

# MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Ashley Akers, Chair, FBA Law Student Division

**FROM:** Mimi Tsankov  
Chair, FBA International Law Section

**DATE:** April 13, 2018

**RE:** FBA ILS Video Conferencing Mock Interview Program

## **Introduction**

On April 13, 2018, the FBA International Law Section (ILS) is conducting another of its expanding FBA Video Conferencing Mock Interview Programs. Coordinated through the University of Georgia (UGA), School of Law LL.M. program, and with the support of FBA ILS Student Liaison, Adriana-Maria Sarria, Graduate Research Assistant and UGA LL.M. Candidate, nine University of Georgia LL.M. students are participating in individualized 1/2 hour video conferencing mock interview sessions with volunteers members of the FBA ILS leadership.

This program builds on a program developed by Dean Toni Jaeger-Fine, Fordham University School of Law and FBA ILS Board Member, Raymond Dowd, former FBA General Counsel, Vice President for the Second Circuit, member of the Board of Directors, and President of the Southern District of New York Chapter, and Susan Kilgore, Membership Chair, FBA ILS. During the program, FBA volunteers conduct multiple video conference mock interviews, and provide individualized and detailed feedback to fine-tune student interviewing skills.

## **Background**

The Fordham University Law School's annual Mock Interview Program has brought together Fordham LL.M. students with seasoned practitioners, judges, and other attorneys for an evening of interviews followed by a networking reception. This program was co-founded through a joint FBA-Fordham Law School partnership. It has given students and academic leaders an exposure to practitioners and judges that they they might otherwise never have engaged. The program has also presented opportunities to engage affinity bar associations, and, in 2018, enjoyed the co-sponsorship of the Asian American Bar Association of New York (AABANY).

Among the many benefits offered by this program, students have had the opportunity to develop interviewing and networking skills and to explore employment opportunities in numerous practice areas. It has also given the Fordham Law School the chance to showcase itself and its programs to a broad range of professionals. Many of the participating interviewers have reported that they have been delighted with the quality and diversity of the students. Moreover, the

program offers a great stewardship opportunity for the Law School and alumni and furthers the Law School's strategic goals to connect current students with alumni.

The FBA has played a key leadership role in the Mock Interview Program. In 2017, then-FBA President Judge Michael Newman traveled to New York City to support the program launch. Despite the challenge of a Nor'easter snowstorm, participation was "at capacity" and the kickoff was extremely successful. Chief Judge Timothy Stanceu of the Court of International Trade was contacted by FBA Second Circuit Vice President Olivera Medenica and also agreed to be on hand to launch the program.

The FBA Immigration Law Section was represented at the event by its then-Deputy Chair Mimi Tsankov. The Federal Litigation Section Chair John McCarthy, FBA leader Simeon Baum, and FBA Civil Rights Section Chair Wylie Stecklow have all acted as mock interviewers and supported this effort. The program has also had the support of the Network of Bar Leaders. Second Circuit Judge Denny Chin was the keynote speaker at this year's event, and FBA Federal Litigation Section Board Member Judge Loretta Preska of the Southern District of New York already has agreed to deliver next year's keynote.

### **Program Expansion**

The FBA International Law Section has participated in both events held thus far. In 2018, FBA ILS Board Member Susan Kilgore expanded the program to conduct mock interviews via videoconference from Texas for Fordham students that were unable to attend on the day of the event. All reports were that this expansion offered an extremely beneficial add-on to an otherwise very successful program.

Building on that success, the FBA ILS has further expanded the Video Conferencing Mock Interview program to the University of Georgia LL.M. program, and has thereby dramatically increased the number of attorneys and students who are able to participate in this useful program. While the Video Conferencing Mock Interview program was designed for LL.M. student programs, it easily could be expanded to support J.D. students, as well.

### **Going forward**

The FBA ILS is expanding the Video Conferencing Mock Interview program and is reaching out to all FBA ILS Law School Student Liaisons to optimize access to current and future FBA ILS members. We hope to partner with the FBA Law Student Division to explore expansion of the program to that group's membership. In support of that effort, we have organized the following sample materials for ease of program replication.

Attachment A - Sample in-person event schedule

Attachment B - Sample Videoconference Mock Interview Program Organizational Process

Attachment C - Sample Mock Interview Questions

Attachment D - Sample FBA News Report

Attachment E - Sample Photos from the April 13, 2018 program

## **Attachment A**

### Sample in-person event schedule

5:30 PM – 8:00 PM Interviews, Remarks, & Reception

5:30	Guests arrive, registration opens
6:00	First interview
6:20	Students rotate- second interview
6:40	Students rotate- third and final interview
7:10	Guests are invited to the reception
7:20	FBA Representative welcomes guests, thanks interviewers, and introduces Presiding Judge
7:25	Presiding Judge welcomes guests
8:00	Event concludes

**Attachment B**

Sample Videoconference Mock Interview Program Organizational Process

1. Identify FBA Student Liaison Program Coordinator
2. Identify interested LL.M. students
3. Identify available FBA Interviewer Members
4. FBA Student Liaison Program Coordinator forwards resumes to FBA Interviewer Members
5. 30-minute Interview schedule finalized

<b>VIDEOCONFERENCE MOCK INTERVIEW PROGRAM</b>	
<b>8:30 AM</b>	
<b>9:00 AM</b>	
<b>9:30 AM</b>	
<b>10:00 AM</b>	
<b>2:30 PM</b>	
<b>3:00 PM</b>	
<b>3:30 PM</b>	
<b>4:00 PM</b>	
<b>4:30 PM</b>	

6. Provide Skype/FaceTime contact information to FBA Student Liaison Program Coordinator
7. Conduct Interviews - 20 minutes interview and 10 minutes feedback
8. Query FBA Student Liaison Program Coordinator for feedback
9. Finalize with a write up for the FBA The Federal Lawyer Magazine, the FBA ILS newsletter, and the FBA ILS webpage.

