

MEMORANDUM

TO: Alisa N. Benedict O'Brien, Board Liaison
FROM: Elizabeth Bernstein and Tom Lee, JD Career Advisors Section Chairs
CC: NALP Office (reports@NALP.org)
DATE: October 19, 2023
RE: NALP JD Career Advisors Section Second Quarterly Report

I. SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES

In June 2023, Chris Marohn resigned as co-chair of JD Career Advisors (JDCA). In July 2023, President Waller appointed Elizabeth Bernstein, Director of Career Services at Southwest Law School to serve as co-chair. Elizabeth and Tom met remotely several times to plan for the remaining time as section chairs.

In September 2023, Elizabeth and Tom communicated and met with JDCA vice chairs to connect with workgroup vicechairs and facilitate workgroup activity and engagement. The chairs are pleased to report that the workgroups are all engaged and active. The vicechairs are working together effectively to produce resources or content for NALP members. Based upon the current activity level, it is anticipated that each workgroup will produce at least one deliverable over the next year. The strength of the talent pool of the JDCA vice chairs was bolstered by the recommendations of JDCA Board Liaison Alisa N. Benedict O'Brien's recommendation of several potential vice chairs for various JDCA workgroups.

The JDCA Section had eight endorsed RFPs submitted for consideration as presentations during NALP's next Annual Education Conference in Boston. A disappointing five of the eight proposals were accepted. The three proposals that were rejected were highly ranked by the JDCA Section RFP vice chairs and co-chair. It is very discouraging that the recommendations of section leadership were not more effective.

Our Section's fourth quarterly section remote meeting was scheduled for Wednesday, September 27 at 2pm ET/1pm CT, 12pm MT/11am PT. There were 41 attendees. The topics covered were:

- (1) The results of a JD Advising Workgroup survey. The discussion was led by JDCA Vice Chair Suzanne Hard at U Conn School of Law. The results are listed below in the workgroup section.
- (2) Are we moving to a post-OCI world? The discussion was led by JDCA Co-Chairs Elizabeth Bernstein and Tom Lee.
 - A. Topics discussed and environmental scanning:
 - I. Precruiting and the struggle for advisors when working with 1Ls;
 - II. Viewpoint that some firms like the results of precruiting and do not need to simultaneously recruit and run summer program;
 - III. Are we in a transitional phase until firms figure out a new recruiting model?
 - IV. The West Coast has not yet felt the same effects of precruiting as the Northeast and Southeast;
 - V. Concern that precruiting fills many spots before traditional OCI timeframe and that students are frequently presented with exploding offers which may lead to hasty decisions and long-term dissatisfaction and FOMO;

VI. Concerns that student are getting strong armed into offers and what-if students keep searching and rescind acceptances.

(3) NALP DEI resource referrals. The discussion was led by Nicole Netkin-Collins at Villanova University Charles Widger School of Law, JDCA's DEI Liason.

- Nicole shared a few existing resources and highlighted the work of NALP's DEI initiatives.

(4) Diversity hiring. This discussion was led by Elizabeth and Tom.

- A few schools referenced reviewing their own diversity initiatives and reviewed the school's language on websites or forms due to the recent Supreme Court ruling.

(5) AI and Chat GPT.

- Several viewpoints were shared in agreement that career services should still teach cover letter drafting and encourage students to go through the process to build the skillset.
- AI viewed as another tool at the students' disposal and teaching them to use it in an effective way is the future of career services.
- AI is no different than giving students cover letter templates .

Since the last JDCA Quarterly report, twenty-eight posts have been made in NALPConnect, with 15 replies.

II. JDCA WORKGROUPS

The following are updates on the JDCA workgroups provided by each workgroup's vice chair(s):

- 1. Annual Education Conference / Bulletin+ Article and Webinar Planning (Vice Chair(s): Tami Diebel, Univ. of Iowa College of Law anb77@uakron.edu. Alecia Bencze, Univ. of Akron School of Law anb77@uakron.edu .**

This workgroup has been focusing on webinars. They currently have one webinar for 2024 submitted to NALP (this is from our Wellbeing section). They are also coordinating with the First Gen College Students/DEI section as well as JD Advantage Careers to submit two additional ideas to NALP from the JDCA section.

- 2. CSO Employer Outreach (Vice Chair(s): Daphne Telfeyan, Hofstra Univ. School of Law daphne.e.telfeyan@hofstra.edu . Maria Comas, Duquesne comas@duq.edu .**

They held the first meeting of the CSO Employer Outreach Work Group of the JD Career Advisors Section on August 16, 2023. There was good attendance with about 19 in attendance. Key points:

- Meeting participants shared their schools and roles, which included a broad range of geographic regions, school size, and department size. Some CSOs have all staff taking on both counseling and employer outreach roles.

