

## MEMORANDUM

TO: NALP Executive Board  
FROM: Natalie Bautista and Caroline Ruhle, NALP International & Advanced Degree Section Chairs  
CC: Maureen Reilly, Board Liaison  
DATE: January 31, 2024  
RE: NALP International & Advanced Degree Section Board Report

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

### Section Call

The International & Advanced Degree Advising & Recruiting Section held its second Section call on January 11.

During the call:

**Caroline Ruhle, Section Co-Chair**, highlighted the upcoming annual Conference in April and noted the early bird special, plenary sessions, networking receptions and CLE credit opportunities. Caroline encouraged the section to fill out the survey to poll members on useful resources to share with the Section.

**Maureen Reilly, Board of Directors, provided a macro snapshot on Everything NALP 2024.**

Mo spoke of the annual conference and noted the Boston Marathon will occur on April 15 and recommended to visit Boston at the end of the conference instead of before the conference, as there are logistics issues. She encouraged the group to attend our section's program, "The Nuances of Counseling and Hiring International Talent" program which will occur April 18<sup>th</sup> at 10:30 am to 11:45 am.

Mo shared a board update, indicating that NALP's financial condition is strong, and that NALP is conducting market research on the Directory for Legal Employers, to determine ways to use the directory differently and keep it an important resource for the next generation of members. NALP is also reviewing member dues and conference structure and fees and is doing targeted research of peer conferences and noted that NALP pricing is quite good. Mo noted the Board is mindful and prudent regarding membership fees. She indicated there has been changes to the Canadian Legal Directory, namely removing salary information, due to the new antitrust law in Canada which prohibits such information sharing.

She also introduced the new NALP personnel, Oksana Poulis, Research Analyst and Daniel Armstrong, PSJD Fellow. She closed with sharing that much strategic planning occurred at the NALP Board meeting in November and that Rebecca Kalman, President-elect, has gathered the information and will roll out her strategic initiative.

## **Ruth Ann Castillo, Vice Chair - Legislative Monitoring**

Ruth Ann shared a legislative update on the State Department's domestic H-1B visa renewal pilot program. The State Department released their updated timeframe for implementation of this highly anticipated program. The program will allow a small number of eligible applicants to renew their visa in the U.S. without having to travel to a U.S. Consulate abroad. Details, eligibility criteria, and how to apply were released on December 20, 2023. The downside of pilot program is that it is limited to 20,000 workers, 10,000 from Canada, 10,000 from India. And it will close on April 1, 2024, or when all application slots are filled, whichever comes sooner. Approximately 4,000 application slots are released weekly between January twenty-ninth and February 26. The good news is, if the pilot program is successful, the Government's goal is to expand the program's eligibility to other visa categories and individuals. The benefits are lower costs, less disruption to the workforce, less uncertainty and will hopefully address the backlog caused by minimal interview appointments for visa renewal at U.S. consular posts abroad.

The second issue noted was that the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services delayed publication of their final rule that addresses filing fees increases for immigration benefit applications and petitions, until April 2024. This rule includes the fee amounts for registration of candidates for the Annual Cap lottery.

## **Amanda Thyden, Vice Chair - Well-Being Champion**

Amanda shared helpful reminders on upcoming programs including a program on financial wellness for legal career professionals and a wellbeing circle on how to optimize your stress in 2024.

The section then had a robust brainstorming discussion on tips and strategies to help counteract discouragement of LLM students in January, especially relating to U.S. job prospects. The section group discussed ways to counsel students who received a low grade.

### **Strategies included:**

- Message that “you are not your grades” to the students. Do this throughout the first semester via one-on-one meetings and group sessions. Remind students that grades are just one factor out of all these other factors that make the case for them as a job candidate, focus on other strengths such as experience, language, culture, etc.
- Some Schools are de-emphasizing grades, have a different grading the system and curve for LLMs.
- Host an alumni program showcasing successful alumni who struggled in school and have incredible careers. Letting students know that success is a possibility with hard work. Students will hear the stories and feel reassured.
- Create programs to help prepare for exams.
- After exams, encourage students to take control of the situation, talk to the professor, talk to an academic advisor, regroup, show resilience, learn how to do better the next semester by changing study strategy.
- Recognize that this is an opportunity to strategize and coach the student to create a great answer from a negative experience in an interview. Students can reframe the narrative, turn it into a positive and a triumph.
- Great time to remind students to boost their resume in other ways such as externships or internships, joining student organizations and outside legal associations.

