Pursuing a Career as a Life Sciences Attorney

American Bar Association
Health Law Section
Life Sciences Interest Group
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Panel*

- Dominic Cirincione, Regulatory Counsel, Office of Prescription Drug Promotion, FDA
- Justin Hallberg, Director, Corporate Counsel, Regeneron Pharmaceuticals, Inc.
- Eli Tomar, Counsel, Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld LLP
- **Moderator:** Abraham Gitterman, Arnold & Porter

*The views expressed during this panel are those of the individuals and do not reflect the official policy or position of their respective organizations.
Overview

- Our personal thoughts/beliefs based on our experience
- Not primarily intended for Intellectual Property (IP), but we can address from our own experiences

Objectives/Goals

- Learn how to develop life sciences background, focus
- Know where to look for life sciences jobs
- Know how to apply to life sciences jobs
- Know how to put together application, resume, letters
- Know how to interview
- Know differences between government, private, non-profit, in house
- Learn about networking opportunities

Is Life Sciences still for you?
- When is too early/late to decide?
Life Sciences Law Background

- Read News, Blogs, Health/Life Sciences Law Journals
- Watch Congressional Hearings
- Read Proposed Rules, Comments, Federal Register
- Learn about Federal Agencies
  - FDA, HHS, OIG, CMS, NIH, DOJ, FTC
- Find out about Cases
- Learn About Health/Life Sciences Laws
  - PPACA, FDCA, AKS, Stark, FCA, etc.
- Health Care Reform and PPACA, FDAISA, FDARA
- Meet w/ Professors, Alumni, Attorneys
Having a Life Sciences Law “Focus”

- Life Sciences Law is a fairly narrow, specialized practice
- Sometimes helps if you **focus**
  - Pharma/Device
    - Regulatory counseling
    - Product liability
    - White collar defense
  - FDA
    - Foods, drugs, cosmetics, devices, etc.
  - Research/Ethical Issues (NIH/FDA/HHS)
  - Business/Corporate/Antitrust (FTC/DOJ/SEC)
  - Govt Investigation/White Collar/Oversight/Compliance
- What Do you want to Do?
  - Litigate → DOJ, OIG, FTC, FDA, HHS
  - Consult → Firm, Think Tank
  - Academia
  - Non-Profit
  - In House Counsel
Where To Look?

- Law School Website
  - May be lists of current, past extern/internships/alumni
- NALP
  - Big Firms/OCI → July/August after 1L Year
- Martindale
  - Smaller/mid size firms
- US News World & Report → Top FDA/Health Firms
- Federal Government Agencies
  - FDA, HHS, OIG, CMS, NIH
  - All the Sub Offices w/in these agencies
- Capitol Hill
- Non profits and Think Tanks
Networking

- ABA Health Law Section & Life Sciences IG
- Food and Drug Law Institute (FDLI)
- State Bar Association Health Section or Law School Group
- LinkedIn ➔ Join all the Life Sciences/Health Groups!
- Summer Firm Receptions
- Informational Interviews
- Emailing Alumni
- Talk with Professors
**Application Materials**

- Tell a **consistent story** about Life Sciences
- Put life sciences activities, jobs up front
- Tailor letters to interests + office/agency
  - i.e. FDA → interested in drug research
- Talk about **the skills you have**
  - Regulatory/statutory analysis/interpretation
  - Legislative background/Rule making process
  - Understanding of Agency System/Procedures
  - Terminology/acronyms
  - Strong Research & Writing Abilities/Memos
  - Broad knowledge of issues/current events
Writing Sample

- OK to use 1L Memos/Briefs
- HOWEVER
  - Try to write an article about a new Life Sciences bill, issue, proposed rule, Health Care Reform
  - It can be short, couple of pages
  - Look at Client Alerts from law firms, NYT, WSJ, Health Law blogs for examples
- Try to include 1L memo/brief and a life sciences related writing sample
- Be sure your statutory interpretation/analysis is strong
Interviewing for Life Sciences

- Be prepared for specific life sciences questions,
  - Not always general law school/student questions
- What do you know about our Agency?
  - Structure, mission, purpose, historical background
- Our Office w/in the Agency? Same as above +
  - Responsibilities, achievements, projects
- What our Lawyers do in this office?
  - Litigate, consult, advice, draft rules, policy
Interviewing (cont’d)

- How lawyers work w/ other Agency’s Office?
  - FDA → DOJ → CMS → HHS → OIG → Congress

- Why life sciences? Why this agency/Office?

- Short term/long term goals?

- Relevant classes/experience →
  - Be specific about what you learned/did

- Something interesting about yourself
Interviewing (cont’d)

- **Research the partners/lawyers you interview with**
  - School, activities, previous jobs, practice areas, cases
  - Look at their specific life sciences experience
  - Find similarities

- **Structure/Size/Culture of firm**
  - Look at *whole* website, look up news
  - Above the Law, Top Law Schools.com

- **Look Specifically at**
  - # of Health/FDA partners & associates
  - List of Clients, cases, involvement in Bar
  - Health related service/pro bono

- **In the End Remember**
  - You are having a conversation about health law
Conclusion

- Life Sciences Law Jobs are just as competitive, if not more
- Other Factors –
  - Grades, Journal, Moot Court/Trial Team → BALANCE
  - Student Group, Health Law Bar; Health Clinic
- Health Law Writing Competitions
  - ABA Health Law, EBG, FDLI
- Biggest Question to Answer TODAY:
  - Is Life Sciences Law for You?
  - Not important to have a focus right now, thinking
  - 1Ls → Summer in Health law important
  - 2Ls → Summer, semester externships, classes very important