a candidate. This mentality should be extended to every person from the employer's place of business that you're in contact with. For your comedic pleasure, some real examples of communication faux pas:

- *Are U Hiring?* as an email subject line
- *BTW*, as an introductory line in an email message
- *But then I realized I was not applying to a stuffy ass federal prosecutor or corporate law job*, taken from a cover letter
- *Extensive experience with the vior dire process*, taken from a resume sent to a litigation employer

Even though some of this may seem to be common knowledge, each recruitment season our office is inundated with questions about these topics. Remember, you are your own best advocate and play a large part in directing your legal career. Even the best paper credentials can be overshadowed by a candidate's lack of professionalism, so make yourself as competitive as possible and stand out for the right reasons.