

Break this Silo!

Breaking Silos: Collaboratively Approach Law Student PD, Inclusion, & Wellbeing (NALP AEC 2025)

This work sheet provides reminders about various opportunities for collaboration between Career Services and other Law School departments.



Throughout the Year:



Collaboration Points	Possible Collaboration Opportunities
<input type="checkbox"/> Recruitment Cycle	Consistent Messaging re Career Services Role; Open Houses; Law School Recruitment Fairs; Admitted Student Days (opportunity for prospective students to hear from all stakeholders); File Reviews
<input type="checkbox"/> Orientation	Programming (ideally find a place where you set expectations for interaction with career services)
<input type="checkbox"/> Professional Identity Development	Fall and/or Spring Orientation Programming; Presentations to Clinics/other experiential learning courses
<input type="checkbox"/> Student Support Team & Wellness Programming	All Hands on Deck! – All student support departments should participate in a student support team; Participate in Wellness Programming (e.g., National Law Student Mental Health Day)
<input type="checkbox"/> 1L Career Programming	Communication through 1L Faculty; Resume/Cover Letter presentations in Legal Writing; Coordinate with Student Affairs to avoid conflicts
<input type="checkbox"/> Spring Orientation	Incorporate as many departments as possible! Owning professional development (Career Services, Academic Support, Academic Affairs); Developing lawyering competencies (Career Services, Experiential Learning Faculty); Responsibility for Others/Clients (Inclusive Community, Clinical Faculty); Wellness (Student Affairs, Counselor, Academic Affairs)
<input type="checkbox"/> Academic/Bar Success	Encouraging Use of Academic Support/Tackling Stigma; Encouraging Early Bar Prep; Response Plan for Alumni who Fail the Bar; Tracking Grads
<input type="checkbox"/> Experiential Learning	Cooperating on Professional Identity Presentations; Programming on Incorporating Clinical Experience into Job Search; Unified Messaging on Experiential Learning
<input type="checkbox"/> Judicial Clerkships	Faculty Encouraging Applicants; Unified Message on Effective Letters of Reference; Faculty on Call for Interview Panels; Incorporate all Grade Reporting Stakeholders (Academic Affairs and Faculty) know clerkship timelines
<input type="checkbox"/> Tracking Graduates	Who can help? Bar Support, Faculty (especially seminars and clinics), Registrar, Student Affairs
<input type="checkbox"/> Connecting with Alumni	Coordinate with Alumni Relations to find Speakers and Mentors; Coordinate Employer Outreach with Donor Visits; Use Exit Exercises (Photos, Hooding, etc.) to stay connected with Grads

Breaking Silos: Collaboratively Approach Law Student PD, Inclusion, & Wellbeing

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Agenda

1. Statement of goals
2. Why break down silos?
3. How to start the dismantling of silos
4. Specific opportunities for collaboration
5. Challenges you may face
6. Reflecting on your own silos

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Statement of Goals

1. Provide a rationale for breaking silos and tips for initiating connections
2. Identify challenges during the academic cycle that offer opportunities for cross-departmental collaboration
3. Walk away with concrete examples of how different law schools have addressed these challenges collaboratively

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Why break down silos?

Cohesive effort toward mission of the school
Better sense of community and morale; personal professional development
Improved student experience and value
2024 LSSSE ¹ : Ranked overall law school experience good or excellent– White students: 84% Latino students: 77% Black students: 67% ²
Holistic Career preparation
Reduces redundancy
Comprehensive support for student success

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Is everyone rowing in the same direction?



VS.



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Risks and Mitigation

Risks	Mitigation
More senior people feel threatened	Start with people at your level; keep senior updated
Negative reaction to disruption of status quo	Move slowly, have confidence in the mission, stand firm in your sphere of influence
Others may not stay in their lane and take over yours	Keep the Mission in Mind; Difficult Conversations: How to Discuss What Matters Most , by Stone, Patton, Heen, Fisher
Self-promoters may claim your work as their own	Choose to start by breaking a different silo
Others may inadvertently injure relationships you have built	Regular communication with colleagues; boundaries; clear goals
Others may provide uninformed advice to your students	Teach the basics to the other silos! You cannot control the spread of information no matter what

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How to start the dismantling of silos

