

**Industry Perspectives – Working all the Angles – Schools, Firms, and Consulting  
Employment Setting Pros & Cons  
NALP AEC in Boston, MA – 1:30 p.m., Thursday, April 18, 2024**

**Schools**

- Pros
  - Serving in a CSO provides rewarding interactions with students and alumni.
  - Most schools encourage collegial, team-focused relationships among colleagues.
  - CSO staff are viewed as experts in the career space; they have authority to create and run their own offices.
  - CSO staff can achieve a decent level of work/life balance.
  - Colleges and universities offer favorable benefits packages (including such things as the ability to take classes, free gym memberships, counseling, child care and tuition assistance for your own family, sometimes even at other schools) and tend to encourage professional development activities/outlets for their CSO staff.
  - Work is cyclical over the course of the year, and therefore predictable.
  - May be more stable/secure than law firms; these positions are not as subject to market volatility. Class sizes don't fluctuate as much as summer associate class sizes or lateral hiring needs.
- Cons
  - Pressure to meet employment ranking outcomes undermines CSO staff's ability to support students and alumni holistically (may not be as relevant in an LLM career office).
  - Pressure to assist foreign trained lawyers (LLMs) in securing stable positions in the U.S that may provide visa sponsorship options.
  - Employer cultivation/job creation expectations are high and often unrealistic, creating added pressure on CSO staff.
  - Revenue-driven admissions mandates (e.g. excessive enrollment of international or transfer students) create additional placement challenges.
  - Salaries of CSO staff are significantly lower than in the firm/private sector, undermining morale.
  - Upward growth and promotions may be limited.
  - Decision-making at upper levels can be cryptic (made by academics).
  - Resources to support the role may be more limited than at a law firm (such as IT support, administrative staff, need to find external sponsors for events/activities).

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### Firms

- Pros
  - In a firm with enlightened leadership, recruiting/PD/DEI staff have a seat at the table and authority, not just responsibility, over their areas of purview/expertise.
  - Ability to effectuate change at the institution by writing and implementing policies, advocating for attorneys, and staffing affinity groups.
  - Recruiting/PD/DEI staff have the budgets and other resources they need to achieve their mandates and goals.
  - Compensation is significantly higher than school positions, and often includes a bonus.
  - Access to excellent support resources (bigger budgets for events/activities, admins, tech, travel benefits, etc.).
- Cons
  - Since recruiting/PD/DEI staff are not non-timekeepers they are often relegated to second-class status within the firm.
  - Many recruiting/PD/DEI staff have significant responsibility but lack authority to make decisions; the lawyers believe that they are in charge and know best.
  - Salaries are higher than at schools or the public sector but come at a cost; recruiting/PD/DEI staff are expected to be available and on the clock 24/7.
  - Many firms do not see the value of investing in professional development for their recruiting/PD/DEI staff.
  - Firm processes can be marked by bureaucracy and stagnation, which can result in it being harder to make a difference for individuals or overall.
  - Can demand significant travel.
  - Some elements of work are cyclical over the course of the year, but other times the workload can be very unpredictable.
  - Job security, salary, benefits can vary with market fluctuations.
  - Roles can be privy to significantly impactful confidential information, which can be stressful, for example associate review outcomes or policy changes like non billable hour credits.
  - Lines of reporting can be unclear and cause stress. Do you report to an administrator or an attorney or in many cases both?

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### Consulting – As an Independent/Entrepreneurial Professional

- Pros
  - For the true entrepreneur it is energizing and liberating to work independently and no longer serve under the thumb of an outside organization.
  - You can set your own schedule and priorities for the business.
  - No ‘office politics’ or concerns about upward mobility - it’s up to you!
  - When creating a work product for a client you can create the advice/improvement sought and then step away; it is up to the client to implement, not you!
  - There are strong relationships among consultants; they lend each other support and often resources.
- Cons
  - Job development pressures lie exclusively on your shoulders; you do not have a reliable paycheck and benefits.
  - You need to incur the business expenses for creating and sustaining the business (including marketing, etc.), though you do get to take deductions for it.
  - You need to be comfortable with “selling” your services; even if you are comfortable, it is nonstop and can feel taxing at times. You likely have to attend a lot of conferences and other types of events where you would come across potential clients, and you have to be in ‘sell’ mode.
  - Sometimes you need a thick skin to move beyond rejection; you also have to understand that building a business is a very long game so often it may feel like you’re doing a lot and not seeing the benefit. You have to trust that it will come in time.
  - You need to be mindful of your reputation, image, etc. from a marketing perspective at all times.
  - Working alone can be isolating.
  - You have to learn how to handle a lot of things that you have support for when working in an organization, and get your hands dirty (IT, travel, billing, admin, etc.).
  - You have to find health insurance and forgo other types of corporate benefits.
  - There are many players in the market, and at times you have to be cognizant of distinguishing yourself in a crowded field.
  - You sometimes have to work at odd hours in order to be responsive to the time frame of clients.

