

MEMORANDUM

To: Pascale Bishop, Board Liaison

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

From: Jennifer Salyers, Chair, Law Student Professional Development Section
Law Student Professional Development Section Leadership Team

Date: February 4, 2021

Re: Board Report, NALP Law Student Professional Development Section

During the third quarter of the 2020-2021 NALP business cycle, the Law Student Professional Development (LSPD) Section continued its work on its charges and engaged in robust environmental scanning discussions during its third quarterly call hosted via Zoom. This report identifies our leadership team, describes the status of our projects, and summarizes the environmental scanning we conducted on our third quarterly call.

I. Leadership Team

Chair:

Jennifer Salyers, William & Mary Law School, jsalyers@wm.edu

Annual Education Conference/Bulletin Article and Webinar Planning Vice Chair:

Alex Piller, University of Illinois, apiller2@illinois.edu

Knowledge Management Vice Chair:

Freda Coleman-Jackson, Washington & Lee University School of Law,
fcoleman-jackson@wlu.edu

Law Student and Lawyer Professional Development Sections Collaboration Vice Chair:

Shar Poormosleh, Southwestern Law School, spoormosleh@swlaw.edu

Membership Development Vice Chair:

Elizabeth Carr, Mercer, carr_e@law.mercer.edu

Professional Identity Formation Vice Chair:

Laura Friedman, Case Western Reserve University School of Law,
laura.friedman@case.edu

Programming Best Practices Vice Chair:

Sara Marshall, William & Mary Law School, srmarshall@wm.edu

II. Section Call Introductions, Developing the Professional Lawyer Workgroup Student Tips Videos, and Board Report

On January 20, 2021, sixteen members of the LSPD Section participated in the third quarterly call of the current NALP business cycle.

A. Introductions & Developing the Professional Lawyer Workgroup Update

The call began with a brief introduction by the Section Chair. Tony Waller, of the University of Georgia School of Law and member of the Developing the Professional Lawyer Workgroup, provided an update and brief demonstration of the groups' new Student Tips Videos series which is now live on the NALP website (https://www.nalp.org/developing_the_professional_lawyer). This has been a three-year initiative at the direction of the Board of Directors and NALP Presidents. Tony reports that two more videos are forthcoming and that the video series is intended to be used by law schools.

B. Board Report

Pascale Bishop, our Board Liaison, provided a Board Report. The next NALP Board meeting will be held in February 2021 where the Board will continue to explore and consider ways to add value for NALP members. The decision about whether to hold the Annual Education Conference (AEC) in person or virtually is still pending. A slate of new Board of Director candidates has been announced and it is now time to update the NALP Directory of Law Schools (NDLS). Pascale concluded her report by mentioning that both the PDI and D&I conferences were successfully held virtually.

III. Work Group Reports

LSPD Vice Chairs then provided updates on their Work Groups and a robust environmental scanning discussion followed.

A. Annual Education Conference/*Bulletin* Article Planning (by Alex Piller)

Bulletin Article

An article on behalf of our section was published in the January 2021 edition of *Bulletin*:

Experiential Education in the Midst of a Pandemic: Where Are We Now?

by Dena R. Bauman and Kathryn C. Liss

A summary of how to find an externship in light of COVID-19, adapting to remote working/telecommuting, and the impact the pandemic has had on students and field supervisors.

Future Conference/Bulletin Article Planning

We continued environmental scanning of topics discussed by our members and at the 2020 Professional Development Institute for future conference proposals and *Bulletin* articles. We also look forward to Annual Education Conference request for proposals opening soon and hopefully convening at this year's conference to further discuss and plan.

A. Knowledge Management - KM (Freda Coleman-Jackson)

On October 1, 2020, the Work Group completed an audit of the 2017 Annual Education Conference Handouts and submitted the content log to the KM Advisory Group for review. Following this submission, the Work Group was assigned to conduct an audit of the Conference Handouts from the 2016 Annual Education Conference. This audit was completed on January 16th and submitted to the KM Advisory Group for review. We welcome any members to join the Work Group and to lend their expertise on LSPD resources.

