

Life as an Estate Planning Clinic Intern, Part I

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It started off fast, almost overwhelming. There was a lot to take in. There was a lot to remember. I had to take a step back and take a deep breath. No, I wasn't about the ride the world's biggest roller coaster. I wasn't going out on a first date. It was actually the first few weeks of Cooley's Estate Planning Clinic.

Over the next several weeks of this semester, I am diving in head first. It is time to take my law school career into the real world. I have learned to law, not it is time to learn how to be a lawyer. Join me as I journal my Estate Planning Clinic career with all of you and The Pillar.

So far in the class, I have learned the formalities and reviewed all the checklists and templates. As an EPC student, you are given access to the ICLE resources as well as Cooley EPC resources. There are more resources than you know what to do with. The best thing to do is review everything from top to bottom. Take it all in by no later than week 3. Then, get yourself organized. Print things off; put them in manilla folders; bust out the briefcase; stockpile a few pens, sticky notes, legal pads, a couple of clipboards, Kleenex, a small stapler, and a Sharpie. Brace yourself, because you are going to start interviewing clients week 4.

I will admit I was nervous about my first client interview, mostly because I did not know what to expect. I did not know if I was going to be prepared enough. I am sure you will feel that way as well. And, that is perfectly ok. Rest assured, you are more prepared than you think you are. You know more about how to be an attorney than you think you do. And, if nothing else, you know how to fake it until you make it for the things you don't know.

The most important thing I learned in my first client interview was how naturally it comes to you to just be a lawyer. What exactly does it mean to be a lawyer? Ask the right questions, take good notes, and - most importantly - just listen. Most of the issues you will face with clients can be resolved easily, even without a legal answer or legal research. Clients just want to know they have been heard.

So, with having finished up a couple weeks of review and a couple weeks of client interviews, I am looking forward to the rest of the semester. It's exciting to get to be a lawyer!