

Research Assessment #1

Date: September 4, 2017

Subject: Career Outlook for Law

MLA Citation:

“Lawyer / Attorney.” *Lawyer and Attorney Careers and Job Information*, Career Profiles, 2017, www.careerprofiles.info/lawyers-attorney-career.html.

Assessment:

Before choosing nonprofit law as my field of study, I knew a little bit about what it entailed but wasn't sure how I would be able to combine my two interests of working in the nonprofit sector and working as an attorney. Through researching, I've found that it won't be easy to fully specialize like that. Although there is a possibility I could end up working as a lawyer for a nonprofit organization, the more common path is trying to find a career in the private sector, and from there looking for a nonprofit job. Reading the article “Lawyer / Attorney” from Career Profiles helped me understand these things-- how there are many different types of lawyers and the different paths to getting there, what the work environment is like, what the qualifications are to become a lawyer, how to get a license and advance as a lawyer, what the employment outlook is like, and what some average salaries are.

First, the general job was covered in what it's like to be an attorney and some of the different kinds of lawyers. What was fascinating to me about this was how many different kinds of lawyers there were and how even within law school there are many specializations. Previously I had thought that going to law school was pretty general, I would graduate with a law degree, and then get a job in whatever field I liked afterwards. This article helped me realize that even within law school there are many distinct specializations that firms often require for new hires.

I was a little bothered with what I read about the work environment: according to this article, being a lawyer is incredibly high-stress and most lawyers work full 50 hour weeks. Even so, this has only made me more excited to get a mentor, because I will be

able to see this up close and firsthand. That is the most wonderful thing about ISM is how I don't have to solely rely on what articles say about work environment, I'll be able to go out and see for myself. I also hadn't previously realized how few lawyers actually work in courtrooms. I thought it was pretty common based on what I've seen from TV and movies, but I now know otherwise, and since the development of technology, the day-to-day life of a lawyer includes the internet a lot more, too. This is great having grown up in the age of technology, because I am always getting better at using the internet, and am good at adapting to new technology. Unfortunately, there isn't much advancement after being promoted to partner, therefore I realized that if I wanted to keep moving up in my career, I might be better off finding a job related to law but with less of a professional cap, such as government.

Reading about the helpful skills for lawyers actually made me really excited, though. Lawyers should be good at reading, writing, research, and speaking. I love to read and tend to do really well in my English classes, and even though I know reading fiction is different from analytical legal reading, I still have very strong comprehension skills. Additionally I love to write, and I am a pretty confident speaker, although I still hope to become better at it over the course of ISM this year, and hopefully these will all help build skills that are beneficial to law.

The information regarding school requirements to becoming a lawyer didn't particularly surprise me, but I still am worried about the student debt I could be in by the time I become a practicing attorney. How many years will it take to work off the cost of all the further education I need to become a lawyer? Should I try to go to an inexpensive college for my bachelor's degree so I can spend more on law school, or do I need to go to a more prestigious undergrad school to get into a good law school? All of this education will really add up, even though law is traditionally a lucrative career.

On that note, most lawyers do make an annual salary of about \$100,000 a year, but I was surprised to learn that the highest paid lawyers come from New York and California. I had originally thought that the northeast would house the highest paying attorneys but unsurprisingly I learned that big cities are where the highest earning lawy

positions are. Living currently in suburban North Texas, this makes me wonder where should I position myself post-college to get a high paying and rewarding job in law? Similarly, the job growth outlook is average, 11%, but I still wonder how hard is it really to find a job in the field of law you're interested in? Just because there are attorney positions available somewhere in America, how challenging is it to get into the sector or specialization you want?

Overall, I was a little hesitant to study law prior to this research assessment because even though I love nonprofit, I was worried that law would be dull and there wouldn't be a way to fit it into nonprofit. Now I understand that it is possible, but also I am more excited than ever to research other kinds of civil law too, like divorce and family lawyers, as that would be a career that still works directly with helping people in a professional setting, but is more nationally common.