



Ohio State's Moritz Law Students Migrate to Washington Summer Internships

[by Erica Winter]

Spring in Washington, DC, is the season for cherry blossoms and tourists. Summer is the season for internships, when students of every stripe flock to the city to learn its secrets—or at least its Metro system—and to make professional connections that could launch their careers. Several of these interns come from Ohio.

The Ohio State University Moritz College of Law, Columbus, sends about 25 law students to the nation's capital through its Washington, DC, Summer Law Program. The combination internship/summer academic program is so popular at Moritz that aspirants started to line up well before the office doors opened at 8:00 a.m. to allow them to sign up.

"The first people got in line at 3:30 in the morning," says Program Director Professor Peter Swire. There were 25 students—the program's maximum—in line by 7:15 a.m., says Swire. It was "the closest to Bruce Springsteen I've ever felt," says Swire.

As the Clinton Administration's Chief Counselor for Privacy in the U.S. Office of Management and Budget from 1999 to 2001, Swire coordinated policy on privacy issues from inside the White House. Before becoming a professor, Swire worked in the private sector with the Washington office of Powell, Goldstein, Frazer & Murphy from 1986 to 1990.

Swire, who started the Moritz Washington, DC, program with the law school's Dean, Nancy Hardin Rogers, three years ago, offers to use his knowledge of Washington to help law students land internships in a highly competitive market.

To start off the program (after the mad rush of the early-December sign up), Swire crafts a list of organizations for which students may want to intern. He has a meeting with each student to discuss options, and both he and the student contact the organization to express interest. Usually, the groups inter-

view the students directly. Not all students who sign up for the program are guaranteed a position, but Swire pledges to work with each person to try to find him/her something interesting for the summer. This summer, 23 Moritz Law students will go to Washington on the program.

The seven-week program launches in Washington the day after Memorial Day and requires both internship work and a minimum two-course academic schedule. Students must work at least 20 hours per week in their internship positions. Also, they must all take the externship seminar and a professional responsibility course.

The externship seminar is structured around a single paper written on the students' internship experience. Moritz students must present the paper—usually a policy proposal—to the class. The professional responsibility course is called Ethics of Washington Lawyering, about which Swire jokes, "A lot of people think that must be a very short course."

This course, however, is specifically tailored to address issues native to Washington and about which newcomers may not know. A series of guest speakers comes in to address the class. Last year, speakers included a former White House Counsel; one author of the Ethics in Government Act; and Jerry Ber- man, head of the Center for Democracy and Technology, a public interest organization.

Professional ethics in Washington "seems to be at a higher level," says Bassel Charles

Korkor, a rising third-year at Moritz Law who participated in the program last year. In Washington, Korkor learned lawyers "must be proactive. The basics aren't enough." Lawyers must keep lines of communication open between their clients and the other side and continually try to reach compromises.

While this is true in many areas, not just Washington, the peculiarity of the capital is that it is truly quite small. A lawyer never knows when he/she will work with these same people in the future, notes Korkor; plus, the opposing side is often the government. It is very important to maintain relationships here.

Moritz works in cooperation with The George Washington University Law School for classroom space, and some Moritz law students can sign up for housing at GW. Additionally, the ethics class is cross-registered with GW Law. "We have a great relationship with GW," says Swire.

While getting academic credit over the summer is helpful to many law students, it's the high-quality internships in their post-first-year summers that have Moritz Law students lining up during the wee hours to sign up for this program.

Last summer, Moritz Law students interned at, among other places, the Department of Justice, the nonprofit United Cerebral Palsy, the Office of Management and Budget, the DC Office of the Attorney General, the Senate Judiciary Committee, the U.S. Coast Guard, the advocacy group The National League



of Cities, and the Federal Communications Commission.

One student who interned through the Moritz program found a position in the Justice Department after graduation, and many hope to use the experience as a "springboard to a DC job," says Swire. Others go to "see a foreign land," says Swire, and to learn the ways of Washington. All participants, says Swire, end up with quality work experience to talk about during their second-year job interviews, some of which bring them back to Washington.