1. Be intentional
2. Find your allies
3. Control what you can control
4. Be patient

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Be intentional



Direction
and
objective



Choose a
starting
point



Keep taking the
next step

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Find your allies and be patient

Casual Relationship Building	Organized Relationship Building
Late afternoon doorway conversations	Invite another team to your staff meeting/lunch to learn about what they do—suggest to your supervisor
Ask a colleague for their opinion on one of your matters	Attend open faculty meetings and workshops
Arrange a coffee meeting with someone you don't know very well	Give a short presentation to a faculty meeting to bring them up to speed on current recruiting cycles and challenges
Attend other departments' programs to learn alongside students	Enlist individual faculty to help with re-engaging students; especially clinic and legal writing faculty
Schedule a weekly staff lunch hour during the summer	Announce a coffee and donuts morning open house in your department
Schedule a happy hour close to campus with 3-4 people, then expand it	Create a cross-departmental brainstorming session around a common challenge—not necessarily departmental leadership

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Specific
opportunities
for
collaboration*

YMMV!
***Every school is
different.**

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Collaboration with Admissions & Financial Aid

Opportunity	Possible Collaborators
Open Houses	Student Affairs, Career Services, Inclusive Community Staff
Law School Recruitment Fairs	Student Affairs, Inclusive Community Staff
Admitted Student Weekends	Career Services, Inclusive Community Staff, Student Affairs
File Review	Career Services
Consistent Messaging re: Career Services Role	Career Services

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Collaboration with Admissions & Financial Aid: Example of Broken Silos

Career Services/Student Services presentations during Admitted Student Weekend

Why is this important?

- Allowing students the opportunity to hear from internal stakeholders about what your school has to offer before they make their admissions decision, can help set them up for success when they arrive in the fall.

Who are the collaborators?

- Admissions
- Student Services
- Career Development

What might this look like in practice?

- Connect with admissions to get allotted time at admitted student weekends. If time is at a premium, see if it's possible to do a joint presentation with another unit.

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Collaboration with Student Services: Opportunities

Opportunity	Possible Collaborators
Orientation	Admissions, Student Affairs, Career Services
Identifying Issues and Students of Concern	All Hands on Deck! - All student support departments
Wellness Programming	Student Affairs, Counseling, Inclusive Community Staff
Addressing Issues Impacting Traditionally Underrepresented Groups	Student Affairs, Inclusive Community Staff, Career Services
Spring Orientation	Student Affairs, Career Services, Academic Support, Academic Advising
Graduate Employment Data Collection	Anyone who has had frequent contact with students!

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Collaboration with Student Services: Example of Broken Silos

Creating a Student Experience Team

What is a Student Experience/Student Success Team?

- Representatives from all student support departments who meet at regular intervals to discuss individual students of concern and general trends staff is seeing in student concerns.

Who are the collaborators?

- Student Affairs
- Law School Counselor
- Academic Success/Bar Success
- Career Services
- Academic Advisor
- Inclusive Community
- Office of Financial Aid

What should we be considering when we make our team?

- Format for sharing information
- What information to share

What are the benefits of a Student Experience Team?

- Identifying students of concern earlier and providing cross-departmental support
- Identifying misinformation so it can be addressed
- Better understanding of other departments' interactions with students, which makes your job easier!

If your Law School does not yet have a Student Experience/Student Success Team, this is time to start one!

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Collaboration with Academic & Bar Success

Opportunity	Possible Collaborators
Encouraging Use of Academic Support	Career Services, Academic Support, Inclusive Community
Tracking Grads	Career Services, Bar Support, Registrar
Encourage Early Bar Prep	Career Services, Academic Support, Bar Prep

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Collaboration with Academic & Bar Success: Example of Broken Silos

Partnership with Academic and/or Bar Success

Why is encouraging use of academic/bar success resources a priority for career services?

- Leveling the playing field for competitive jobs
- Building growth mindset, which is also important for the job search
- Response plan for alumni who fail the bar

Who are the collaborators?

- Academic Success/Bar Success
- Career Services
- Inclusive Community

What are concrete ways you can collaborate?

