



Brooklyn Law School
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The Road Ahead: Brooklyn Law School Works

Dean Nicholas W. Allard | July 2014

When I became Dean in July 2012, my number one concern was jobs for Brooklyn Law School graduates. That focus hasn't changed. What *has* changed is that our graduates are landing meaningful, good jobs at a decidedly better rate than in the recent long years of a historic recession.

It's being noticed: BLS was among just 20 law schools to improve their employment rate by 10 percent or more for recent graduates, according to a new *National Jurist* ranking. The magazine noted that between 2011 and 2013, traditional full-time legal employment jumped 17 percent for BLS graduating classes. Rankings were based on the editors' own methodology and did not count meaningful jobs in compliance and other fields where our graduates are employed. But the attention reflects a larger awareness of our strengths.



The full picture is even rosier. In fact, 90 percent of the Class of 2013 was employed in professional jobs where a J.D. is a demonstrable advantage, as of February 15, 2014 (the official ABA reporting date). The news just keeps getting better.

A Team Effort

This isn't accidental. It reflects the quality of our students and their preparation. It's also the result of a dedicated and concerted effort on the part of the entire BLS community, including our trustees, faculty, alumni, Office of Career and Professional Development, and staff. Everyone has been working together to enhance the curriculum and Law School programs to maximize our students' marketability, to connect students with graduates in their fields of interest, and to open doors to growing and emerging opportunities in non-traditional legal positions where a J.D. fuels job success.

Our career office, far along in its mission to overhaul our entire approach to job placement, has been leading the way. While we will still participate in standard On Campus Interviewing, we are doing so much more. Gone are the days of wholesale, bureaucratic, one-size-fits-all "career placement." Instead, we have introduced "bespoke" customized professional career development for individual students.

For example, students are matched with alumni for one-on-one informational interviews and mentoring — offering direct access to their fields of interest, as well as career insight, job search tips, and invaluable face-to-face time with seasoned professionals. We have also re-focused programming to provide not just practical skills and substantive practice area learning, but also valuable time with our alumni presenters. These opportunities to learn from alumni who have walked in our students' shoes have proven to be both popular and successful.

Ingredients of Success

Then again, the career office is also empowered by the very students it serves. Our students have always had a reputation for being well prepared and ready to practice when they graduate. Today that image shines brighter than ever. With the bar exam just one week away, it's noteworthy to mention our **record bar passage rate** from last year: 94 percent of BLS first-time bar takers passed the exam — far surpassing the 86 percent statewide average. The Class of 2013 bar passage rate is the Law School's highest in at least 25 years.

Our students' marketability is only helped by their professional education and training at BLS. For example, to meet the demands of roles in compliance, the faculty has developed new financial, corporate, and regulatory coursework, produced cutting-edge symposia on these topics, and established the **Center for the Study of Business Law & Regulation**, as well as the highly respected *Brooklyn Journal of Corporate, Financial & Commercial Law*. Thanks to alumni-funded programs like **Business Boot Camp** and our newly launched **Center for Urban Business Entrepreneurship (CUBE)**, we graduate students with a wealth of real world business and legal experience, ideal for the current market — a community of makers and entrepreneurs.

Our alumni continue to play an ever-increasing role in supporting our students in many other ways. Two programs, **Alumni Committed to Employing our Students (ACES)** and the **Mentor Program**, are crucial. Alumni participation through ACES provides graduates with myriad ways to engage with students and earn points and community-wide recognition for their efforts. Our ACES program includes mock interviews, career center panels, networking, letters of recommendation, and more. We rely on you, our alumni, to be part of our team and to help integrate our students into the new world of law.

Of course, our Mentor Program, now in its 21st year, also plays a huge role in our students' professional development. Last year 110 students were matched with lawyers practicing in just about every area of the law. Alumni not only offer advice on a variety of topics, but also include students in a variety of work-related activities and local networking events. We are looking to enhance and grow this program so that many more students are able to access our extensive network of graduates across the globe.

Speaking of our recent graduates, they continue to stand out, winning some of the most coveted fellowships in the nation. Over the past year, they include:

- **Johane Severin '08**, who was awarded a fellowship by the newly launched Racial Justice Training Institute, a groundbreaking new training program that will establish a network of advocates committed to advancing a coordinated racial justice agenda;
- **Daniel Faessler '13**, recipient of the Tom Steel Post-Graduate Fellowship, a grant funded by Pride Law Fund out of San Francisco;
- **Cody Carlson '13** and **Justine Pelham '13**, both awarded the highly competitive Equal Justice Works (EJW) Fellowship, which places new lawyers in two-year assignments at public service organizations to implement projects that address pressing community needs;
- **Peter Travitsky '14**, who received the Borchard Fellowship, which is hosted by NYLAG and will focus on educating and advocating for low-income senior citizens; and,
- **Scott Foletta '14**, one of 25 fellows selected from an applicant pool of 400 for the Immigrant Justice Center's (IJC) newly created IJC Fellowship.

These awards are testaments to the strength of our students, and to the spirit of a student body that is inspired both to do well *and* do good.

Many in the media have been relentlessly pessimistic about the future of legal education. We have been responding to their concerns, speaking and writing about the **growing shortage** of good new attorneys prepared to work in both the private and public sectors. Increasingly, **others** are picking up this theme.

The more I think about it, the more I realize that Brooklyn Law School, thanks to your help, reflects the future of legal education. We are facing challenges and meeting them head-on, whether it's reducing our tuition, stepping up our already robust practical preparation, or using more effective techniques to help our students find meaningful jobs.

In brief, Brooklyn *works*. We are leading the way, on the Road Ahead together. As always, I invite your feedback and hope you enjoy the rest of your summer.

* We want to spotlight you. If you have been mentioned in the media — be it popular or trade press — please email us at alumni@brooklaw.edu so that we can share the news with other alumni, our current and prospective students, and audiences well beyond the Law School. We are justifiably proud of our graduates and want to share it with the world.