

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: February 1, 2018

Re: NALP LSPD Section Quarterly Board Report

The NALP Law Student Professional Development Section (“LSPD”) continues to engage its members, develop practical resources for members to use and to serve as a forum to share ideas. In addition, this past quarter, we have started two new initiatives. First, at the invitation of the NALP Board, we are collaborating with NALP’s JD Career Advisors and Recruiting sections to develop a series of short videos focusing on student professionalism in the on-campus interview process. Second, we are exploring the formation of a workgroup focused on professional identity formation.

More detail on the LSPD Leadership Team, our new initiatives, our most recent section call (including environmental scanning), and our work groups is provided below.

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

II. New Initiatives

A. Professionalism Videos – Submitted by Eric Bono (Denver)

This past fall, environmental scanning by NALP’s Regional Resource Council revealed that there seemed to be an uptick in employer concerns about student professionalism in the on-campus recruiting process. Among other things employers noted that law students sometimes fail to follow the 14-day reaffirmation instructions in their offer letters, fail to affirmatively release offers they do not plan to accept and may not always communicate appropriately in the recruiting process.

In response to these concerns, the NALP Board invited the JD Career Advisors, Recruiting, and Law Student Professional Development sections to consider whether producing a series of short videos focused on these issues would be useful to employer and school members alike in educating students about the importance of professionalism and adhering to NALP’s recruiting guidelines. The three sections jumped at the chance to tackle this project and Tony Waller, chair of the JD Career Advisors section, is leading this effort.

At this stage, the workgroup has developed a series of talking points for use in making the videos and, beginning at NALP’s annual Recruiting Summit, we have started recruiting employers to make the videos. Video topics include the purpose of the NALP recruiting guidelines, handling open offers, declining offers, email and voicemail best practices and more.

B. Professional Formation Workgroup – Submitted by Eric Bono (Denver)

As we all know, NALP and its members have long-focused on Law Student Professional Development. In a parallel universe, many law faculty across the nation have been focusing on professional development in Legal Profession courses, clinics, externships and other academic settings. It feels like the professional development movement has been growing in both domains.

Historically, there has not been a great deal of collaboration or coordination between the professional development efforts of faculty and law school career services offices (“CSOs”) but in recent years that seems to be changing. Thus, the time seems right to explore more formal

collaborations between faculty, CSOs and employers on law student professional development.

Ahead of the 2017 Professional Development Institute, Susan Fine from George Washington Law School suggested the LSPD section explore the prospect of a more formal collaboration between NALP and the Holloran Center at the University of St. Thomas School of Law, which is directed by Professors Neil Hamilton and Jerry Organ. The Holloran Center seems eager to engage with NALP in this way.

Thus far, I have spoken with Susan Fine, Professors Hamilton and Organ, as well as LSPD Vice Chair Elisabeth Beal (William & Mary) who has recently started a project that could related to the proposed work group. I have also reached out to NALP Staff and Board leadership, including incoming President, Melissa Lennon. All seem interested in exploring this concept, so I am in the process of scheduling a conference call to seek the advice of NALP leadership on what might be the best way to structure this initiative.

III. Section Meeting / Environmental Scanning

The LSPD section held its second quarterly section call on January 25, 2018. Thirty-Five members attended with participation holding at or near that level throughout the call. The call went for a full hour and could easily have gone longer as members were eager to share the work they are doing on the Law Student Professional Development Front. On the call we devoted time to encouraging our members to submit RFP's for PDI and the AEC. And, we discussed the NALP Professionalism Videos that are under development to ensure that the LSPD members are aware of this project. The rest of the call was devoted to two environmental scanning topics and those discussions are summarized below.

A. How do we build stronger bridges between key stakeholder groups (students, employers, law school faculty & staff)? – Moderated by Patty Lopez (Case Western) and Elizabeth Carr (Mercer)

There was a general consensus that from the viewpoint of a CSO the most difficult gap to bridge among stakeholders can often be between law school staff and faculty, so most of our discussion centered on ways CSOs are bridging that gap. We also discussed ways to bridge gaps between students and CSOs.

On the faculty / CSO front, several schools reported success in finding key faculty members and communicating regularly with them about professional development. This can involve serving as guest speakers in the classroom on a career-related topic or something as simple as having lunch periodically with receptive faculty members. As a general matter, externship, legal writing and clinical faculty are natural allies.

Some CSOs have been successful in getting onto key faculty committees (such as the curriculum committee) and using that as a platform to encourage faculty to focus on Law Student

Professional Development and to partner with the CSO in doing so. Major transition points where law schools tend to look inward, such as a school's strategic planning process or the arrival of a new dean, can provide a good opening for CSO staff members to suggest new professional development initiatives and/or get onto key committees. One law school reported that their CSO has gained a great deal of traction by having a faculty member on the CSO team.