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### Consulting – As a member of a Group/Large Consulting Shop

- Pros
  - You are viewed as an expert enlisted to solve clients' problems and provide solutions.
  - Serving as a member of a team of consultants gives you a community with whom to interact and seek support.
  - You are an employee with a salary not reliant on your own personal business development.
- Cons
  - There may be pressure to generate business which is tied to compensation or a demand for diligent networking.
  - Your reputation is often tied to the reputation of the principal.
  - Projects are done the way the principal(s) demand and you may not have control over the outcome.
  - You don't control the projects you work on, you are an employee and are given assignments.



# Industry Perspectives: Working all the Angles Schools, Firms, and Consulting

## *Introducing Your Moderator*

*Mina Jones Jefferson*



- ❖ Chief Culture and Engagement Officer at Bricker Graydon LLP
- ❖ Chief People Officer Graydon Law
- ❖ Associate Dean, Chief of Staff and Director, Center for Professional Development, University of Cincinnati College of Law
- ❖ Litigator, Frost & Jacobs LLP (nka Frost Brown Todd)
- ❖ Past President of NALP
  - Frequent speaker on career development
  - Served twice on the NALP Board
  - Served on many committees and task forces

## Introducing Your Panel

Lisa Dickinson



- ❖ Currently a consultant and career coach at Total Talent Design.
- ❖ Served as the Director of Attorney Recruiting and Professional Development at Kirkland & Ellis LLP in the Bay Area, leading recruiting, training, diversity, equity and inclusion and attorney engagement programs.
- ❖ Served as the Director of Career Development at her alma mater, the University of San Francisco School of Law.
- ❖ Past president of NALP and the Bay Area Legal Recruitment Association.
  - Chaired Nominating Committee
  - Chaired Annual Conference
- ❖ Served over 15 years on the Board of One Justice, a California nonprofit devoted to increasing legal services to those in need.
- ❖ Completed NALP's coaching skills series.

## Introducing Your Panel

Elizabeth (Betsy) Armour



- ❖ Extensive experience in career services and legal recruitment on both coasts:
  - Dean of Career Services at USC Gould School of Law
  - Leader of Boston University School of Law's CSO
  - Legal recruiting at 4 law firms
- ❖ Did a stint in a legal consulting firm.
- ❖ Past president of NALP
  - Served twice on NALP's board of directors;
  - Has chaired and served on numerous NALP committees, task forces and work groups;
  - Has done conference planning and served on the Nominating Committee;
  - Frequent speaker at the NALP Annual Education Conference.

# Introducing Your Panel

## Jessica Hernandez



- ❖ Principal of JLH Coaching and Consulting LLC (coaching and consulting) ; Co-Founder, with Jessica Natkin, of Law Career Center LLC (outplacement provider)
- ❖ Co-author, with Jessica Natkin, of "Let's Coach All the Lawyers: An Essential Primer for Professionals Developing Legal Talent."
- ❖ Served as Associate Director of Graduate Professional Development to LL.M. population at Georgetown Law
- ❖ Served as Attorney Development Manager for the East Coast and Europe at Morrison Foerster
- ❖ Practiced M&A and Securities Law for 11 years at AmLaw 100 firm, smaller firm and in-house
- ❖ Certified Coach through CTI

# Your Panel Has Been Around . . .

## Moderator -

### Mina Jones Jefferson:

- ✓ Law firms (PD/Culture)
- ✓ Law school (multiple roles)
- ✓ Past NALP president
- ✓ JD (practiced 9 years)

### Jessica Hernandez:

- ✓ Consulting (entrepreneur)
- ✓ Law firm (PD)
- ✓ Law school
- ✓ Certified Coach
- ✓ Author
- ✓ JD (practiced 11 years)

