

5th Year Career Development Survey Class of 2001

Starting with the Class of 1996, the Career Development Office has solicited information from each class five years after their law school graduation. We commenced surveying the Class of 2001 in January 2006 and ultimately received a 56% response rate.¹ This report provides data about the Class of 2001 gleaned from those survey responses.

I. First Employment²

Employer Type

The Class of 2001 was typical in their first employment choices after departing Yale. Judicial clerkships were the most popular destination of our graduates immediately after law school, followed by law firms. Looking at first non-clerkship job choices, more than half (58%) worked in law firms, while close to one-third (29%) worked in the public service.

Class of 2001	First Job	First Non-Clerkship Job Choices of Judicial Clerks	First Non-Clerkship Job Choices
Total Respondents	107	46	107
law firms	32% (34)	59% of clerks (27)	58% (62)
judicial clerkship	43% (46)	--	--
public service	14% (15)	35% of clerks (16)	29% (31)
academia ³	3% (3)	7% of clerks (3)	6% (6)
business	6% (7)	--	6% (7)
other	2% (2)	--	1% (1)

Gender Differences in Employer Type

A greater proportion of men from the Class of 2001 started their careers in law firms, while almost twice as many women entered public interest jobs. Roughly equal numbers of women and men served as judicial clerks.

Class of 2001 ⁴	% of Women	% of Men
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¹ Although we received an overall response rate of 56%, not every respondent answered every question. As a result, some statistics reflect response rates less than the overall response rate for the Class.

² The statistics reported in this memo, including in this First Employment section, are derived only from responses to the Class of 2001 Fifth Year Survey. CDO also reports First Employment information for each Class at the time of their graduation from law school. The statistics in this section vary from CDO's First Employment information due to smaller percentage of respondents to the Fifth Year Survey.

³ Includes both teaching and nonteaching academic positions.

⁴ According to information reported by YLS to the ABA, 54% of the Class of 2001 was comprised of men.

Total # of Respondents	52 (51% of all respondents)	51 (49% of all respondents)
law firms	27% (14)	39% (20)
judicial clerkship	42% (22)	45% (23)
public service	21% (11)	12% (6)
academia	6% (3)	--
business	4% (2)	4% (2)

Employment Locations

More than half of the Class (59%) accepted their first non-clerkship positions in either Washington, DC, New York City or California. As with the Classes of 1997 and 1998, DC topped NYC as the most popular destination for graduates by a very slim margin.

Top Three Employment Locations	Class of 2001
Total Respondents	107
Washington, D.C.	21% (23)
New York, NY	20% (22)
California (including all cities)	17% (18)

Methods Used to Obtain First Non-Clerkship Position

Overall, 45% of respondents to the 5th Year Survey indicate that they obtained their first non-clerkship employment with their own efforts, while 40% accepted a position with an employer for whom they worked during a summer at YLS. Among graduates who commenced their careers with law firms and didn't clerk, 53% started with a firm where they worked during a YLS summer. More than two-thirds (67%) of clerks who went to law firms after their clerkships chose firms they worked for during a YLS summer.

Work Schedules

More than half of the respondents (54%) reported working between 2,000 - 2,500 hours in their first non-clerkship positions. Seventeen percent reported working more than 2,500 hours. Four people reported working part-time.

Annual Salaries

Slightly more than half of respondents (52%) who worked for law firms as their first non-clerkship position earned between \$75,000 - \$150,000 an additional 43% in law firms earned between \$150,000 - 300,000. As would be expected, public service respondents earned less, with 86% earning \$30,000 - 74,999.

Reason for Leaving First Non-Clerkship Position

The most frequently reported reasons for graduates leaving their first non-clerkship positions were professional and career development (24%), work/life balance priorities (16%) and situations in which their positions ended (16%).

