

MEMORANDUM

TO: NALP Executive Board

FROM: Frantz Price, Jr. and Sunita Iyer, NALP International & Advanced Degree Section Chairs

DATE: January 29, 2026

RE: NALP International & Advanced Degree Advising and Recruiting Section Board Report

Please find below a report of the International & Advanced Degree Advising and Recruiting Section's activities since the last Board Report in October 2025.

Section Call

The International & Advanced Degree Section held its quarterly meeting on Tuesday, January 13 at 1:00 p.m. ET. During the call:

Poonam Gupta, Esq. of Summit Legal PLLC was the guest speakers. Poonam spoke to our section about newly implemented and proposed changes to US immigration policies affecting international law students, applicants, and recent alumni from our member schools. Her presentation touched on the following issues:

- **H-1B Policy Shifts**
 - Increased processing times and rigorous vetting and enforcement protocols have made the current H-1B visa application process challenging.
 - The process will become even more difficult this year however, due to increased processing (\$2,965 as of March 1, 2026) and entry (\$100K) fees, and the implementation of a weighted visa lottery (as of February 27, 2026) that will give preference to applicants being sponsored for experienced positions.
 - While the new \$100K entry fee will not apply to international students on a student visa applying from the US for an H-1B as a change of status, the new weighting will disadvantage applicants seeking entry-level positions (such as those being sought by our students).
- **F-1 Work Authorization**
 - Current 12-month OPT and 24-month STEM OPT extensions will continue unchanged.
 - However, compliance with reporting requirements is being more strictly monitored.
 - Most automatic EAD extensions were eliminated as of October 30, 2025, and new review policies have been put into place for applicants from "high-risk countries".
 - Most importantly, the speaker noted that if an applicant were to depart the US while their H-1B change of status petition was pending, this would force consular processing (which is often backlogged) and trigger payment of the \$100K entry fee.
- **Travel & Consular Processing**
 - While no blanket student-specific ban currently exists, country-specific and security-based restrictions have created significant barriers for international students applying to our schools.

- Students applying from the following countries are currently subject to entry/visa suspensions:
 - Full Entry Suspension (all visa categories): Afghanistan, Burkina Faso, Burma (Myanmar), Chad, Republic of Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Haiti, Iran, Laos, Libya, Mali, Niger, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Syria, Yemen, Palestinian Authority
 - Partial Suspension (B, F, M, J Visas Restricted): Angola, Antigua & Barbuda, Benin, Burundi, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Dominica, Gabon, The Gambia, Malawi, Mauritania, Nigeria, Senegal, Tanzania, Togo, Tonga, Venezuela, Zambia, Zimbabwe
- Effective September 6, 2025, the State Department ended the practice of “third-country national processing” of visa applications. Now, applicants are required to schedule in-person nonimmigrant visa appointments at the embassy or consulate in their country of nationality or residence.
- Visa appointments at US embassies are subject to extensive delays and backlogs; H-1B appointments in India were postponed from December 15, 2025, with many not being rescheduled until at least March 2026.
- **University Strategies**
 - Visa applicants who are sponsored for employment by a US university are considered exempt from H-1B caps (i.e., no lottery requirement)
 - Sponsoring your own graduates is possible, but only for bona fide, budgeted university positions that meet specialty occupation standards and prevailing wage requirements.
- **Current Job Market Conditions**
 - Hiring has tightened significantly across a variety of sectors, making employer sponsorship decisions more selective and strategic.
 - While employment opportunities still exist for international law students, the weighted lottery will hurt applicants seeking visas for inexperienced/entry-level positions.