## Betsy Armour:

- ✓ Consulting (organization)
- ✓ Law firms (multiple – Recruiting)
- ✓ Law schools (multiple)
- ✓ Past NALP president
- ✓ Reentered the profession twice after taking time off

## Lisa Dickinson:

- ✓ Consulting (organization)
- ✓ Law firm (Recruiting/PD)
- ✓ Law school
- ✓ Past NALP president
- ✓ Coach training
- ✓ JD

## Self-Reflection

Think about your career objectives.  
Where do you see yourself in:

- 5 years?
- 10 years?
- 20 years?



## Self-Reflection



What's important to you in making potential future moves?

- Subject matter
- Job security
- Work/life balance
- Managerial role
- Entrepreneurship
- Independence
- Stable income
- Fit

## Your Panel Has Been Around . . .

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## Resources: Organizations

- National Association for Law Placement (NALP)
- Professional Development Consortium (PDC)
- Professional Development Providers Network (PDPN)
- Association of Law Firm Diversity Professionals (ALFDP)
- Local City Groups and Consortia (ex: BALRA, WALRA, CALPA)
- National/Local Attorney Groups
- Local Bar Associations
- Law Firm, Law School or University Alumni Groups

## Resources: Job Boards

- [PDC](#) – job board for the Professional Development Consortium, focused on legal professional development positions
- [NALP](#) – job board for the National Association for Law Placement; contains legal recruiting professional development postings, as well as other ancillary law firm roles (practice development, knowledge management) and occasional practice positions. AND NALP colleagues are an immense resource for networking.
- [HigherEdJobs](#) – job postings in higher education
- [Careers Inside Higher Ed](#) – link to “Law and Legal Studies Jobs” section of general higher ed postings on this site
- Individual university websites

## Resources: Assessment Tools

Gallup CliftonStrengths Assessment:

[https://www.gallup.com/cliftonstrengths/en/514250/cliftonstrengths.aspx?qclid=CjwKCAiA\\_6yfBhBNEiwAkmXy5y3ncAzNONfxyKtrrKPDckOip7MjhoYUbxYfhITqJICdHzMEkkfiRoCiNYOAvD\\_BwE](https://www.gallup.com/cliftonstrengths/en/514250/cliftonstrengths.aspx?qclid=CjwKCAiA_6yfBhBNEiwAkmXy5y3ncAzNONfxyKtrrKPDckOip7MjhoYUbxYfhITqJICdHzMEkkfiRoCiNYOAvD_BwE)

Questionnaires for Measuring Values:

[https://positivepsychology.com/values-questionnaire/#:~:text=The%20Personal%20Values%20Assessment%20\(PVA\)%20is%20a%20short%20and%20straightforward,to%20our%20core%20personal%20values](https://positivepsychology.com/values-questionnaire/#:~:text=The%20Personal%20Values%20Assessment%20(PVA)%20is%20a%20short%20and%20straightforward,to%20our%20core%20personal%20values)

How to Prioritize Your Values when Job Hunting:

<https://medium.com/@MetisConsultGrp/day-2-how-to-prioritize-your-values-when-job-hunting-d4067a18875e>

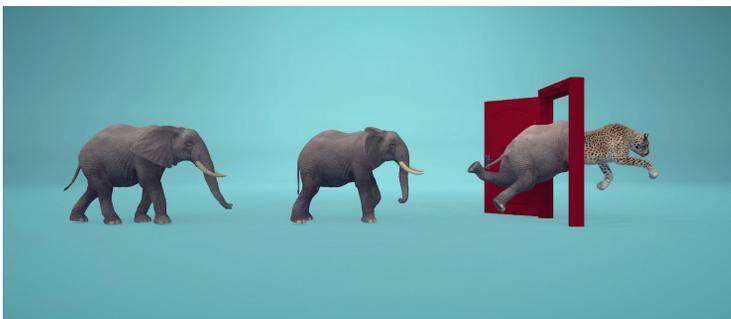
Motivational Appraisal of Personal Potential (MAPP):

<https://www.assessment.com/>

Enneagram personality type:

<https://enneagramtest.com/>

## *Self-Reflection Revisited*



What do your 5-, 10-, and 20- year objectives look like now?