II. Employment Five Years After YLS Graduation

Employer Type

When comparing at graduation choices with where the Class of 2001 is working five years after graduation, fewer graduates are with law firms five years after graduation and slightly fewer graduates are in public service when compared to first non-clerkship employment. In contrast, in all prior class years surveyed, more graduates worked in the public sector five years after graduation. However, this class also had the highest percentage of respondents reporting first non-clerkship employment in the public sector. More graduates are in academic and business positions.

Class of 2001	5 Years After Graduation	First Non-clerkship Employment
law firms	48% (50)	58% (62)
public service	26% (27)	29% (31)
<i>nonprofit org/ assn.</i>	<i>41% (11)</i>	<i>68% (21)</i>
<i>federal government</i>	<i>11% (3)</i>	<i>26% (8)</i>
<i>state government</i>	<i>4% (1)</i>	<i>3% (1)</i>
<i>local government</i>	<i>44% (12)</i>	<i>3% (1)</i>
academia	11% (12)	6% (6)
business	12% (13)	6% (7)
other	3% (3)	1% (1)

Gender Differences in Employer Type

Although equal percentages of men and women are in public service, significantly more men are in academia and business and almost twice as many women are in law firm practice. These numbers vary from prior class years surveyed. In prior years, more women were in public interest and similar numbers of women and men were in law firm practice.

Class of 2001	% of Women	% of Men
Total Respondents	52 (51% of all respondents)	50 (49% of all respondents)
law firms	61% (32)	36% (18)
public service	27% (14)	26% (13)
academia	2% (4)	20% (10)
business	8% (4)	18% (9)

Employment Locations

Five years after graduation, respondents geographic locations are virtually identical to where they were located at graduation.

Top Three Employment Locations for Class of 2001	5 Years after Graduation	First Non-clerkship Employment
New York City	20% (21)	21% (23)
Washington, D.C.	20% (21)	20% (21)
California (including all cities)	16% (17)	17% (18)

Methods Used to Obtain Current Position

Just over half of respondents (51%) used their own job search efforts to obtain their current position. Of those respondents in law firms, one-third (32%) report that their current employer was a former YLS summer employer. No respondents in public service positions are working for a former YLS summer employer.

Work Schedules

Overall, one-fifth of respondents (19%) work more than 2,500 hours per year. Those respondents hardest working are in business, with almost half (42%) of business respondents working more than 2,500 hours per year as compared to 18% of those in law firms, 15% of those in public service and no one in academia. Only 6% of respondents work less than a full-time schedule.

Annual Salaries

Not surprisingly, business and law firm respondents report the highest incomes, with 71% of those in law firms and 72% of those in business reporting salaries over \$150,000. The majority of respondents in public service (67%) report earning between \$30,000 - 74,999; an additional 33% of respondents in public service earn between \$75,000 - 150,000. Equal numbers of academics earn between \$75,000 - 150,000 (42%) and \$150,000 - 300,000 (42%).

Plan to Stay with Current Employer

The most common response from respondents was that they plan to stay with their current employer for 1 - 3 more years, with almost half of respondents (48%) selecting that option. One-fifth plan to leave within the year and 13% plan to stay for 3-5 more years. One-fifth plan to stay longer than 5 years.

Job Satisfaction

Respondents were asked to indicate their overall satisfaction with their current employment. Three quarters of the Class are either "satisfied" or "very satisfied" with their current jobs. Law firm respondents in this Class express slightly greater job satisfaction than in prior years (30% very satisfied, compared with 17% of the Class of 1999 for example).

Class of 2001	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Not Satisfied
overall satisfaction	40% (41)	36% (37)	19% (19)	5% (5)
law firms	30% (15)	36% (18)	28% (14)	6% (3)
public service	51% (14)	30% (8)	15% (4)	4% (1)
academia	67% (8)	33% (4)	--	--
business	30% (4)	54% (7)	8% (1)	8% (1)

Men express somewhat greater job satisfaction than women – 86% of men are either satisfied or very satisfied with their current positions as compared to 66% of 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 56% of respondents indicating that they are “very satisfied” with that area of their work.

