

MEMORANDUM

TO: Deborah Snyder (Board Liaison) and Fred Thrasher (Deputy Director)
FROM: Kathy Greenier and Erik Turkman, JD Career Advisors Section Chairs
CC: NALP Office (reports@NALP.org)
DATE: January 29, 2026
RE: NALP JD Career Advisors Section Second Quarterly Report

I. SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES

The chairs are pleased to report that the workgroups are all engaged and active, and the section is making progress on its charges. Achievements include the JD Counseling Work Group's *Best Practice Guide for Early Law Student Recruiting*, available in our section's library on NALPConnect since October 31, 2025 (downloaded 131 times as of today) and the First-Generation College Students Work Group's featured speaker at their January 20, 2026 meeting—Sandra Morriss, Law Student Talent Acquisition Manager at Davis Wright Tremaine, LLP gave a talk on supporting first-generation students in the workplace. In the January edition of *Bulletin+*, four section members published three articles: 1) "Something I Learned in my First Few Years with NALP" by Tracey Johnson and Swati Parikh; 2) "Breaking the Stigma: JD Advantage, JD Preferred, and the Evolving Legal Landscape" by Celestine Oglesby; and 3) "What Law School Career Professionals Can Learn at the 2026 AEC?" by Mary Beth Nielsen. Thanks to the efforts of our section's AEC/Bulletin+ Article/Webinar Planning Work Group, four Annual Education Conference proposals and one proposal for the Legal Recruiting Summit were selected out of the 10 proposals submitted on behalf of the JD Career Advisors (JDCA) Section. Since the last JDCA Section quarterly report (October 16, 2025), 22 posts have been made in NALPConnect, with 11 replies.

We hosted a remote meeting on Thursday, January 15, 2026. Thirty-two people attended. The agenda was as follows:

- Welcome and introductions
- Updates from work group vice-chairs
- Updates from NALP
 - Upcoming free NALP webinars
 - 2026 AEC registration is now open
 - Call for volunteers form submission due February 6, 2026
 - New NALP Student Resource: the recently updated Buying Power Index
- Discussion of hot topics
- Close meeting and announcement of the next meeting on March 12, 2026

Immediately following the meeting, Kathy and Erik facilitated a huddle for all workgroup vice-chairs to build relationships and solicit from them what kind of support they are looking for in the year ahead.

II. ENVIRONMENTAL SCANNING

During our discussion of hot topics at the January 15, 2026, meeting, we asked participants to select one student need currently "showing up" in their career advising work and to then discuss in small groups ways they are meeting that need or resources/tools they wish they had to better meet that need. Following the small group conversations, participants shared the following:

- students aren't reading emails
- they need hope, especially after grades have come out
- students need to "re-launch" or pivot after grades come out
- need to help students who had been focused on Big Law, but due to grades they need to pivot
- students don't know how to Google
- they don't know how to use Track Changes or Microsoft Word generally
- they need help adjusting expectations
- students need professionalism training about formality—they don't know not to call judges by first name
- students don't know recruiting terminology, like what "OCI" means

III. JDCA WORKGROUPS

AEC/Bulletin+ Article/Webinar Planning: Ellen Oganeyan and Brenda Porter

Work Group Vice-Chairs

Samantha Ciriaco, Director of Professional Development, CWRU School of Law, stepped down due to a job change in December 2025.

Webinars

None to report.

Bulletin+ Articles

Since June, our workgroup has submitted four (4) Bulletin+ article topics for NALP's consideration. One was featured in the October *Bulletin+* and mentioned in the last Board report: *Document Review Best Practices for Career Counselors*, by Alexis Joyce, Director, Career Development Office, Pepperdine University. We continue to encourage members to submit article proposals. Three *Bulletin+* articles submitted by JDCA section members via other proposal channels were published in the January *Bulletin+*: 1) *Something I Learned in my First Few Years with NALP*, by Tracey Johnson and Swati Parikh; 2) *Breaking the Stigma: JD Advantage, JD Preferred, and the Evolving Legal Landscape*, by Celestine Oglesby; and 3) *What Law School Career Professionals Can Learn at the 2026 AEC?*, by Mary Beth Nielsen.

