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Myers Speaks on Understanding Diversity and Inclusion

BY: JACOBIE ♦ STAFF WRITER

The Vernā Myers’ Professionalism Series was an overwhelming success on Monday, March 24. A nearly full house of Valpo Law students and faculty received Ms. Myers in the ballroom of Harre Union.

All those assembled had the opportunity to participate in Myers’ presentation where she parsed though the difference between diversity and inclusion.

Myers hails from Baltimore, Maryland, is a graduate of Harvard Law School, and received a Bachelor of Arts from Columbia University. Myers was the first Executive Director of the Boston Law Firm Group, as well as the Deputy Chief of Staff for the Attorney General of Massachusetts. Myers also practiced corporate and real estate law in Boston for six years.

Currently she is the principal of Vernā Myers Consulting Group, L.L.C., is a nationally recognized expert on diversity, and inclusion within law schools and other legal organizations. In 2011, Myers authored, “Moving Diversity Forward: How To Go From Well-Meaning to Well-Doing,” published by the American Bar Association. She is also set to release her second book “What if I Say the Wrong Thing? 25 Habits For Culturally Effective People.”

Myers’ presentation was entertaining, informative, and very inclusive in its own right. She opened by outlining the points of her presentation and then went on to educate presentation goers on the difference between diversity and inclusion. Myers conceptualized the difference between the two with the simile diversity is being asked to the party and inclusion is being as to feel comfortable. Myers stressed the importance of inclusion throughout her presentation. However, she reiterated some key benefits of inclusion. The most useful benefit that inclusion fosters, especially to students, is that it sharpens ideas. She used the example of like-minded people attacking a problem to convey this point.

Myers educated her audience on scientific studies that have shown like-minded groups get stuck at the same point when problem-solving. Research proves that diverse groups are better problem solvers because the different ideas and prospectives they provide; more ideas and prospectives leads to more success. Myers ended her presentation with an interesting airplane analogy describing the difference between headwinds and tailwinds. She equated headwinds with obstacles and tailwinds with privileges. Myers offered the advice that people should use their tailwinds to ease the headwinds of others. She tasked the audience with using their talents and privileges to help someone else in times of struggle. This was a refreshing message to combat the competitive nature of law school.

The faculty, the Diversity Concern Committee, and 28 organizations assisted in the success and operation of this program. Myers presentation seemed to be received well by all who attended.

Verna Myers at the professionalism event.

Jacobie is a 2L and can be reached at vuslforum@gmail.com
Know How to Download an App?

By: Lisa Cannon • Director of Experiential Education

As summer quickly approaches, first and second-year students will move on to a variety of internships, pro bono work, and externships. May 2014 graduates will begin life as new attorneys following the July bar exam, and we hope you may find this article very timely and useful. The Career Planning staff looks forward to hearing about your summer experiences and post-grad opportunities.

The following is an excerpt from an article dated February 24, 2014 by Mary Crane. Mary Crane is a graduate of the University of Missouri-Columbia and George Washington University Law School. She is also a graduate of the Culinary Institute of America, where she studied tortes after studying torts.

From my encounters with students and new professionals—all the brilliant young people who already know how to download apps—what are the practical workplace skills they should acquire before they enter an office building? Below I’ve listed 10 things every budding professional should know.

Workplace Skills for Students, Interns & New Professionals

1. Hold a knife and fork correctly. In the United States and a few countries in South America, diners generally use the “zig-zag” style of dining. Begin with your fork in your left hand, tines pointed down, and knife in your right hand. Cut two to three bite-sized pieces of food. Then, put your knife down, placing it across the top of your plate, and switch your fork to your right hand. With the tines pointed up, use your fork to lift food to your mouth. The rest of the world uses the “Continental” style of dining. Begin the same way, holding your fork in your left hand, tines pointed down, and knife in your right hand. Now, cut one bite-sized piece of food, and with tines still pointed down, lift that food to your mouth.

2. Navigate a table setting. As soon as you are seated, place your napkin on your lap. Please do not unfurl your napkin flamboyantly as if to make the sign of Zoro. Rather, discretely unfold it in half and place it on your lap. Your napkin should remain in your lap throughout the course of the meal. Use it to briefly dab your lips before you drink a beverage. Should you need to excuse yourself from the table, place your napkin in your chair. Return your napkin to the tabletop at the end of a meal. Use silverware starting from the outside of the place setting and working in. Once you use a piece of silverware, never return it to the tabletop.

