

# Working on Capitol Hill



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# CHAPTER 1

## WORK ON THE HILL

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The opportunities on the Hill for lawyers and law students are numerous and multifaceted. However, as the actual work on Capitol Hill is often conducted in small, autonomous personal and committee offices, obtaining a position requires more networking and persistence than some other types of legal employment.

This guide will try to decode this process for you. First, it provides descriptions of several employment areas in DC involved in federal legislation and policy including the White House. Next, it offers job hunting advice for Capitol Hill job seekers. Chapter 2 provides online, print, and human resources that may prove helpful in your search. Finally, the narratives in Chapter 3, submitted by YLS students and alumni with Hill experience, provide an insider's view of various positions and up-to-date guidance on how to storm "The Hill."

Law students and graduates interested in federal legislation and policy should consider employment with: the personal offices of representatives in the House and Senate; the committees in both bodies; the Democratic and Republican Parties; the congressional administration; and the Executive Offices. Remember that although the job titles or locations might be different, the actual duties may be highly similar. For example, because it is not uncommon for a committee chair to informally merge his personal staff and committee staff, the work performed by counsel in each type of office might be identical. Thorough job research is necessary to classify the type of work. Staffers on the Hill, especially counsel and legal advisers, tend to perform a combination of legal, policy, and political work.

*It is great work: it will change how you think about law and society in general and, sometimes, give you a great sense of fulfillment. It is, however, work that you should do when you're young: it is often long hours, difficult working conditions, and relatively low pay. But where else can you get such a chance to make a difference?*

**TIMOTHY WESTMORELAND '96**  
**Visiting Professor of Law**  
**Georgetown University**  
**Former Robert Wood Johnson Foundation**  
**Investigator in Health Policy**

### A. Political Positions on the Hill

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#### 1. Personal Offices

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Members of Congress have the dual responsibility of maintaining a presence in Washington, where they serve as legislators, and serving the specific needs of their constituents. For this task, members have extensive personal offices whose staffs serve both to advise and assist the member on legislative matters and to respond to the needs of constituents. The staff size of a personal office varies widely.

In the House of Representatives, members are authorized (as part of their Member's Representational Allowance) to employ no more than 18 permanent persons and up to 4

additional staff at any one time.<sup>1</sup> In the Senate, the “administrative and clerical assistance allowance component of the SOPOEA<sup>2</sup> is allocated according to the population of a Senator’s state.”<sup>3</sup> There may be restrictions on the number of staff a Senator may hire. The average House staff size is 14. The average Senate staff size is 35, although the range in the Senate is from around 32 to as many as 45. These figures exclude voluntary interns and congressional fellows.<sup>4</sup>

The staff is divided between Washington, DC and home offices. The average number of Washington, DC staff is 8.2 for members of the House, and 22.4 for members of the Senate.<sup>5</sup> Because each member of Congress is assigned a budget to manage his or her personal office and members can divide the sum as they see fit to pay staff salaries, salaries of employees in equal positions with different personal offices can vary widely.

Typically a personal staff includes a staff assistant and legislative correspondents, who handle administrative matters, constituent services, and correspondence. Legislative assistants (LAs) research and advise the member regarding legislative issues. Each LA is usually given certain issues in which to develop expertise. On a personal staff, the LA may be expected to follow a broader range of issues than a committee staff person but is usually not required to do as much writing on the issues as committee staff. The personal office LA advises the member on the issues to be considered by the committee and what the member might do during consideration of legislation. He or she is usually responsible for meeting with lobbyists and other advocates, with constituents, and with other Hill staff. The ability to summarize complex material is a useful skill.

The legislative director oversees the efforts of the legislative correspondents and legislative assistants and is responsible for all legislative matters, including making recommendations on specific legislative issues. The chief of staff, or administrative assistant, is typically the head of the office and the main staff advisor of the member. In addition, the office may employ a communications director and communications assistants, a deputy chief of staff, a systems administrator (computer specialist), and others.

Although the structures of House and Senate personal staffs are quite similar, some differences exist. Typically Senate staffs will be larger and more formal and will allow more opportunity for specialization. The House staffs are more cozy and informal, allowing greater interaction with the member. The speed of business tends to be quicker in the House.

### ***The Facts of Life in a Personal Office***

The wide variety of positions available within especially large personal offices creates ample opportunity for satisfying employment. However, for those YLS students or alumni seeking permanent employment with personal offices, whether for policy or legal positions, certain caveats apply.

- A position with a personal office can be uncertain and extremely insecure, as House members are up for reelection every two years and Senate members every six. Those YLS students graduating in May of an election year should be aware that House and Senate members running in contested races may be unlikely to make any new hires prior to the November elections.

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<sup>1</sup> Congressional Research Service Report RL30064, *Congressional Salaries and Allowances*, by Ida A. Brudnick (December 30, 2014), p. 5 (Text in [http://www.senate.gov/CRSReports/crs-publish.cfm?pid=%270E%2C\\*PL\[%3D%23P%20%20%0A](http://www.senate.gov/CRSReports/crs-publish.cfm?pid=%270E%2C*PL[%3D%23P%20%20%0A))

<sup>2</sup> Senators’ Official Personnel and Office Expense Account (SOPOEA)

<sup>3</sup> Brudnick, *Congressional Salaries and Allowances*, p. 7.

<sup>4</sup> Congressional Research Service Report RL30807, *Congressional Member Office Operations*, by John S. Pontius, p. 3 (Updated December 29, 2003)

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p.5.

- Advancement within a personal office can be rapid. On the other hand, some personal offices do not hire individuals for advanced positions unless those candidates have spent time in a lower position within the office. Again, you should research individual office policies.

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## 2. Committee Work

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Unlike personal offices, committee offices rarely, if ever, deal directly with constituent requests.<sup>6</sup> Rather, the committee office is the location for most of the actual legislative work being performed on the Hill. It is in committee that hearings on pending legislation take place, and it is in committee that executive business sessions (called “mark-ups”) take place. In these mark-ups, legislation is pored over, line-by-line, before gaining approval to make it to the floor of the House or Senate. Committee and subcommittee staff serve as information resources for committee members.

Committees have staffs for both the minority and majority sides, as does each subcommittee. Committees and subcommittees will commonly employ a chief counsel or staff director to serve as the chief staff person on the committee. The chief counsel will usually be assisted by a number of assistant counsel, professional staff members, and staff assistants. There is also a minority staff director who leads the minority staff.

A committee staff person is usually assigned a subset of the committee’s issues to be his/her portfolio of responsibilities. Committee work is made up of searching out and understanding these issues; outlining possible legislative and oversight responses to them; meeting with lobbyists and other advocates; briefing the chair and members of the committee; drafting the legislation to be considered (as chosen by the chair and the members); staffing and inviting witnesses for hearings; and drafting amendments (and counter-amendments) for that legislation. Committee staff do a great deal of writing—some of it technical statutory writing (e.g., “in subsection 3, strike ‘six’ and insert ‘seven’”), some of it broadly rhetorical (e.g., “Six is an unworkable number that will result in deadlock that will disadvantage all, but seven will produce a simple majority.”). The ability to write concisely and clearly is a valuable skill.

Committee counsel are commonly hired by and work for particular committee members. Most are hired by the chair of the committee (often from their own staff) for the majority side and the ranking member (leader of the minority party on the committee) for the minority side. However, variation exists, such as subcommittee chairs assigning staff to the committee. For example, in the Senate Judiciary Committee the chair and the ranking member have the largest committee staff, but other members may have committee staff as well. In the House Judiciary Committee, all staff officially work for the chair or the ranking member but may also be assigned to other representatives.

Because of the inherently political nature of committee positions, the majority staff size exceeds the staff size of the minority party to a degree reflecting the extent of the majority. And, like personal offices, committee staffs will have limited personnel budgets.

### ***The Facts of Life in a Committee Office***

- Committee staff members describe their work as very rewarding. Indeed, some committee counsels have kept their positions for upwards of 10 years, bucking the trend of high turnover pervasive in the staffs of personal offices. The average stay seems to be from two to five years.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> A list of Senate and House Committees, their leadership and membership, can be found in the current version of *Congress at Your Fingertips* in the CDO library, and in *The Almanac of American Politics*, also found in the CDO library.

<sup>7</sup>See [www.washingtontimes.com/news/2012/jun/6/congressional-staffers-public-shortchanged-by-high/?page=all](http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2012/jun/6/congressional-staffers-public-shortchanged-by-high/?page=all). For more detailed information on congressional staff turnover by year, please see [www.washingtontimes.com/interactive/congressional-staff-turnover/](http://www.washingtontimes.com/interactive/congressional-staff-turnover/).

- Positions as assistant counsel are extremely hard to obtain directly out of law school, especially depending on the committee to which one is applying. The Senate Judiciary Subcommittee on Technology and Terrorism, for example, is unlikely to hire a graduating law student for an assistant counsel position, given the highly technical nature of its work. The same is true for the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence.
- Finally, be aware that some committees, such as the Armed Services and Intelligence Committees, might require background checks prior to employment.

