



National Association for Law Placement
2021 SURVEY OF
CANADIAN LAW SCHOOL
CAREER SERVICES OFFICES

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INTRODUCTION

The 2021 NALP Survey of Canadian Law School Career Services Offices was conducted during May 2021. A total of 17 schools completed the survey, representing eight provinces. Because of the small number of responses possible for this survey, most analyses are at the national level only; in a few instances analyses are also based on law school enrollment. Additionally, because few schools reported more than three staff members in the career services office, staff members reported in the 4th–6th positions were combined to provide sufficient data points for analysis.

Finally, some findings are reported out in footnotes or text only, as the item was applicable to only a few respondents.

Table 1. Staffing Levels

	Overall (N = 17)	By Total Enrollment (JD/LLB and graduate students)	
		Less than 500 (N = 8)	500 or more (N = 9)
Professional Staff—Full-time			
Average number	1.9	1.4	2.3
% reporting one	35.3%	62.5%	11.1%
% reporting two	47.1%	37.5%	55.6%
% reporting three or more	17.6%	0	33.3%
Support Staff—Full-time			
Average number	0.6	0.4	0.9
% reporting none	47.1%	62.5%	33.3%
% reporting one	41.2%	37.5%	44.4%
% reporting two	11.8%	0	22.2%
Paid Student Assistants—Part-time, Fall 2020			
Average number	1.2	0.4	2.0
% reporting none	52.9%	75.0%	33.3%
% reporting one	23.5%	25.0%	33.3%
% reporting two or more	23.5%		33.3%
Paid Student Assistants—Part-time, Spring 2021			
Average number	1.4	0.4	2.2
% reporting none	47.1%	75.0%	22.2%
% reporting one	23.5%	25.0%	33.3%
% reporting two or more	29.4%		44.4%
Student Volunteers			
Average number	3.9	1.4	6.1
% reporting none	58.8%	75.0%	44.4%
% reporting 1-9	23.5	25.0%	22.2%
% reporting 10 or more	17.6%	0.0	33.3%

Note: Few schools reported staff in other categories. Reporting was as follows:

Five schools reported one or two part-time professional staff, in the role of counselor. Three schools reported one or two part-time support staff. About 70% of schools reported having no full-time student assistants during summer 2020; most of the rest reported having one student assistant. Just one school reported having a full-time student assistant during fall 2020; just one reported a full-time student assistant during spring 2021. Three schools reported having one or more part-time student assistants during summer 2020. Staff in the 'other' category was reported by one school and described as professional contract staff.

Table 2. Staffing for Specific Functions

	Overall (N = 17)	By Total Enrollment (JD/LLB and graduate students)	
		Less than 500 (N = 8)	500 or more (N = 9)
Staff person for employer outreach	29.4%	25.0%	33.3%
Staff person for wellness or personal counseling	70.6	50.0	88.9
Judicial Clerkship Counseling Provided By			
Designated CSO staff	58.8	62.5	55.6
Any available CSO counselor/staff	64.7	50.0	77.8
Clerkship advising is independent of CSO	17.7	25.0	11.1
Other*	17.7	25.0	11.1
Career Counseling for Graduate Students Provided By			
Designated CSO staff**	7.7	NC	11.1
Any available CSO counselor/staff**	61.5	NC	66.7
Graduate student office staff**	46.2	NC	44.4
Other (faculty noted)**	30.8	NC	33.3
School does not have graduate students	23.5	50.0	0.0
Public Interest/Government Counseling Provided By			
Designated CSO staff	35.3	50.0	22.2
Any available CSO counselor/staff	70.6	50.0	88.9

Note: More than one response could be chosen for the counseling questions, so percentages add up to more than 100%. NC indicates that percentages were not calculated as the overall number of schools in the category is less than five. Designated staff may be the only staff in the office.