3. Create a business-appropriate voicemail greeting. Create a voicemail message on your landline as if to make the sign of Zoro. Rather, discretely unfold it in half and place it on your lap. Your napkin should remain in your lap throughout the course of the meal. Use it to briefly dab your lips before you drink a beverage. Should you need to excuse yourself from the table, place your napkin in your chair. Return your napkin to the tabletop at the end of a meal. Use silverware starting from the outside of the place setting and working in. Once you use a piece of silverware, never return it to the tabletop.

4. Leave a voicemail message. If you place a call, and the person whom you are calling is unavailable, leave a voicemail message. Clearly articulate your name, your employer and your phone number. Generally, I indicate that I will take responsibility for following up, saying, “I’ll take responsibility for phoning you again later today. However, if it’s easier for you to reach out to me, my number is . . . ” Repeat your phone number, remembering that it’s easier for you to say it than for others to record it.

5. Disconnect. As you progress in your career, you will discover the need to disconnect. Do so. It will help you preserve your sanity, increase your focus, and make you a better employee in the long run. However, before you go silent, manage your internal and external clients’ expectations. Go ahead and plan an out-of-town weekend escape. Before you travel, meet with your supervisor, describe your plans and confirm that it’s acceptable for you to turn off your smartphone or to check for emergency messages exactly one or two times per day.

6. Introduce yourself. Every time you meet someone, stand-up, make eye contact, and smile. State your name clearly. Extend your right hand for a handshake, holding your hand perfectly perpendicular to the ground. (If you allow your hand to dip over to a 45-degree angle, you’re more likely to deliver a limp wrist, cold fish handshake—...Continued on page 8
On Wednesday, Ravindra Jadeja was reported in court accused of shooting and killing his girlfriend, Reeva Steenkamp. The prosecution case rested after 15 days in court. In total, 21 witnesses were called. Forensic analysts testified about the marks left on the door in the bathroom through which Steenkamp was shot. The prosecution and defense disagree on whether the athlete put his prosthetic legs on before or after bashing the door with a cricket bat to get to his girlfriend. The trial was scheduled to last until March 20 but will now continue into the middle of May.

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Legal Technology Resources Abound in the Law Library

By: Jesse Bowman • Digital Services Librarian & Assistant Professor of Law Librarianship

Historically speaking, the legal profession has been notoriously technology-averse. Commentators have offered many explanations as to why this is the case, with some of the common theories being that attorneys are either (1) simply too busy to adopt new technologies or (2) skeptical by nature, with this skepticism extending toward claims that technology will improve their practice. Moreover, due to the widespread use of the hourly-billing model, there has been a clear financial disincentive for attorneys to adopt technology to work faster.

However, the last few years have witnessed a technological revolution within the legal community. One of the driving forces originates from outside the profession; namely, the lightning-quick advancement of technologies such as mobile devices and cloud computing.

Indeed, by virtue of simply living in today’s world, attorneys are implementing technology into their daily routines like never before. At the same time, this increased use of technology has undoubtedly resulted from business and advocacy considerations. With the proliferation of free information available on the Web, as well as do-it-yourself websites such as LegalZoom and Rocket Lawyer, potential clients now have far more leverage when retaining counsel.

One result of this shift in power is the rise of alternative fee arrangements, such as flat fee or subscription agreements, in which clients pay a set fee for legal work and the lawyer completes the work, regardless of the amount of time required. In these situations, attorneys have an incentive to work faster, and many are using technology to complete work in a fraction of the time traditionally required.

From an advocacy perspective, lawyers have adopted new technologies to better represent their clients. For example, rather than bringing multiple boxes of evidence into the courtroom, litigators are now able to wirelessly present their case using an iPad, Apple TV, and cloud storage system, such as Dropbox.

At the Law Library, numerous resources are available for those interested in learning more about the intersection of technology and legal practice. The ABA’s Law Practice Management Section publishes a variety of books on the topic, the majority of which the Law Library has available for checkout.

One helpful series is the In One Hour for Lawyers (KF320.A9 S55 2013), Blogging in One Hour for Lawyers (KF320.A9 S88 2012), Facebook in One Hour for Lawyers (KF320.A9 K466 2012), iPad Apps in One Hour for Lawyers (KF320.A9 M483 2013), and Twitter in One Hour for Lawyers (KF320.A9 C67 2012). These titles focus on the practical, attorney-specific value of each resource and are excellent resources even if you are already generally familiar with the topic.

In addition to the In One Hour series, the Law Practice Management Section also publishes more in-depth titles, including Cloud Computing for Lawyers by Nicole Black (KF242.A1 B575 2012), Locked Down: Information Security for Lawyers by Sharon D. Nelson, David G. Ries, and John W. Simek (KF320.A9 N457 2012), and Virtual Law Practice: How to Deliver Legal Services Online by Stephanie L. Kimbro (KF320.A9 K56 2010). These titles each provide a detailed look at their respective topic but are written in everyday, non-technie language.

