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PRACTICAL
TRAINING
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Gabrielle Alexandrescu '24



Hailey Fletcher '24



Brian Lewis '25



Natalie Maher '24



Harrison Peisstein '24



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At New York Law School (NYLS), students have immense opportunities to gain real-world legal training through internships. These experiences help them put the skills they learn in the classroom to practice and help them grow professionally. We spoke with five NYLS students who discussed their recent internships and what they learned.



Gabrielle Alexandrescu '24 spent summer 2023 as a Compliance Summer Associate at Citi. In her role, she worked interpreting financial regulations and creating concise requirements for the institution to remain compliant, supporting the build out of programs, investment request processes, refreshing the technology strategy for compliance, and providing overall feedback where necessary. She also had the opportunity to join her team for meetings with different compliance teams and leading technology vendors to discuss potentially incorporating their products into compliance at Citi.

Among the highlights of her internship was a chance to attend a showcase where industry leaders in generative artificial intelligence (AI) demonstrated their platforms for Citi. "I'm really interested in AI," said Alexandrescu. "I was fascinated by the potential incorporations of generative AI to help streamline tedious processes."

Through the internship, Alexandrescu gained new professional experiences in fields where she had little former experience, but it also gave her insight she could use to apply her legal training and skills to confidently approach new challenges. She explained, "I had a great manager who encouraged me to use my lack of context as an asset rather than a barrier. He helped me realize that by not being privy to the granular parts of the organization, I was able to provide valuable feedback and an outside perspective. Keeping a more outward perspective and always asking 'why' is a great tool that I'll take with me."

And how was her overall experience at Citi? "I loved it! So much so that I have just accepted a return offer for September 2024."



Hailey Fletcher '24 recently worked as the Trial and Legal Unit Intern at The Children's Law Center in Brooklyn. Her day-to-day responsibilities included setting interviews with clients, preparing for interviews and reading memoranda on previous litigation involving the clients, and helping prepare for trial. In collaboration with another intern, she created a pamphlet for community members and others to learn about how The Children's Law Center and Family Court operate. She also had the opportunity to write documents supporting the organization's arguments in relation to certain cases and to interview clients under the supervision of her mentor attorney.

Fletcher noted that some of the greatest legal skills she developed through this internship were trial and court etiquette, and conducting a legal interview for both adults and children. "I had many opportunities to observe different types of lawyers and how they approached a trial when I was sitting in the courtroom," said Fletcher. "After an introduction from my supervisor, I would then talk to them, and I received so much insight from their perspectives on family law and how they approach different problems that arise during trial. Now in my assessment of issues, I have a multitude of perspectives to pull from."

As for interviewing, working at The Children's Law Center helped Fletcher develop the skills she first learned in Legal Practice during her 1L year at NYLS. "Interviewing your client is more than just finding out the facts, you're creating a relationship with them, especially when dealing with children," Fletcher said. "I found that interviewing children is much different than adults because of the relationship you want to create with them. We realize that the situation is usually traumatic for the children, and talking to a complete stranger about things that make them sad is difficult, but when you show the child you are interested in them and want to know about who they are, and not just this sad situation, they are more inclined to open up and trust you."

In fact, interviewing led to one of Fletcher's most memorable experiences, where she drew on her legal skills and her past experiences working with children with autism to complete an interview. "I was able to think outside the 'legal' box and interview using my own style," Fletcher explained. While conducting an interview with a child who was non-verbal, Fletcher and her supervisor weren't sure they would be able to get much information they needed for the court appearance. But "using my past experience, I understood that some non-verbal kids communicate in different ways, whether it be by hand gestures or drawing. I gave the child a piece of paper, and to an extent, the child was able to draw an answer to topics we asked about, even though they were not able to verbalize them."

Fletcher was proud of the work she did at the organization, and that moment was especially poignant for her. "The Children's Law Center's mission is to give every child a voice, and that day I felt I was able to give this child a voice!"



Over the summer, **Brian Lewis '25** worked as the Legal Intern for the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), Office of the Principal Legal Advisor. "My internship at DHS was rewarding and an excellent experience for me to advance my litigation skills," said Lewis. As part of his general responsibilities, he researched case law in the Third Circuit and U.S. Supreme Court, and he drafted motions to dismiss, prosecutorial discretions, and country conditions packets for DHS Headquarters. He also had incredible opportunities to advance his oral advocacy skills by cross-examining witnesses and giving arguments before an immigration judge in Immigration Court, under the supervision of his mentor attorney. Through his work, he also had the chance to speak with many of the assistant chief counsels in the department to learn more from both their general and career insights and advice.