No schools reported having a staff person primarily dedicated to alumni counseling. The staff person primarily dedicated to wellness/personal counseling may or may not be in the careers office.

Two schools reported offering a masters in law program. Career counseling for these students is provided outside of the CSO.

*Others described include faculty or a faculty committee for Supreme Court clerkships, in addition to the CSO.

**Overall figures are based on 13 schools which reported having graduate students.

No schools reported having a separate public interest office or other public interest counseling model.

Table 3. **Characteristics of Primary Staff Person**

Titles Reported*	
Director	64.7%
Assistant Dean	11.8%
Other, e.g., Coordinator, Officer, Manager	23.5%
Years in Current Job	
Less than 4 years	47.0%
4 or more years	53.0%
Average number of years	7.0
Years in Field	
8 years or less	47.0%
More than 8 years	53.0%
Average number of years	10.6
LLB/JD?	
Yes	76.5%
Prior Practice (N=13)?	
Yes	100.0%
Current License Status (N = 13)	
Practicing member of a provincial law society	7.7%
Non-practicing member of a provincial law society	76.9%
Not a member of a provincial law society	15.4%
Salaries for Full-time Staff (N = 15)	
Median	\$96,000
Average	\$100,950
Half of salaries fell in range from:	\$88,000 – 118,800
Time Spent on Career Counseling	
None	0.0
Less than 25%	29.4%
26-50%	17.6%
51-75%	47.1%
More than 75%	5.9%

Note: The number reporting is 17 unless otherwise noted. All but one of these individuals were reported as professional full-time staff. Salary figures have been rounded to the nearest \$25.

*Titles have been grouped into categories based on the presence of the word(s) in the title.

Other advanced degrees described are at the Master's level, including MBA, Med, and MSW.

Table 4. **Characteristics of Second Staff Person**

Titles Reported*	
Counsellor/advisor	50.0%
Coordinator, Assistant, Specialist	28.6%
Other, e.g., officer, director	21.4%
Job Characteristics (N =13)	
Professional full-time	84.6%
Professional part-time	0
Support full-time	15.4%
Years in Current Job	
5 years or less	50.0%
More than 5 years	50.0%
Average number of years	8.9
Years in Field	
6 years or less	42.9%
More than 6 years	57.1%
Average number of years	10.3
LLB/JD? **	
Yes	50.0%
Salaries for Full-time Staff (# reporting = 12)	
Median	\$81,675
Average	\$80,025
Half of salaries fell in range from:	\$71,500- 90,400
Time Spent on Career Counseling	
None	7.1%
Less than 25%	14.3%
26-50%	0
51-75%	28.6%
More than 75%	50.0%

Note: The number reporting is 14 unless otherwise noted. Salary figures have been rounded to the nearest \$25.

*Titles have been grouped into categories based on the presence of the word(s) in the title.

**Those individuals with a JD have all practiced previously, but are currently non-practicing members of a provincial law society.

Other advanced degrees described include MA, MEd, and MLIS.

Table 5. **Characteristics of Third Staff Reported**

Titles Reported*	
Advisor/Counsellor	70.0%
Coordinator	20.0%
Other title	10.0%
Job Characteristics	
Professional full-time	60.0%
Professional part-time	30.0%
Support full-time	10.0%
Years in Current Job (N = 10)	
3 years or less	60.0%
More than 3 years	40.0%
Average number of years	4.1
Years in Field (N = 10)	
Less than five years	50.0%
Five years or more	50.0%
Average number of years	9.6
LLB/JD?***	
Yes	40%
Salaries for Full-time Staff (# reporting = 7)	
Median	\$63,000
Average	\$68,100
Time Spent on Career Counseling	
None	30.0%
Less than 25%	0
26-50%	0
51-75%	40.0%
More than 75%	30.0%

Note: The number reporting is 10 unless otherwise noted. Salary figures have been rounded to the nearest \$25. Since fewer than 10 salaries were reported, only the median and average are shown.

