

MORE THAN YOUR RESUME

PRE-LAW SOCIETY AT VCU



MOLLY CALO

I've known that I want to be a lawyer since I was eight. Because I have had this goal for so long, when I got to VCU in the fall of 2018 I naturally set my sights on law school. I immediately began meeting with advisors, career services, professors, and professionals asking for advice on how to get into law school, how to be prepared for it, and what I should be doing with my time at VCU. During these meetings I received wonderful advice and resources, which have been so vital to the success I've had in my undergraduate studies, professional life thus far, and personal growth. The advice I have gotten has driven me to become more involved in the VCU and Richmond communities. It has helped me form friendships, become more outgoing, and gave me professional opportunities that I had only dreamt of. It has given me chances to discover what I am truly passionate about and to

However, none of their advice prepared me for a realization I had one day last fall.

Last fall I was a rising junior. On paper, I had everything figured out. I had a double major and a minor. I was hot off my summer internship. I was entering my second semester with the Honors College, and had just been accepted to two executive board positions. I had purchased LSAT study books, set a score goal, and told myself I'd start studying soon. I began scheduling and attending appointments with my advisors to make sure I was on the right track to graduate on time and apply to law schools the following fall. I began searching for a summer internship for the next year. I made a list of law schools that I was interested in and I also began meeting virtually with admissions officers from law schools that were on my list. Then, one afternoon last fall I opened a Zoom link to a meeting that would change my

life.

I was meeting with an admissions counselor from a law school that was on my list. During this meeting, I was hoping to be able to get more insight into a particular clinic they offer. At the beginning of our meeting, they asked me what I have been doing during my time at VCU and to tell them a little about myself. I started spewing information about my academics, my undergraduate research, the internships I've earned, and the work that I have done as an executive board member with the VCU Votes Student Coalition. I told them about the classes I was taking, the clubs I was involved in, and my LSAT study plan, but once I was done speaking, they paused. Fear immediately overcame me. Did I say something wrong? Should I not have mentioned something I did? Was I oversharing? Did something come across in a way I did not mean it to?

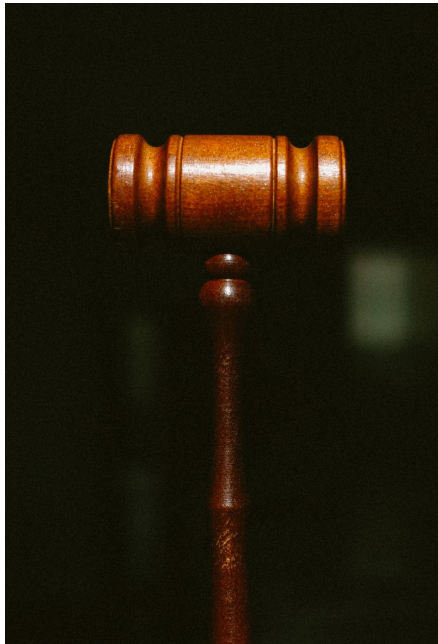
Later that day I could not stop thinking

about the pause. I was still worried I had made some sort of mistake. I was dissecting every word I had said. Then I realized what I did. I told them absolutely nothing about who I am personally, just who I am on paper. All of a sudden it clicked for me.

Based on this meeting alone, all they knew about me was information they could find on my resume. I did not tell them why I want to be an attorney or why I was interested in the clinic I had made the appointment for in the first place. I had given myself value based solely on my tangible achievements and accomplishments, I had seen myself as just who I was on paper, and as crazy as it sounds, this changed my life. I did not get to tell them how passionate I am about a career that makes a difference in the lives of others or how my passion for the Innocence Project sparked my undergraduate research.

When you apply to law schools, you submit an application. When they read your application, they can see who you are on paper; they can see what you have accomplished. Do not get me wrong, your resume is an important piece of your law school application, but they know that you are more than that. At a VCU Pre-Law Society event last year, law school admissions counselors shared that they want to know about you as a person.

So, remember that you are more than what is on your resume and that law schools want to know more about you than what is on your standard application. Share your passions, interests, and hobbies when you're asked to tell someone about yourself. Next time you are meeting with admissions professionals, do not forget to tell them something about yourself other than what is on your resume.



“I had given myself value based solely on my tangible achievements and accomplishments, I had seen myself as just who I was on paper.”

“The Pre-Law Society at Virginia Commonwealth University is a non-partisan organization but provides a platform for members to express personal opinions and experiences. All information posted is strictly for educational and informational purposes. The Society does not endorse these views.”