

## 5<sup>th</sup> Year Career Development Survey Class of 2004

Every spring the Career Development Office solicits information from our graduates five years after their departure from the law school through our 5th year Career Development Survey. We commenced surveying the Class of 2004 in May 2009 and ultimately received a 58% response rate.<sup>1</sup>

The purpose of this report is to provide a snapshot of the career experiences of the Class of 2004 in their first five years since graduating YLS. In order to provide a complete picture, this report includes statistics from two sources. The statistics reflected in Section I of this report are based on information provided to CDO from the Class of 2004 upon their graduation from law school or upon completion of a judicial clerkship. The statistics reflected in Sections II – VII of this report are derived from Class of 2004 responses to the 5th Year Career Development Survey.

### I. First Employment<sup>2</sup>

#### Employer Type

Law firms and judicial clerkships were the most popular destinations of our graduates immediately after law school. Smaller percentages commenced their careers in public service, academia, business, or pursued further education.

Because so many of our graduates clerk, it is also relevant to know our graduates' first non-clerkship job choices. Based on those statistics, 74% worked in law firms, while 16% worked in the public service.

<b>Class of 2004</b>	<b>First Job</b>	<b>First Non-Clerkship Job</b>
<b>Total Respondents</b>	183	139
<b>Law Firms</b>	43% (79)	74% (103)
<b>Judicial Clerkship</b>	42% (76)	NA
<b>Public Service</b>	8% (14)	16% (22)
<b>Academia<sup>3</sup></b>	2% (4)	4% (5)
<b>Business</b>	2% (4)	4% (5)
<b>Advanced Degree</b>	2% (4)	3% (4)

<sup>1</sup> Although we received an overall response rate of 58%, not every respondent answered every question. As a result, some statistics reflect response rates less than the overall response rate for the Class.

<sup>2</sup> The statistics reflected in this section are derived from information provided by students to CDO either upon their graduation from law school or upon completion of a judicial clerkship.

<sup>3</sup> Includes teaching, research, academic fellowships and academic administration.

## Gender Differences in First Employer Type

When looking at gender and first employment choices, more women commenced their careers in law firms, while more men clerked for judges.

<b>Class of 2004</b>	<b>Women</b>	<b>Men</b>
<b>Total Respondents</b>	89	88
<b>Law Firms</b>	48% (43)	41% (36)
<b>Judicial Clerkship</b>	40% (36)	46% (40)
<b>Public Service</b>	5% (4)	5% (4)
<b>Academia</b>	3% (3)	1% (1)
<b>Business</b>	2% (2)	2% (2)

## Reason for Leaving First Non-Clerkship Position

According to the 5th Year Career Development survey, the two most frequently reported reasons for graduates leaving their first non-clerkship positions were professional and career development (24%) and work/life balance priorities (15%).

## **II. Employment Five Years after YLS Graduation**

### Employer Type

When comparing first non-clerkship job choices with where the Class of 2004 is working five years after graduation, fewer graduates are with law firms five years after graduation and more graduates are in public service and academia.

<b>Class of 2004</b>	<b>5 Years After Graduation</b>	<b>First Non-clerkship Employment</b>
<b>Law Firms</b>	57% (58)	74% (103)
<b>Public Service</b>	25% (25)	16% (22)
<b>Academia</b>	14% (14)	4% (5)
<b>Business</b>	4% (4)	4% (5)

## Gender Differences in Current Employer Type

Unlike in prior class years surveyed, a greater percentage of women from the Class of 2004 are in law firm practice, and a smaller percentage are in public interest careers. Men and women are similarly represented in other fields.

<b>Class of 2004</b>	<b>Women</b>	<b>Men</b>
<b>Total Respondents</b>	54 (53% of all respondents)	47 (47% of all respondents)
<b>Law Firms</b>	67% (36)	47% (22)
<b>Public Service</b>	19% (9)	34% (16)
<b>Academia</b>	13% (7)	15% (7)
<b>Business</b>	4% (2)	4% (2)

## Employment Locations

Five years after graduation, more than half of the Class of 2004 resides in either New York, DC or California, with DC edging out New York as the city of choice.

<b>Top Three Employment Locations for Class of 2004</b>	<b>5 Years after Graduation</b>
<b>Washington, D.C.</b>	25% (25)
<b>New York City</b>	22% (22)
<b>California (including all cities)</b>	16% (16)

## Work Schedules and Salaries

The most commonly reported range of work hours was 2,000-2,500 hours per year, with 49% of respondents reporting working hours in that range. Only 4% of respondents report working less than full-time.

Not surprisingly, law firm and business respondents report the highest incomes, with 71% of those in law firms and 75% of those in business reporting salaries over \$150,000. Three quarters of respondents in public service report earning between \$75,000 – 149,999. Among academics, 54% earn between \$75,000 - 149,999.

## Plan to Stay with Current Employer

With regard to how long they plan to stay with their current employer, the most common response from graduates was that they plan to stay for 1-3 more years, with 31% of respondents selecting that option. The next most common response was that they plan to stay for 3-5 more years, with 25% of respondents selecting that option.

## Job Satisfaction

Respondents were asked to indicate their overall satisfaction with their current employment. Almost half of the class (47%) is “very satisfied” with their current position and 31% are “satisfied.” Although law firm respondents are overall less satisfied than their counterparts in public service and academia (38% of those in law firms are “very satisfied” compared to 60% in public service and 64% in academia), they express greater satisfaction than prior class years surveyed.