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### 3. Party Positions

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There are numerous political positions that function as party offices and are unaffiliated with specific member offices. For example, the Senate Republican ([www.rpc.senate.gov](http://www.rpc.senate.gov)) and Democratic Policy ([www.dpcc.senate.gov](http://www.dpcc.senate.gov)) Committees serve as steering committees through which party platform issues are coordinated. The Republican and Democratic Conferences (or Caucuses, depending on party) serve similar functions. The Leadership Offices—such as those of the Majority and Minority Leader, the Speaker of the House, and the Majority and Minority Whips—often employ additional political staffers whose job it is to assist the party leaders with the political responsibilities of their positions.

Contact information for the political positions of the House and Senate is most readily available in *Congress at Your Fingertips*, available in CDO, or in the *Leadership Directories*, available online.<sup>8</sup>

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### 4. Job Search Tips for Political Positions

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#### ***First, Network and Research***

Finding a permanent job on the Hill is largely a matter of effort and stamina, but the best way to get a permanent job on the Hill is to work a summer job on the Hill. This provides you with contacts, references, and experience that are priceless in your search for a permanent position. It may also provide you with an offer, but since openings are unpredictable this can't be assumed. Since YLS provides summer funding through the Student Public Interest Fellowship program (SPIF) to students interested in volunteering for Hill positions (but not for campaign positions), you have an enormous opportunity to obtain excellent Hill experience.

To pursue either a summer or permanent Hill job, realize that you do have contacts on the Hill through the YLS community that you can use to your benefit. Networking is not only a valuable aid to getting a job, it is a major research tool. Hill offices vary greatly in structure and culture. There are notorious members of Congress whose staffers are not happy employees. Other offices are wonderful places to work. Careful research—in person, online, and in print—should be done throughout a job search.

Make sure to use the student summer job evaluations and student summer employment lists to find students who have Hill experience and can help you learn the ropes. Use YLS Career Connections to find alumni on the Hill and contact them for advice and other referrals. Also use the faculty, student, and alumni mentor lists provided in this guide for additional leads. Mention your interests to other faculty members to see if they can assist. Your undergraduate institution may also yield connections and contacts. In addition, political loyalty, campaign work, and personal friendships can be valuable resources in finding Hill jobs. If you, your family, or friends have these experiences, you have another set of contacts to pursue.

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<sup>8</sup> [www.leadershipdirectories.com](http://www.leadershipdirectories.com); please see the “Online Resources” section below for login information.

For all of your employment mentors and Hill contacts, make sure to be courteous of their time, provide them with an emailed resume (in hopes they will circulate it further), and follow up on the leads that they provide. Also, since turnover on the Hill is high, it is important to keep in touch with these contacts, updating them periodically on your progress.

In addition to educating yourself through your contacts, use other available resources. Reference books, such as *The Almanac of American Politics* or *Congress at Your Fingertips*, will help you find the committees that handle the issues that interest you, the members that are active on those committees, and the structure of their staffs. You should also use these and other resources to learn more about a member for whom you would particularly like to work and about the structure of their personal staff. As always, knowledge of the employer is the key to a successful job search. It means that you need to be able to demonstrate an understanding of the member's role and his or her stance on issues. The member's personal website, the reference books and websites described in Chapter 2 of this guide, and a general web search can provide rich data.

## **Applying**

### **Summer**

To obtain a summer volunteer position on the Hill, conduct research to determine where you would like to work and approach that office. For a member's personal office, write to the chief of staff/administrative assistant (COS/AA), chief counsel, or legislative director. Do not apply to the intern coordinator, since such an application is likely to result in a position given to undergraduates and not one with considerable legal exposure. Names of Congressional staffers and their contact information can be found in *Congress at Your Fingertips*. Remember that representatives from a district to which you can claim a connection (home, college, law school, vacations, intended home) may take a special interest in you. Make sure to point out the connection.

For committee work, you can write to the majority or minority staff director of the committee, to the COS/AA or chief counsel of the chair or ranking member (minority party leader), or to other members of the committee. Committees rarely have the same geographic or hometown restrictions as personal offices, but again, the staff director acts at the discretion of the chair. Some senators prefer staffers with state ties for their committee staff as well as their personal staff, while others have no such preference for committee staff. Research into hiring practices should be conducted. Tailor the cover letter and resume to the job based on your research. A political background with one party may skewer an opportunity for employment with committee staff of the other party, so a resume may need to be adapted accordingly. Always follow up in a few weeks with a phone call. Do not be surprised if you are not able to confirm a position until well into the spring semester.

### **Permanent**

This type of outreach is also advisable for a permanent job search; however, there are a few other sources of information that you will want to check. Although the positions on the Hill are not uniformly posted or advertised, both the House and Senate have placement offices that handle some job listings—permanent, temporary, paid, and unpaid. The Senate Placement Office produces a weekly *Senate Employment Bulletin* which is available online at [www.senate.gov/employment/po/positions.htm](http://www.senate.gov/employment/po/positions.htm). For more information, please consult the *Placement Brochure* on the website or contact the Placement Office at (202) 224-9167.

The House of Representatives offers an online subscription to the weekly *House Employment Bulletin*, which can be found at [www.house.gov/content/jobs/hvaps\\_subscribe.php](http://www.house.gov/content/jobs/hvaps_subscribe.php). The bulletin is also available for pick-up in the Longworth House Office Building, Suite B227 or the CAO Human Resources Office, located in H2-102 Ford in DC.



In addition, the House Vacancy Announcement and Placement Service (HVAPS) maintains a resume bank of candidates seeking employment with the House. HVAPS provides confidential referral of resumes if and when House offices request them. Instructions for registering with the resume bank can be found at [www.house.gov/content/jobs/members\\_and\\_committees.php](http://www.house.gov/content/jobs/members_and_committees.php). Resumes are kept on file for 90 days.

The Committee on House Administration (CHA) website, <http://cha.house.gov>, provides lists of House staff organizations (under *Member Services* select *Congressional Member/Staff Organizations*, then *Congressional Staff Organizations*), some of which are open to non-Hill employees and offer a good networking opportunity. Also, some publications (several are listed in the online resources section of Chapter 2) provide job announcements for Hill positions. Be forewarned that no official or unofficial site will contain all job openings on the Hill. Some are circulated by interoffice memos alone or filled before the need to advertise arises. This reinforces the importance of keeping your Hill networks alive and growing.

Finally, on the Hill there is a useful and time honored tradition of walking from office to office and leaving a resume with a junior staffer. This allows you the opportunity to inquire whether there are any vacancies or possible vacancies in the near future, learn what skills or background might be of particular interest to that office, and learn the name of the appropriate person with whom to contact regarding your application. This tradition is commonly followed, and those in the building vouch for its efficacy.

Salaries are substantially less on the Hill than in the private sector. In addition, because staff salaries are not dependent on years of service (as with civil service positions), the amount earned might be considerably less than with other government legal positions, notwithstanding the long hours often worked by staffers.

### ***Working Your Way Up***

Many offices will be reluctant to hire individuals for legislative director, committee counsel, or other senior positions without Hill experience. Even a summer legal internship with an office or committee can make a difference. However, with or without your summer experience, it may be necessary to apply for a lower position, such as a legislative assistant. These entry level positions not only allow you to gain experience but also mean you will be available to apply for a higher position in the same, or another, personal office or committee at a moment's notice. Such opportunities for advancement are not rare. Although the work done by legislative and political staffers is rewarding, turnover can be high. This does not necessarily reflect job discontent but is a product of the horizontal and vertical movement between various Hill positions.

It might be disheartening to take a non-counsel position upon graduation, but lower, non-legal, and certainly less well-paid positions are often prerequisites to becoming counsel.

### ***Timing***

Openings on the Hill for all permanent positions are usually for immediate needs. The number of Hill opportunities is often greatest in the summer, when many junior staffers leave, and soon after elections—particularly when a party has regained majority status in the House or Senate. Therefore, a student seeking post-graduation employment might have to wait until he or she is ready to begin working to apply. It may prove a discomfiting truth that, while your classmates have secured jobs well in advance of graduation, you are without an offer until graduation or after. The nature of these positions, though, means that flexibility and persistence are crucial, as is patience.

Job hunting in an election year might prove even more difficult, as Hill offices tend to be less willing to hire an individual for a position for the few months prior to the vote. It might be necessary in such cases to pursue fallback options in Washington, DC, but also consider working on a campaign. Campaign work can not only earn you a position if your candidate wins but can also assist you if your candidate loses, because you will have developed contacts, a reputation, and a sense of what the work entails.

### ***Safety Nets***

Although most students have had success in obtaining summer positions on the Hill, it is a challenge to find a great, permanent Hill job right after graduation. Our sources tell us that an office may receive hundreds of resumes for each counsel opening, with 50 to 100 of them being credible applicants. This does not mean that you should give up—just that you should be persistent, broad, and realistic in your search. Some students also establish a fallback position with firms by asking a firm to hold an offer open pending a public interest Hill job search. Another fallback option might be to work for a congressional or senatorial campaign, as discussed above.

## **B. Non- Political Positions**

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### **1. House and Senate Administrative Offices**

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For those seeking non-political, non-traditional legal work on Capitol Hill, a position with the administrative staff of the Capitol might be appealing. The House and Senate offer a wide variety of positions, unaffiliated with any specific party or member.

