

EXTERNSHIPS AT WCL

Reflecting on Legal Practice

AMERICAN UNIVERSITY
WASHINGTON
COLLEGE OF LAW

EXTERNSHIP PROGRAM

HOW TO BE A LAWYER: LEARNING FROM LIFE LESSONS

LaNita McWilliams ('13) did not know what to expect from her externship when she started working at the Maryland Office of the Public Defender the summer after her 1L year. Little did she know, her externship experience in the Juvenile Division would provide her with an unforgettable life lesson.

As an extern, LaNita worked alongside attorneys and with clients on numerous juvenile delinquency cases, but one case in particular would leave her with a lasting impression. It involved one of two twin brothers. LaNita worked closely with this young man so it was a surreal experience when she found out the day after trial the client was mistakenly identified and murdered by a rival of his brother.

"This was my first realistic experience of what happens in practice," LaNita explains, "it hit close to home because you build a relationship with your clients." Despite the devastation that the team felt, the attorneys in the office quickly went to battle to keep the surviving brother from being unjustly detained. LaNita soon realized that difficult situations are part of the career and that when something



bad happens to your client you have to "keep moving forward."

Facing the realities of the career did not deter LaNita from pursuing other externships and continuing to develop her legal career in the area of Juvenile Justice and Child Advocacy. LaNita participated in two additional externships at the Children's Law Center, Guardian ad Litem Project, and at the Public Defender Service for the District of Columbia, Juvenile Services Program, which reinforced her interest and expanded her knowledge in the field.

"I knew coming in to law school that I wanted to do Juvenile Justice... the [externships] have played a huge role in helping me identify the areas of Juvenile Justice that I can work in once I graduate."

"At the beginning of the externship [at Public Defender Service], my supervisor told me that one thing I would be after this externship is an expert in juvenile justice in the District," LaNita recalls. She remembers thinking "there's no way possible I'm going to acquire all this knowledge in a short period of time." Soon after, because her externship "was hands-on and interactive... the learning curve was very high," she realized "he was not lying."

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MUST KNOW: REQUIREMENTS FOR EXTERNSHIPS

Externs must:

1. Work for courts, government agencies, not-for-profits or a Pro Bono program at law firms; not at for profit law firms.
2. Be supervised by a licensed attorney.
3. Perform substantive legal work .
4. Work on-site in the same location as the supervising attorney.
5. Be unpaid.

****Students must also be enrolled in an externship seminar****

WCL Calendar

Students should begin their externships by the start of the academic semester.

SPRING 2015

Classes start on *January 7th*

SUMMER 2015

Classes start on *May 26th*

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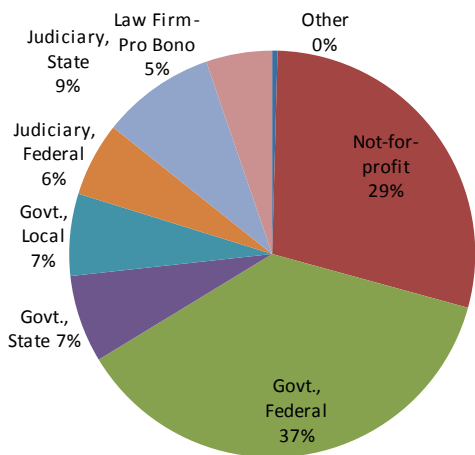
LaNita acquired knowledge and became an expert in the field in which she wanted to practice. In addition, after dealing with clients, writing motions, performing oral advocacy in administrative hearings and conducting legal research, she also acquired transferable skills that would apply in any legal field.

“Client contact... client relations, applying the knowledge,” she begins listing the skills acquired. “Writing memos in legal rhetoric isn’t the same as writing them in the real world.”

Practical experience was not the only thing LaNita gained from her multiple externships. As LaNita describes, “my supervisors from my externships turned into my mentors and [they] have been a huge help throughout my law school career.” Looking back on her externships, LaNita is grateful for what the externships have provided and how they’ve helped her identify her career plans.

“I knew coming into law school that I wanted to do Juvenile Justice ... the [externships] have played a huge role in helping me identify the areas of Juvenile Justice that I can work in once I graduate.”

