

A man in a dark suit and red tie stands on a balcony, leaning on a wooden railing. He is smiling and holding a black folder. The background features a large window with a grid pattern. A red text box is overlaid on the right side of the image.

Graduating from Student to Professional:

Tips on Proper and Effective
Communication of Law
School Admission Officers

Crystal Nance

Ideally, you will have the opportunity to meet face-to-face with an admission officer from all of the law schools that you are interested in. Time, money and travel may be an issue if you are interested in a law school that is not within a day's drive. Here are some things to keep in mind as you explore various law schools and interact with the people who will help you get there:

Face-to-face contact

Treat it like a job interview. While a tuxedo may be over the top, a nice collared shirt and slacks will never go out of style. You will not be offered admission on the basis of style, but only positive things can be thought and said about an individual that is well put together and looks like business.

Cell phones can be a distraction so put them on silent and keep them out of sight. You want to focus on the conversation at hand with the admissions officer; text messages and social media notifications can wait.

Many of us depend on friends and family for support and that support will be critical as you pursue your law degree. It can easily be distracting to have your parents alongside you while talking with various recruiters at an LSAC (Law School Admission Council) forum or graduate and professional school fair, especially if they are asking all of the questions and not you. Demonstrate your confidence and ability to make adult decisions. Parents and guests are welcome to attend on-campus visits and open houses, but the visit is truly all about you as the prospective or admitted student.

Don't forget to plan ahead when you have the opportunity to meet recruiters. If you know that a particular law school will be visiting your campus, take the time to research their websites and go armed with specific questions. "Can you tell me about your program?" is a vague question and might not yield the type of information you are truly seeking. Finally, consider asking questions that would not appear on a law school's website.

Email communication


Grammar and proper punctuation are very important in any kind of written communication, so keep that in mind as you are emailing admissions officers. "Hey (insert recruiter name)," would not be an appropriate way to start an email since you are communicating with professionals, not a peer.

Your email address itself is equally important. Consider the impression you are making with an email address such as badchick69@gmail.com. Chances are the impression is not favorable. It might be beneficial to create an email address such as firstname.lastname@gmail.com to keep track of your communication with various law schools. Also, be aware of when your college or university email address expires. If you are graduating, it may expire and you could miss information from law schools if you've only provided that address.

Phone contact

As a country, we value freedom of expression. While you're expressing yourself, don't neglect professionalism. Over the phone, this means having an appropriate voicemail greeting (no music playing), rethinking call tones and only answering the phone when you are in the position to have a distraction free conversation.

All in all, go for formal over informal, no matter what method you are using to communicate with an admission officer. Put your best foot forward and demonstrate your ability to flip from undergraduate student to aspiring lawyer!

A man in a dark suit, white shirt, and red tie stands on a balcony. He is smiling slightly and looking towards the camera. His right hand is on a wooden railing, and his left hand is in his pocket. The background is a large, multi-paned window with a grid pattern. The entire image has a red tint.

Crystal M. Nance, M.Ed. currently serves as the Assistant Director of Admission and Diversity Initiatives at Drake Law School. She is in familiar territory at Drake; she earned degrees in public relations and sociology from the university in 2010. Before returning to Drake in 2012, Crystal served as the Parent and Family Services Coordinator at Northern Arizona University, implementing innovative ideas to increase the level of parental engagement and involvement with the university. Crystal has recently presented workshops at the Power in Diversity Leadership Conference at St. Cloud State University and Big XII Conference on Black Student Government at Kansas State University on the importance of diversifying law school classrooms and ultimately the legal profession. She earned her master of education in human relations from Northern Arizona University in August 2012.