**MEMORANDUM**

**To:**       Heather DiFranco, Board Liaison

**Cc:**       Fred Thrasher, Deputy Director
              Meaghan Hagner, Member Services Coordinator

**From:**     Eric Bono, Chair and LSPD Leadership Team

**Date:**     April 5, 2018

**Re:**       NALP LSPD Section Quarterly Board Report

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This memorandum summarizes the Law Student Professional Development section's recent quarterly call as well as the status of our projects for this academic year. It also suggests some directions for the coming year.

## I.       Leadership Team

Chair – Eric Bono, University of Denver Sturm College of Law, ebono@law.du.edu

Annual Education Conference/*Bulletin* Article Planning Vice Chair, Katelynn McBride Barbosa, Notre Dame Law School, Katelynn.McBride@nd.edu

Law Student and Lawyer Professional Development Sections Collaboration Vice Chair, Elisabeth Beal, William & Mary Law School, eabeal@wm.edu

Best Practices Guide Vice Chair, Francie Scott, Wake Forest University School of Law, scottfs@wfu.edu

Experiential Learning Requirements Vice Chair, Leanne Fuith, Mitchell Hamline School of Law, leanne.fuith@mitchellhamline.edu

Membership Development Vice Chairs, Patty Lopez, Case Western Reserve University School of Law, pmr43@case.edu and Elizabeth Carr, Mercer University School of Law, carr_e@law.mercer.edu

Publications Vice Chair, Katelynn McBride, Notre Dame Law School, Katelynn.McBride@nd.edu

Environmental Scanning Vice Chair, Katelynn McBride, Notre Dame Law School, Katelynn.McBride@nd.edu

I.    **Section Meeting / Environmental Scanning**

The LSPD section held its final quarterly section call on March 20, 2018.  Thirty-two members attended with participation holding at or near that level throughout the call.  The call went for a full hour and could have gone longer as the discussion on the call was quite robust as described below.  At the outset of the call, we encouraged our members to submit RFP's for Professional Development Institute and the Annual Education Conference.  And, we encouraged LSPD members to attend our section meeting at the 2018 Annual Education Conference. In addition, Heather DiFranco provided participants with a thorough report from the NALP Board. The rest of the call was devoted to two environmental scanning topics: (1) Ways to measure the effectiveness of professional development programming; and (2) How and when should the career services office be the "bad cop," with students?

A.  **Ways to measure the effectiveness of professional development programming (facilitated by Patty Lopez, Case Western)**

Law school Career Services Offices ("CSOs") have worked hard to "sell" the value of intentional professional development programming to key stakeholders in their institutions including deans, faculty and students.  This is particularly true when trying to make the case for requiring professional development training for students.  As CSOs continue to make the case to develop, maintain and grow their professional development programs, there is a general recognition that having more data to support the value of these programs would be helpful.  That said, the impact of professional development programming can be difficult to measure.

The discussion on this topic ranged from schools sharing ways they already seek to measure the effectiveness of professional development programming to brainstorming on new ideas schools could try. Below are some key takeaways:

- Some schools ask students to rate the effectiveness of every program right after it concludes.

- Other schools use (or have used) "student advisory groups" as a way of gathering feedback about what students find useful and in turn to help the CSO spread the word about the value of professional development programming.

- At least one CSO provides a significant amount of professional development programming as a part of the law school's broader first-year orientation and then receives feedback as a component of the overall student orientation evaluation.

- We also discussed the prospect of having students rate the impact of a CSO's professional development training using surveys that ask students to rate their progress objectively as opposed to providing their subjective sense of the value of a particular

program. For example, students could be asked to rate their level of competence in a specific skill, e.g. professional communication, before and after a training on the subject in order to assess whether the training made any difference.

Note that because members of the LSPD section are eager to share their ideas, this particular discussion also veered off in helpful ways. For example, one member spoke at length about a Saturday workshop, well-received by students, where she brought in a professional communication consultant and held breakout sessions on "grit" and "teamwork." In the grit breakout, students were presented with research findings on grit and also had the opportunity to assess their own level of grit by taking a grit inventory. Another school reported having success with providing professional development programming right after holiday break.

### B. How and when should the career services office be the "bad cop," with students? (facilitated by Elizabeth Carr, Mercer)

CSOs occupy a unique position in that they regularly interact with the people on both sides of the hiring equation, namely, students and employers. While the overwhelming majority of students strive to conduct themselves in a professional manner, CSOs do frequently receive reports from employers (and sometimes faculty) about students who are perceived to have behaved unprofessionally in some way. And, on occasion, CSO professionals observe firsthand, student conduct that calls for a "teachable moment." Because CSOs can only assist those students who regularly utilize their services, CSO professionals tend to place a high premium on building strong relationships with students. Accordingly, it can be difficult to know when and how to intervene if a student's conduct veers into unprofessional territory. Do we use "tough love?" Do we take a gentler approach? Does it depend?