- Have a direct referral process for students who come to career services wishing to improve academically
 - ◆ Partner with Inclusive Community staff to decrease stigma
- Have shared data on who is sitting for the bar exam and where so that you can reach out with both bar and career advice after results come out
 - ◆ BONUS: If you have any alumni reticent to give employment updates, bar success staff may have more success

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Collaboration with Clinical and Field Placement Programs

Opportunity	Possible Collaborators
Unified Messaging on Experiential Learning	Clinics, Field Placements, Academic Advising, Career Services
ABA Professional Identity Development Requirements	Clinics, Field Placements, Career Services, Student Affairs, Inclusive Community, Academic Success
Lawyer Competencies	Clinics Field Placements, Career Services

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Collaboration with Clinical & Field Placement Programs: Example of Broken Silos

Professional Identity Presentation During Orientation

Why emphasize collaboration during Orientation?

- This is an opportunity to show students a unified administration and to reinforce the credibility of various departments.

Who are the collaborators?

- Career Services
- Student Affairs
- Academic Support
- Experiential Learning/Clinics
- Inclusive Community
- Academic Affairs

How might you divide up professional development components between departments?

- Owning Your Professional Development: Career Services, Academic Support, Academic Affairs
 - ◆ Think of "Professional Development" broadly!
- Developing Lawyering Competencies: Career Services, Experiential Learning
- Responsibility for Others/Clients: Inclusive Community, Clinical Faculty
- Wellness: Student Affairs/Law School Counselor, Academic Affairs

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Collaboration with Faculty

Opportunity	Possible Collaborators
Classes as Opportunities to Reach Students	Any faculty who will let you in/promote your programs!
Educating Faculty About Student Experience	Dean, Faculty, Career Services
Connecting to Graduates	Faculty, Career Services
Collaborating to Support Inclusive Communities	Faculty, Inclusive Community
Judicial Clerkship Advising	Clerkship Committee, General Faculty, Careers Services

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Collaboration with Faculty: Example of Broken Silos

Resume Workshop in Legal Writing

What does this look like in practice?

- Agree with Legal Writing faculty on a class period at which career services team can present and provide real time advice on resumes (or resumes and cover letters).

Who are the collaborators?

- Career Services
- Legal Writing Faculty

What are the benefits?

- Buy-in from faculty on the importance of skills you are teaching
- Set aside time for overwhelmed 1Ls without requiring them to attend yet another presentation on their own time

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Collaboration with Alumni Relations & Advancement

Opportunity	Possible Collaborators
Panels	Career Services, Alumni Relations, Communications
Mentorship Programs	Career Services
Donor Visits	Student Affairs, Career Services, Admissions
Hooding	Career Services, Student Services Alumni Relations

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Collaboration with Alumni Relations & Advancement: Example of Broken Silos

Hooding/Graduation Photo Employment Data Collection

Who are the collaborators?

- Alumni Relations
- Communications
- Career Development

What might this look like in practice?

- Career services and alumni relations find a time at or before graduation to connect with graduates.

Benefits of breaking this silo?

- Gaining employment data for those graduating 3Ls who fail to respond to request about their employment status help finalize your employment numbers.

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Challenges you may face



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Consequences of Not Breaking Silos

- Fragmented, missing, or conflicting student support.
- Missed opportunities to collaborate between offices.
- Duplication of efforts.
- Inconsistent messaging amongst units
- An issue that is relatively small, can become much more problematic and harm the organization.
- Gaps or exclusions in perspectives go unnoticed.
- Risks or damage to reputation.

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Challenges

- Lack of communication between offices.
 - E.g., Student affairs not sharing information on a student struggling with emotional issues.
- Unwillingness to share data/information.
 - E.g., Registrar not sharing information with academic affairs or bar support.
- Misalignment of mission.
 - E.g., Alumni relations may want to identify prospective donors who aren't always the best resource for career advice.
- Differences in allocation of resources and institutional support.
 - E.g., Offices of equal importance in creating success are not perceived as such and are staffed or financed at different levels.
- Resistance to collaboration because we've always worked in silos.
 - E.g., People who have been in their roles for a long time and are resistant to change because that's not how we've always done it.
- Lack of role clarity amongst offices.
 - E.g., Does Advancement or Career and Professional Development own a relationship with an employer?

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Reflecting on
your own silos

TIME TO HEAR FROM YOU!

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Endnotes

¹ Law School Survey of Student Engagement, part of Indiana University's Center for Postsecondary Research

² "[Law student satisfaction rates high for last 20 years, lower for students of color, study shows](#)", Reuters, November 26, 2024