

THE ROLE OF AN ATTORNEY ADVISOR

— A Job Description —

at·tor·ney (ə-tûr' nē) **ad·vis·er** (ăd-vī'zēr) (noun)

1. a lawyer and a member of a chapter board of the J. Reuben Clark Law Society.
2. designee of an attorney chapter board assigned to liaise with local law student chapters.
3. person responsible for facilitating the creation of new student chapters, building successful student chapters and ensuring their continuity year by year, and supporting the integration of law students into their local attorney chapter and the society generally.

I. CREATING NEW STUDENT CHAPTERS

An Attorney Advisor (also called an Attorney Liaison) works together with the Student Chapters Committee (SCC) of the JRCLS International Board to help Student Chapters get organized and become officially recognized.

- A.** An Attorney Advisor can help create Students Chapters. Creating a new Student Chapter is a process that requires students, with the help of their Attorney Advisor and the SCC, to answer at least two questions:
- *Are there sufficient students to create a Student Chapter?* An Attorney Advisor should work with students on the viability of forming a chapter. If there are just a few interested students, seeking official recognition for a Law Society student chapter may not be practical. However, despite small numbers, students may still consider creating a formal chapter at their schools given the funding that traditionally flows to such organizations once recognized by the school.
 - *What steps does the law school require to become a recognized student organization?* An Attorney Advisor should counsel students to follow whatever guidelines are required by their school. Requirements will vary depending on the law school, but often include submitting the names of a minimum number of students (*e.g.*, 7–10 students), a simple constitution and by-laws, a list of officers, and the name of a faculty adviser.
- B.** An Attorney Advisor can help Student Chapters become officially recognized. Once the law school's standards for creating a new student organization are satisfied, an Attorney Advisor can help students become an "officially recognized" chapter of the Society. Official recognition is as simple as submitting an Application Form (www.jrcls.org) and bylaws to, and receiving approval from, the SCC.
- Official recognition establishes a formal connection between the Student Chapter, the local Attorney Chapter, and the Society generally.
 - Official recognition is the gateway to participation on the Society's Student

Chapters International Board (SCIB), which is comprised of the presidents of officially recognized Student Chapters and is designed to serve the needs of Student Chapters collectively.

II. BUILDING SUCCESSFUL STUDENT CHAPTERS

An Attorney Advisor plays a critical role in making sure students' needs are met, and serves as a staple of continuity for student leadership that changes annually.

- A. An Attorney Advisor ensures Student Chapter continuity from year to year. He or she should play a meaningful role in setting the direction of Student Chapters.
- *Keep A Roster.* An Attorney Advisor should work with Student Chapter leaders to maintain a list (updated annually) of student names and email addresses.
 - *Tracking Leadership.* An Attorney Advisor should work with student leaders to track the leadership changes at each law school. Student leaders, with help and encouragement from their Attorney Advisor, should provide the information about new leaders to the SCC by sending the Change of Leadership form in by April 15 of each year (www.jrcls.org).
 - *A Record Shall Be Kept.* An Attorney Advisor should ask each outgoing Student Chapter president to keep a record of members' contact information, activities, Student Chapter funding, agendas, minutes from meetings, *et cetera*. This record is passed on from year to year, allowing new leadership the benefit of past experience.
 - *Early Training.* Student chapter presidents should be trained by their Attorney Advisor early in the school year. (The first few weeks of law school is a critical time for new student leaders: first year law students are arriving, firm recruiting is taking place, and leaders are making their initial impressions.) Student chapter presidents should be trained, *inter alia*, how to recruit new members, about appropriate chapter activities, how to get funding, and the resources available to them from the local chapter and the Society generally.
 - *Recruiting Student Chapter Members.* An Attorney Advisor should work with Student Chapters (and with Attorney Chapters) to seek out new student members. See John Christensen, *Fourteen Ways to Find Potential Members for Your JRCLS Student Chapter* (<http://www.jechristensen.com>).
- B. An Attorney Advisor should pay special attention to Student Chapters in remote locations. He or she should find ways to keep distant chapters integrated. Ideas include: inviting the remote student leaders to participate in the Attorney Chapter board meetings via conference call, establishing relationships through frequent e-mails, inviting remote students to attend all events.
- C. An Attorney Advisor can also fill in if there is a shortage of current student leadership. He or she can serve as the Student Chapter President in the unusual situation that a student cannot be found to serve as president. He or she is

responsible for keeping students without functioning chapters at their school connected to the Attorney Chapter. He or she can reactivate the Student Chapter when new leadership is located at the school.

III. STUDENT CHAPTER INTEGRATION

An Attorney Advisor plays a critical role in making sure students are retained as Society members post-graduation.

- A. An Attorney Advisor connects students and attorneys. He or she is a conduit for training student leaders, conveying announcements, and otherwise connecting students with the Attorney Chapter. He or she can also advise student leaders on activities, possible speakers, finances, and chapter organization.
- *Interconnected Boards.* An Attorney Advisor should be a member of the Student Chapter boards in his or her area. The Student Chapter president (or a student representative) should also be a member of the Attorney Chapter board.
 - *Open Lines Of Communication.* An Attorney Advisor can ensure Student Chapter presidents are (a) invited to attend Attorney Chapter board meetings, (b) placed on the Attorney Chapter board's email list, and (c) asked to invite student members to attend Attorney Chapter events.
 - *Designing and Carrying Out Activities.* An Attorney Advisor should work with Student Chapters to design activities that allow students to network with attorneys. He or she can help Student Chapters contribute in a positive way to their law schools by helping to organize symposia or other educational programs at the school, arranging for speakers, or assisting student leaders in planning inter-school events. The Society has collected a list of potential speakers, called the Speakers Bureau (www.jrcls.org).
 - *Tracking Graduating Students.* An Attorney Advisor can help track each of the graduating students by encouraging students to send in a Notification of Graduation form for each student by April 15 (www.jrcls.org). Law school graduates should become members of the Society chapter for the geographical area in which they work.
- B. An Attorney Advisor can assist the students with career placement and networking. The Society is not a replacement for the placement office of each law school, but it can be a supplement. An Attorney Advisor can assist students in the areas of placement and mentoring through informal means or more structured programs.
- *Law Student Advisor Network.* An Attorney Advisor should encourage students to take advantage of this network of attorneys willing to assist students in their placement efforts (www.jrcls.org) prior to interviewing with a specific firm, agency, or other organization. (Note: students should be strongly discouraged from using this database to send mass email employment solicitations.)
 - *Supplementing Law Schools' Career Placement.* An Attorney Advisor can work with students to develop lists of local attorneys available to assist students with their placement efforts, hold a pre-interview season event designed to assist

students in placement, and/or prepare materials offering substantive guidance to students interviewing in the area.

- *Mentoring Programs.* With the help of an Attorney Advisor and the Attorney Chapter, attorney mentors can be arranged for student members. Such a program can be formal (*e.g.*, having scheduled meetings between mentor and student) or informal (*e.g.*, circulating names and contact information of possible mentors, as well as their area of expertise, among those interested Student Chapter members).