Readers interested in a more theoretical look at the impact of technology on the legal profession will enjoy the work of Richard Susskind. Susskind, a renowned speaker, IT expert, and professor at the University of Oxford, argues that several “disruptive technologies” will transform the everyday roles of most attorneys. His two most recent books, Tomorrow’s Lawyers: An Introduction to Your Future (K120.S87 2013) and The End of Lawyers?: Rethinking the Nature of Legal Services (K87.S877 2008) are each available. A third item, and one akin to Susskind’s work, is Mitchell Kowalski’s Avoiding Extinction: Reimagining Legal Services for the 21st Century (KF315.K69 2012). This work, written as a parable set in the near future, considers the inefficiencies of traditional BigLaw and proposes a new, technology-driven law firm model.

Technology is influencing the practice of law like never before and, as technological solutions continue to be developed, this impact will increase exponentially. If you are interested in learning more about this topic, I encourage you to check out one of the resources mentioned above or to visit with a Law Librarian. We are happy to help and can recommend resources both within and outside the Law Library.
Most of you already know that the ABA accreditation visit at VULS is scheduled for April 6-9, 2014. Actually, one member of the Team will begin interviews on Saturday, April 5, 2014.

This is a regular, every-seven-years visit and the ABA accreditation team will be accompanied by a representative of the Association of American Law Schools (AALS), which conducts a membership review in conjunction with the ABA accreditation visit. You can learn more about the ABA accreditation process at http://www.americanbar.org/content/aba.html (Section of Legal Education and Admissions to the Bar, Accreditation Overview) and the links provided there.

I urge you to participate in an open meeting with members of the ABA team, scheduled for Monday, April 7, 2014, at 3:30 p.m., in Pelzer. There may be other opportunities to talk with members of the team since they will be in the buildings and visiting some classes.

Obviously, continuing accreditation is important to VULS and its students, staff and faculty. But the accreditation process is really about more than accreditation because it provides an opportunity for the law school to engage in self-evaluation and planning that benefits from the report of the outside visitors.

As with most organizations, law schools can gain new insights from well-informed visitors. For that reason, we look forward to the accreditation visit and see it as an opportunity to improve VULS.

The doors opened at six where standing tables with horderves were provided. Guests were encouraged to bid on a wide range of silent auction items that included everything from a night at a casino to Disney movies. The organization strived to accommodate all who attended by providing items that everyone could bid on.

After an hour of the auction, the student fashion show started; students strutted down the runway in formal wear and business attire.

"Our biggest goal was to bring as much money in as possible to promote this great organization," said Jeremy Hahn, 1L, and current Event Coordinator of the Business Law Society. "We wanted to have an event where students could have fun, relax, and meet new people. It also gave event goers the opportunity to learn about BLS and hopefully be apart of the event next year."

In his current position, Hahn worked with the other chairs to oversee that the event went smoothly. "This event really captures how our organization is run and what we try to promote," said Hahn. "We strive to create events with an atmosphere that is fun but also where students can learn about creating business relationships in the local area.

Alex Mitranil, 1L, spoke about what it took to create this kind of event. "Before the event we spent a lot of time coordinating with retailers and making sure the models showed up for their fittings," Mitranii said. "Our focus then shifted to the logistics of the night itself. Many were involved in getting the runway put together, putting out chairs, and getting food set up for the guests."

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...Continued on page 6
Letters to the Editor

Do you have an opinion you want to express? Do you agree or disagree with an article? Voice your opinion by writing a letter to the editors.

LETTERS POLICY

The FORUM reserves the right to edit any contributions and/or reject them without notification. Letters must be limited to 400 words and columns to either 400 or 800 words.

Written contributions must be typed and include the author’s contact information; law students must include their year in school.

Unsigned letters will not be printed. When referring to specific articles, please include the date and title.

Contributions can be sent to: The FORUM, 656 S. Greenwich Street, Valparaiso, IN 46383; via e-mail at vuslforum@gmail.com; or in hard copy to The FORUM’s mailbox located in the SBA office.

vuslforum@gmail.com

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Harsher Penalties for Worst Offenders

BY: PAUL NICOLOSI • STAFF WRITER

On March 13, 2014, the last day of the Indiana Legislature’s session, the Indiana Senate unanimously approved a bill that would overhaul the state’s criminal justice system. The bill will create harsher penalties for the worst offenders, would place non-violent criminals in more “appropriate” correctional settings, and would also remove the “tough on crime” sentences for such non-violent offenses.