## Attachment C

### Sample Mock Interview Questions

1. Tell me a little about yourself -- where are you from and why did you apply for this LL.M. program in the U.S.?
2. Do you have experience working as a lawyer in your home country?
3. What do you consider to be your most challenging weakness?
4. What are your long-term career goals?
5. What has been one of your more challenging professional situations? How did you handle it?
6. Why should a firm/company hire you?
7. What do I need to know about you that is not in your resume?
8. What qualifications do you have that will help you be successful in law practice?
9. What qualities set you apart from other candidates?
10. How do you think you can contribute to a firm's practice or organization?
11. Which of your accomplishments have given you the most satisfaction?
12. Why did you choose law as a career?
13. Do you think working in a team is important and, if so, why?
14. Do you see yourself as a litigator or transactional lawyer? Why?
15. Do you have any questions for me?

## Attachment D

### Sample FBA News Report

On January 22, 2018, Fordham Law School Dean and FBA International Law Section Board Member Toni Jaeger-Fine and FBA SDNY Chapter Board Member Ray Dowd hosted a Fordham International Law Affinity Group training and networking event at Fordham Law School. The program involved a series of Mock Interviews with leaders in the legal community, followed by a presentation by the Honorable Denny Chin, and a cocktail reception. FBA International Law Section Chair Mimi Tsankov participated, as well. In addition, we are proud to report that Susan Kilgore, Membership Chair, FBA International Law Section, went the extra mile, and conducted a series of Mock Interviews via Skype from Texas for students who were unable to participate in the actual event. Following is a sampling of the feedback we have received:

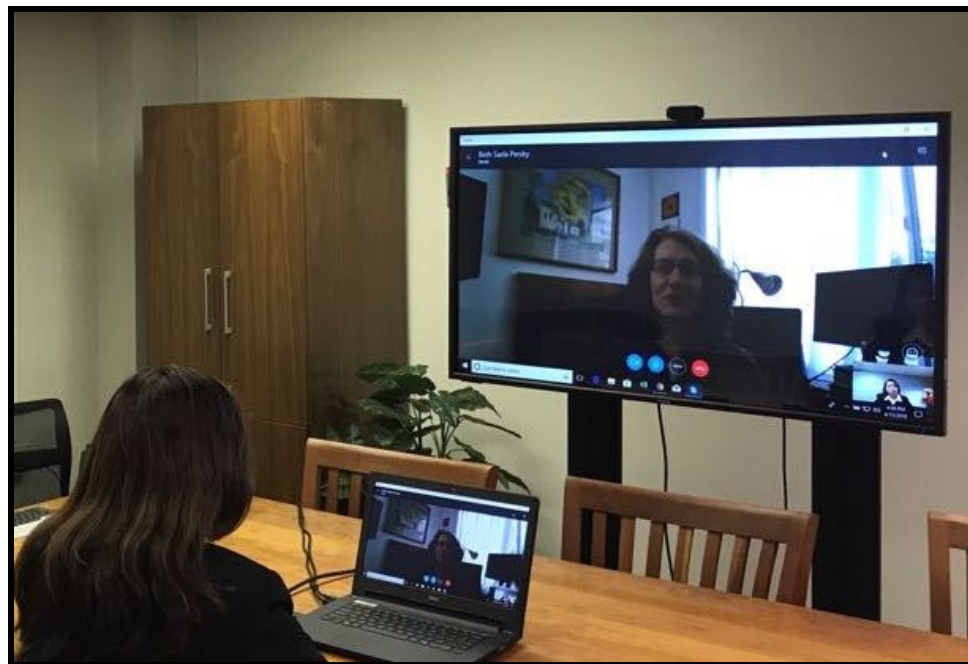
- Across the board, students report positive experiences about participating in this program;
- Practitioners report that since they don't have the pressure of offering an actual job they are relaxed and feel that it is a worthy service to the school;
- Law School faculty report that students absorb job search information better in non-classroom setting from experienced practitioners;
- Law School faculty report that mock interviewers have acted – without any obligation to do so -- as mentors following the program;
- Practitioners report that they are often amazed at the quality of students;
- Students report greater student awareness of internships and job opportunities from networking; and
- Law School faculty reports that the program raises the profile of the Fordham Law School among practitioners and alums.

**Attachment E**

Photos from the April 13, 2018 Event



Pictured (L to R) LL.M. Student Valerya Subocheva, FBA ILS Student Liaison and LL.M. Student Adriana-Maria Sarria, FBA ILS Chair Mimi Tsankov, LL.M. Student Jasmine Zou



Pictured (L to R) LL.M. Student Thelma-Aguilar Pierce, FBA ILS Secretary Beth Persky





Pictured (L to R) LL.M. Student Samaneh Pourhassan, FBA ILS Board Member and Membership Chair Susan Kilgore