

MEMORANDUM

To: Jeff Becherer, Board Liaison

Cc: Fred Thrasher, Deputy Director; Claire Nash, Member Services Coordinator

From: Alex Piller, Chair of the Law Student Professional Development Section

Date: April 6, 2023

Re: Fourth Quarter Board Report, NALP Law Student Professional Development Section

During the fourth quarter of the 2022 – 2023 NALP business cycle, the Law Student Professional Development (LSPD) Section continued work on its charges within each respective Work Group and conducted its fourth quarter section meeting hosted via Zoom. This report identifies our leadership team, summarizes the environmental scanning we conducted on our fourth quarter section meeting, and describes the status of our projects.

I. LSPD Leadership Team:

Chair:

Alex Piller, *Director of Career Planning and Professional Development*, University of Illinois College of Law (apiller2@illinois.edu)

Vice-Chairs, Annual Education Conference / *Bulletin*+ Article and Webinar Planning / PDI:

Kristina Bilowus, *Assistant Director of Career Development*, Michigan State University College of Law (bilowuskristina@law.msu.edu)

Vice-Chair, Communications, Social Media & Marketing:

Oscar Teran, *Associate Dean for Career Services*, Southwestern Law School (oteran@swlaw.edu)

Vice-Chair, DEI Liaison:

Carmia Caesar, *Associate Dean for Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion*, The George Washington University Law School (ccaesar@law.gwu.edu)

Vice-Chair, Law Student and Lawyer Professional Development Sections

Collaboration:

Diana Mercer, *Director, Career Development Office*, Loyola University New Orleans College of Law (dmercerc@loyno.edu)

Vice-Chair, Member Relations and Membership Development:

Elizabeth Carr, *Assistant Dean of Career Services*, Mercer University School of Law
(carr_e@law.mercer.edu)

Vice-Chairs, Professional Identity Formation:

Leanne Fuith, *Associate Professor*, Mitchell Hamline School of Law
(leanne.fuith@mitchellhamline.edu)

Erika Pont, *Associate Professor of Law, Fundamentals of Lawyering*, The George Washington University Law School (epont@law.gwu.edu)

Vice-Chair, Well-Being Champion:

Natasha Patel, *Senior Director, Career Center*, Emory University School of Law
(natasha.patel@emory.edu)

II. 4th Quarter Section Meeting (March 15)

We held our fourth quarter meeting on March 15 by Zoom. About 15 members attended. We ended the meeting on time, after 60 minutes.

A. Adapting Professional Development Programming to Early Recruiting / “Precruiting”

We discussed our latest experiences with early recruiting and how it may affect law student professional development and CSO programming. We discussed how the timing and nature of early recruiting can depend on the market and the school. CSOs and students need to adapt to those occurring earlier than others, those employers who may hold offers open until OCI, and those employers who may require earlier decisions. At schools with students targeting a variety of geographic markets, some students may have to prepare for earlier recruiting than other students.

We discussed how some CSOs have difficulty preparing students in time for early recruiting due to other activities and timelines, including the results of grades, class rank, and journal competitions. We also discussed how some students may need more preparation to interview well.

We also discussed the added pressures on students only having first semester results for those employers that are recruiting early. This impacts credentials available for recruiting, and could also affect progress on professional identity formation, including possibly affecting students’ preparedness to accept offers and make decisions concerning their career paths.

We also discussed various effects early recruiting might especially have on diverse and first-generation students, including effects of employers' diversity initiatives seeking to identify and recruit a smaller, diverse pool earlier.

B. Effects of Remote-Work Arrangements on Law Student Professional Development

We next discussed how remote and hybrid work arrangements at employers during summer internships might affect law student professional development. We discussed that students might have to take more initiative to form personal and professional connections at work. We discussed some CSOs provide training and resources for students on how to overcome this challenge, including templates suggesting ways to reach out. We also discussed the challenge of encouraging students to use the CSO resources.

We discussed how remote and hybrid work environments are reportedly hampering professional development, experiential learning, receiving feedback, and mentoring at work for full-time employees, and this is also a concern also during summer internships. CSOs should consider making students aware of these concerns and provide strategies for working around them.

