

When Everyone is Your Client: Managing Expectations & Meeting Demands

NALP 2022 Annual Education Conference – New Orleans, Louisiana

Universal Recommendations/Managing Your Own Expectations

- Communicate clearly, early, and often
- Be clear about what is possible, but lean into “yes”
- Manage negative encounters and difficult conversations through active communication that helps others feel heard
- Celebrate successes
- Pick your battles
- Update your protocols regularly to keep up with the times, the market, and generational demands
- Meet regularly with CSO team members to ensure the entire team provides consistent messaging
- Find allies and share talking points with them — let them help you manage expectations
- Respond promptly when you discover that expectations have not been understood or met
- Ask others for their expectations of you
- Remember that much of this is trial and error — even with adjustments, the ideal/perfect outcome is not guaranteed
- Don’t take things personally (easier said than done, we know!)

Special Considerations for Students

- Meet students where they are — be creative on how, when, and where you communicate with students
- Get student-specific information — ascertain a student’s goals, the reason behind those goals, and whether they are the right fit for the student’s circumstances
- Set mutual expectations early and reinforce regularly (see below for an outstanding example of these from the University of South Carolina School of Law)*
- Collaborate with other messengers generally and ask for their help in managing student expectations (note: expectations will vary by class year/division)
- Use active listening during individual meetings, and review each party’s next steps at the conclusion of each advising session
- Tag team with colleagues in and out of your department on especially challenging cases

Special Considerations for Senior Leadership

- Be proactive about concerns
- Consider the demands senior leadership may confront from “higher up” for added perspective
- Meet regularly with your supervisor and/or senior leadership to share CSO updates and talking points they can share with faculty, alumni, and employers

Special Considerations for Faculty

- Identify your allies and encourage them to actively participate in the life of the CSO
- Share CSO updates and talking points they can share with students, alumni, and employers
- Find opportunities for collaboration
- Regularly ask for feedback — what are they hearing from students?
- If you do not have a CSO Advisory Committee, considering forming one to provide a regular opportunity to share messaging with key faculty allies

Special Considerations for Employers and/or Alumni

- Create multiple opportunities to engage outside the recruitment process
- Develop policies and procedures for recruitment and OCI
- Regularly review websites, job boards, etc. that are employer-facing to ensure consistent messaging
- Meet them where they are – ensure CSO representation at periodic alumni association and/or Board of Trustees meetings to provide updates/calls for collaboration and support of recent grads who passed the bar exam
- Find ways to share legal market updates and updates specific about recruitment at your school. This is especially important for those employers who do not have access to NALP resources — become the expert for them and educate them on trends in the industry
- Commit resources to employer outreach efforts to learn employers' challenges and to share CSO messaging on a regular basis
- Manage sideways — engage employers and alumni in ways that best align their energy and interests with your CSO's specific goals

***Sample Mutual Expectations**

The Office of Career & Professional Development (C&PD) looks forward to supporting you in charting a path to a meaningful career. In order to most successfully partner with you as you navigate your career path, it is important that you remain engaged with us.

We make the following commitments to you. We will:

- Provide you with individualized career development and job search strategy advice and guidance
- Educate you regarding job search tools, career options and trajectories, and critical competencies necessary for success in the legal profession
- Communicate with you regarding job, educational, professional development, and networking opportunities
- Respond to your requests for information and guidance
- Coordinate on- and off-campus interview programs and post job opportunities

- Engage with industry leaders and employer representatives to remain up-to-date about the legal job market and expand opportunities for South Carolina Law students and graduates

In turn, we ask that you make the following commitments to us. You will:

- Review and respond to our communications
- Provide us with information related to your summer and post-graduate employment
- Honor your commitments to:
 - *C&PD* by attending educational, professional development, and networking events and opportunities for which you registered
 - *Prospective Employers* by attending scheduled interviews (so long as you remain available for employment)
 - By bidding for an in-person on-campus interview, you are confirming your availability for an in-person interview on the scheduled day
 - By bidding for a virtual on-campus interview, you are confirming your availability for a virtual interview on the scheduled day
 - *Your future employers*, by withdrawing your applications and canceling interviews once you have accepted a summer or post-graduate position, which would make you unavailable for the position for which you are withdrawing
- Truthfully represent your credentials and background throughout all phases of the job search process, including in your application documents and while interviewing

Questions?

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