#### ***The Offices of Legislative Counsel***

The Offices of Legislative Counsel (OLC) are non-partisan offices in each chamber that provide technical expertise in legislative drafting to members and committees. They prepare bill mark-ups and verify proposed language for consistency with the rest of the U.S. Code. These attorneys do not set the policy of the legislation on which they work. In fact, an attorney in the OLC may draft a bill for introduction and draft all of the competing amendments offered to that bill. The attorney is concerned with the legislative policy behind the bill only for the purpose of ensuring that the draft accurately reflects that policy. Because of the nonpartisan nature of the OLC, current substantial political activity may disqualify potential employees from gaining positions. Counsel in these offices will meet with members and their staffs to discuss legislative proposals; attend committee meetings; discuss the legislation with their counterparts in the House, Senate, or Executive Branch; review the Congressional Record and other materials regarding other matters in the subject area; attend floor consideration; research related prior legislation; and draft bills and amendments.

The Office of the Legislative Counsel of the U.S. House of Representatives (HOLC) is a nonpartisan office that drafts legislation for the Members and committees of the House of Representatives. HOLC employs approximately 40 attorneys and often accepts several 2L summer associates. The summer associate position is paid a small stipend, and splits are possible. The 2L summer associate program is similar to the program for new attorney hires in that the summer associate is given initial training in various aspects of the work and provided an opportunity to work directly with clients on actual bills and amendments. The HOLC web page ([www.house.gov/legcoun/](http://www.house.gov/legcoun/)) is an excellent resource for information about the office's work and employment opportunities.

The Senate Office of the Legislative Counsel (SLC) employs approximately 36 attorneys and has a program for summer interns. The intern must be a 2L and is put in an intensive training program that is a modified form of the eight-week training that new attorney hires are given. Interns are given

responsibility for drafting resolutions and other legislation. For more information about the office and positions, see the SLC webpage at [www.slc.senate.gov](http://www.slc.senate.gov) or contact the office at (202) 224-6461.

### ***Senate Legal Counsel and House General Counsel***

Both the Senate and the House have small offices of attorneys (typically five to six) that represent the members, committees, and the entity in their institutional capacity. For example, they may represent members or committees when subpoenas are issued, or they may represent the Congress to protect an institutional prerogative.

### ***The Library of Congress***

The Library of Congress ([www.loc.gov](http://www.loc.gov)), which serves as the research arm of Congress as well as a national repository of information and creativity, employs many attorneys. These are civil service jobs and, therefore, are not subject to the election schedule. For information about the Library of Congress and for its general employment opportunities, check [www.loc.gov/hr/employment/index.php](http://www.loc.gov/hr/employment/index.php).

The Congressional Research Service (CRS) is the public policy research arm of the Library of Congress. It provides services to the members and committees of the U.S. Congress. Within the CRS are five interdisciplinary research divisions that employ experts in a variety of fields to provide information and analysis of complex issues for Congress with the aim of incorporating program and legislative expertise, quantitative methodologies, and legal and economic analysis.

Within these divisions, the American Law Division ([www.loc.gov/crsinfo/research/div-ald.html](http://www.loc.gov/crsinfo/research/div-ald.html)) is the chief employer of attorneys who, upon request, conduct research for and advise members of Congress. The attorneys in this division provide written analyses and legal opinions at any stage of the legislative process. Many of the attorneys employed by the American Law Division are new graduates who came to the division through the CRS Law Recruit Program. The American Law Division also welcomes law students as summer volunteers or for externships. For more information on the CRS Law Recruit Program, visit [www.loc.gov/crsinfo/opportunities/law-recruit.html](http://www.loc.gov/crsinfo/opportunities/law-recruit.html) or contact Kevin B. Greely at [LawRecruit@crs.loc.gov](mailto:LawRecruit@crs.loc.gov).

The CRS also offers a Graduate Recruit Program to attract a diverse pool of highly qualified graduate students who have the desire to assist Congress with its deliberations and legislative decisions. The Graduate Recruit Program offers a variety of paid positions, and appointments are for a period of up to 120 days beginning in the summer. The program is open to students enrolled in, or graduating with an appropriate advanced degree from, an accredited graduate institution, and to Library of Congress staff who already possess a graduate degree. Note that this program is not geared specifically to law school graduates. Participants who perform successfully in their appointments and have fulfilled the requirements of a master's or doctorate degree may be considered for placement in a permanent position at the end of the summer appointment. Those students who return to school to complete their advanced degree program may be eligible for a permanent position after they obtain their degree. To be considered, candidates must submit a formal application package as described in the instructions of each vacancy announcement. To learn more about the Graduate Recruit Program, visit [www.loc.gov/crsinfo/opportunities/graduate-recruit.html](http://www.loc.gov/crsinfo/opportunities/graduate-recruit.html) or contact Nancy Warrick at [CRSGraduateRecruit@crs.loc.gov](mailto:CRSGraduateRecruit@crs.loc.gov) or (202) 707-6960.

## C. Executive Offices

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### 1. The Office of Counsel to the President (or White House Counsel's Office)

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Although not technically a Hill office, the Office of Counsel to the President is included in this guide because of its involvement in policy and legislation. This office advises the President on all legal issues concerning the President and the White House. The Counsel's Office is responsible for advising on all legal aspects of policy questions as well as on ethical issues. It also oversees judicial selection, handles presidential pardons, reviews legislation and presidential statements, and serves as the White House contact for the Department of Justice.

Law students may find interesting summer work at the White House Counsel's Office. Each term, this office hires interns to assist Associate Counsels with their duties. The internships are unpaid, and applications go through the White House Internship Program, which provides interns throughout the White House offices. Information on the Internship Program and application materials can be found at [www.whitehouse.gov/about/internships](http://www.whitehouse.gov/about/internships).

Candidates may apply at [www.whitehouse.gov/about/internships/apply](http://www.whitehouse.gov/about/internships/apply). Contact the personnel office at [intern\\_application@whitehouse.gov](mailto:intern_application@whitehouse.gov) for more information.

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### 2. The Office of Management and Budget (OMB)

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The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) assists the President in the development and execution of his policies and programs. Although not a Hill position (OMB is in the Executive Branch), the OMB has been included in the guide because it has a hand in the development and resolution of all budget, policy, legislative, regulatory, procurement, e-government, and management issues on behalf of the President. The OMB is composed of divisions organized either by agency and program area or by functional responsibilities. However, the work of the OMB often requires a broad exposure to issues and programs outside of the direct area of assigned responsibility.<sup>9</sup>

Attorneys in the OMB work in the General Counsel's Office or in other areas of the OMB with non-attorneys doing public policy work. The OMB accepts applications from students for unpaid internships. The OMB also has a summer intern program that takes students from a variety of graduate schools, including law. Information about the application procedure is available at [www.whitehouse.gov/omb/recruitment\\_default](http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/recruitment_default). Each job vacancy and internship specifies what materials are required for the application and how to apply. For more information on the summer intern program, please contact the OMB summer intern coordinator, Falisa Peoples-Tittle, at (202) 395-9175.

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<sup>9</sup> For more information, please see [www.whitehouse.gov/omb/organization/mission.html](http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/organization/mission.html).

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## CHAPTER 2 RESOURCES

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## D. Online Resources

### **<http://congress.org>**

Congress.org is a nonpartisan news and information website devoted to encouraging civic participation.

### **<http://thehill.com>**

*The Hill*, a Capitol Hill newspaper, posts job vacancies in its Jobs section on the homepage.

### **[www.house.gov](http://www.house.gov)**

This website is a general source of information on representatives. The site provides links to all of the representatives' personal websites, which typically provide biographical information as well as committee appointments and staff contacts. For a list of job vacancies at the House of Representatives, click on *Employment* on the top of the homepage.

### **<http://cha.house.gov/>**

The Committee on House Administration website provides lists of House staff organizations (select *Member Services*, then *Congressional Member/Staff Organizations*, then *Congressional Staff Organizations*) of which some are open to non-Hill employees and can be a good networking opportunity.

### **[www.house.gov/legcoun/](http://www.house.gov/legcoun/)**

If you are interested in applying for an assistant counsel position in the House Office of the Legislative Counsel (HOLC), the HOLC web page is a resource for information about the work of the office. Click on *Career Opportunities* on the top of the homepage for more information.

### **[www.leadershipdirectories.com](http://www.leadershipdirectories.com)**

Yale Law School provides students with a subscription to the *Leadership Directories*, which contain biographical and contact information for people in a variety of government, nonprofit, and private sector arenas. Students using a Yale computer or connected to Yale through a VPN can access the directories without a password. Simply click on the yellow login box on the top of the home page. Anyone accessing the site from an outside computer without VPN will be taken to a login screen. In that event, contact CDO at (203) 432-1676 for a username and password.

### **[www.loc.gov/crsinfo/](http://www.loc.gov/crsinfo/)**

This website provides information on the Library of Congress Congressional Research Service and its opportunities. There is an option to register for email alerts regarding vacancy announcements under the *Career Opportunities* link on the left sidebar.

### **<http://pac.org/>**

The Public Affairs Council is a non-partisan, non-political association for public affairs professionals. Its mission is to advance the field of public affairs and to provide members with the executive education and expertise they need to succeed while maintaining the highest ethical standards. This site includes job opportunities in Public Affairs. Click on *Jobs* on the top of the screen for more information.

