

Teamwork Makes the (Career) Dream Work:

Law School and Law Firm Partnerships for Student and Associate Well-Being

Crystal Arnold, Sr. Talent Acquisition and Professional Development Manager, Ropers Majeski PC

Alisa Benedict O'Brien, Assistant Dean of Career Services, Strategic Initiatives and External Affairs, Akron Law

Karen Fischer, Director of Legal Recruiting, Husch Blackwell

Lynnore Thames, Executive Director of Employer Relations and Outreach, New York Law School



Today's Game Plan

1. Welcome and Introduction of Panelists
2. Who is our audience?
3. Presenter-led sharing and discussion
4. Small group sharing and discussion (huddles)
5. Questions
6. Takeaways and final thoughts

Photo: Business Insider

Injury Report (What stresses our students, i.e. US?)

- 1Ls
 - The newness of law school
 - Time management between classes and extracurriculars
 - First semester grades
 - What happens if you don't make the top 15%?
 - Rebounding from less-than-optimal grades – how do you pivot?
- Evening/Part-Time Students
 - How do you get seen?
 - Balance full-time work with classes



Injury Report (What stresses our students, i.e. US?)

- 1L and 2L summer job searches
 - Federal Government
 - Law firms/expedited timelines
- 3L – still no post-grad job secured
- The Bar Exam(s)
- Life experiences, i.e., health issues, childbirth, loss of loved one/grief
 - Who is your support system?
 - How do you adapt and display resilience in the face of life's challenges?
- Artificial Intelligence



Injury Report (What stresses our associates?)

- Transition from Summer Associate to Associate
- Imposter syndrome
- Billable hours
- Demanding clients (internal and external)
- Pressure to meet deadlines
- Business development
- Lack of work-life balance and time management
- Return to office mandates
- Artificial Intelligence



Treatment Plan (Wellness Programs and Events) - for students

- On-Campus:
 - Wellness Committee
 - Dedicated wellness space and programming
 - Student Emergency Fund
 - Career Closet/Professional Clothing
 - Counselor/Therapist in the building
 - Sponsored study breaks and exam snacks
- "How to Succeed in Your Summer Job"
- Financial Planning Sessions (AccessLex or Financial Aid office)
- Counseling on bar exam application/character and fitness process

Treatment Plan (Wellness Programs and Events) - for students

- ABA Standard 303 programming
 - Professional development/professional identity formation, including stress management, time management, balance, guided meditation/yoga, advice for working parents, etc.
- Panel on Work/Life Balance – engage local firms
- Mentor Programs (peer and attorney)
- Programming, support, and counseling for students outside top of class
- Partner with Bar Associations and LAP programs
- Take care of your teams and yourself!



Treatment Plan (Wellness Programs and Events) - for associates

- Survey associates/summers - how can we better support you?
- Offer more early training and coaching (especially for First Gen)
- Lean into hobbies/passions of senior attorneys and partners
- Find wellness champions within the firm
- Host panels on substance abuse, navigating burnout, and anxiety - create safe spaces for overcoming and removing stigma
- Demonstrate real-life scenarios in a facilitated discussion with attorneys



Treatment Plan (Wellness Programs and Events) - for associates

- Set expectations at each path of the journey through webinars to alleviate anxiety about the unknown:
 - Before direct recruiting or OCI starts
 - Before the summer program starts
 - Before the bar exam (e.g. how to prepare, what to expect)
 - Before your first day as a new associate
 - Before your first evaluation
- Resources/support for remote attorneys (build community)
- Health and Wellness programs, events, and committees
 - Example: Wellness events at all-firm retreats
- Therapists & mental health-trained professionals



Coaches and Trainers (Partnerships)

- **Law School**
 - Faculty
 - Student Affairs
 - Wellness Center
 - Counseling on campus
 - Mentor programs (peer and alumni)
- **Law Firm**
 - Associate committees at firms
 - Professional Development, Business Development and Marketing Professionals
 - Firm mentors
 - Well-being champions
 - Firm retreat planning committee
- **External**
 - Bar Associations/Mentor Programs
 - Legal Consortia/City Groups
 - Lawyer Assistance (LAP) programs
 - Counseling Centers/Services
 - Employee Assistance Plans (EAPs)
 - Main university counseling/resources/training (schools)
 - Subject matter experts
 - Organizations/communities – find your community of support (e.g. American Heart Association)



Coaches and Trainers (Partnerships)

- Communicate clearly – Eliminate the unknown (e.g., hiring process, offer status, expectations)
- Collaborate on campus events – Sponsor activities that fuel team morale (e.g., healthy lunch/snack breaks)
- Host fireside chats/panels – Share insights on overcoming challenges (e.g., imposter syndrome, transitioning to associate)



Coaches and Trainers (Partnerships)

- Invite students and Career Services – Offer access to firm webinars and events to foster connection
- Invite experts to the table – Bring in top-tier coaches and trainers (e.g., Access Lex, Dr. Lemke) [Play Dr. Lemke video](#)
- Involve the community – Foster wellness through group activities (e.g., fitness classes, walking tours, local gyms)



Huddle Up! (Takeaways)

- Communication is key!
 - With students
 - With associates
 - Between schools and employers
- Transparency
- Start small
- Information sharing
- Find your partners
- Encourage resilience, productivity and advancement
- Build a program with flexibility and growth potential
- Start with Well-Being in Law Week (May 5-9, 2025)

Contact Information

Crystal Arnold

*Sr. Talent Acquisition and Professional
Development Manager*

ROPER MAJESKI PC

(646) 454-3291

crystal.arnold@ropers.com

Alisa Benedict O'Brien, Esq.

Assistant Dean, Career Services
The University of Akron School of Law

330-972-8540

ab139@uakron.edu

Karen Fischer, Esq.

Director of Legal Recruiting

Husch Blackwell

816-983-8797

karen.fischer@huschblackwell.com

Lynnore Thames, Esq.

Executive Director of Employer
Relations and Outreach

Office of Academic Planning and Career
Development

New York Law School

212-431-2159

Lynnore.thames@nyls.edu

WELLNESS PROGRAMS AND RESOURCES FOR STUDENTS AND ASSOCIATES

Programs:

- How to Succeed in Your Summer Job
- Financial Planning Information Session
- Panel on Work/Life Balance
- Mentor Programs
- Firm-sponsored study break (healthy snacks)
- Information sessions on bar exam application and character and fitness process
- Guided Meditation/Yoga
- Stress Management
- Program for Working Parents/Caregivers
- Information Session on On-Campus Interviews/Law Firm Recruiting

Ideas to Implement:

- Survey associates and summer associates regularly - how can we support you?
- Offer more training and coaching for first-gen students and associates
- Demonstrate real-life scenarios in facilitated discussions with attorneys
- Tailor resources and support for remote attorneys
- Incorporate wellness at all-firm retreats and events
- Engage therapists and mental health-trained professionals
- Form a wellness committee
- Partner with Bar Associations and Lawyer Assistance Programs
- Well-Being Week in Law Events (May 5 - 9, 2025)

Resources:

- Institute for Well-Being in Law: <https://lawyerwellbeing.net/well-being-week-in-law/>
- AccessLex: <https://www.accesslex.org>
- American Bar Association: https://www.americanbar.org/groups/lawyer_assistance/resources/links-of-interest/
- NALP: https://www.nalp.org/well-being_in_the_legal_profession (join the Well-Being Section!)

Notes: