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The University School of Law receives 1,000 applications yearly and selects only 170 students, says Bert Fukumoto, director of placement.

Lawyers

Prestige, fame and fortune — but only if they find a job

By Melissa Martin
 Of the Emerald

Not all professions have been hit hard by the economy.

University law school graduates can look forward to a trend of increasing salaries, says Bert Fukumoto, placement director at the School of Law.

According to a recent graduate survey, starting salaries for lawyers have increased by \$3,200, he says. Today's salaries range from \$10,000 for public service jobs — legal aids or public defenders — to \$43,000 for a job with a large firm, Fukumoto says.

And there's more good news for University law students. Out of 100 responses from 159 graduates in the class of 1983, more than 80 have found law-related jobs, Fukumoto says.

Of the 1983 law graduates now employed in the field, about 60 percent of are employed in Oregon and the majority of the remaining 40 percent in the Northwest, he says.

Part of the success can be attributed to the placement department.

"Our primary goal is to find permanent employment for third year students," Fukumoto says.

Still, law students need to be concerned about employment long before their final year in law school, Fukumoto says.

First and second year students should jump into the field early by finding law clerking positions. These positions sometimes develop into full-time jobs with firms, Fukumoto says.

With more and more students interested in

business law, this pre-graduate experience is very beneficial, he says.

And, as in any profession, having a family member already established in the business is to the graduate's advantage.

"It's a tough job market and anything you can use is to your advantage," Fukumoto says. "If you have a father that's a lawyer, chances are the father will turn around and hire the daughter or son."

At the same time, Fukumoto says, "there are students whose fathers aren't lawyers who are finding employment."

Like doctors, lawyers have to choose between

pursuing money or a satisfying employment situation, Fukumoto says. If students are lucky, they can find a place in between.

This term Fukumoto's office has sent 700 letters to law firms inviting them to visit the University law

school in search of future employees.

He says firms may be more likely to consider the University because it is ranked in the top third percent of law schools nationwide. The Carter Report ranked the school of law 40th out of 166 schools, and the Gourman Report placed it 51st out of 166.

Despite all the optimism concerning the field, there is one pessimistic note. The market continues to be saturated, thus, the search for employment can be frustrating.

"We try to encourage students to look very early," for employment, Fukumoto says. He recommends students seek personal interviews, especially if their transcripts are weak.

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— Bert Fukumoto

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