### **[www.psjd.org](http://www.psjd.org)**

The *Public Service Jobs Directory* or PSJD ([www.psjd.org](http://www.psjd.org)), formerly PSLawNet, is an effective and centralized tool to find information about public interest opportunities. PSJD is made up of a network of 200 member law schools across the United States and Canada, including YLS and more than 13,000 law-related public interest organizations around the world. Through their online database, PSJD provides a comprehensive clearinghouse of public interest organizations and opportunities for lawyers and law students. As PSJD members, YLS students can perform customized searches for organizations in which they have an interest and for public interest opportunities, ranging from short-term volunteer and paid internships to post-graduate jobs, fellowships, and pro bono opportunities.

### **[www.rcjobs.com](http://www.rcjobs.com)**

Lists job openings, both on and off the Hill. For general political information and news, log on to the *Roll Call* website, [www.rollcall.com](http://www.rollcall.com).

### **[www.senate.gov](http://www.senate.gov)**

Similar to the House website, this website has links to all senators' personal websites, which provide biographical information as well as committee appointments and staff contacts.

## **E. Print Resources**

The Career Development Office maintains a library of resources to assist in finding employment on Capitol Hill. All entries are in the CDO library unless otherwise listed.

### **The Almanac of American Politics (2014)**

This resource includes information on every senator and representative and their respective district and state. However, it does not include information on staff members.

### **The Almanac of the Unelected: Staff of the U.S. Congress (2011)**

This directory contains in-depth profiles on key congressional staff members who work with and support the representatives and senators in various important roles that help to enact change or refine existing laws and codes that govern our nation.



### **Congress at Your Fingertips 114<sup>th</sup> Congress, 1<sup>st</sup> Session (2015)**

This guide has contact information, dates of election, margin of victory, and photographs of all members of the House and Senate as well as contact information for House and Senate committees and administrative positions. Additionally, the book lists the names and contact information for top staffers in each office.

### **The Insider's Guide to Research on Capitol Hill (2005)**

This guide provides information for new interns to the Hill on all available resources as well as useful tools for approaching the difficult task of 'Congressional Research.' It contains explanations of IT resources in the House and Senate, an in-depth overview of the Congressional Research Service (CRS), and research tips for interns. Some of the websites discussed are also helpful for those engaging in an employment search.

### **The U.S. Government Manual (2014)**

This manual includes descriptions of agencies in all the different branches of the U.S. government. The Legislative Branch section contains information about the roles of the House, Senate, Library of Congress, and Congressional Budget Office, in addition to providing the names of key officials in each agency.

## **F. Fellowship Funding**

The Heyman Federal Public Service Fellowship Program provides one year of funding to allow recent Yale Law graduates to work closely with high-level leaders in the federal government. Appropriate positions include high-level substantive work with the sponsoring office, agency, or commission. Positions that are not considered include judicial clerkships, entry-level positions, and work for political campaigns. In the five years since the program's inception, a number of Heyman Fellows have worked with Senators or Representatives on Capitol Hill. Two to three fellowships are awarded each year. For the 2015-16 fellowship year, the stipend was \$44,000 and included health benefits. Details on the 2015-16 fellowship can be found at [www.law.yale.edu/student-life/career-development/students/career-pathways/public-interest/yfs-public-interest-fellowships](http://www.law.yale.edu/student-life/career-development/students/career-pathways/public-interest/yfs-public-interest-fellowships). For more information, contact CDO at (203) 432-1676 or [cdo.law@yale.edu](mailto:cdo.law@yale.edu).

The Presidential Management Fellowship is a two year government fellowship sponsored by the Office of Personnel Management (OPM). The aim of the fellowship is to recruit and train recent graduates for leadership management and policy roles in the federal government. For additional information, see [www.pmf.gov](http://www.pmf.gov) or contact CDO at (203) 432-1676 or [cdo.law@yale.edu](mailto:cdo.law@yale.edu).

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# CHAPTER 3

## PERSONAL NARRATIVES

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### A. Alumni Narratives

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#### 1. Political Positions

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*David Dorsey '91, Former Congressional Fellow  
SENATOR EDWARD KENNEDY-U.S. SENATE HELP COMMITTEE;  
CURRENTLY SENIOR DIRECTOR, JANSSEN RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT, LLC*

I worked on the Senate HELP Committee for Senator Edward Kennedy from January 2001 through April 2009 on FDA-related issues and bioterrorism.

The Food and Drug Administration had “detailed” me to the committee, so I can’t offer much insight about how to find a job on the Hill as a regular staffer. Casual observations suggest that having previous Hill or campaign experience, knowing the right person at the right time, and being smart can be important to finding and landing a Hill job (knowing the right person at the right time worked for me). Substantive knowledge or experience can also be a plus, especially if you want a job on a committee instead of in a personal office. Except when a member is newly elected, there is generally not a regular time for hiring, so you’ll have to be willing and able to take a job when there is an opening.

I worked almost exclusively on legislation, and my experience on the HELP Committee was extremely rewarding. Several bills I worked on were signed into law. The process for getting these bills done included two formal conferences with the House, a few informal conferences before Senate action, and a few informal conferences after House and Senate action. The Senate acted on most of these bills by unanimous consent with no debate on the Senate floor, but three bills I worked on were debated at length on the Senate floor. I’ve learned from extremely experienced, committed, intelligent colleagues in my office and in others.

Many skills are important to getting a bill passed: The most important skill is to know when you can make a call yourself and when you need to talk to the boss. You also must be able to work with others on the committee—some of whom you disagree with strongly on politics or policy—to reach agreement on a bill, or it won’t move. Other skills include gathering information quickly and from different viewpoints to make informed decisions; executing policy in bill language and assessing how others have done so; including people at the right time in a process to make the conditions optimal for sufficient agreement to coalesce around a bill; and prioritizing tasks when several last-minute, apparently highly important ones land on your desk.

For me, the most challenging aspect of committee work was to evaluate all the options for moving a bill forward. What outside support would help? Is there a press strategy? Who are likely cosponsors to make the bill bipartisan and how can they be convinced to join? What are the must-haves in the bill and what can you give up?

Committee work also involves staffing hearings and constituent meetings, which requires concise written and verbal communication and knowing how to best use the forum to advance your boss’s policy objectives. The committee also monitors the agencies for which the committee is responsible, and committee staff must judge when a call, letter, or other oversight is warranted.

Committees often have staff devoted to oversight, not legislation. I don't have any direct experience with intensive oversight, but it involves interviewing informants or witnesses, sending what are essentially interrogatories or document discovery requests to an agency or to private parties, such as the members of an industry under scrutiny, and poring through the evidence to identify possible problems. These requests, which can be followed with subpoenas, can document the need for legislative reform or produce evidence of such significant malfeasance that a committee report, or news reports on the results of the investigation, can lead to significant reforms.

I generally worked until 7 or 8 at night, but have worked much later to prepare for hearings or executive sessions to mark-up bills. I more than once worked until four or five in the morning to negotiate one aspect of a bill only to resume negotiations a few hours later on another. While a bill for which I was responsible was being prepared for and was on the Senate floor, I had to work very long hours 7 days a week and was expected always to have the answer—I imagine it must be something like the hours and stress of real lawyer work, such as preparing for and being in trial.

The work can be routine and it can be frustrating. But it is often quite challenging and very rewarding, especially if a bill you have worked on passes and makes a difference for people.

2015

***Robert Toone '95, Former Counsel***

***SENATOR EDWARD KENNEDY-U.S. SENATE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE;  
CURRENTLY AT FOLEY HOAG LLP***

From April 2001 to March 2005, I worked as a counsel for Senator Kennedy on the Judiciary Committee. I handled LGBT issues, crime, drugs, guns, prisons, sentencing, terrorism, related civil liberties issues, and the occasional executive or judicial nomination.

Things changed dramatically in the Senate in May 2001, when the Democrats regained majority status thanks to Senator Jim Jeffords' decision to leave the Republican party. Following the September 11th attacks, the committee focused on a range of terrorism-related issues, including the USA PATRIOT Act, military tribunals, the treatment of detainees, reorganization of the FBI, and immigration reform. The Democrats lost control of the Senate again in 2002, and the Republicans expanded their majority in the 2004 elections. (The Democrats regained control in 2006.)

Being in the minority meant that Democrats had limited ability to hold hearings and call for votes in the committees and on the Senate floor. Unlike the House of Representatives, however, the Senate strongly favors minority rights over majority rule, and little can be accomplished without strong bipartisan support. Even a single member has substantial power under the Senate's rules to slow things down, and, as we've frequently seen in recent years, a minority of 41 members can generally prevent a bill or nomination from coming to a vote at all.

For this reason, there is great incentive in the Senate to work with members of the opposite party, no matter who's in charge. Little can be accomplished without strong bipartisan support. And, in fact, I was pleasantly surprised by the ability of members from different parties and their staff to work together on some issues. For more than a year, for example, I worked on a bill to reduce the incidence of sexual assault in prisons and jails. It's an issue I care about, having spent my first four years out of law school litigating jail conditions. Approaching this problem legislatively was a very different experience. Rather than seeking, say, wholesale improvements in safety at a particular facility, we worked to achieve more modest relief for inmates across the nation, within the bounds of the federalism principles held by our Republican allies in the House and Senate, the Administration, and outside groups. The process was frustrating at times, and the final legislation was not as strong or comprehensive as many reformers would

have liked. At least in the Senate, however, legislative work involves the identification of issues of bipartisan interest, compromise, and incremental change. “Big wins” seldom happen, particularly when you are in the minority.

