LSATs, Legalese, and Lawyers: Meet the Law Networking Event

By: Marie MacCune
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The Commonwealth Honors College Events Hall was abuzz Thursday night with questions about LSAT prep, private versus public sectors, and work life balance.

Current students met with alumni attorneys as part of Meet the Law, a speed-dating style networking event where students move table to table in order to ask alumni about all aspects of a legal career. The event was sponsored by Commonwealth Honors College, the UMass Pre-Law Advising Office, and the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences.

“I took the LSAT and thought, ‘ok, done. That’s the worst thing I’ll ever have to do.’ And then I went to law school and every test was like that. And then I took the Bar, which has to be the worst test ever,” Sultan Druzi ’11, assistant district attorney for Hampden County, said. “But it was all totally worth it.” Druzi expressed his passion for criminal law and encouraged students to become involved on either side.

Alexandra Bonazoli, who graduated from UMass in 2010, spoke about her experience in working with children, many of them facing deportation, as an immigration attorney. “There’s something new every day. I’m never bored at work,” she said.
Students asked Edward Kammerer ’03 about avoiding the negative side of the competitive culture in law school. He told students to simply not take part of it, be friends with everyone, and remember the world is bigger than law school. He also added that when visiting law schools during the application process, students can get an honest feel for the school’s culture.

“Don’t just talk to the kids the admissions office gives you, get lunch in the cafeteria and talk to students there too,” he advised. Krammerer is a lecturer in both the School of Public Policy and Urban Affairs and the College of Professional Studies at Northeastern University.

Jill Tessier ’06 works as a staff attorney with the Committee for Public Counsel Services. She spoke to students about the rewarding work of public defense, saying “sometimes you’re the only person these people have. You’re the only person between them and this huge system out to get them.”

Samantha Clarke, who is a 2010 UMass graduate, works as an associate attorney with Pannone Lopes Deveraux & West LLC in Providence. She explained to students the difference between transactional law and litigation as well as the pros and cons of public and private practice.

“It looked like a fantastic opportunity,” said Michaela Dunn, a sophomore CHC student, about why she chose to attend. “I knew the UMass alumni were a very friendly and supportive group so I was excited to join.”

Following the formal speed-dating part of the event, students and attorneys alike mingled together, asking follow up questions and offering contact information.

“They gave me so much to think about,” Dunn said at the conclusion of the event.