EXTERNSHIPS BY THE NUMBERS:



The chart above displays the percentage of total WCL externships (2011-2012 academic year) in each legal sector.

435 Total Externships for the 2011-2012 academic year (from summer 2011 to spring 2012), not including the number of students enrolled in individual faculty supervision.

8-10 average number of externship seminars offered every semester.

12 Maximum number of externship credits a student can earn in law school (6 seminar credits and 6 fieldwork credits).

1-3 number of fieldwork credits a student can earn in a single semester, which depend on the amount of hours worked (140 hrs. = 1 credit, 210 hrs. = 2 credits, and 280 hrs. = 3 credits)

Over 1000 employers on the Externship Database who have hosted WCL student externs or have shown an interest in WCL students.

(To access the Database go to: <https://www.wcl.american.edu/externship/externshipapp/>)

EXTERNSHIP PROGRAM IN 5 WORDS

The Externship Program asked former externs to say five words that come to mind when they think of our program.

“Wonderful, challenging, beneficial, growth and promise”
- Brandon Roman ('13)

“Organized, helpful insightful, caring and awesome”
- Theo Waggoner ('13)

“Amazing, hands-on, awesome learning experience”
- LaNita McWilliams ('13)

“Experience, connections, litigation, fun and learning”
- Sara Aguiniga ('13)

EXTERNSHIPS BY PRACTICE AREA

**AMERICAN UNIVERSITY
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EXTERNSHIP PROGRAM**

Externships in Business and Finance

EXTERNSHIP REQUIREMENTS: Students may earn academic credit for substantive legal work under the supervision of a licensed attorney. The externship must be unpaid and must be for a not-for-profit organization, court or government agency (students may work for private firms, only if they are engaged exclusively in pro bono work). Students must work on site and may not work remotely.

EMPLOYERS: Employers wishing to be added to our database should do so by contacting the Externship Program at (202) 274-4200 or at externship@wcl.american.edu or by creating a listing on our website (<https://www.wcl.american.edu/externship/employers.cfm>).

DATABASE: The contact information for the following placements can be found in the Externship Database at www.wcl.american.edu/externship. You may search for the employer by name or by ID number.

Organization	Branch	Division	ID #
Administrative Office of the United States Courts	Office of Judges Programs; Bankruptcy Judges Division		2682
American Council of Engineering Companies	Government Affairs		2963
Association of Corporate Counsel	National Headquarters, Legal Resources Department		2260
Attorney General's Office, Maryland	Consumer Protection Division		727
Commodity Futures Trading Commission			3029
Computers & Communications Industries Association			2567
Consumer Financial Protection Bureau	Enforcement Division		2721
Consumer Financial Protection Bureau	Non-bank Supervision		2961
County Attorney, Montgomery County, Maryland		Finance and Procurement	3083
Credit Union National Association, Inc.	Legal Branch		2348
Direct Selling Association			2558
District of Columbia Council	Committee on Finance and Revenue	Councilmember Jack Evans	1646
District of Columbia Department of Housing and Community Development	Housing Regulation Administration; Office of the Director		2471
District of Columbia Department of Insurance, Securities and Banking	Securities Bureau		597
District of Columbia Office of the Attorney General	Commercial		3271
Eleventh Judicial Circuit of Florida	Complex Business Litigation Court		2306

4801 Massachusetts Ave. NW Ste. 413, Washington DC 20016 | (202) 274-4200 | externship@wcl.american.edu

Students can check out Practice Area Lists on the Externship Program’s MyWCL Page and outside the Externship Office (Rm. 413). Lists are available in the following areas:

- Alternative Dispute Resolution
- Business & Finance
- Children and Juvenile Rights
- Communications & Media
- Criminal
- Disability
- Environmental
- Gender and Family
- Health
- Human Rights
- Immigration / Asylum
- Intellectual Property
- International
- Judicial
- Labor and Employment
- Tax

4801 Massachusetts Avenue, Suite 413, Washington, D.C.

202-274-4200 | externship@wcl.american.edu | www.wcl.american.edu/externship | twitter: @AUwclExternship