



Legal Liftoff 2026



Pictured, left to right: Emily Harmon (Term Law Clerk, UWCOL '25), Aaron Swaney II (1L), Hon. Kelly H. Rankin U.S. District Court Judge for the District of Wyoming (UWCOL '94)

opportunity

Legal Liftoff is a mentorship program held over Spring Break to provide students with a mentor who provides insight into real world practice and discussion of a wide variety of topics.

Students develop professional skills and positive early practice protocols to utilize as they begin their legal journeys.

Student: Aaron Swaney II, 1L Employer: U.S. District Court, District of Wyoming

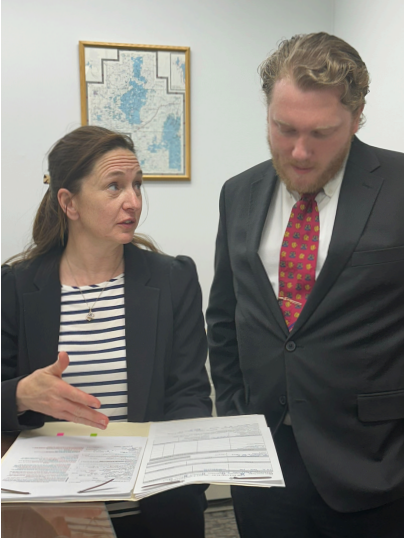
“The chamber's staff was welcoming and engaging. They quickly included me on tasks and facilitated attendance at several hearings with three different judges. I enjoyed getting a feel for the flow of the office and gathering the insight into both the type of work the court clerks get to do, and the work's importance to the outcomes it produces.”

Aaron spent time completing legal research to help with a project. He attended a change of plea hearing, sentencing, scheduling conference and motions hearing.



Student: Joe Lockey, 2L

Employer: Crook County Attorney's Office



Pictured, left to right: Carina Ostberg (Deputy County Attorney, UWCOL '12), Joe Lockey (2L)

“Very wonderful, I had a great time at my placement and would recommend it to anyone who wants to get some office experience on their spring break.

[I]...got to see a forensic interview, watch two arraignments, a disposition for a case, and a civil hearing. Got to sit in on meetings with a lawyer from Secretary of State's trademark office and the County Tourism Board, and got to research a few issues that came up while I was at the office.”

“I have never had an intern show up so ready and willing to go to work...! He asked for projects and the work he did was solid and took care of some issues on my never-ending to-do list which I appreciate.

We also made the required trip to Devil's Tower (see below), so he was able to experience some of the outdoor experiences and local color that is Crook County.”

- Crook County Attorney Mentor



Pictured, left to right: Cindy Holland (Victim/Witness & Juvenile Services Officer), Joe Lockey (2L), Kaitee Hernandez (Legal Assistant) and DaNece Day (Crook County and Prosecuting Attorney, UWCOL '96)



Student: Clay Long, 3L

Employer: Fremont County Attorney's Office

“Nice opportunity. I hope it continues.

Although a student might not want to move to a certain area - they should not overlook what they can learn. They can learn a significant amount from the intimate contact with legal professionals, courts, and processes potentially shielded in larger geographic locations too busy to give them the contact and mentoring busy workplaces can't.

...I regret not using [this program] sooner.”



Student: Morgan Compton, 1L

Employer: 1st Judicial District of Colorado District Attorney's Office

"Loved the program. I think it's a great opportunity to sort of see what legal opportunities could be out there post law school as well as making connections in the legal community."

Got lots of answers from both the attorneys I worked with as well as the county court judge I was able to speak with, and she was able to give me advice and answers to questions I had."

Pictured left to right: Rachael Willihnganz (1st Judicial District of Colorado District Attorney's Office), and Morgan Compton (1L)

Students: Hunter Slatten, 1L and Cross de la Cruz 2L

Employer: The Spence Law Firm

Overall, this program was great. It gave me to opportunity to get hands on experience before the completion of my first year.



"The students attend the firm's weekly meeting and an associate lunch. They conducted discrete research projects for attorneys, reviewed a potential case, sat in on a client call, and observed a meeting with a contractor for demonstrative exhibits for trial."

-Spence Law Firm Mentor



Pictured left to right: Hunter Slatten (1L) and Cross de la Cruz (2L)

Employer Feedback

We appreciate students getting 1 week exploration. Committing to a semester internship can be tough i[f] a student isn't sure, plus we only have a few internship positions available, so this lets us see more people, and for them to see us.

Seems like a great opportunity for 1L students to get exposure to future legal careers!

We encouraged the 1L to apply to our 2L summer position.

The students were great!

"I really enjoyed the opportunity to get to see what a day of working in the DA's office was actually like. It was great to get to ask questions and see a variety of different things that were being balanced. It was helpful to learn from people that were actually doing the job that I want to do.

I asked a lot of questions about the trial so I learned about jury selection and the way that the process works in Larimer County. I also learned about what managing witnesses and the order of trial looks like. I asked questions about what the daily job was like and learned about what the prosecutors have to do when new charges come in, what preparing for docket looks like..."

~Samantha Yeakley, 1L, partnered with the 8th Judicial District Attorney's Office

Thank you

We are deeply grateful to the supervising mentors and applaud the students who took advantage of this program! See you next year!

Kristin Lanouette, MS, LPC, NCC
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College of Law
Career Services

<http://www.uwyo.edu/law/career-services/index.html>