*Titles have been grouped into categories based on the presence of the word(s) in the title.

** Those individuals with a JD have all practiced previously, but none are currently practicing members of a provincial law society. Due to the small number, further break-outs are not reported.

Other advanced degrees described include MA in counselling, and MEd.

Table 6. **Characteristics of Additional Staff Reported**

Titles Reported*	
Advisor/Counsellor	18.2%
Coordinator/Administrator	45.5%
Secretary/Assistant	27.3%
Other	9.1%
Job Characteristics	
Professional full-time	9.1%
Professional part-time	18.2%
Support full-time	54.5%
Support part-time	18.2%
Years in Current job (N = 7)	
3 years or less	57.1%
More than 3 years	42.9%
Average number of years	7.0
Years in Field (N = 7)	
Less than five years	42.9%
Five years or more	57.1%
Average number of years	7.7
LLB/JD? **	
Yes	18.2%
Salaries for Full-time Staff (# reporting = 7)	
Median	\$58,300
Average	\$62,200
Time Spent on Career Counseling	
None	63.6%
Less than 25%	18.2%
26-50%	
51-75%	18.2%
More than 75%	0

Note: The number reporting is 11 unless otherwise noted and are a combination of 4th, 5th, and 6th staff members reported, with counts of 6, 4, and 1, respectively. Salary figures have been rounded to the nearest \$25. Since fewer than 10 salaries were reported only the median and average are shown.

*Titles have been grouped into categories based on the presence of the word(s) in the title.

**Those individuals with a JD have all practiced previously, but are currently a non-practicing member of provincial law society.

Other advanced degrees described include MEd.

Table 7. **Other Duties Performed by Staff**

	Primary staff person (N = 17)	Second staff person (N = 14)	Third staff person (N = 10)	Additional staff (N = 11)
Program development and career education	100.0%	92.9%	70.0	36.4%
Recruitment initiatives	100.0	92.9	80.0	90.1
Employer outreach	88.2	64.3	60.0	54.6
Development and Fundraising	23.5	0	0	9.1
Management/ administrative duties	94.1	21.4	20.0	27.3
Experiential learning or law co-op programs	41.2	21.4	20.0	18.2
Wellness or personal counselling	23.5	21.4	30.0	0.0
Other	35.3	7.1	10.0	9.1

Other duties noted for the primary professional include DE&I counseling; advocacy with regulators; administration outside of career office; member of Faculty Leadership team; alumni relations; on-site supervisor for Pro Bono Students Canada (PBSC). For the second person admissions and support for student services and HR were mentioned.

For the third person, duties related to event coordination and job postings were mentioned. For additional staff (combining positions reported at the 4th, 5th, and 6th levels), communications and duties related to internship courses, fellowships, and clerkships were mentioned.

Table 8. **Reporting Lines—Person to Whom the Primary CSO Professional Reports**

	Overall
Law School Dean	47.1%
Law School Associate Dean	11.8
Law School Assistant Dean	35.3
Other	5.9

Note: All percentages based on all 17 responses. Operations Manager was also mentioned.

Table 9. **Other Offices/Functions Reporting to the Immediate Supervisor of the Primary CSO Professional**

	Percent of schools
All other offices	5.9%
Admissions	52.9
Registrar	17.7
Student services	47.1
Financial aid	23.5
Development	29.4
Business/finance	17.7
No other offices	5.9

Note: All percentages based on all 17 responses. Respondents could check more than one response; hence percentages add up to more than 100. About 24% of schools checked 'other', with descriptions including: Communications; Director, Indigenous and Community Relations; and IT.

Source of Funding for Staff Salaries – Nearly all schools (14 of 17) reported that salaries are funded from a centralized law school staff salary fund. Nine schools reported a central fund only. Eight schools reported student fees, usually, but not always, in conjunction with other sources. A few schools reported that CSO salaries are funded partially, but not exclusively by revenue generated by the CSO. Donations were also mentioned.

