

## A Student's Perspective – Legal Writing Academy Interviews

### Selena

M: Hi, my name is Michele, and I am a Writing Leader with the Legal Writing Academy. I am here today with Selena, a first-year student, who will be talking about her experience at the debrief session for the *Doré* case summary assignment. So, Selena, how useful was the session?

S: The session was extremely useful. Not only did myself and some of the students there get hands-on support by the writing leaders who have gone through this process before, but I walked out of that session feeling more confident about future assignments.

M: That's so great to hear! So, what did you learn from the session?

S: The two lessons that I got from the session [include] the pre-writing stage: so, how do I plan my writing and organize my ideas and thoughts and answers related to the questions posed by the assignment? And the second was that we are engaging in comparative legal analysis. So, how do the facts compare from the *Doré* case to the facts in the ... Ms. King and the Canterbury scenario? Being able to create a chart, with the importance and usefulness of using some of these tools, to engage in comparative factual analysis in order to draw much more coherent predictions of how the case can move forward.

M: That's good. I'm happy you identified the pre-writing stage because sometimes we forget how important that is for the *actual* writing piece that we end up with.

S: Yes.

M: So, how did the writing leaders help you?

S: The writing leaders were available on-hand ... As I was performing certain exercises that were posed by the Facilitator, there were certain questions running through my head that were running through my head when I was trying to complete this assignment, but I had no one to really talk to because other students had similar questions but weren't sure how to proceed. So, to have these writing leaders present to answer my questions as the thought emerges in my brain was extremely helpful and gave me a peace of mind and the confidence I felt I was missing.

M: That's good! Thank you so much for your time!

S: Thank you for having me, and I hope this is super helpful to others!

## A Student's Perspective – Legal Writing Academy Interviews

### Tino

M: Hi, my name is Michele, and I am a Writing Leader with the Legal Writing Academy. I am here today with Tino, a first-year student, who will be talking about his experience at the debrief session for the *Doré* case summary assignment. So, Tino, how useful was the session?

T: I found the session to be very useful. I think it's one thing to be given an assignment and to be given some instructions, and then do the assignment and receive feedback—obviously, you pay attention to what is said in the comments, but when you actually see it presented to you and you actually have the guidance of someone taking you through step-by-step it's very useful. I found that the exercises we did at the session were incredibly useful to me because there were some things I thought I did really well, but after evaluation where I was dissecting my assignment, I thought I could have done things even better. So, in that sense, I was very happy that I attended, and found it to be very useful.

M: That's great—thank you. What did you learn from the session?

T: One of the main things that I learned was the importance of “because.” It seems like something that is so simple, I mean, in an assignment like this where you're meant to give an opinion, it seems obvious that you're explaining something. You explain the scenario, and then you explain how you come to the conclusion of what's going to happen, but to actually put the word in “because,” it's such a service to the reader ... because when we actually get out there and we're writing these for lawyers who are very busy, they might not have the time ... to look at what we've read, they want something that's concrete and very to the point ... and that's an excellent tool to speed things up. [Showing the reader] this is what you have to see and why. The second really valuable thing I learned from the session was the importance of quoting in a ... memo. I didn't make extensive use of quotations ... but in an assignment like this where we're really comparing the words of the two individuals and seeing how they are different and how they are the same, I think I would have made better use and included more ... Now, it seems obvious to me, but when I was actually doing the assignment, it flew over my head. So, I'm happy that I went to [the session] because of that as well. And for the next assignment, I'll definitely focus on the words of the parties.

M: Those are really good learning points. So, how did the writing leaders help you?

T: They were fantastic as well. I think we all really benefitted from the fact that there were so many of them ... so whether or not someone had an individual question or just doing the exercises given to us, they were of tremendous assistance. I remember at one point in the session [...] I asked the [writing leader] if it was okay that I [placed certain things] in different areas [in my memo], or should I have focused on putting it in the reasoning section, and she actually went up and asked the main instructor the question for me, and came back and explained the answer. So, I think that, obviously, there is a lot of room to learn by ourselves, but to have people who have been in your position before, and they are offering assistance—I think it's great. So, I really I think I benefitted from the writing leaders being there as well. Overall, I think it was a very useful experience ...

M: That's so great to hear! Thank you so much, Tino, for your time!

T: Thank you.