

Why Networking with Law Students Matters

By Amanda West

As a current law student, I would like to thank all of the women attorneys who have made it possible for me to attend law school. Because of your efforts, over half of the students in my class are women. While great strides have been made to help women graduate from law school, little has changed for women's networking during their law school years.

Although some female networking opportunities exist for women in the legal profession, you can imagine how awkward it might feel as a student at one of these events. As a current student, I found myself surrounded by very confident and successful women who knew each other and were well established in their practice areas. It was easy to feel overwhelmed and intimidated. I remember having awkward conversations with attorneys who seemed far removed from law school.

So why should an attorney worry about networking with women who have not even finished school?

(1) **We need you!** As we all know, the majority of law school professors and law firm partners are male. Because of this gender imbalance, we lack the strong networks that male students develop early in law school.

(2) **You can increase female leadership in the legal profession.** Your personal path to success and your insight will motivate students to follow in your footsteps. Your involvement with women early in their legal studies would potentially decrease the high attrition rate of women practicing law. As women continue to practice law longer, more female attorneys will gain leadership positions in the profession.

(3) **You could meet a future associate.** You might meet a student who would be a

great asset to your firm. These types of students are in high demand from various employers. By acting as a voice for your firm, you will attract the types of women who you want employed as the future associates of your firm.

Ultimately, interacting with law students can help increase female leadership in the legal profession.

Although certain aspects of law school have changed over the years, you may find that you have more in common with law school students than you think. So the next time you see a shy and intimidated student who is dressed in her very best suit, don't be afraid to take the initial step by introducing yourself and welcoming her into the exclusive club of female attorneys.



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