2026 AEC RFPs

10 RFPs were submitted by the JDCA Section for the 2026 NALP AEC. Four (4) programs were accepted, and one (1) other was selected for use in the January 2026 Legal Recruiting Summit.

CSO Employer Outreach: Remy Cahn, Becky Bossle, Veronica Elizalde

Quarterly Meeting Update

The CSO Employer Outreach workgroup held its third quarterly meeting on January 27, 2026. This quarter's meeting was originally scheduled for earlier in the month (1/6/2026); it was shifted to later in the month because the semester began with OCI at many of our schools.

At this meeting, we expanded our discussion beyond outreach to law firms. We explored how CSOs are working with employer partners generally, including government and public interest organizations, in the new recruiting environment that has been created by the dual influences of the federal hiring freeze and accelerated large law firm recruitment.

In light of all the changes with the federal government and BigLaw, our students are facing a completely different employment landscape than just a couple of years ago. There have been a lot of discussions about how to guide students through the "wild west" of recruiting. But how are we handling employer outreach in this climate? For example, how do you tactfully recommend that a small firm wait to recruit until later in the season? How do you reassure public interest employers that they need not accelerate their hiring timeline either? And how do you diplomatically tell large firms that students deserve more than 48 hours to consider an offer?

We tapped into the hive mind of the workgroup to tackle these tricky questions and plan to share our creative solutions with our fellow NALP members.

Future Plans for the Workgroup

We intend to write an article to be submitted to NALP for publication in the *Bulletin+* regarding this topic – Tackling employer outreach in 2026: how to effectively communicate with and educate employers about the realities of today's legal recruiting landscape.

JD Counseling: Kim Underdown, Amy Rowland

The JD Counseling Work Group completed the *Best Practice Guide*, which was published by NALP on Oct. 31. The work group continues to discuss hot topics such as the recruiting times lines, a lack of professional and basic skills expected from law students, and the wellbeing of everyone involved in the recruiting process.

First Generation College Students: April Giancola, Carletta Sanders-Chavers

The First-Generation Work Group hosted a guest speaker on January 20, 2026, at our quarterly meeting. Sandra Morriss from Davis Wright Tremaine in Seattle talked with us about how firms/employers can best support first-generation students via robust training, mentorship, and onboarding. It was a great conversation, and we were grateful for Sandra's input.

JD Advantage Careers: Ellen Dolan, Cassie Butler

The JD Advantage Work Group has met twice since the Board's last report.

The Group's current project is to develop a survey to be distributed to Career Services Offices across the broader NALP membership. The goal is to gain a clearer understanding of how schools are approaching JD Advantage careers and to identify resources that may benefit the broader NALP community. The survey will aim to quantify CSOs' focus on JD Advantage careers by understanding the composition of JDA-designated staff, the quantity of quality of JDA-focused programming, and compiling a compendium of common JDA programming and resources. A number of work group members have volunteered to participate in this project, and next steps will entail a meeting to plan a timeline and survey content.

Additional discussion among work group members largely has focused on market trends in the JDA space, emerging career fields, and best practices in counseling students.

The work group will meet twice before the upcoming Annual Education Conference, with exact dates in February and March to be determined.

AI and CSOs: Amy Kimmel, Jackie Russell

The AI Best Practices Guide for CSOs resource is in the final editing stages. Everyone sent in their sections in November/December and we have a great first draft. We are now just editing and finetuning. The resource covers a brief overview of AI in the legal industry, considerations for CSO before using AI, and best practices for teaching students.

Online JD Advising: Alison Finn

No report available at this time.

DEI Liaison: Lauren Jackson

No report available at this time.

Well-being champion: Patrick Niebour

No report available at this time.