We also discussed it being more difficult for students to evaluate the culture of an employer prior to accepting an offer when some employers have hybrid or remote working arrangements for their employees; therefore it is even more important for students to try to carefully evaluate their options and the cultures of the employers to find a good fit. We discussed CSOs helping their students be aware of these questions and the importance of gauging employer culture.

C. Environmental Scanning

Members had no other environmental scanning concerns at the meeting.

III. Work Group Reports

A. Annual Education Conference / *Bulletin*+ Article and Webinar Planning / PDI (by Kristina Bilowus)

Kristina Bilowus attended the 2023 NALP Newer Professionals' Forum in San Diego, CA. In addition to promoting the Section, meeting new members, and speaking about opportunities, the request for RFPs was advocated. From an informal standpoint, there was several topics of interest discussed, that may be of particular relevance with programming and content moving forward. Of interest, DEI, mental health and wellness, work life balance, and the ever-evolving landscape of the work environment within the legal profession seemed to present consistent themes. Social justice, post-pandemic structures, and needs of Gen Z students, was also discussed. Moving forward, our Section could potentially build around these themes as we plan for the year ahead.

A. Communications, Social Media, & Marketing (by Oscar Teran)

As we approach the end of 2022 – 2023 NALP business cycle, the Social Media & Marketing Work Group, led by vice-chair Oscar Teran, has produced social media content for NALP’s LinkedIn page and promoted the work of section members through NALP Connect. Social media posts have highlighted the "Developing the Professional Lawyer" video series; NALP’s “Diversity Best Practices Guide;” and the NALP E-Guides on E-Professionalism. In addition to social media content, the Social Media & Marketing Work Group utilized NALP Connect to highlight the “Business of Law” professional development curriculum for students, co-authored by Section member Diana Mercer, Career Development Director at Loyola University New Orleans College of Law.

B. Law Student and Lawyer Professional Development Sections Collaboration (by Diana Mercer)

As discussed in prior updates, the Law School Professional Development Section and the Law Firm Professional Development Section have developed a Business Law Curriculum with the goal of providing a guide that both law schools and law firms can use to educate students/new lawyers about the business side of law practice and the effect various compensation structures have on salary considerations, time on partnership track etc. While our proposed curriculum was not implemented as a program in the spring, we did receive helpful feedback from some career offices which was helpful in refining the curriculum. The hope is that this curriculum will be a resource for law schools and law firms, especially those without centralized training programs, and perhaps also the subject of an article for the NALP newsletter in the future.

In addition to the above, we discussed issues law firms may face when employing attorneys and other personnel (including law students) who live in states other than where the firm is located or has an office, including tax, workers compensation, and other issues. The goal is an article examining these issues in more depth and offering specific issues for firms (and lawyers and students) to consider in these situations (not any specific legal advice, of course). We are meeting later in April to flesh this topic out further.

C. Professional Identity Formation (by Leanne Fuith and Erika Pont)

Since the last report, the Vice Chairs have identified a tentative date for the first in their series of webinars on Professional Identity Formation. The first webinar will be a pre-Annual Education Conference primer for those unfamiliar with professional identity formation. The webinar's learning objectives are to introduce: (1) the vocabulary of professional identity and its formation in law students and (2) the skills, values, and character traits developed in the professional identity formation process.

Pending approval from NALP, the Vice Chairs are targeting April 13 during the lunch hour for this primer. Format will be an "Inside the Actors Studio" style Q&A between Vice Chair Erika

Pont and Professional Identity Formation thought leader [Jerry Organ](#) followed by audience questions. The Q&A will be informed by the ongoing environmental scanning Vice Chairs have conducted as part of NALP's Professional Identity Formation Working Group.

D. Well-Being Champion (by Natasha Patel)

Natasha Patel attended the NALP Well-Being Champions quarterly meeting. We discussed specific items to focus on in well-being for attorneys. Also, we discussed plans to meet at the annual conference.