- Networking:
  - Demystify networking to minimize the fear of the big networking idea. It is just constant, all the time, we are always doing it, and just don't realize it.
  - Breaking down cultural hesitation to network. Sharing that networking is the norm here. It's not abnormal, especially if you're networking with alums. Go into conversations without expectations that it will lead to a position. Start from a place of curiosity to get to know people and develop professional friendships, rather than having transactional interactions.
  - The LLM class is your network, your friend group and a professional network.
  - Frame networking as a 2-way street. You're asking for advice. You're learning from this person, but you're also giving them an opportunity to give back and to help and talk about themselves. Practitioners love the opportunity to share their story. They look forward to giving back their knowledge. And it's also a form of a compliment, instead of just asking for a freebie.
  - Switch narrative to building a network and long-term relationships, if the student really wants to work in the United States, this could be an option down the line. It doesn't have to be right after graduation.
  - Some ways to network: speed peer networking program, job fairs as a tool to motivate networking, joining bar associations and getting involved in committees, using informational interviewing to grow network.
- Set expectations of LLMs as to the U.S. Market and limit of jobs early to manage disappointments with their job prospects. Plan out the best way to achieve career goals, regardless of short-term success.
- The group also discussed the merit of taking a Bar exam to add to the student's marketability for some firms.

### **Work Group Update**

The Section did not suggest any new work groups for the new academic year. Since the AEC, all Vice Chair positions have been filled but for the Communications, Social Media & Marketing work group. We will continue to recruit to fill this open position during Section meetings and via NALPconnect.

Current vice chairs:

- AEC/Bulletin Article and Webinar Planning: Jabrina Robinson, Duke Law
- Bar Exam Issues: Amy Kimmel, UC Hastings; Claire Lee, Boston University School of Law
- Legislative Monitoring: Ruth Ann Castillo, Georgetown Law
- Member Relations, Tammy Dawson, University of California, Berkeley School of Law
- Knowledge Management: Sarah Gruzaz, USC Law
- Well-Being Champion: Amanda Thyden, USC Gould School of Law
- Communications, Social Media & Marketing

### **Annual Education Conference**

- The Nuances of Counseling and Hiring International Legal Talent

Co-Chair, Caroline Ruhle (Penn Carey Law), Vice Chair, Claire Lee (Boston University School of Law) and Section member Ana Maria Knapp (Hogan Lovells) will be presenting along with Bennett R. Savitz (Savitz

Law Office).

### **Membership Update**

The following new members have recently joined our Section:

Alexia McCaskill	University of Colorado Law School
Carolyn Roan	Emory University School of Law
Elizabeth Chen	University of Michigan Law School
Hanna Kim	New England Law   Boston
Kathleen Behan	University of Windsor Faculty of Law
Maria Comas	Thomas R. Kline School of Law of Duquesne University
Mary Feller	University of North Dakota School of Law
Vanessa Pineda	Arizona State University Sandra Day O'Connor College of Law

Each new member is sent an e-mail to welcome them to the Section, which includes information about getting involved by submitting Bulletin articles, conferences RFPs or being part of work groups. Members also receive NALP's LLM advisor manual.

### **Next Steps**

We will utilize the responses to the Section survey to organize our speaker series and develop the requested resources to share with members. Additionally, in one of the upcoming section meetings, we will devote part of the time to discussing the results of the LLM Job Fairs. Our quarterly meetings for the remainder of 2023-2024 are as follows:

- March 14, 2024, at 12:00 pm (CST)
- AEC, April 18, 2:45 – 4:00 pm (EST)