

Have I found the Area of Law I Love Already?

Elizabeth Pearce, Florida State University

We kicked off Week 5 with a direct and cross examination seminar, led by Miami partner Steve Smith, to get ready for our workshop on Thursday. The preparation for this workshop was pretty similar to our preparation for our mock deposition earlier this summer. I felt like my performance in our other workshops was stronger than my performance during this workshop, but I took plenty of notes and received good feedback that I plan to implement for the upcoming mock trial.

As for the rest of this week, I had so much fun connecting with the attorneys in the office. My mentor, Kayla, and I had dinner together on Wednesday, and on Friday we had a really fun attorney lunch at the office. I got to learn a bit about the firm's founding and listened to some hilarious stories about past cases. It was a fantastic way to start the long weekend. The group in the Tallahassee office is awesome and I'm thankful I get to work with them.

I'm learning quickly that I really enjoy education and employment law projects. I never expected to be so interested in either area! Specifically, I have had a great time working with partner Leonard Dietzen. He sends me numerous small research projects throughout the week. Education law is constantly changing, so sometimes an answer I find earlier in the week might be different by the end of the week. Being at the forefront of some of these issues has been super exciting.

This week was especially interesting in the education world, as the Florida Commissioner of Education sent out information to schools about the Department's plans to implement the Florida Legislature's teacher bonus program. My mentor gave me the idea to read through the information and create a "cheat sheet" for Leonard's clients so they could answer their employees' questions about the program. I put together a rough draft on Thursday, and after a lot of back and forth edits with Leonard, we had a final product ready to go before the long weekend. It was really rewarding to take initiative on this project and see it come together so quickly. Although I know I went to law school to pursue a legal career, I really like the business development side of working for the firm. Leonard has taught me some of the basics on how to maintain client relationships and build new ones. I never thought about this specific part of "firm life" before, but it has been quite the experience and I look forward to learning about it more as the summer continues.