Table 10. **Benefits Paid for by the School**

	Percent of schools providing the benefit for	
	Professional Staff	Support Staff
Association memberships	100.0%	29.4%
Industry conferences	100.0	23.5
Laptop	82.4	47.1
Corporate credit card	41.2	0.0
Parking	11.8	0.0
Remote network access	17.7	29.4
Cell phone	47.1	5.9

Note: All percentages are based on all 17 respondents. No schools reported providing tablets.

For professional staff, memberships typically include NALP, Canadian Bar Association, Law Society of Ontario, and other provincial bar associations. Industry conferences typically include NALP's Annual Education Conference and Canadian Winter meeting, and CLCDN meetings. For support staff, paid memberships and industry conferences, if any, are generally for NALP.

Table 11. **Changes Experienced in the Most Recent Fiscal Year**

	Percent of schools reporting
Position(s) in the office eliminated	17.7%
Position(s) in the office added	23.5%
Position changed from part-time to full-time	5.9%
Position changed from full-time to part-time	5.9%
Staff have left the office	29.4%
Staff have joined the office	23.5%
Office budget reduced	17.7%
Office budget increased	0%
Travel authority/budget reduced or eliminated	23.5%
Travel authority/budget increased	0%
Decrease in funds for staff professional development/conferences	11.8%
Increase in funds for staff professional development/conferences	0%

Note: All percentages are based on all 17 respondents. Since more than one item could be checked, percentages add up to more than 100. No schools reported or described an 'other' change.

Open-Ended Comments on Changes, Challenges, and Enhancements that Have Affected the Office Since May 2020

- The COVID-19 pandemic resulted in reduced travel and so naturally a reduced travel and overall budget. At this point, there is no indication that my office's budget would not return to pre-COVID levels once travel starts back up. Our Faculty overall, which normally has a relatively small number of support/admin staff, at one point lost three support staff positions due to COVID, including our events coordinator (a position that helps my office with OCIs, Career Fairs, etc.). We should have two of those three positions back starting in the fall but one of those positions was lost permanently.
- I have been working remotely since March 16, 2021. This includes career fairs, industry information sessions, panelists, firm hops, etc.
- Even though we did more one-on-one advising session and did most of them through Zoom, it was more challenging to build rapport with students. It was also challenging to keep staff motivated at times.
- The pandemic completely shifted our way of doing business. Most of our time in this fiscal year was taken up addressing issues related to the pandemic.
- New Acting Dean in June 2020, New Dean starting July 2021, New Director of Professional Development started March 2021. Numerous challenges regarding COVID.
- Most significant changes being transition to remote work and, at the request of the incumbent, reduction to 0.5 full time equivalent for the Director of Career Services.
- The biggest [change] has been a hiring freeze (which resulted in us not being able to move forward with a previously approved advisor position) and changes within Faculty leadership (Dean and Associate Deans leaving).

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- Communications with students can be more challenging in the pandemic. When we were in person, information was shared more organically through word of mouth, and it was easier to get the word out via posters/events, etc. We share all info via email, but the messaging gets lost and students feel we're not communicating things. It's certainly a challenge.
- Due to the pandemic, we no longer have authority from the university to travel, but I suspect that once pandemic restrictions are lifted, that we'll be permitted to start travelling and attending conferences in-person again.
- The pandemic has definitely affected our operations, since everything became remote we have explored new ways to deliver our programming. We will be looking at additional change in 2021-2022 as we navigate a hybrid model of teaching and service delivery.
- The office moved to 100% remote work for the entire year with all events moved online and all student appointments held by phone or by Zoom. While the budget for the office was not changed, both income and expenses were reduced due to the pandemic. Aside from the pandemic, staff increased focus on serving marginalized students using focus groups and new mentorship programs.

Note: Some comments were edited slightly for clarity and length.



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