My work on the Judiciary Committee exposed me to a fascinating range of issues and problems. In a single day, a staffer might be called on to cover issues as varying as gun control, post-*Booker* sentencing, patent legislation, gay marriage, and investigations into alleged detainee abuse. Typical work for me involved meetings and phone calls with other staffers, advocates, attorneys, and constituents; drafting and analysis of bills and amendments; memos to and meetings with my boss (often in cars or hallways); briefings, hearings, committee mark-ups, and floor debates. Working conditions bordered on the chaotic, office space was extremely limited, and there was little administrative or secretarial support. On the other hand, almost everyone returns your call, and each staffer gets a TV on his or her desk (for the stated purpose of monitoring the Committee, floor activities, and news coverage, and not, for example, watching the French Open).

On the whole, I found being a Senate staffer an extremely enjoyable, demanding, and intellectually rewarding job. I learned much from my colleagues, outside groups, and the members themselves. I was surprised by the degree to which Committee counsel are able to inform the senators’ debate and decisions. And I had the good fortune to work for one of the nation’s greatest legislators.

I’m not aware of any established procedure for applying for positions, counsel or otherwise, on Capitol Hill. Every office seems to have its own method for soliciting applications and hiring staff. As a general rule, it helps to put your cover letter, resume, and list of references before a senior staff member (on Senate Judiciary, that usually means the chief counsel for each member), regardless of whether there is currently an open vacancy. Ideally, you should either email or drop your materials off in person, to avoid the messiness and delay that results from the anthrax screening of incoming mail.

Before doing that, however, carefully investigate the senators and representatives you are thinking about applying to. Political ideology is only one factor to consider: members with similar voting records may have very different areas of substantive interests, levels of seniority, approaches to the legislative process, methods of interacting with staff, and general temperament. And some of the most interesting and important work for lawyers in Congress can be found on committees other than Judiciary.

2015

***Fiona Heckscher '15, Former Counsel***

***OFFICE OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL, U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, ASSISTANT LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL***

The House Office of the Legislative Counsel is a very unusual position for Capitol Hill. We are trusted nonpartisan subject matter expert technocrats brought in to help translate people's ideas into something that can have effects on the real world (via statutory language). The task is to help legislative directors and committee staffs articulate their policy visions in statute.

The job consists primarily of listening very carefully and issue-spotting and counseling and, eventually, writing. We don't write memos; the only writing I do in my office is statutory drafting (and the occasional email). Because the skill set is distinctive, the office puts a lot of effort into training new attorneys and expects them, once trained, to stick around. I've received the kind of mentorship that most lawyers only dream of: sitting next to the expert in my field for hours every day while he narrates out loud what he's thinking and stops to answer, at length, every question and to give me feedback on my work. They hire about 2 people a year and roughly one third to one half will stay for their entire career. I'm happy to talk at further length about my office or the Hill in general.



*Paige Herwig '06, Former Chief Counsel,*  
**SENATOR AMY KLOBUCHAR;**

**CURRENTLY U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE, COUNSELOR TO THE ATTORNEY  
GENERAL ASSOCIATE COUNSEL TO THE PRESIDENT, WHITE HOUSE COUNSEL'S  
OFFICE**

I knew that I wanted to work on Capitol Hill after I finished clerking in the summer of 2008. I had never worked on the Hill before, so I began doing countless “informational interviews” about possible job opportunities. People repeatedly made the point to me that I was going to have a tough time finding a job without previous Hill experience (I had none). However, each of these informational interviews was helpful—I never ceased to be surprised that random friends-of-friends or other connections would be willing to have coffee with me for 15-30 minutes during their busy days—and these interactions helped me figure out where I wanted to land.

Eventually, one of these informational interviews paid off in an even bigger way: One of the people I spoke to told me that Senator Durbin’s Judiciary Committee staff was looking for a fellow (that’s Hill-code for “unpaid intern with a graduate degree”—the title “fellow,” at the very least, generally implies that the Senate isn’t paying your salary if you are getting one at all). I interviewed for this position and agreed to work for a minimum of three months while I looked for a paying job.

I loved my time on Senator Durbin’s Judiciary Committee staff and kept applying for paid positions—mostly other Judiciary Committee counsel positions. Working on the Hill in an unpaid capacity helped me appreciate why it can be so difficult to get a job without previous Hill experience. Quite frankly, business is conducted at such a fast pace and involves so many informal networks and judgment calls each day that there isn’t much time for on-the-job training. Additionally, congressional procedure and terminology is so specific (read: frequently arcane) that starting with some baseline knowledge is incredibly useful.

The other reason my fellowship was important is that I am confident I would not have gotten my paid position without it. First, plenty of Hill jobs are never posted publicly. People will circulate job postings to other people that they know on the Hill (e.g. the Legislative Director for a Democratic Senator may only circulate a job posting to a listserv of other Democratic LDs. This is another reason why informational interviews are important—to simply increase the number of people who know you are looking for a job and can forward you postings that you might not otherwise hear about). Second, the people doing the hiring in a Hill office will generally give a lot of weight to the opinions of other Hill staffers, because those people are familiar with the pace and nature of the work on the Hill.

After six months of working for Senator Durbin, I got a job as counsel to Senator Amy Klobuchar (D-Minn.) in April 2009. After a year, I became her chief counsel. Senator Klobuchar was a relatively junior member of the Judiciary Committee when I started working for her and did not have a subcommittee of her own. This is relevant because senators that chair Judiciary subcommittees generally receive their own separate budgets and subcommittee office space, which enables them to hire more staff. This meant that for a significant portion of my time with Senator Klobuchar, I was the only full-time staffer doing her Judiciary Committee work. (It is generally true that the more seniority that a member of the Committee has, the more staff they have; this means that counsels in other offices are more likely to specialize in certain issues areas.) This made my life really busy but also really rewarding, because I got to see the entire range of issues that the Committee deals with—issues like criminal justice, antitrust, intellectual property, civil rights, oversight of various federal agencies, and judicial nominations. I was especially lucky that the two years I spent working for Senator Klobuchar gave me the chance to work on the confirmations of both Justice Sotomayor and Justice Kagan, which were incredibly exciting.

I would advise people to spend a lot of time researching the office (whether senator, representative, or committee) that they are applying to work for. You can get a sense from someone's website what issues are important to them. Be ready for the question, "What is a bill that you would propose for the [Senator/Representative] to introduce?" and do your best to come up with something that is in an issue area and on a scale that is reasonably consistent with their past activity and that reasonably approximates how liberal/conservative that member is. Have a sense about the ways you would like to influence policy besides introducing legislation. It takes a lot of effort to get even small bills passed, so make sure you have some other ideas about ways that you can advance a member's agenda.

2015

***Lisa Powell '03, Former Staff Director (2008-2012), Former Chief Investigative Counsel (2007-2008)***  
**SENATOR DANIEL AKAKA, SENATE SUBCOMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT OF  
GOVERNMENT MANAGEMENT, THE FEDERAL WORKFORCE,  
AND THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA;  
CURRENTLY STAFF COUNSEL, THE NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION**

I worked for five and a half years for Senator Akaka's Subcommittee on Oversight of Government Management, the Federal Workforce, and the District of Columbia, first as Investigative Counsel and later as Staff Director of the Subcommittee. The Subcommittee is part of the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee (HSGAC) so it also handles homeland security issues for its Chairman. HSGAC's subcommittees were reorganized for the current Congress, so its name and issues differ a bit today, but previously its largest set of issues is federal workforce policy, such as pay and benefits, whistleblower rights, and labor issues, and it also had jurisdiction over a range of government management and District of Columbia issues.

I originally looked for work on the Hill because I found myself more interested in policy than litigation, and I was closely following and energized by the 2006 elections. When the Democrats took control of Congress, I started applying for positions on the Hill. I did not have previous Hill experience or connections to the State; I just happened to have a somewhat unusual set of experience and expertise that the Subcommittee was seeking. If you are interested in working on the Hill, I would strongly recommend seeking a summer internship during law school (which are generally unpaid). From there, you can make connections, get a better sense of the offices that might be a good fit for you, impress people with your work, and have a bit of Hill experience on your resume.

Each office generally hires individually through whatever idiosyncratic process it desires, both for summer internships and permanent positions. Longer-term, there are not a great number of positions and many job seekers, so it may be most feasible to find a Hill position from another job rather than seeking to go to the Hill right after law school. Some but not all offices post positions through the Senate Employment Office, but you'll do better if you network directly with offices you're interested in ahead of time so that they contact you if they have a position. You likely will need to do some leg work tracking down an appropriate senior staff contact in the offices you are interested in. For networking meetings, I suggest emailing a request to meet briefly for coffee with your resume—your resume is important because it should get their attention as someone worth their time; calls may be considered intrusive and paper is more likely to get lost in the shuffle. Investigate the office you're interested in, not only to make sure you would be comfortable and effective representing your boss's views on particular issues, but also because there are a surprising number of Senators who treat their staff members poorly. (My boss, for the record, is amazingly nice.)