The bill already passed in the Indiana House of Representatives. It is on its way to Governor Pence’s desk, and the stated goal is to reduce the state’s prison population. This is discussed as the biggest overhaul of the state criminal system in nearly three decades.

Although the news articles have not provided many details on what exactly these changes are, any change to the status quo is long overdue. As the law currently stands, even mere possession of drugs can mean the end of one’s liberty and freedoms via incarceration. As the Eighth Amendment states, “…nor cruel and unusual punishments inflicted.”

The punishment should always fit the crime, and a possible decade or more in prison for a bag of weed is not proportionate. Locking someone in a cage for a personal choice is cruel and unusual and does nothing to solve the drug problem. Another important thing to note is that there is no victim when one decides to partake in these substances. It is merely a personal act that affects the life and body of no one but the user.

Even if Indiana is going to make non-violent crimes a lesser offense; which likely includes drug possession, the state can learn a great deal from other countries as to why this is the right path. In Portugal, for example, drugs were decriminalized in 2002 and were treated as a rehabilitation issue as opposed to a criminal one.

What was the result? Crime was drastically reduced in all areas, and people began seeking treatment for their problems, as opposed to being stigmatized in the same category as murderers, robbers, and rapists. Uruguay, which has legalized marijuana in an attempt to curb the drug mafia that has gripped Latin America for decades, hopes to see similar results.

While these are merely baby steps for the state of Indiana, anything to reduce these harsh punishments for non-violent crimes is necessary progress. May the 6.5 million Hoosiers in this state work so that freedom and liberty may truly ring in our criminal justice system.

Paul is a 2L and can be reached at vuslforum@gmail.com

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...Catwalk continued from page 5

The crowd was treated to plenty of dancing and attitude down the runway from all involved. “I really wanted to support the Business Law Society by participating in the fashion show,” said Jacobie Whitley, 2L. “A lot of good friends worked hard to make this show the success it was. I like to support Valpo and show some Valpo pride.”

Students participated in many different aspects of the event outside of modeling. Tomasz Pierprzycki, 1L, donated to the silent auction and modeled in the show itself. “It was a team effort from the entire Valparaiso community,” Hahn said.

Students enjoyed themselves and the process of getting ready for the fashion show. “I’m wearing Banana Republic. It’s slim fit, better for the ladies,” joked Jonathan Clay, 1L. “In all seriousness, I think it’s a great cause,” Clay said. “You have the greatest guys running the event, and how could you not be passionate about giving back to the community?”

The organization raised just under $5,000 from the event. BLS more than doubled the most money ever raised in previous years. Hahn was very excited about the turn out and has already started planning all the possibilities for next year. “My goal is to continue our relationship with Meals on Wheels,” Hahn said. “By continuing to raise money for their organization, it allows them to be more excited for next year. Their excitement then turns into further awareness and hopefully a bigger turn out for the event.” Hahn also hopes to get even more people at the event. “We want to expand the show. Instead of just having suits and business attire, we want to incorporate students’ fashion designs and lengthen the time on the runway,” said Hahn. “Our goal for is to help people in need. Whether that is Meals On Wheels, a 2L that is interested in learning about the business aspect of law, or a 1L that is just looking to make new friends and escape the pressures of school,” said Hahn. “We want to expand all aspects of the organization.”

If you’re interested in joining the Business Law Society, you can contact Jeremy Hahn with any questions at Jeremy.hahn@valpo.edu.
Student Profiles

3L Ben Fink
Hometown: Dayton, OH
Undergraduate School: Ohio University
Undergraduate Major: American History

How did you spend your spring break?
I mostly spent spring break hanging out with my nieces, but I also traveled to visit some friends.

Do you think Crimea should be able to join Russia?
While I believe Crimea should be able to join Russia, I believe that the manner in which it is currently happening is bogus.

Who do you want to win the men's NCAA tournament?
Because my undergrad isn't competing this year, I just want Iowa State to lose.

What has been your favorite memory of Valpo thus Far?
My favorite law school memory is Prof. Adams having us analyze Stairway to Heaven for contracts terms.

What has been your favorite law school class?
My seminar with Professor Gaffney, he has a wealth of knowledge and a unique delivery style, so I learned a great deal.

Where do you see yourself in 5 years?
Hopefully in Chicago as a burgeoning environmental lawyer.

What is your favorite April Fool’s Day prank?
One time I called my mom and told her she was going to be a grandmother. She didn’t like that too much.