Class of 2004	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Not Satisfied
<b>Overall Satisfaction</b>	47% (47)	31% (31)	19% (19)	4% (4)
<b>Law Firms</b>	38% (22)	33% (19)	24% (14)	5% (5)
<b>Public Service</b>	60% (15)	28% (7)	12% (3)	--
<b>Academia</b>	64% (9)	29% (4)	7% (1)	--
<b>Business</b>	25% (1)	25% (1)	25% (1)	25% (1)

Women express slightly greater job satisfaction than men – 84% of women are either satisfied or very satisfied with their current positions as compared to 72% of men. This differs from other class years surveyed. In the Classes of 2001-2003, men had expressed greater job satisfaction than women.

Respondents were also asked to rate their level of job satisfaction with regard to 12 specific aspects of their work. Overall, respondents are most satisfied with the collegiality of their colleagues, with 48% of respondents indicating that they are “very satisfied” with that area of their work. Among those in law firms, 26% indicated that they are not satisfied with their ability to balance work and life. This is consistent with responses from the Classes of 2001-2003. Other areas of dissatisfaction among law firm practitioners are billable hour expectations (14% not satisfied) and performance evaluations (12% not satisfied). Public service respondents also expressed dissatisfaction with their performance evaluations (18% not satisfied).

### III. Public Service Employment

Not factoring judicial clerkships, one-third of respondents (33%) have worked for a public service employer at some point in the five years since graduation.

### IV. Job Changes

On average, respondents have changed jobs twice in the five years since graduation, not including judicial clerkships. While 37% are still in their first non-clerkship job, 50% are in their second job, 11% are in their third job, and 2% are in their fourth job.

Among graduates whose first non-clerkship position was with a large law firm, 65% left that position at some point within the first five years after graduating. Of those 65%, 41% accepted work with another large firm, 19% went to federal government, 16% went to a smaller law firm, 13% went into business, 5% went into academia, and 3% went to a non profit.

### V. Pro Bono

Respondents were asked to report their average pro bono hours per year in their current employment. Among those in law firms, 38% devote over 100 hours to pro bono per year and 23% devote 51-100 hours.

Class of 2004	Law Firm Respondents	Business Respondents
over 100 hours	38% (20)	--
51 - 100 hours	23% (12)	--
26 - 50 hours	23% (12)	--
1 - 25 hours	9% (5)	25% (1)
0 hours	7% (4)	75% (3)

The survey inquired about the factors that have contributed to and limited respondents' *pro bono* hours. Respondents ranked personal satisfaction, followed by sense of professional obligation and employer encouragement as the factors most contributing to their *pro bono* hours. Workload demands and employer billable hour expectations were selected as the two most important factors that have limited their *pro bono* hours.

Respondents were also asked to select the activities at Yale Law School that positively influenced their *pro bono* commitment. As with all prior class years surveyed, the clinics had the most positive influence.

YLS Activities Positively Influencing <i>Pro Bono</i>	Class of 2004
clinics	37% (27)
summer or term-time public interest work	33% (24)
public interest lectures and programs	18% (13)
public service student organizations	11% (8)

Finally, respondents were asked the following question: "Has an employer's strong *pro bono* policies and commitment contributed to your decision to work for that employer?" Just over half (52%) responded yes.

## VI. Debt

At graduation, more than half of the Class (56%) reported a debt burden of more than \$75,000. One quarter of the Class (25%) reported using the Career Options Assistance Program (COAP) at some point since graduation. Almost half of respondents (43%) believe that the need to pay off their debt affected their legal career choices.

Debt Burden at Graduation	Class of 2004
less than \$5,000	21% (23)
\$5,000 - 24,999	4% (4)
\$25,000 - 75,000	19% (21)
over \$75,000	56% (60)

<b>Percent of respondents who used COAP</b>	25% (28)
<b>Percent of respondents who said the need to pay off debt affected their legal career choices</b>	43% (47)

## VII. Retrospective

Respondents were asked to indicate why they decided to attend law school. The three most popular choices were to engage in the intellectual challenges of law, to create career options, and to enter a career in public service.

<b>Why did you attend law school?</b> <i>(Select as many as apply)</i>	<b>Class of 2004</b>
<b>To create career options</b>	29% (62)
<b>To defer making a choice about my career</b>	7% (15)
<b>To engage in the intellectual challenges of law</b>	33% (72)
<b>To enter a career in public service</b>	23% (50)
<b>To establish a lucrative career</b>	6% (12)
<b>Other</b>	2% (5)

The survey asked respondents, “When you began law school, in what area(s) did you envision working five years after you graduated?” Respondents were able to select one or more choices. More than half of respondents (55%) selected public service, 16% selected academia, 18% selected law firm practice and 3% selected business. Comparing these responses to where graduates actually work five years after graduation demonstrates that more graduates are in law firms and fewer graduates are in public service than what they planned.

<b>Class of 2004</b>	<b>Where will you work 5 years after graduation?</b> <i>(Select as many as apply)</i>	<b>Actual employment 5 years after graduation</b>
<b>Law Firm</b>	18% (32)	57% (58)
<b>Public Service</b>	55% (95)	25% (25)
<b>Academia</b>	16% (28)	14% (14)
<b>Business</b>	3% (6)	4% (4)
<b>No Idea</b>	7% (12)	N/A