An aspect of the work I found both challenging and rewarding is that the job involves many skills and tasks, both legal and non-legal. I managed staff and worked on legislation, hearings, and other oversight, on a tremendous range of issues. It's difficult to say what a typical day was, but attending meetings or

briefings with executive branch officials, advocates, and/or congressional staff on a legislative or oversight issue; writing or editing a memo to my boss about introducing or cosponsoring a bill, signing a letter, or preparing him for a meeting; researching an aspect of legislation; or drafting legislative language are pretty common tasks. Before becoming Staff Director, I used to plan hearings regularly, which involved fairly intensive research into a topic, meeting with experts and stakeholders, selecting witnesses, and preparing materials for the Senator. After becoming the Subcommittee Staff Director, much of my time was spent editing materials drafted by other staff, providing strategic guidance to staff, and dealing with management issues such as hiring decisions.

An interesting aspect of the work is thinking and working strategically to use all possible levers to get to your goal—working effectively with stakeholders and Hill allies, using media, getting the right cosponsors on board, figuring out how to minimize the CBO score, working with the administration to do what cannot be done legislatively, etc. An important skill of the work is figuring out where there is common ground with people who have different or opposing views. A frustrating aspect of the job is that this is a skill that unfortunately seems to be in decline, and many seem resigned to gridlock.

The hours on the whole seem to roughly compare to a law firm, and they generally are longer than other government work. As Congress became less and less productive, my hours tended to trend down a bit—nine to ten hours per day with rare weekend work perhaps. Previously, typical was more in the ten to eleven hour per day with not-infrequent bits of weekend work, with occasional very long hours. On the whole, the Hill provides incredible opportunities to become deeply engaged in policy-making on the national level and is a rewarding and exciting way to spend some portion of one's career.

2015

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## **2. Non- Political Positions**

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*Jody Feder '02, Legislative Attorney*

### **LIBRARY OF CONGRESS, CONGRESSIONAL RESEARCH SERVICE- AMERICAN LAW DIVISION**

I graduated from Yale Law School in May 2002, and I began working as a Legislative Attorney at the American Law Division of Congressional Research Service (CRS) in September 2002. CRS is a department within the Library of Congress that provides nonpartisan advice and analysis to members of Congress and their staff. The American Law Division is one of six research divisions within CRS. While the other divisions focus primarily on policy issues, the Law Division handles all of the legal requests received from congressional staff. These inquiries span the range of legal questions that emerge from the legislative agenda as well as questions concerning the impact on Congress of administrative and judicial developments.

For example, common questions include, “How would a court interpret the legislative language in our proposed bill?” or “Are there any constitutional problems with this legislation?” or “What does this Supreme Court decision mean?” Basically, any legal issue that is raised in news reports or congressional legislation generates requests to the American Law Division. As legislative attorneys, we respond to these requests in a variety of ways, from extensive phone conversations or in-person consultations to written reports and legal memoranda. Ultimately, we serve as a sort of institutional memory for Congress, providing them with expert, nonpartisan advice on a wide array of legal questions. Because the work at CRS is driven by the congressional agenda, it varies constantly, and this variety is one of the best things about the job. Although most days involve research and writing, I sometimes am called upon to participate in more exciting opportunities, such as attending committee mark-ups so that I can answer any legal questions that may arise, or attending Supreme Court oral arguments when the Court is considering an important case in my issue area. In addition, because it is a government job, the benefits are excellent,



and the salary, although significantly less than a law firm job, is generous for a public interest legal job. More importantly, one of the best things about the job is that it is lifestyle friendly, with a 40-hour work week and only the occasional late night.

Ultimately, I think working in the law division at CRS is one of the best legal jobs around. Unfortunately, it's not a large organization, so there are not a lot of job openings each year. Typically, the law division has the authority to hire between one and four new lawyers each year, and they tend to hire only recent graduates (i.e., third-year law students) through their Law Recruit Program, which is advertised on the CRS Employment website. On rare occasions, the law division posts positions for higher level attorneys through OPM's federal employment website.

2015

## B. Student Narratives

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### 1. Political Positions

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*Katherine Kimpel '06*

**SENATOR RUSS FEINGOLD-U.S. SENATE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE**

I work as a law clerk for Senator Russ Feingold on the Judiciary Committee. Currently, Senator Feingold is the ranking minority member on the Subcommittee for Constitution, Civil Rights and Property Rights. Our office mainly handles constitutional amendments along with bills that would have a significant impact on the judiciary system's civil rights. For example, this summer we have handled amendments that would restrict a judge's ability to interpret the First Amendment with regard to religious freedom, a flag desecration amendment, and the gay marriage issue and accompanying amendments.

September 11th still plays a major role in the types of issues and hearings that we deal with as well. Senator Feingold, in particular, has taken a lead on the U.S.A. PATRIOT Act opposition. Much of my work has centered on preparing to challenge the Administration's claims for unchecked power during oversight hearings before the full Judiciary Committee.

The depth of the work that this office, in particular, entrusts to law clerks is remarkable. Typical work for me involves the same type of work entrusted to the two members of Senator Feingold's staff who are his legal counsel. In preparation for a hearing, I have been asked to help identify and secure witnesses, compose memos for the senator briefing him on the issue, craft opening statements for the senator to give during hearings, design questions for the senator to ask the witnesses, and write the written questions that will be entered into the record following the hearing. Along with work on hearings, I also compose three- to five-page memos on significant Supreme Court decisions or other legal decisions that may lead to legislative efforts. Currently, in part because of my commitment to civil rights, I am writing the speech that the senator will give at the annual NAACP convention. I am not certain that law clerks in other offices are given the same opportunities.

In order to work for Senator Feingold, or most of the other senators on the Judiciary Committee, I would advise beginning your research in December, making initial contact with the office in late December or early January, but also realizing that the final word on positions will not come until April. In my experience, both a resume and a writing sample are required. Before sending off resumes, I would advise people to carefully research the senators and the subcommittees for which they are a ranking member as well as the size of the office. I tailored my cover letters to reflect the type of work that might typically be handled by the subcommittee on which they were a ranking member and was rewarded with more than one job offer. Also, be sure to find out how many people there are in an office—both staff and interns.

The more people, the less likely law clerks will be entrusted with big projects on their own. Finally, I would note that Judiciary staffs typically have separate offices from the senator and the rest of the staff. As a result, we rarely interact with anyone other than Judiciary staffers and opportunities for networking are limited.

*Summer 2004*

***Jon Donenberg '08***

**SENATOR EDWARD KENNEDY-U.S. SENATE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE**

During the summer of 2006, I spent three months working as a legal intern for Senator Edward M. Kennedy on the Judiciary Committee. The experience was very rewarding, and I would highly recommend spending a summer working on the Hill, and in particular, on the Judiciary. The Committee is structured somewhat differently from others in the Senate in that individual Senators retain substantial staff operations beyond that of the Chairman and the Ranking Member. As such, a job with a Senator who sits on the Judiciary may, in many ways, provide a more substantive experience than an internship with a Senator on another Committee who is not the Chairman or Ranking Member.

The jurisdiction of the Judiciary Committee is broad—it includes constitutional issues, judicial nominations, immigration, Justice Department oversight, federal prison policy, U.S. Attorney and federal judicial nominations, and patent law, to name just a handful of the relevant areas. In addition, then-Chairman Arlen Specter was particularly adept at expanding the jurisdiction of the Committee through a liberal interpretation of its mandate, holding hearings on issues like detainee treatment and hedge fund regulation. The wide range of issues covered by the Committee makes the Judiciary one of the more interesting places to work in the Senate, as does the fact that the various staffers are usually trained lawyers. Finally, each Senator's Judiciary staff is used to taking one to three law students per summer to work as legal interns, and in this sort of fluid environment it's always a good idea to take a job with an office that understands your substantive value and won't have you making photocopies or opening mail. The work I did could generally be categorized as one of four types—hearing preparation, speechwriting, drafting internal memoranda to update/advise the Senator and the staff, and legislative negotiations. As is the way with political jobs, there is no clear path to obtaining a job on the Judiciary Committee, even for a summer. Each Senator on the Committee runs their own hiring process, which generally involves soliciting resumes and references (and sometimes writing samples) and then holding onto them for an inordinate amount of time before actually making a decision. It's best to try and track down whatever information is available regarding the timetable for each Senator who sits on the Committee and is of your political party, and then apply to them all. Keep in mind that hiring decisions will be made quite late in the process by law school standards. Most 1Ls will know what jobs they will take for the summer by the end of January at the latest, and 2Ls even earlier than that. Senate offices, on the other hand, often won't even start considering applications until late February, and receiving an offer in April is not particularly unusual. Thus, if you are a 1L considering applying to work on the Committee, I would recommend not even starting to interview with alternative employers until the beginning of the spring semester; otherwise you'll have to turn down job offers far in advance of having any idea what's going on with your applications to the Senate.