"As this was a litigation-focused internship, I advanced my research, writing, and oral advocacy skills, which I will utilize throughout my career," Lewis noted about his experience. "As a lawyer, no matter what practice, it is crucial to have strong research, writing, and communication skills. At DHS, these three skills were at the forefront."

His biggest highlights of the work were his opportunities to litigate in court before a judge—a rare opportunity for a 1L summer internship. "In my opinion, practical experience is the best way to learn from your mistakes and advance your career," he said. "My supervisor and I share the same philosophy. Therefore, the whole experience this summer was practical. It was surreal to make objections, cross-examine witnesses, or perform a closing argument because I have always pictured myself in a courtroom, but not at such a young age."



Natalie Maher '24 recently had the opportunity to work as a Legal Extern for the Music Division of Roc Nation, the entertainment agency founded and owned by Jay-Z. At the agency, Maher's responsibilities included drafting templates of multiple types of recording agreements such as profit splits and royalty; redlining agreements; option tracking, or reading an artist's contract and keeping track of what deliverables they owe the label and by when; and research on a variety of legal questions that are a part of the industry, from licensing and online sampling tools to helping artists obtain work visas. "It was an incredible and fruitful experience that I'm very grateful for," said Maher.

The experience helped her put her skills to practice in a fast-paced work environment. "There were a lot of 20+ page agreements to go over in short windows of time, and I learned how to identify what was important, and then effectively re-communicate that information to both lawyers and non-lawyers alike," Maher explained. "I'm sure this will be incredibly helpful in practice, as so much of what music lawyers do is communicating complex topics to team members and artists who don't have the time or capacity to get into the nitty-gritty themselves."

She appreciated experiencing firsthand the dynamic relationship of law and music in the workplace. "Everyone is always learning!" she said. "It was encouraging to hear my supervisors discussing their research on new areas and nuances of law." At the culmination of her time with the agency, she even had the opportunity to present her own research on music and AI, addressing both its potential for democratization as well as copyright concerns.

Ultimately, she loved working at the artist-friendly label. "It was invigorating to be around lawyers who truly love music and want to help artists get the recognition and money they deserve."



"My internship experience was more memorable and fulfilling than I could have possibly imagined," said **Harrison Perlstein '24**, who recently worked as a Summer Associate at Zetlin & De Chiara (Z&D). At the New York-based law firm, which specializes in construction law, Perlstein's responsibilities included conducting research for jurisdictional surveys on professional design contract clauses, drafting contracts and corporate resolutions, and completing a wide range of various memorandum for multiple attorneys. He also had the opportunity to work with many of the firm's attorneys on different projects.

Among the many skills he honed was drafting contracts. Perlstein had already taken a drafting contracts class at NYLS where he "learned how critical it was to have a strong gameplan before beginning to draft," which was even more critical in a real-world environment. "With contracts for design professionals, there are typically subcontracts between the contractor and subcontractor in which references are incorporated using flow-down clauses from a 'Prime Agreement,'" Perlstein explained. "If you are not extremely careful and do not markup everything from the original agreement, you might let something fall through the cracks, which would obviously have a devastating impact for your client. I think the organization and preparation skills during these assignments have better prepared me for the future. I have always been quick to jump right into a task, but I learned that I can be more productive and efficient if I take a step back and make sure my checklist is completely thorough."

He also appreciated the opportunity to work in an environment surrounded by hard-working, highly-motivated people. "Working with the attorneys at Z&D made me excited to go to work every day," he said. "There is a sense of purpose and fulfillment that contributes to a healthy, work-life balance when you truly enjoy and appreciate the people with whom you work. As important as it is to learn about the legal skills of being an attorney, it is equally important to speak to the associates and partners about the soft skills of being an attorney."

Perlstein is thrilled he's been able to continue his work with Z&D during the fall semester.

Career Resources at NYLS

No matter where students are in their career journey, the Office of Academic Planning and Career Development is committed to providing NYLS law students with tailored guidance to fit their career path. Throughout the school year, they also send out a weekly newsletter, The Inside Track, to keep students up-to-date on job opportunities, networking events, professional development, and more. Whether a student is looking for the best way to add their summer position to their résumé, searching for the next semester's internship or externship, or preparing for a job interview, they can email or stop by the office on the fifth floor of the E building to get the support they need to achieve their goals.