2L Kevin Hansen
Hometown: New Berlin, WI
Undergraduate School: Saint Norbert College, WI
Undergraduate Major: Communication & Political Science

How did you spend your spring break?
I attended the SINC Conference, a three-day conference in Washington D.C. It was a worthwhile sports networking conference on the George Washington University campus.

Do you think Crimea should be able to join Russia?
I really don’t know, I mean from what I’ve read it seems like a majority of Crimea’s population wants to be recognized as Russian citizens. I’m more worried about what this means moving forward.

Who do you want to win the men’s NCAA tournament?
I’m from Wisconsin so I always have a special place in my heart for Bo Ryan and the Badgers but with that being said I think either Florida or Arizona wins it this year.

What has been your favorite memory of Valpo thus Far?
I think getting to enjoy everyone’s company at Barrister’s Ball has been my favorite. It was nice to finally relax and take some time off from school.

What has been your favorite law school class?
My favorite class was definitely Criminal Law. It has inspired me to join the FBI.

What is your Favorite April Fool’s Day prank?
I think the last prank I did, which may not be the best, was put Icy Hot on the toilet seat of our dorm bathroom at St. Norbert.

1L Joseph Beezie
Hometown: Downers Grove, IL
Undergraduate School: DePaul University Chicago
Undergraduate Major: Political Science & Conflict Resolution

How did you spend your spring break?
I went to Ft. Knox, Kentucky for a military training exercise. I then traveled to Ft. Sheridan, Illinois and ended my tour as Company Executive Officer.

Do you think Crimea should be able to join Russia?
I have personal feeling about the issues, however, my position in the United States Army permits me from making that comment at this time.

Who do you want to win the men’s NCAA tournament?
I haven’t been able to keep up this year, unfortunately. However, the only basketball team I follow is my alma mater, DePaul, and they aren’t in the tournament.

What has been your favorite memory of Valpo thus Far?
I think getting to enjoy everyone’s company at Barrister’s Ball has been my favorite. It was nice to finally relax and take some time off from school.

What has been your favorite law school class?
My favorite class was definitely Criminal Law. It has inspired me to join the FBI.

Where do you see yourself in 5 years?
I see myself working in federal law enforcement, or continuing my career in the Army. I would love to use my legal training to combine my two passions.

What is your Favorite April Fool’s Day prank?
One time I called my mom and told her she was going to be a grandmother. She didn’t like that too much.

NO MORE
Together we can end domestic violence & sexual assault
If you believe you are a survivor of sexual violence (including harassment, violence, assault, abuse, etc.) please come out to our support group for a meeting. Please contact our group at projectbrokenfailure@gmail.com for the date, time, and location of the event.
something you definitely want to avoid. Firmly grasp the other person’s hand, pump once or twice, and then release. If you have an unusual or a difficult-to-pronounce name, make sure you slow your speech and clearly articulate your name. In fact, you may wish to help others pronounce your name by providing them with a clue. For example, someone named Vaux might say, “It’s pronounced Vaux, like faux in faux fur or faux leather.”

7. Have a “real” conversation. With technology now ubiquitous, you may be tempted to email or text rather than engage in genuine conversations. However, especially in the world of work, talking will get you further than texting. John Stoker, president of DialogueWORKS, says “real” conversations contain the following components: R – recognize and suspend judgment; E – express thoughts, feelings or opinions without creating resistance; A – ask questions to understand; and L – listen and attend to other’s verbal and nonverbal messages.

8. Make your boss/ supervisor look good. This means: no surprises. Keep your boss informed of the status of projects, especially delays and significant problems that you encounter. Turn in projects that are client-ready, i.e., free of typos and stains or stray markings. If you become aware of some inner-office or client communication that could affect your boss, make your boss aware of it. Support your boss’s decisions. Do not disagree or publicly criticize your boss, especially among your peers. Should you choose to share your disagreement with your boss, do so behind closed doors. Always dress in a manner that reflects well upon both you and your employer.

9. Ask. Whether you need help on a particular project, a few days off to attend to a personal matter or feedback from a boss or supervisor, you must learn to ask for what you want and/ or need. Never assume that others are aware of your wants/needs. As you become aware of them, make sure you can specifically articulate what they are and why they are important to you. In terms of who you ask to address a want or need, be extremely selective. When you speak with that person, be direct, clear and specific.

10. Build a reputation. Warren Buffet once said, “It takes 20 years to build a reputation and five minutes to ruin it. If you think about that you’ll do things differently.” Keep in mind that everything you do at work—how you greet coworkers, how you interact with clients, how you dress, eat and email—contributes to or detracts from your reputation. Make sure you build the best reputation ever.”