



Washington University School of Law
CAREER CENTER

1L First Chance Reception Guide



First Chance Reception



The goal of networking is to create long-term, mutually beneficial, professional relationships with attorneys and other professionals. As a law student, networking is an effective way to learn about a legal market, practice areas, and employers and to identify potential employment opportunities. The First Chance Reception is a great opportunity to connect with employers from across the country and to learn about their work.

First Chance Reception Format:

The 2023 First Chance Reception is a 90-minute, in-person reception in Crowder Courtyard on Thursday, November 2nd from 5:30-7:00 pm.

Event Instructions:

Before heading into the reception, check in at the table outside the Crowder Courtyard by Collins Farm and pick up your nametag. Nametags should be worn on your right lapel.

During the reception, you are invited to visit with employers in Crowder Courtyard. There will be light appetizers and drinks. Attorneys and students will mingle freely in the courtyard. You may not have time to visit with every employer, so make a list of your high-target employers prior to the reception and focus on that list first.

If you have questions during the reception, there will be members of the Career Center team and Peer Career Advisors in the courtyard to assist.

Before the First Chance Reception:

Research: Prior to the reception, take a few minutes to research your high-target organizations. Learn about their core values, practice areas, and locations. Memorize 2-3 questions that you can ask to drive conversation and have a few general questions ready so that you can confidently strike up a conversation - even if you have not researched a specific organization. Sample questions are provided below.

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Attire: Business attire - a suit, dress jacket, or professional separates.

Resumes: Do not bring your resume to the First Chance Reception. This is not a job fair, but it is a great way to meet employers, connect with alumni, and gather information to help you make informed decisions about your job search.

LinkedIn: Create a LinkedIn profile prior to the First Chance Reception. Your profile will give employers the opportunity to learn more about you following the reception, including your educational background, employment history, and honors/awards you have received.

At the First Chance Reception:

Read the Room: Avoid large groups and look for organizations of interest with attorneys who are not speaking with other students at the time. Be open to speaking with organizations that are not on your high target list. Every attendee represents a great networking opportunity.

Make your Introduction: When you meet an attendee, introduce yourself. Listen to the names of the attorneys you meet and repeat them once: “Kelly, it’s so nice to meet you.” If you have researched a particular organization, your introduction might highlight something from your research. Otherwise, your introduction will be more general. For example:

“Hi, my name is _____. I am excited to meet you because I know your firm has a summer associate program open to 1Ls that provides mentorship throughout law school. I’m wondering if you could tell me more about this program.”

“Hi, I am _____. I am interested in pursuing a career in juvenile justice, and I am inspired by CASA’s mission. Could you speak to the mentoring that your organization provides to new attorneys?”

“Hi, I am _____. I know your organization is deeply committed to promoting women of color and that Kate Fritz was recently recognized by the National Diversity Council as one of the top women lawyers for 2023. Her work is very inspiring, and I am wondering how her leadership sets the tone for the organization.”

Actively Listen: Active listening is a great way to compliment the other person – it shows her/him that you are interested in what s/he is saying. Avoid listing off your questions, one after another. Try to link your next question to something the person said. For example:

“You mentioned that CASA has a formal mentoring program for its summer interns and new associates. Could you speak to the structure of the summer internship program?”

“I think it’s wonderful that your firm has adopted a goal of 100% associate participation in pro bono efforts. What progress has the organization made toward that goal?”

Make a Graceful Exit: During the reception, do not linger for too long in any single conversation. After a few minutes, thank the person for her/his time and then step aside. After a few conversations, take a break from mingling to make quick notes about what you discussed or

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the advice that was shared in the previous conversations. You will want to refer to these details in your thank you note.

Take Notes: Some students find it helpful to write down the names of the attorneys and employers they meet, along with a brief description of the conversation. During the reception, you are welcome to take a brief break in the Career Center to make notes in between conversations.

Extend your First Chance Reception Experience:

Participating employers understand students may not have had the opportunity to meet with every employer on their target list. To network with employers that you could not fit into your First Chance Reception schedule, reach out to the participating attorney(s) and request a five-minute informational meeting.

In addition, many participating organizations are also hosting events before and after the First Chance Reception. These events are open to the entire 1L class and can be found in the Events section of [Simplicity](#). These smaller format events range from a quick drop-in between classes to introduce yourself and grab a snack to a more in-depth small group conversation with attorneys and employers. Employers keep track of students who attend. In the past, students have reported that their attendance and the good impression they made at these smaller events were instrumental to their recruiting success.

After the Reception:

Follow-up is important. Within 24 hours, send a thank you email to each of the attorneys you met. Additionally, connect with them via LinkedIn. Below are examples of thank you emails:

Dear Ms. Conrad,

Thank you for speaking with me yesterday at the First Chance Reception. I really enjoyed hearing about your firm's international trade practice, and its genuine commitment to providing a welcoming, diverse workplace. I believe I would thrive while being an asset to your busy practice, and I plan to apply for a summer position with your firm.

Thank you again for your time. I hope to have the opportunity to speak with you again in the near future.

Best,
Lei Smith

Dear Ms. Thompson,

I really enjoyed meeting you yesterday at the First Chance Reception and having the opportunity to learn more about CASA's new initiatives. Your organization's dedication to advocating for children is inspiring. I look forward to applying for a summer internship with CASA and hope that we will have the opportunity to work together in the future. Thank you again for your time.

Sincerely,

Percy Jackson

Sample Questions:

Can you tell me a little bit about your practice?

Why did you decide to work for this firm/employer?

What do you like most about working at your firm/employer?

What does the firm/employer do to contribute to employees' professional development?

Does your organization have a formal mentorship program? (If the answer is yes, follow up with "Can you share a little about it?")

Do you hire 1Ls?

How long is your summer program?

Do 1Ls work in one area, or do they rotate through various practices?

What makes a 1L successful at your organization?

What do you see as the biggest challenge facing new attorneys?

How does a new attorney succeed at your organization?