On the student / staff front, multiple schools reported that using student workers or key student leaders (e.g. SBA members) as ambassadors can increase student attendance and buy-in to professional development programming. Peer-to-Peer messaging is effective because student liaisons can message in ways the CSO cannot and are often able to make use of key student-run social media outlets.

B. Timing and messaging for 1L Professional Development Programming – Moderated by Leanne Fuith (Mitchell Hamline)

This discussion began with an acknowledgement that first-year law students receive mixed messages. On the one hand, we tell them they need to focus on their academic performance above all else. On the other hand, we also tell them they need to focus on their professional development. The reality is that both are important, but the demands of law school coursework and the time it takes to focus on professional development can be hard for students to balance.

From the standpoint of a CSO, striking the right balance requires careful messaging, not only to students but also to faculty as both groups may not be as familiar as we are with the realities of the job market. While faculty sometimes question why CSOs are so focused on professional development for 1Ls, faculty can also be very helpful as they have firsthand insight into what students are facing in the classroom at any given time. This can be helpful to CSOs in planning key events.

One school noted that in the fall semester, they take a very conservative approach and most messaging on professional development is built into existing class time, as opposed to being messaged through separate programs. In the spring semester, they devote more time to messaging on professional development and they present specialized professional development programs.

The discussion then turned to efforts at two schools to identify students who are academically at-risk and to coordinate with academic support and other faculty on how to message to those students. At one of these schools this effort was driven by an analysis they did of their graduates who were "unemployed & seeking" at the ten-month mark. They found that most of these graduates had low academic performance and/or bar pass issues and were *also* not engaged with the CSO. This analysis drove them to think about how best to engage with students who are struggling academically in the 1L year. For students who are at risk of being dismissed based on low academic performance, the message is to focus during spring semester on academic improvement and to utilize the school's academic support office. Such students are encouraged to re-engage with the CSO once they are no longer at risk for dismissal. This can be effective to help students shore up their academics, but it may also result in those students missing out on

opportunities to gain summer legal experience. The school is considering whether to recruit faculty who might hire these students as RAs or other ways of helping these students build their resumes

IV. Work Group Reports

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

1. Bulletin articles

Mary Walsh Fitzpatrick, Esq, Assistant Dean, Career and Professional Development Center, Albany Law School submitted a bulletin article *Professional Opportunities for Law Students with STEM Degrees: Beyond Patent Law* in January to be published in an upcoming NALP bulletin.

2. Conference RFPs

At the end of December, Katelynn McBride Barbosa, who chairs the LSPD section's conference planning efforts, posted a notice to the LSPD discussion section on NALP Connect that the LSPD section is actively seeking ideas for the NALP bulletin and for conference RFPs and to reach out to her with ideas. Katelynn received the bulletin article idea mentioned above and worked with Mary to push that forward. Additionally, she received one RFP idea for the 2019 Annual Education Conference from Molly Wescott, Assistant Dean for Career and Professional Development, University of San Diego School of Law.

This was Molly's idea:

USD Law, we have a new course (this is the second year for it), called the 1L Practicum, where students spend fall doing a litigation project and spring doing a transactional one. This year, we incorporated select career and professional development topics into the course. I think it has already made a big difference in the engagement of our 1L in the career and professional development planning process. So I would love to submit a proposal to present on this along with the faculty member who teaches/coordinates the practicum course. My Dean is a huge proponent of the course, so he might want to be included as well.

Katelynn emailed with Molly and then discussed the RFP process with her on the phone on January 29.

Katelynn brought up the RFP process for both PDI and the AEC in the LSPD section's January quarterly call and instructed anyone with an idea to post the idea to the discussion group in the section's NALP connect so other members could see and contribute. Additionally, Katelynn added that members were welcome to email her individually as well.

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

This quarter, Elisabeth began her initiative to interview and draft write-ups about law firm PD programs. However, after a couple of conversations with the Section Chair, Eric Bono, and other individuals interested in law firm PD, we decided to “hold” on this project pending a conference call with NALP leadership and other LSPD and LPD section members about the possibility of launching a Work Group to study law firm PD programs and Professional Identity Formation.

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 with the goal of sharing with the NALP community by the end of the spring semester.

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

In addition to gathering a list of previously active members of the group, we are actively reaching out to potential new members. We’ve done this so far by 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 continue to send this group of newer members the agenda before each section call to get their thoughts and encourage engagement. We also encourage them to invite 1-2 friends or send the agenda on for their thoughts. During conversations with interested new members, we suggest helpful resources developed by the group such as the PD Booklet. We will continue to make outreach efforts to these new/potentially interested members in order to gauge their thoughts on the group and what they might like to learn about and hear from the group.