

Changing Times, Changing CDO

To help Boalt students adapt to the job market's changes and new realities, the Career Development Office (CDO) has made changes, too, says Terry Galligan. It now has three staffers who focus on helping students find alternatives to the Big Law career path. Melanie Rowen and Alex Lee, both of whom have experience in nonprofit organizations, work to assist students interested in public-interest and public-sector careers.

"As a public institution, Boalt has a culture that strongly supports those career choices," Galligan notes. "Also, the dean has recently made further improvements to our LRAP"—the Loan Repayment Assistance Program, which covers up to \$100,000 in law-school debt for graduates

in qualifying public-interest jobs. "We have probably the best loan-forgiveness program of any public law school now," says Galligan, "and it's helping a lot of our alums who are interested in taking that path."

A recent addition to the CDO staff is Samorn Selim '09, who helps connect students to small, mid-size, and boutique firms, which generally lack the recruiting resources of large firms. Selim—who specifically sought (and successfully found) a job at a mid-size firm after graduating—explains that the search process is different, and at times daunting. "It takes more initiative," she says. "Unlike Big Law, there's no comprehensive list such as Vault or the *National Law Journal* that lists all boutique, small, and mid-size firms in one

place, so it takes more work to figure out what's out there."

Not every law school grad fits the needs of a small or mid-size firm, Selim says. "These firms are looking for particular strengths. They want people with initiative, entrepreneurship, and business development skills—the ability to come in and help grow the business."

By the same token, the work in small and mid-size law firms doesn't necessarily fit the needs of every student. "If you want more structure, training, and supervision, it might not be for you," Selim concedes. "But if you're like me—if you want to hit the ground running, and if you want to be writing motions and managing your own cases within a couple of years—it can be a great fit."