

NALP Handout

Advising Today's Law Students through the Interview Process with Sensitivity and Realism

Panelists:

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Overview

- **Who are today's law students:**
 - Today's law students are unique and different
 - They come from all different backgrounds
 - There's no one size fits all
- **Advising today's law students:**
 - Be a good listener
 - Foster open discussions—don't preach
 - There's more than one way to be successful or unsuccessful in an interview
 - Be mindful of your own biases
- **The mock interview:**
 - Pre-interview
 - Go over the logistics:
 - Where (virtual or in person)
 - If in person, how are you getting there and how long will it take?
 - If virtual, are you familiar with the platform, have you downloaded and tested it out yet? If not, do so ahead of time and make sure to login early in case you need time to troubleshoot.
 - Note: eye contact in a virtual interview is with your camera, not the faces on the screen
 - When
 - With who (multiple people/panel interview?)
 - What are you wearing?
 - What to bring with you if in person (copies of what you've submitted)
 - Mock interview
 - Use a question list specific to the position the student is applying for so it's close to what they should expect in terms of the types of questions they might get asked and what they should highlight about their experience
 - Provide substantive feedback on their responses
 - Revisit difficult questions and let them try again or talk them through it together
 - Talk through questions the students should have prepared for the interviewer
 - Post mock interview

- Send a good luck email providing last minute tips to which they can refer prior to the interview
- **Interviewing today's law students:**
 - Gen Z grads sometimes struggle with job interviews partly because of a generational gap that they might not understand
 - The interview needs to go beyond just what's on the student's resume
 - Demonstrate why they want to work for this firm or this employer specifically
 - All communications matter from scheduling the interview, to checking in at the front desk, to thank you emails sent after the interview—make sure everything is perfect with no typos and that the student knows to be their best self throughout the entire process
- **Key takeaways:**
 - In the interview setting, students should strike a balance between being their most authentic self and being quirky for quirkiness sake
 - When facing a tough conversation with a student, move quickly past the initial shock and awe to concrete strategies
 - Unpack your own biases – what behaviors are problematic and what is us?

Group discussion questions:

- Jamie has an interview coming up and doesn't have a suit. They come into your office asking you what they should do because the interview is in 2 days, and they don't have the time or money to get one that quickly. What are your recommendations?
- Cameron has had dreadlocks since their sophomore year of college. They like their dreadlocks but have been thinking about making a change and are worried they might hurt their chances during OCI so they're thinking of getting rid of them. How would you advise them?
- Mya really wants to work in big law. She comes into your office and tells you with excitement that she was just offered an interview at her dream firm, but there is a networking reception that goes along with her interview. She reminds you that she is a bit of an introvert and is not comfortable in large groups of people she doesn't know so she doesn't feel comfortable attending the networking reception and doesn't feel like she should have to go because her interview will speak for itself. How would you respond?
- Sarah loves wearing bright colored clothing and glittery make-up. She says, it's part of her personality and that she doesn't feel herself without it. During a presentation on dressing for an interview she gives you pushback when you recommend students wear dark-colored suits to their interviews in either black, navy, or dark gray. How would you respond?
- Ben comes into your office for a mock interview wearing a hoodie and jeans with a bushy beard and long hair falling into his face. Would you address his appearance? If so, when would you do so and what would you say?
- Clara recently lost a lot of weight and is very proud of her new figure. She applied for a position with the Army JAG and submits the required full-length photo through your job board. As you're skimming through the applications, you notice that in her photo she is wearing fishnet tights with a fitted black skirt, no blazer, and a white button-down shirt that is unbuttoned so that her pink bra is showing. What do you do?