It is probably helpful to “know somebody” who works on the staff already, but that isn't a requirement to get a job. The three Yale students who worked on the Committee in the summer of 2006 were all offered jobs as a result of applying through the standard application process run by their particular Senator's office. Since the smooth functioning of these offices is somewhat dependent on things like loyalty and confidentiality, however, it never hurts to have someone who can recommend you, formally or informally, as you apply. Don't despair if you don't think you know anyone when you first start thinking about this sort of job. The Law School itself is actually a great source for such people. There are typically several students in each class who have done a moderate to significant amount of work in politics, and

many are willing to help. Searching the alumni directory or doing your own research to identify YLS alums that currently work in the Senate is another good avenue for making connections. It's a good idea to try to sit down or talk over the phone with these people during the course of the first semester to help get a sense of the terrain before applying.

If you receive an offer, there are a few things that I think are worth considering when deciding whether or not to take a summer job working for the Senate Judiciary Committee. The first is the size and structure of the staff. Personal interaction with the Senator may be lower in the case of a large staff than with a small staff. At the same time, the Senators who retain large staffs are often among the most engaged, and the more engaged a Senator is, the more likely you are to get to work on substantive issues. In particular, an internship with a Senator who has a low rate of hearing attendance and engagement with legislation might well be less substantive. The level of formality may also be of interest to you—some Senators will wander their offices and interact with their own staff, or even the staff of like-minded legislators, very informally, while others conduct themselves in a very formal way. Finally, if you can find out, the personalities of the people you will be sharing a very small space with might be relevant to you. I was quite lucky in that Senator Kennedy's staff is very unassuming, friendly, and looking to give substantive work to their legal interns.

*Summer 2006*

***Mark Totten '05***

**SENATOR JOSEPH LIEBERMAN-U.S. SENATE GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE**

This past summer I worked on the Senate Governmental Affairs Committee for Senator Joseph Lieberman. Now on the other side of a Capitol Hill job search, I can share a few suggestions for those interested in working on the Hill. Summer jobs on the Hill for law students go by a number of names, but the job title I found most helpful in making my inquiries was "legal intern." You do not want to ask about simply "intern" positions, since that term is reserved for the hundreds of undergraduate students who flood the Hill every summer spending their hours responding to angry constituents (An important job, but not what you want to be doing as a law student.) You will want to make clear to any person you talk to that you are a law student, so that they know you are looking for a position that will allow you to use the many skills you learned during your first or second years of law school. Whether the attention it gives is deserved or not, you should also mention that you are a law student at Yale.

A second nuance worth knowing is that often members of Congress have two kinds of staff: personal staff and committee staff. All members have personal staff. Some of these people focus on helping constituents, and others are LAs who usually focus on two or three areas of policy. Law students can find meaningful work on the personal staff, but you will want to ask many questions and express clearly what kind of work you are seeking. College interns for the most part work for the personal staff and you will want to make clear that you want to work in a specific policy area that will allow you to use your legal skills. Working for the committee staff is a safer bet, insofar as the committee staff are focused entirely on issues of public policy. Senator Lieberman has about 12 people on his Governmental Affairs Committee staff, and more than half of them are attorneys.

In addition, it is helpful to know who to contact. If you are considering a position on the personal staff, you will want to talk probably to three people: the chief of staff, the legislative director (LD), and probably the LA assigned to that particular area. Don't worry about redundancy—the more who know your name the better. If you are applying for a position on a committee, the main people to contact are the staff director and the chief counsel. Persistence pays in any job search, but is absolutely essential in applying for a job in the House or Senate. Consider perhaps five to seven different offices to which to apply. Fax your resume and cover letter—congressional mail post-anthrax scare is far too unreliable—and perhaps send a duplicate copy via email as an attachment. Follow up a few days later with a phone call.

Although you might successfully land a job over the phone, I would suggest scheduling a trip down to DC for one or two days. I went right before the Christmas break, which seemed a very good time since the Senate was in recess and the staff members were relatively relaxed. When you finally get a phone call with your key contact, tell her that you will be in DC on such and such a date and wonder if she might have a few minutes to meet. You may leave DC having made a decision, or more likely you will hear back from those with whom you interview sometime in January or February.

My experience this past summer exceeded my expectations. The first week and a half on the Hill I wrote a memo in preparation for a committee hearing giving my opinion on the scope of the fiduciary responsibilities created by a certain federal law. My staff director was careful to make sure I had constant and varied projects that made use of my legal skills and taught me much along the way. I left the Hill with better legal research and writing abilities but also with a sense of all the factors that weigh in to shape public policy. My main area of work was environmental law, so I often attended hearings on this subject. Likewise, a few times a week I went to briefings conducted by various government agencies. Several times, the staff director assigned a project to me based on that day's news. For example, I researched and formed an opinion on what weaknesses in the federal regulatory structure were brought to light on account of the monkeypox outbreak. As a result of my work we requested a briefing by the CDC and prepared an oversight letter. In my interview for this job, I was careful to describe the type of work I was seeking; nonetheless, I started in late May not knowing quite what to expect. I left very satisfied, however, with a sense that I had both acquired new legal skills and had a broader sense of how the legislative process works.

*Summer 2003*

***Rebecca Kelly '08***

**SENATOR CHARLES SCHUMER-U.S. SENATE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE**

I went to DC the summer after my 1L year to work for Senator Schumer (D-NY) on the Judiciary Committee. Before I describe the process of getting the job and working on the Hill, it's important to note several things: first, what the work is like and how the hiring process operates can vary tremendously from Senator to Senator; second, I think my experience on the Hill was especially anomalous because of both the specific time I was there and particularly because of the nature of my office, which is quite different from most other Hill offices. Though I imagine I would have loved my job even if those differences hadn't been true, the idiosyncrasies of my office helped provide me with the best professional and personal experience I have ever had (and possibly ever will have).

When considering summer jobs, I was fairly confident I wanted to work in government, and was particularly interested in the legislative/policy making fields. After talking to fellow YLS students, it quickly became clear to me that the best place (if not the only place) for law students to find summer work on Capitol Hill is through the Senate Judiciary Committee—many (though not all) Senators on the Committee hire one or more law students for the summer; the decisions are made by each individual office so it's best to get in touch with the various counsels to find out what their hiring plans and processes are. I also understood that having contacts in the offices is particularly valuable. I applied to Senator Schumer's office in part because I'm a native New Yorker, but mostly because I had a good friend who used to work in his office and helped me get my resume in front of the right people. I interviewed in January and was hired the following month. I began my job the day after Memorial Day.

The Committee offices of Members of the Judiciary Committee vary in both size and structure—the more senior the Member, the larger his or her Judiciary Staff. Some Senators treat their Committee staff as entirely separate from their other legislative staff; some treat them as a regular part of their legislative staff who sit in a different office. Senator Schumer falls very much into the latter category—as part of his Judiciary staff, which is made up of between two and three lawyers, one post-college assistant, and a law

student—we interacted regularly with the rest of the staff in his personal office, including other legislative staffers and press staffers. In general, Senator Schumer tends to be more hands-on than many other Senators, so we frequently spent time meeting with him in his office or over the phone to discuss pending issues and legislation (many Senators communicate primarily or exclusively with only their most senior staffers; this was not the case in our office).

As a law clerk, I reported directly to the Chief Counsel in our office. My work for him spanned a broad spectrum—I analyzed and summarized legislation, fed him interesting or important articles, generated ideas for and drafted legislation, drafted letters and statements, attended hearings and Committee meetings, met with constituents and groups, and did a variety of other work. The job was always fascinating and extremely fast paced. It was also very time consuming—I would arrive at the office between 8 and 9 in the morning, and we frequently didn't leave until after 10 or 11 p.m. I also worked many weekends. Our schedule was entirely unpredictable; I had no idea in the morning whether I'd be leaving at 7 or whether I'd be stuck in the office until midnight. In addition, even when we weren't in the office, we were almost always paying attention to the news, both print and television, and staying in touch with each other as issues progressed. For me, it was entirely worth it, but it is worthwhile to be prepared for that type of commitment.

That was the typical pattern of my work—my summer, however, was complicated by the retirement of Justice O'Connor and the process of the Supreme Court hearings. Starting in the beginning of July, I focused on pretty much nothing but hearing prep, including reviewing constitutional case law and the nominee's records and drafting questions, statements, and other material. Though DC usually becomes a ghost town in August and the Senate dies down, our August was jam-packed (I would, however, have been excited to stay through August even if it hadn't been busy because the quiet times are the only ones in which there is time to focus on new ideas and policy development). Because our Supreme Court staff was so small, and because I loved my job so much, I ended up staying on in our office for an entire year, though my original plan was to stay for twelve weeks.

I cannot speak highly enough of my experience in Washington. I learned more about the law, about policy-making, and about politics than I could have imagined, and I got an incredible first hand perspective on the legislative process. I also made terrific friends and connections on both sides of the aisle. Again, though I'm sure I would have loved working in any of the Senate offices, I think the people in and the structure of my particular office contributed tremendously to my enjoyment. For the same reason, I think it is tough to anticipate what a summer spent on the Judiciary Committee will be like for any individual. However, for someone with an interest in politics and policy, the opportunity to spend a summer on the Hill is probably invaluable.