Work Group Update

The Section did not suggest any new work groups. All Vice Chair positions have been filled, as listed below:

Amanda Thyden	Vice Chair - Well-being Champion
Amy Kimmel	Vice Chair - Bar Exam Issues
Caroline Springer	Vice Chair -- Member Relations
Clara Solomon	Vice Chair - Legislative Monitoring
Sarah Gruzaz	Vice Chair - Knowledge Management
Clara Solomon	Vice Chair - Annual Education Conference / Bulletin+ Article and Webinar Planning

2026 NALP Annual Education Conference

Two of the proposals submitted by section members for the upcoming 2026 NALP Annual Education Conference were selected:

- **Legal Limbo: International Students in a Shifting America**
 - Thursday, April 16th, 10:00 – 11:00am
 - Sunita Iyer, Yazmyne Vasquez Eterovic, Ryan Coleman, Martin Rosenow
 - International students hoping to study in the U.S. face more challenges now due to changing immigration policies and widespread misinformation. Student visa processing was halted creating backlogs impacting international student enrollment at U.S. universities. SEVIS terminations, social media screening, and extensive background checks have created additional roadblocks for global talent. Uncertainty looms over the future of OPT and H-1B programs so alternatives should also be explored. Join us to learn how law schools and employers are addressing today's immigration challenges. The panel will consist of law school career advisors, a law school visa services officer and an immigration attorney.

- **Supporting International Students in Uncertain Times**
 - Friday, April 17th, 10:30 -11:45am
 - Clara Solomon, Caroline Springer, Frantz Price, Jr., Elizabeth Gradinger
 - International lawyers — JD and LL.M. — manage not only academic and professional pressures, but also stressors tied to events in their home regions, and geopolitical situations affecting their immigration status and studies in the U.S. The emotional and psychological impacts of domestic political rhetoric, international natural disasters, war, civil instability, or humanitarian crises (among others) are felt intensely. These situations can affect a student's ability to focus, engage, and plan for their careers — particularly when their immigration status or employment prospects are also in flux. This session will explore how legal career professionals can support international students during times of uncertainty.

Board Updates

Cassandre Stump shared the following Board updates:

- NALP remains in a strong financial position. The Board recently reviewed the strategic plan adopted in 2024 and determined that the organization is on track to achieve many of its stated goals. The Board also expressed appreciation for the high level of member engagement, particularly participation in recent webinars focused on the recruiting process, and reaffirmed its commitment to continuing to provide timely resources and programming for members.
- Members were reminded of upcoming events, including the Legal Recruiting Summit and the Lateral Recruiting Summit at Fordham Law. Additionally, President-Elect Mike Ende recently issued a call for volunteers for the next cycle, and members were encouraged to consider serving in various NALP volunteer positions.
- The Governance Review Task Force has submitted recommendations about how to align NALP's voting structure with an all-in membership model. The Board is currently reviewing these recommendations.
- Several additional member resources and initiatives were highlighted, including registration for the Annual Education Conference, the launch of the NALP merchandise store, the NALP Talk

podcast, and the availability of annual research reports in the NALP online bookstore, including the Jobs & JDs report.

Well-Being Update

Amanda Thyden provided the Well-Being update. She encouraged members to attend a program entitled, "Well-Being & Money: Building Financial Calm for the Year Ahead", being conducted virtually by Eryn Schultz, Founder of "Her Personal Finance", on Thursday, January 15, 2026, at 12:00pm CST.

Bar Exam Issues Update

Amy Kimmel was unable to attend the meeting, but asked us to notify the members that John McAlary, who had previously handled questions about foreign educated applicants for the NY Bar, retired at the end of 2025. Going forward, any such questions should be directed to Joseph Salin (joseph@nybarexam.org).

Environmental Scanning

This section invites guest speakers to inform the section about market updates, recruiting trends, career resources, etc. The speaker for this meeting discussed changing US visa policies and the negative impact their implementation and enforcement might have on the job market for our international students.

Open Discussion

Likely given the somber nature of the issues discussed by the guest speaker and their potentially negative impact on the hiring market for our international students, the members did not have any further questions or discussion points.

Next Steps

Our final quarterly meeting for 2025-2026 will be held on Tuesday, March 10, from 1:00 - 2:00pm ET. We will share the zoom link closer to the meeting.