



**Law Student Professional Development Section
Quarterly Call Agenda & Newsletter**

Welcome to the Law Student Professional Development Section's first quarterly newsletter for the 2016-2017 year and my first newsletter as Law Student Professional Development Section Chair!

If you're new to this newsletter, it follows a similar format from quarter to quarter, and generally discusses 3 topics. Those 3 topics include a spotlight of a law school's professional development program, a law student professional development topic related to the current season, and a member

professional development topic related to the current season. Because it is summer, this newsletter's law student professional development topic is "Communicating with Students Over the Summer" and this newsletter's member professional development topic is "Take an Intensive Training Course."

As always, our hope is that the issues in these quarterly newsletters will spark new ideas for your CSO and professional development offices, generate discussion for LSPD section quarterly talks, and of course, contribute to inculcating a culture of professionalism in law schools today.

This newsletter was written by me, Law Student Professional Development Section Chair and Program Director for Public Interest & Chicago Initiatives at Notre Dame, Katelynn McBride and I am always open to hearing your comments about past newsletter topics and ideas for new ones. My email is Katelynn.McBride@nd.edu and I am happy to hear from any LSPD section member. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Katelynn

Join us for the next Law Student Professional Development Section Quarterly Call!

Next Call: Wednesday, September 21 at 1:00 Eastern

Join us by calling 888-346-3569 and entering passcode: 3018

PD Spotlight

Penn State, Dickinson School of Law's For-Credit, Graded Mandatory "Practicing Law in a Global World: Contexts & Competencies I and II"

Just last year, Penn State Dickinson Law instituted a two semester for-credit, graded, mandatory professional development program. Penn State Dickinson Law describes it as "a new course that is part of Dickinson Law's faculty's vision of an integrated curriculum that helps prepare students for professional life after graduation." The first semester is "Part I: Contexts," a 3 credit course taught by faculty during 1L spring semester. The second semester is "Part II: Competencies" and it is taught 2L spring semester. There is no final exam. Instead, students are graded based on a portfolio they turn in at the end of the semester, three reflective essays that they prepare after conducting 20 minute informational interviews, class assignments, quizzes, and class attendance. The portfolio and assessment requirements might be updated for the upcoming year.



The portfolio that students turn in consists of:

1. Resume
2. Cover letter
3. StrengthsFinder 2.0 Assessment
4. Outreach emails for informational interviews
5. Reflective essays after informational interviews
6. A completed roadmap template
7. An elevator pitch
8. Present intentions on where you intend to take the bar exam and the subjects tested on that state's bar exam
9. A list of internships or in-house clinics that interest you
10. A statement on which seminar you are considering taking for graduation

11. Current thoughts on other classes you plan to take over the next two years
12. A writing sample
13. Any letters of recommendation or other evidence of your competencies, skills, attributes, and values that you would be willing to share with a potential employer

Dickinson Law describes the reasoning for the program as:

By reading about and hearing from different kinds of lawyers, students gain a better understanding of what it means to be a lawyer in the 21st Century. Students learn about the many different career paths that lawyers have chosen; the opportunities available to them; and the expectations of clients and others. Students hear from a wide variety of lawyers about their professional values and expectations. Thus, the course gives students the opportunity to consider the type of lawyer that they would like to become.

The new mandatory curriculum was supported and initiated by Dickinson Law's Dean in conjunction with the faculty. Career Services collaborates on the curriculum, helping to develop content and recommend speakers. Because the program is mandatory and takes place during a regularly scheduled course time, staff did not need to chase down students to attend the class. They simply attended the class as they would any other class.

This course meets twice a week during the second semester of 1L year. It is divided into the following four units: (1) an introduction to the legal profession and background information; (2) walking in their shoes: the "wants" section; (3) contexts in which lawyers work; and (4) the impact of globalization on the law and the legal profession.

In-class content consists mostly of panels of speakers representing the various contexts of practice being discussed. The speakers then stayed for lunch and students were invited to sign up for lunches that interest them and informally network with the speakers after class. Alumni were excited about the curriculum and happy to be a part of it while students frequently stayed for the lunches to talk with alumni and many got jobs through that networking. Students have assigned reading and are required to turn in a survey or assignment that is related to the class session.

Class sessions include titles such as "An Overview of the U.S. Legal Profession," "What Do Employers Want & How Do they Find it," and "Government Lawyers - Litigation, Advisory, Policy & Regulatory." In its first year, the government lawyers, prosecutors, and "representing entrepreneurs" panels were the most well received.

Having just finished their first year with the program, Dickinson Law did not institute specific requirements for the informational interviews students were required to complete and many students interviewed friends and family members. For next year, Dickinson Law plans to implement a requirement that students must conduct informational interviews with practitioners that they don't know or aren't immediately related to.