Elizabeth Carr facilitated this discussion and led off by sharing an unfortunate (but perhaps a bit humorous) anecdote about a student from another law school who appeared at a multi-school career fair dressed in a "jazz outfit." This scenario raised several questions around when and how that student's CSO might have intervened. Should they have spoken to the student in the moment? Should they have waited until after the career fair? For the student's benefit (and for the school's) is it ever appropriate to decline to allow a student to participate in a program based on how they are dressed? This discussion led to other participants sharing their own experiences with students dressed improperly, missing events to which they had RSVP'd without notice, reneging on accepted offers and other conduct commonly viewed as unprofessional. Here are the main takeaways from the discussion:

- Context matters. There may be times when immediate intervention is warranted and other times where it is better to intervene later. For example, a student who shows up for an event dressed inappropriately might benefit from being encouraged to change into something more professional, time permitting. On the other hand, if time does not allow, it may strike a better balance to allow the student participate in the program and speak to them later about their attire. Likewise, if a student shows up inappropriately dressed for

an interview and doesn't have time to change, the consensus was not to address the issue ahead of the interview since that would likely rattle the student and undermine their interview performance. That said, some counselors keep extra suits on hand to mitigate situations like this and one counselor even reported giving a student she knew well "the shirt off her back" so that she could present better in an interview.  No one can accuse CSO professionals of not caring about their students!

- CSO professionals recognize that constructive feedback about unprofessional student conduct is often more effective coming from the employer who reported it rather than from the CSO.  That said, employers who report such conduct are often uncomfortable sharing it directly with students.  There seemed to be a consensus on the call that CSOs would like to see more employers willing to give this type of feedback directly to students given the helpful impact such feedback can have.  Such reports of unprofessional conduct come to CSOs from faculty as well, who often ask the CSO to deliver their feedback to a particular student rather than delivering it themselves.

- In one way or another, most participants in the discussion agree that building strong relationships with students on the front end makes it easier and more effective to deliver constructive feedback, and even "tough love" on professionalism.  For example, one school stated that the more handholding a CSO can do with students on the front end, the easier it is to deliver "tough love" when it is warranted.  Another school reported that before delivering feedback on professionalism, they check in with the student on their well-being so that they lead off by conveying concern for the student rather than leading with criticism.  Finally, one CSO leader reported that from the beginning, when she introduces students to her office, she states that an important part of her job is to have tough conversations with students about professionalism issues and that it comes from a desire to assist them.

- Helping students view their own conduct through the eyes of others—that is, to see the impact of their conduct—can be a good way to help students see the importance of professionalism.

## II.    Work Group Reports

### A.  Annual Education Conference & PDI /*Bulletin* Article Planning – Submitted by Katelynn McBride Barbosa (Notre Dame)

1.  Bulletin articles

George Podolin, William & Mary and Patty Lopez, Case Western, submitted a bulletin article for the May 2018 bulletin entitled "CSO-Run Law School Professional Development Programs:  It Takes a Village." Our section's *Professional Development in Law Schools:  The Who, What,*

*How, and Why of Law School PD Featuring 40 Case Studies from 40 Law Schools*, was the inspiration for the article.

2.  Conference RFPs

Last month, Katelynn McBride Barbosa, posted to NALP Connect an announcement that the RFP process has opened for 2018 PDI and for the 2019 Annual Education Conference in San Diego and that if anyone has ideas for either conference, they should post them to NALP Connect.

**B.**  ***Law* Student and Lawyer Professional Development Sections Collaboration (Submitted by Elisabeth Beal)**

This quarter, Elisabeth, Eric Bono, Susan Fine, and NALP leadership participated in a conference call about the groups interested in studying law firm PD programs and the opportunity to collaborate on this work. As such, the Law Firm PD Write-Up Project has been on hold, and we anticipate it will now be wrapped into a charge from the incoming NALP President for the LSPD Section to collaborate with the Holloran Center and the LPD Section to study law firm PD programs and lawyer competencies.

**C.  Experiential Learning Requirements (Submitted by Leanne Fuith)**

The Law Student Professional Development Subcommittee has completed research on state-by-state experiential learning requirements that must be met in order for a law school graduate to sit for their state's bar exam. Issues researched include which states have an experiential learning requirement that must be met before law school graduates may sit for their bar exam, what are the specific requirements and what are law schools currently doing to help prepare students to meet those requirements. The findings of this research are being summarized and formatted and is on track to be shared with the NALP community by the summer of 2018. Looking ahead, it would be helpful for this subcommittee to review these requirements every 3 years and update the findings accordingly.

**D.  Best Practices Guide (Submitted by Francie Scott)**

The goal of the Professional Development section Best Practices Guide is to develop a framework for implementation of professional development programming, as well as a resource center for NALP members. We are working to compile a list of commonly-used and helpful resources, including books, webinars, and other tools that can be used as both references for educators and possible assignments for students addressing various aspects of professional development.

In addition, our goal is to create a teaching guide offering various interactive exercises that can be used with students. This guide will be built on experience with programming on various topics, including networking, resume and cover letter development, informational interviewing, and more. It will combine recommended reading and resources with specific teaching tools to help

guide NALP members looking to implement more effective programming. We hope to have this guide complete by the end of this summer.

### E. Membership Development (Submitted by Patty Lopez and Elizabeth Carr)

Over the past year, with Chair Eric Bono's help, we gathered a list of previously active members of the group and conducted outreach to those members in addition to new members who expressed interest. That outreach included emails before each section call targeted to gather topics for discussion, encourage participation on the call and encourage those contacts to invite others who might be interested in the discussion. Outreach also included joining other section calls, specifically the Newer Professionals call on Thursday, January 11 as well as gathering interested members contact information at the December NALP/PDI conference. We also encouraged direct outreach with us to answer questions or hear thoughts about the section. During these conversations we would continue to encourage membership in the group and suggest helpful resources. We received feedback that the targeted emails were helpful before the section calls as they were a good reminder and also provided the group with an opportunity to provide feedback even if they couldn't make it to the calls. More could certainly be done going forward with specific outreach to new members via phone calls to see what they would like to see from the group.