Sample Letter and Programs

The following letter and sample programs may be of assistance to you in your educational and outreach activities:

Dear Educator:

Many students consider career opportunities in the law office to be limited to lawyers and secretaries. In reality, there are a variety of challenging support positions in the efficient law office.

The (Chapter Name) of the Association of Legal Administrators presents timely programs providing up-to-date information on law office management.

Our members are willing to present programs at your classes, at career days or in continuing education seminars. The presentations might address career opportunities in general or be customized around specific topics such as marketing, human resources, information systems, financial management, etc.

We are anxious to increase the number of students seeking a career in the legal field and to help your students make informed career decisions.

You can arrange a speaker, set up a seminar or receive additional information about legal careers by contacting \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ .

Sincerely,

(Chapter Name) Association of Legal Administrators

Program 1 — You Go to Them With Speakers

At the time of your initial contact with the educators, indicate that your speakers are available for classroom or assembly presentations, career-day programs, law-day activities (check with your local bar association), seminar, workshop or conventional presentations.

Instructors are always looking for relevant presentations for students. Administrators are also looking to provide updated business information at faculty continuing education workshops.

Presentations should be geared to the particular interests of the audience, but everyone likes to hear about the variety of career opportunities, salary ranges and benefits, whether the firm has a night shift and technological trends in law offices. Most class periods will allow only enough time for the speaker to be introduced, a ten to fifteen minute presentation and a question and answer segment.

With a minimum investment of time, this program can help establish contacts while providing high visibility for your chapter and member firms. Participants will find their firms are very supportive of this time spent in public contact and education.

Sample Format for Classroom Presentation

“Hi, I’m (your name) and I’m the (your title) for (organization’s name). We are located at (location).

“Many people think that there are two jobs in a law office/department -- lawyer and secretary. Perhaps that’s true of one-attorney offices/departments, but in our area an average firm has (number) attorneys.

“Our organization is considered (small/medium/large) and has a support staff of (number). That staff is comprised of legal secretaries, paralegals, word processors, accounting and human resources personnel, file clerks and messengers. Some offices also have (naming positions your office doesn’t have).”

(Explain the duties of the different positions in your office. Don’t forget to include your own duties.)

(Tell of the difficulties you are experiencing in trying to fill some of these positions.)

(Share with your audience what is important to do or not to do during an interview.)

(Talk about the changes taking place in your office or area in the use of technology.)

(Following this format, your audience should have questions for the remainder of the session.)

Program 2 — They Come to You for a Seminar

For your chapter’s first seminar, you might want to try a panel format as illustrated in the seminar outline. The question and answer segment which follows should be quite lively. Scheduled from 3:00-5:00 PM on a weekday afternoon (but never on Friday), your seminar should not conflict with class time and no food is necessary. Beverage breaks are nice, but not necessary.

The location you choose will depend on the number of participants expected. To control attendance, you might want to limit the registration to a certain number for your first seminar. Many educators may be paying the fee, if any, out of their own pockets, so you will want to keep the cost as low as possible. You might want to offer package deals to schools sending more than one participant.

Seminar Outline

Introduction by Moderator

of ALA

of local chapter

of panel members

Brief Presentation by Each Panel Member:

name of member’s organization and location

number of attorneys

breakdown of number of support personnel by job title

description of type of practice

Questions Asked by Moderator of Panel

What are the duties of some of the support personnel in your organization?

What are the salary ranges and benefits available to your employees?

What are the differences between large/small firms and corporate law offices?

Do you have evening or weekend hours?

How are technological changes affecting your organiza­tion (e.g., word processing, computers and telecommunications)?

How would you like to see potential employees better trained?

What are things that should be avoided during an interview?

Questions and Answers from Seminar Participants

Closing by Moderator

thanking panel and participants

reminder of availability of chapter members to speak in schools

Your seminar letter or brochure should include:

an introduction to ALA and your chapter

seminar details

topics to be covered

identification of panel members

RSVP form