Dickinson Law's mandatory program is an exciting new development, which requires students to learn about various practice areas and the practical steps they need to take to get jobs in those practice areas. By making the class mandatory and slotting it into a regular class schedule, students take the class seriously and are required to perfect documents that any career development professional deems vital, such as a resume, cover letter, and a plan for where they want to practice. It will be exciting to see this program develop as it continues into its second year.

Communicating with Students Over the Summer

As unhappy as students are to receive too many emails during the school year, they are even less thrilled about having their inboxes flooded over summer. But that doesn't stop career and professional development professionals from having vital information to impart. In fact, reminding students of how to conduct themselves in the workplace is even more important when they are out in the field working. So how can we effectively communicate with students who are not loving email?

Start a blog. The University of Denver has an aesthetically pleasing informational [blog](#) that students want to read. It has pictures, a brief glimpse of text that makes you want to read more without overloading you, and an extremely clickable "Featured Jobs" section on the side of the website.



I am inspired to follow Denver's lead and I am starting my own careers blog, <https://becomingadifferentkindofprofessional.org/>, which will enable me to never send out a long email again. Instead, I will send out a short email with the blog post title, a few sentences of text, and then a link to the blog. No more long emails to complain about!

Go where students go. I recently spoke with a communications director at a Midwest law school who told me that their students only get information from Facebook. So they started posting the information to Facebook. If they had an interesting lunch time program coming up, they would link to it on all of the class year's Facebook pages. And if you start a blog, you can link to that on Facebook as well.

Inception students with professional development information. I would wager that you only care about students learning your professional development messages and not so much about how they get those messages. One way to get them that information is to have your alumni teach them how to maximize their presence and effectiveness. You can do this by requiring students to participate in a mock interview program. Need advice for getting a mock interview program started at your school? Bonnie Tunick from DePaul created a [spreadsheet](#) compiling information on multiple schools' mock interview programs and posted it on NALP Connect.

Beyond a mandatory mock interview program, you can send students information about a topic they care deeply about and include professional development messages within that information. I run Notre Dame's federal work study program, where I help 90 students get federal work study funding to work in public interest jobs over the summer. Those students care A LOT about when they will be getting paid so when I send an email with that information, they read it. So you better believe that I sneak some professionalism tips into my email announcing the payment dates.

How do you communicate with your students over the summer? Start a discussion on [NALP Connect](#) and let us know.

<p style="text-align: center;">Member PD: Take an Intensive Training Course</p>
--

I like summer. I get the chance to get big projects done, think in broad terms about how I can most help students, and conduct tons of employer outreach. But after this summer, I think I am going to also commit to taking at least one intensive training course every single summer. This is not just for selfish reasons. It helps students more than anything else I could do. Let me explain.



Last week, I finished [the Center for Conflict Resolution's Mediation Skills Training](#). I spent five days learning how to mediate disputes, which consisted of learning active listening skills and really making someone feel heard, reframing negative language to highlight the positive shine on any message, summarizing what someone has said to show that I understood them, and “reality testing” any assertion someone makes about what they claim to want with solid questions probing the matter. It does not take a huge leap of logic to see how this will help me better connect with students.

After a while, when I talk to students on a daily basis and create programming to help them, it can be easy to get trapped in my own brain and to think broadly about my CDO’s priorities, forgetting that I am talking to people who ultimately just want to be heard. This excellent mediation training taught me how to connect with people in a way that I had never learned before and gave me a fresh perspective. And at the end of the day, if we do not connect with our students on a human level, they will not take any professional development or career advice we give, even if it is the most obviously good advice in the world.

Beyond that, now that I have completed mediation skills training, I am knowledgeable about a profession that touches the law and that my students may be interested in pursuing. Now that I know something about it, I am more aware of its existence as a career option and can better counsel students interesting in pursuing it. Also, the Center for Conflict Resolution is one of Notre Dame’s externship sites so I further solidified a relationship with an organization where my students may end up working.

Unsurprisingly, I connected with several lawyers, all with interesting and diverse backgrounds. I am going to build upon these connections and create more networking opportunities for my students.



Of course, mediation is very strongly connected to the law so this all seems obvious but I would contend that taking a taekwondo or tuba or Spanish intensive training course over the summer would be highly beneficial as well. Expanding your worldview and dedicating yourself to learning a lot about a topic you had never thought about will make you a more open, curious, and well-rounded person. Even if you learn nothing about the topic, meeting diverse people you would have never come across otherwise will just make you better. Since we are all on a mission to make our students better, we better start with ourselves.

Join the Conversation

Thank you for reading the first edition of the 2016-2017 Law Student Professional Development Section's Quarterly Newsletter. Please email Katelynn at Katelynn.McBride@nd.edu if you have ideas for topics for future newsletters or would like your law school's professional development program to be spotlighted in the next edition.