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Conference: Clinton classmates discuss sexual harassment, serendipity, timing

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Both women shared their law experiences Tuesday as part of the Women's Law Conference.

Their informal talk was sponsored by the Women's Law Forum, and the event filled Gerlinger Lounge beyond capacity. The discussion had originally been scheduled as the keynote address for a Women's Law Forum Conference at the end of February, but had been postponed because of the flooding.

Both women began with a description of their college years. They both had attended Wellesley College, and both had been classmates of Hillary Clinton.

"It was the first time I had ever intensively become friends with

women," Graber said. "I think the experience of the other individuals really stayed with me."

However, Olson described an environment filled with sexual harassment and very few women.

"There were really only a handful of women in the class," she explained. "We stuck out like sore thumbs. There were a few among the faculty who were, frankly, predators."

Olson also described how she dealt with the harassment. At first, she "didn't know how to deal with it" and even stayed out of some classes. Then she "looked for mentors and hid behind them" and finally moved to advocating empowerment for other women.

Both speakers urged female law students to seek mentors. Olson said a mentor is more than a patron who can help with professional problems.

"It's a source of wisdom," she said. "It's a source of counseling. It's a source of comfort in rough times."

Graber also cautioned the audience to watch for luck and to seize opportunities when they arise.

"Serendipity plays a great role," she said. "Chance and timing do play a role as well."

Graber and Olson then briefly discussed their regrets, both personal and professional.

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Fraud: 'If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is'

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selves. Scholarships that guarantee winnings or have loose requirements are prime scam suspects.

"Scholarship sponsors do not hand out awards to students simply for breathing," Kantrowitz said. "Other tipoffs include typing and spelling errors, use of a mail drop for a return address and omitting a phone number for inquiries."

Scholarship scams can appear almost anywhere. Some organizations will randomly call students and offer them scholarships. Others place ads in newspapers or distribute flyers.

"I personally have never seen any scholarship scams," said Judy Saling, counselor at the Office of Student Financial Aid. "But we were looking into some scholarship ads that were printed in the *Emerald*."

Scholarship scams seem to share certain characteristics. If a scholarship charges an application fee, even if it is a low amount, there is a strong chance that it is a scam because most legitimate scholarships do not charge fees, Saling said.

"We always warn students not to pay for scholarships," Saling said. "We have various books on available scholarships in the office, and we also have applications for Oregon state scholarships."

The Federal Trade Commission compares the recent scholarship scams to the fraudulent advanced-fee loans that posed problems in past years. It encourages students to use caution when the scholarship requires an up-front payment, said Dana Lesemann, staff attorney with the FTC.

"Just remember one cardinal rule," Lesemann said. "If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is."

If a student receives information about a possible scam, they should take a copy of all the materials that they received to their financial aid office. Students can also call the Better Business Bureau at (703) 276-0100, or the National Fraud Information Center at (800) 654-8896.

The Financial Aid Information Page located on the Internet provides more advice on how to identify scams and what to do if an offer is a scam. The Internet address is <http://www.cs.cmu.edu/~finaid/inaid.html>.

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