- T-14 schools are positioned differently than the rest of the schools, making for a pretty polarized experience in employer outreach and potentially in success with certain employers, though even schools outside of the T-14 who are in big cities may attract big law recruiting.
- **Concern raised: how to deal with employers who reach out to recruit** and/or present to students when there is little likelihood of student interest? How to manage the employer's expectations, deal with time constraints and maintain the good relationship with the employer?
Solutions: Engage the employer in a way that is valuable to the CSO: have the employer participate in a panel with other employers, and make them present on a topic valuable to students, like interviewing practices; hold an Employer Spotlight event at which employers can come to school at lunch time or in the evening and be available to speak to students and collect resumes; Table Talk Tuesdays; Dinner with a Lawyer.
- **Concern raised: what to do when you can't deliver the talent the employer seeks?** Sometimes you just have to let it go. Idea: calendar to reach out to employer in 2 months and touch base. Get State Bar Association involved to support employer's recruitment efforts. Share with other CSO professionals at other schools in the state closer to where the employer is seeking to recruit.
- **Issue:** how to communicate with employers about the new pre-recruiting and negative effect on students? **Idea:** working group open letter to firms to address law school concerns about pre-recruiting.
- **Issue:** how to have meaningful conversations with employers who pull out of recruitment event AFTER scheduling the interviews? **Idea:** working group open letter to firms to address "best practices" in recruiting. In Massachusetts there are a group of schools who join together to communicate with employers about issues.
- Attention was brought to the group about NALP's Employer Outreach Handbook, which is available as an outstanding resource.

The next meeting will be held on Thursday, October 19 at 3:30pm ET. Agenda will address focused ideas for working group project this year. Will propose:

- Development of Employer Outreach Best Practices for CSO Offices based on geographic setting and reputation of school through the use of case studies. **OR**
- Development of an Employer Outreach Toolkit: **check list** for a) self assessment or audit of existing efforts, b) setting desirable goals, and c) path to build a better outreach effort through the development of essential action items with a related timeline.

3. **JD Counseling (Vice Chair(s): Kim Underdown, St. Mary's Univ. School of Law kunderdown@stmarytx.edu . Suzanne Hard, UConn School of Law suzanne.hard@uconn.edu .**

The workgroup performed a "hot topics" survey, and Suzanne Hard presented the results at the JDCA quarterly call on September 27th.

Survey results:

Q1: What kinds of issues are you seeing currently in your JD career advising?

Students accepting positions and wanting to later back out

Students with no work experience, students not knowing what they want to do with their JD, students choosing law school as a "default"

Whether because of apathy or anxiety, they are not participating in OCIs

Hiring timelines, hiring requirements, types of job that allow attendance flexibility or are remote.

As I am currently focused on 3L advising, I am seeing questions around the timing of finding a post-grad job and salary/compensation negotiations.

anxiety & stress in students, questions re JD Advantage jobs and how to land them, students wanting work-life balance but also wanting to be paid well, not reading emails

FOBO (fear of better options), students reneging, employers giving ridiculously short deadline for students to respond, employers ghosting students

A feeling of overwhelm with student demands - you help one student, and there's always another to help! Needing better systems to facilitate the customer service approach we take.

Post OCI still seeking; concern about opportunities in private sector generally (2Ls and 3Ls)

Students who do not pay attention to the information we are sharing and miss great opportunities because of it. Missed deadlines - missed programs and interviews. Late start on the hiring for 2L summers.

Low-income students who want to do public interest work but feel immense family pressure to go into big law

Anxiety, professional development skills

Inability to make a decision on OCI offers, students wanting to wait until they have multiple offers, or always thinking something better is out there. The same for 3Ls with postgrad job offers.

Q2: What do you consider to be "Hot Topics" in JD career counseling now?

Law student intern pay, outside of large and mid-sized law firms and large organizations, is low or non-existent. Discussing issues of pay and navigating financial aid resources available to students is a regular discussion I am having.

Student concerns for wanting a legal job that offers a work-life balance; not wanting to pursue firms or litigation work due to perceived lack of work life balance

Geographical differences in the need for attorneys

Flexibility or remote work seems to be the big topic. No one wants to work full-time in an office anymore. and can't understand why that is a big issue with employers.

AI in application materials; the impact of the pandemic on students' ability to be adults, let alone professionals; and whether the economic downturn that has been much feared after the pandemic will, in fact, impact hiring.

DEI Recruiting

Pre-OCI/precruiting way too early 1L year; current students who "struck out at OCI" in part because some employers filled their classes early

How to address cover letters and avoid mis-gendering people; salary transparency; unpaid internships (are they exploitative?)

Job prospects, visa sponsorship for international students

Recession, Hiring Trends, JD Advantage Jobs

AI and the next gen bar are big topics for the future. Continuing to think about ways to incorporate Professional Identity Formation into programming is also one of our ongoing topics of discussion.

Increased interested in plaintiffs side/private public interest law firm, movement lawyering.