Among those in law firms, 24% indicated that they are not satisfied with their ability to balance work and life. This figure compares favorably to prior class years surveyed. In the Classes of 1996-2000, an average of 40% of law firm respondents stated that they were not satisfied with their work life balance. Interestingly, 20% of law firm respondents expressed dissatisfaction with pro bono opportunities. In prior class years, that was not a concern. A comparably high percentage of law firm respondents are also not satisfied with mentor availability (18%) and billable hour expectations (14%).

Public service respondents expressed the greatest dissatisfaction with their compensation (26% not satisfied), advancement opportunities (15%) and performance evaluations (15%).

III. Public Service Employment

More than one-third of respondents (36%) 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 1.9 times in the five years since graduation, not including judicial clerkships – while 37% are still in their first non-clerkship job, 43% are in their second job, 18% are in their third job, and 2% are in their fourth job. This is similar to prior class years surveyed.

V. Pro Bono

Respondents were asked to report their average pro bono hours per year in their current employment. Among those in law firms, 39% devote over 100 hours to pro bono per year and 22% devote 51- 100 hours.

Class of 2001	Law Firm Respondents	Business Respondents
over 100 hours	39% (18)	--
51 - 100 hours	22% (10)	--
26 - 50 hours	11% (5)	---
1 - 25 hours	17% (8)	27% (3)
0 hours	11% (5)	73% (8)

The survey inquired about the factors that have contributed to and limited respondents *pro bono* hours. Respondents ranked personal satisfaction, followed by a 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 2001
clinics	37% (24)
summer or term-time public interest work	32% (21)
public interest lectures and programs	11% (7)
public service student organizations	20% (13)

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?” Half of respondents (49%) responded yes.

VI. Debt

At graduation, half of the Class (51%) reported a debt burden of more than \$75,000. This level of debt is higher than in prior class years surveyed – the average number of respondents reporting debt over \$75,000 from the Classes 1996 - 2000 was 43%. Twenty-nine percent reported using the Career Options Assistance Program (COAP) at some point since graduation. Over a third of respondents (40%) believe that the need to pay off their debt affected their legal career choices.

Debt Burden at Graduation	Class of 2001
less than \$5,000	18% (19)
\$5,000 - 24,999	3% (3)
\$25,000 - 75,000	20% (21)
over \$75,000	58% (60)
Percent of respondents who used COAP	29% (31)
Percent of respondents who said the need to pay off debt affected their legal career choices	40% (40)

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.

Why did you attend law school? <i>(Select as many as apply)</i>	
To create career options	31% (73)
To defer making a choice about my career	10% (24)
To engage in the intellectual challenges of law	26% (60)
To enter a career in public service	18% (43)
To establish a lucrative career	9% (20)
Other	6% (13)

The survey asked respondents, “When you began law school, in what area(s) did you envision working when you graduated?” Respondents were able to select one or more choices. Just over one-fifth (21%) selected law firm practice, while close to one-half (47%) selected public service work. Respondents were also asked where they envisioned working five years after graduation. Even fewer respondents (13%) selected law firm practice, around the same percentage (48%) selected public service and almost one quarter of the class selected academia (24%). Comparing this question 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.

Class of 2001	Where will you work when you graduate? <i>(Select as many as apply)</i>	Where will you work 5 years after graduation? <i>(Select as many as apply)</i>	Actual employment 5 years after graduation
Law Firm	21% (37)	13% (23)	48% (50)
Public Service	47% (81)	48% (85)	26% (27)
<i>Government</i>	<i>49% (40)</i>	<i>54% (46)</i>	<i>59% (16)</i>
<i>Public Interest Org</i>	<i>51% (41)</i>	<i>46% (39)</i>	<i>41% (11)</i>
Academia	19% (32)	24% (42)	11% (12)
Business	7% (12)	6% (11)	12% (13)
No Idea	6% (10)	9% (15)	

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