*Summer 2005*

***Tabitha Edgens '13***

**SENATOR CHARLES SCHUMER-U.S. SENATE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE**

My interest in Capitol Hill began with a semester-long internship for my district's congressman as an undergrad. I enjoyed the young, fast-paced, and politically engaged environment so much that I decided to work in politics after college. I spent six months on a Senate campaign in 2008 then went to work in the Senator's congressional office in Washington, D.C. in 2009. Because I knew that I wanted to return to DC and government work after law school, I first I thought I should experience something different during my 1L summer. I initially applied to a variety of jobs with federal agencies and non-profits. Then, in January of my 1L year I joined the Yale Law Democrats' annual trip to Washington, DC. We met with alumni who worked in the White House, the State Department, and many other federal agencies, but it was our meeting with several Senate Judiciary Committee staffers that most impressed me. That meeting

reminded me of what drew me to the Hill in the first place: it was full of smart, savvy, and pragmatic people with strong personal views but also practical ideas about how to actually get things done.

After that meeting I decided to apply to several members of the Senate Judiciary Committee. (While most Hill jobs require some knowledge of the legal system, the Judiciary Committee is the arm of the Senate that deals with most purely legal issues. For instance, it oversees the Department of Justice, is responsible for confirming all federal judges, and hears most legislation related to civil rights, the Constitution, intellectual property, and immigration.) I knew that the clerkships on the Judiciary Committee, which are only available to law students, are typically more substantive than the internships in Senators' personal offices, which consist of answering phones and writing letters if you're lucky.

The clerkship application process varies widely among offices. Some strongly prefer clerks with ties to the Senator's home state. Others prefer strong academic credentials or particular subject-matter interests. I knew that personal contacts also matter on the Hill, so I immediately contacted the staffers I met at the Yale Law Democrats' lunch. I also asked some of my former colleagues to put in a good word for me in the offices where I was really interested in working. I also did some research to find YLS students who previously worked in the offices in which I was interested and had coffee with them to learn about office dynamics and priorities. I eventually decided that Senator Schumer's office was the best fit. I was thrilled to receive a job offer after a short in-person interview with his Chief Counsel (in which we spent equal time discussing our mutual love of southern literature and wonky policy stuff).

My experience in the Judiciary Committee was dynamic; my assignments and the pace of the work varied dramatically from week to week. On the Hill, the legislative calendar dictates your experience. The first half of my summer was fairly busy, but the second half was dominated by debt ceiling negotiations which brought most other business to a halt. The unpredictable pace is also affected by summer recesses, which typically last for about one week per month during the summer, plus the entire month of August.

The office was highly entrepreneurial. The staff charged the clerks with generating project ideas. I spent the first several weeks getting acclimated, attending meetings with lawyers on staff, and writing memos as directed on a variety of topics. By the second half of the summer I was mostly self-sufficient and developed my own projects and ideas. Clerks were expected at a minimum to read *The New York Times*, *Washington Post*, and *Politico* every day, monitoring any developments important to the committee or the state. We also monitored the committee's business and attended hearings and other events. I wrote a couple of detailed legal memos, a handful of short policy memos, and assisted with drafting a piece of legislation. Still, at times there was a dearth of work and I scoured newspapers for project ideas for hours to stay busy. Often, when projects arose they had to be completed within a short time frame, which contributed to the stop-and-go pace.

The most important aspect of my clerkship for me was the work environment. The staff was collegial and welcoming. They treated the clerks like professionals but still didn't ask us to work long hours unless something out of the ordinary came up. A typical work day was 9:00-6:00 with an hour lunch break. I enjoyed getting experience in a variety of policy areas, from telecommunications to the Second Amendment. After spending a summer doing such a variety of research, it was hard to imagine being in a place where I only learned about a single area of the law. I highly recommend a Judiciary Committee clerkship for anyone interested in legislative or regulatory work. Those who are strictly interested in litigation or academia might be unsatisfied with the amount of strictly legal research and writing. However, if you're looking for broad exposure to many areas of law and interesting but not exhausting summer experience, the Judiciary Committee is a great place to be.

*Summer 2011*

*JD Hamel '13*

**SENATOR JOHN CORNYN-U.S. SENATE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE**

I decided to work on the Hill because I was interested in the legislative process but knew I didn't want to make a career out of it. During your 1L summer, you can do virtually anything, so I decided to follow my interests and worry about my actual career during 2L summer. It was a great decision—I learned a lot, did a lot of substantive work, and enjoyed a really great city.

People get jobs on the Hill in a variety of ways, but the common denominator seems to be that you must know *somebody*. For some, that means you're friendly with a senior staffer. For others, that means your mother went to law school with a congressman. I didn't have that common denominator, but I got the job because I was on the Federalist Society email list, John Cornyn needed law clerks, and a professor wrote me a very good letter of recommendation. If you want to work on the Hill, professors are a very good resource. They will either know an important person on the Hill, or know someone who knows an important person on the Hill. What this means is that not having a preexisting network shouldn't discourage anyone—I didn't, and it worked out fine for me.

I worked for John Cornyn, but I worked for his Judiciary Committee staff, so I wasn't involved in, for example, the budget negotiations. The work was excellent, and I think that anyone who wants substantive legal work should look first at the Judiciary Committee. I wrote memos about pending legislation, recommended whether the senator should co-sponsor bills, and researched judicial nominees. In addition to the work, I really enjoyed the opportunity to sit in on committee hearings and meetings between senior staff and lobbyists. Put simply, it was very cool to be an "insider," even if only for six weeks.

The only negative part of the experience was the pace of the work. Government work is generally slower than at a large law firm, and I think that's especially true of Capitol Hill during the summer. Sometimes I had to ask for projects, and sometimes there just weren't any projects to give. It was never boring, but there were some days during which I had a little bit more free time than I would prefer. For some, that's an advantage, but it's a drawback for others. If you're the kind of person who needs constant activity, then Capitol Hill might not be the best workplace.

Finally, keep in mind that each office is different. Some of my classmates worked for another Judiciary Committee member, and each of them told me that their experience was more intense than mine. That said, all of us agreed that working on the Hill was a very worthwhile experience.

*Summer 2011*

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**2. Non- Political Positions**

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*Sally Pei '13*

**LIBRARY OF CONGRESS-OFFICE OF THE GENERAL COUNSEL**

I have always been interested in issues of cultural property and preservation, and, having decided fairly early in my 1L summer job search that I wanted to experience legal practice in a federal government setting, I thought the Office of the General Counsel at the Library of Congress, the nation's oldest federal cultural institution, would be a good fit. The Library of Congress's location on Capitol Hill was thus a relatively marginal factor in my decision to apply for an internship there, but being part of an institution whose mission is to serve and support Congress certainly added to the excitement. I submitted a resumé, cover letter, and writing sample to the OGC on December 1, had a telephone interview with two OGC attorneys in early January, and received an offer a few weeks after that.

Working at the Library turned out to be everything I had hoped for. Although serving as a resource for Congress is a crucial part of the Library's mission, the Office of General Counsel, at least in my experience, had little direct involvement with congressional affairs. (Other divisions, particularly the Congressional Research Service, have more direct contact with Congress and also hire law student interns during the summer months.) Instead, the OGC provides legal advice to the Library's various divisions. It is a small office—eleven attorneys, plus support staff and three summer law clerks—but handles a wide range of issues, including intellectual property, ethics, employment, government contracts, gifts and acquisitions, and designing Library regulations and policies. It also defends the Library in litigation. The office environment is low-key and relaxed. The other two law clerks and I generally arrived at work between 8:30 and 9:00, and left sometime between 5:30 and 6:00. The regular attorneys kept similar hours.

Over the ten weeks of my internship, I worked in most of the OGC's practice areas. Many of my assignments involved writing research memos about how best to make the Library's vast collections accessible and relevant to the public, often focusing on copyright and fair use. Other assignments involved developing social media policies for the Library. I also drafted motions in an employment discrimination lawsuit and attended depositions and a status conference. My supervisor also brought all the law clerks to meetings, hearings at the Copyright Office about possible changes to the copyright law, and other events and panels that exposed us to the work of the different Library divisions. The work was consistently stimulating and substantive, although often fairly solitary—I found myself wishing for more collaboration and discussion with both the lawyers and the law clerks. Still, the work was challenging and presented interesting issues, and supervisors gave helpful feedback and encouragement. The best part of the job, though, was the opportunity to work with people, both within the OGC and in other Library divisions, who have devoted their careers to preserving national history and culture, and sharing their enthusiasm and expertise in countless subject areas, from folklife and music to poetry and literature, with the wider public.

*Summer 2011*



# Career Development Office

<b>Juliann Davis</b>	Assistant Director, Administration
<b>Marilyn Drees</b>	Director
<b>Amanda Hilton</b>	Administrative Assistant
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<b>Janelle Schmouder</b>	Technology Communications Coordinator
<b>Christine Severson</b>	Director, Recruitment Programs and Administration
<b>Kelly Voight</b>	Assistant Dean

Telephone: (203) 432-1676  
Fax: (203) 432-8423  
E-mail: [cdo.law@yale.edu](mailto:cdo.law@yale.edu)  
Website: [www.law.yale.edu/student-life/career-development](http://www.law.yale.edu/student-life/career-development)

Mailing Address: Career Development Office, Yale Law School,  
127 Wall Street, New Haven, CT 06511

Physical Address: Rutenberg Hall, Room 184, 133 Wall Street,  
New Haven, CT 06511

Office Hours: 8:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

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