

My Summer Associate Experience: Sofia Fernandez

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Our 2023 Summer Associate Program brought 14 law students from eight law schools to the firm for an intellectually challenging and professionally gratifying experience. The students took part in firm-sponsored social events and community service projects throughout the summer in addition to attending client meetings, depositions, court hearings and other proceedings. Nearing the end of the program, the students agreed to share a few highlights from their summer at Shutts.

Sofia D. Fernandez joined Shutts' Miami office from the Florida International University College of Law. Sofia is a Dean's Full Scholarship Recipient and a member of the FIU Law Review.

Below, Sofia shares her thoughts on her summer at Shutts.

Why did you choose to join Shutts for the summer?

I applied to Shutts for a summer associate position through my school on-campus interview process in the summer of 2022. My mentors at school expressed to me what a reputable firm Shutts is. After visiting the Miami office for my second interview and meeting several associates and partners, I knew it was my first choice for a summer associate position. Everyone was very welcoming and genuine. I felt that the work culture mirrored my personal values.

What advice would you give to someone looking for a summer associate position on how to be successful?

First, be a team player. Take advantage of the other summer associates and attorneys in the firm: this is the time to begin making relationships and working together towards a common goal. Second, try to pursue assignments from as many practice groups as possible. This will help you discover what you are most interested in, and it will also allow you to gain as much experience as possible. Third, do not be afraid to ask questions. Everyone here is eager to help you learn and become a better law student/future attorney. Finally, be yourself. Do not be afraid to be social and establish relationships. This will make your summer even more memorable.

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What is something that you learned or a new skill that you gained during the summer program?

I gained a variety of different skills throughout the summer program. I was able to gain a vast amount of experience in transactional work. I was able to draft documents and conduct research that is very different from litigation work. I did not have prior experience in transactional work, so I was very grateful to have that opportunity during the summer. I also improved my research and writing skills (and even drafted several motions and complaints). Therefore, my litigation skills drastically improved as well. I have become a much more well-rounded legal professional.

What were your expectations for the summer and have they been met (or exceeded)?

My expectation was to hopefully expose myself to as many practice groups as possible since this program was rotational. I also hoped to develop my writing skills and gain some experience in transactional work. The program exceeded my expectations. I learned areas of the law I never thought of working in (or even knew existed) and I networked with many professionals on a regular basis.

About Shutts & Bowen LLP

Shutts & Bowen, established in 1910, is a full-service business law firm with approximately 270 lawyers in offices in Ft. Lauderdale, Jacksonville, Miami, Orlando, Sarasota, Tallahassee, Tampa, and West Palm Beach. Learn more about Shutts & Bowen at www.shutts.com.

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