- 4. First Generation College Students (Vice Chair(s): Samantha Ciriaco, Case Western Reserve University School of Law svc1031@case.edu . Ashli Rae Tomisich, The University of Wyoming, College of Law ashli.tomisich@uwyo.edu .**

This quarter we recruited a new member, Susan Galazen, Director, Career and Professional Development, Mitchell Hamline School of Law. We held a call with DEI Committee leader, Jennifer Mencarini, and are working closely with Bijal Shah and Amber Crosby collaborating on a third quarter webinar entitled: *Bridging the Gap: Supporting First Gen Students in the Legal Profession*. It has been scheduled by Mary Beal for Tuesday, February 6, 2024, 3:00 PM-4:00 PM EST. We have two speakers confirmed and are securing one-two more for a Q&A panel discussion.

In Q3 we also plan to hold a JDCA section meeting discussion on this topic. Looking ahead to Q4, we are collaborating with the Newcomers Section for an article in the June/July Bulletin.

- 5. JD Advantage Careers (Vice Chair(s): Kathy Greenier, University of Richmond, kgreenier@richmond.edu). Cassie (Katherine) Butler, UMass kbutler2@umassd.edu**

In June, JD Advantage Work Group co-chair Quaimee Lee (Northeastern University School of Law) concluded his term as co-chair, and Katherine (Cassie) Butler (UMass Law) began her service as the new co-chair. Cassie and Kathy Greenier (Richmond Law) are so grateful to Quaimee for his commitment and skilled contribution to the work group. Kathy is excited remain as Cassie's co-chair. During the summer, Cassie and Kathy met one-on-one for onboarding, goal setting, and to plan group meeting dates for the year ahead. The work group met two times this quarter, on August 16, 2023 and September 20, 2023. The group will next meet on November 1, 2023.

Over the past two work group meetings, Cassie and Kathy provided attendees an overview of last year's work group charges, facilitated project volunteers in giving an update on the progress or completion of those charges, and led group brainstorming for new deliverables to be completed in the year ahead.

Specifically, the update on last year's work group charges is as follows:

- Host a second JD Advantage Career Week for spring 2023 or fall 2024 (in progress)
- Update the 2020 [NALP JD Advantage Career Guide](#) (almost complete)
- Continue to record, organize, and publish the podcast series (almost complete)
- Host webinars on Advising Students on Data Privacy and Cybersecurity Careers; How Corporate Recruiters Approach JDA Hiring; and Harnessing the Power of Energy Influencers to Boost Career Advisor Well-Being (complete)

August meeting attendees brainstormed ideas for this year's deliverables, which Cassie and Kathy used to [survey](#) all group members, gauge interest level, and set priorities. The ideas cultivated in that August meeting, and via the survey, are as follows:

- Compile a list (or update any existing list) of companies and organizations that might be recruiting students and recent graduates for JD Advantage positions
- Plan and execute a second JD Advantage Career Week
- Create a complement to the *JD Advantage Career Guide* that serves as a shorthand for various JD Advantage job titles, job descriptions, and possibly employer names
- Create a primer on the skills students and graduates possess that appeal to JD Advantage employers, to advance relations with JD Advantage employers and support students in marketing themselves
- Develop resources to support partnering with the MBA programs and business schools
- Explore the potential for JD Advantage careers in the emerging world of AI
- Host a webinar and/or create resources like a worksheet on careers in Legal Operations
- Host a webinar and/or create resources for those that are new to JD Advantage career advising

In the September meeting, with the consensus of attendees, Cassie and Kathy recommended moving forward with the projects that generated the most volunteer interest via the survey, which were as follows:

- Compile a list (or update any existing list) of companies and organizations that might be recruiting students and recent graduates for JD Advantage positions

- Explore the potential for JD Advantage careers in the emerging world of AI
- Plan and execute a second JD Advantage Career Week
- One or more webinars, the content of which is to be determined, but one webinar will be facilitated as a “lightning round” format, in order to showcase multiple work group deliverables at once.

Cassie and Kathy plan to follow up via email with the people who expressed interest in each project in order to facilitate next steps. They will propose that each sub-group plan a time to separately meet and define their deliverable in time for our next Work Group meeting in November.

6. DEI Liaison (Vice Chair(s): Nicole Netkin-Collins, Villanova Law, nicole.netkincollins@law.villanova.edu)

Nicole presented a list of NALP DEI resources to participants in the JDCA September quarterly call.

7. Well-Being Champion ((Vice Chair(s): Seth Mills, New York Law School seth.mills@nyls.edu. Ros Lister, Penn State Dickinson Law rbl5457@psu.edu.)

The activities of this workgroup are as follows:

Free NALP Member Webinar: Financial Planning for Legal Career Professionals

January 17, 2024 at 1:00 pm ET

Financial planning – for day-to-day, retirement, and setting up care for loved ones – is a critical part of wellbeing. In this program, Niraj Chhabra of SideBar Advisors LLC will discuss financial wellness and planning strategies, with a focus on issues common to former attorneys and those now working in higher education.

This seminar will include these topics:

- Retirement Planning Strategies
- Family Planning
- Tax Reduction Strategies
- Student loan repayment strategies
- Estate Planning Strategies
- Planning for aging parents
- Budgeting
- Start the new year right with this educational session sponsored by the JD Career Advisors Section.

Wellness Exercise for JDCA quarterly call on 1/9/2024. Ros is leading a new year wellness exercise at the quarterly call.