B. Law Student and Lawyer Professional Development Sections Collaboration (Shahrazad Poormosleh)

The Law Firm PD Program Write-Up Project, an initiative to interview and draft write-ups about law firm PD programs is now near its final stages of progress. We now have instructions to create a separate document per interview/law firm; and have someone from the Section post to NALPConnect in the Lawyer PD group on a regular basis (two firms per month). We will be reaching out to the Chair of the Lawyer Professional Development Section (Carrie English), regarding the publication of the final product on NALPConnect. We may arrange for posting the same on the Law Student Professional Development Section page on NALPConnect.

C. Membership Development (Elizabeth Carr)

First, we want to mention that we had a very productive Law School Professional Development Roundtable during December's PDI conference. A special thank you to those in attendance and to those who contributed their thoughts and expertise! The three main topics that were discussed were: 1) Helpful Tips to Prepare Students for Virtual Networking Events- a topic near and dear to everyone's heart these days, 2) How to Reinforce Programming Content Delivered Virtually- another topic of extreme relevance at this time, and 3) Lessons Learned: Getting Faculty/Student "Buy In" When Launching New PD Programs and/or Adjusting Established PD Programs in the COVID era- a topic that maybe someday we won't have to keep discussing! I know I am longing for that day.

As always, to continue our efforts to increase LSPD Section membership, I spoke with current members during our most recent call and encouraged them to invite their colleagues and contacts to join quarterly calls and to engage in discussions on NALPConnect and to invite one person to our next virtual meeting. I also indicated that I am happy to take on ideas for new and better ways to develop our membership, especially given the current circumstances.

D. Professional Identity Formation (Laura Friedman)

The working group finalized and submitted the survey of law firm competency models for associate development in November, and NALP shortly thereafter opened it up to NALP law firm members. As a reminder, the survey will help illuminate what common competencies exist across different sizes of law firms, help law firms understand the varied ways in which competency models are being used by law firms, and help law schools understand the extent to which common competencies among law firms are considered in the hiring process and whether they align with common law school learning outcomes. The survey has closed and we got nearly 60 responses, in line with expectations. The working group met in January to begin sorting through the data and plans to assess and categorize the qualitative responses in February. The Co-Vice Chair of this work group for the Lawyer Professional Development Section is seeking input from NALP leadership about timelines for forms of presenting the survey results (articles, workshops, etc.) and potentially expanding the survey audience to a wider range of employer types.

E. Programming Best Practices (Sara Marshall)

This work group is continuing to gather information on programming best practices to develop a resource for NALP members. In particular, we are gathering information on how to provide effective virtual programming in a world of physical distancing. We are partnering in this endeavor with the Small and Solo Career Advisor Section's Programming Best Practices work group. At this stage, we have created a Google doc that is shared between our Sections so that members from both groups can share their ideas and best practices, including adjustments they have made to traditional PD programs.

Collection of this information will also be helpful for the Sections' contributions to NALP's strategic planning process. In addition to creating a stand-alone programming tool kit, we will consider adding updates on virtual programming best practices to the existing PD Booklet.

IV. Environmental Scanning

A. Environmental Scanning: Advising Students in Distress Remotely/Via Zoom

As the current public health crisis continues, emotions and stressors are at an all-time high for our students during this turbulent year; grades are being released, bar results are still trickling in, and a competitive OCI/recruiting season is still in progress. The LSPD Section Leadership Team wanted to discuss and share best practices for career advisors when coaching a student in distress (or who might have a strong emotional response) during a virtual advising session. Jennifer Salyers led a discussion about this topic. Here are the themes and highlights from this discussion:

- One section member reported spending more time (as compared to in-person advising) at the beginning of an advising appointment engaging the student in a general discussion (e.g., asking how they are doing, where they are living, etc.) before diving into career advising.
- Another section member reported that asking questions related to overall student wellbeing is more important than ever due to the importance of getting buy-in.
- Showing our humanity is important. Members discussed how blending professional boundaries (e.g., allowing children to be seen on screen and giving students a window into our lives) serves as a reminder that we are all in this together.
- Allowing a bit of vulnerability with ourselves is also helpful for students to know that they are not alone.
- Reminding students that they are feeling grief right now.
- We seem to be the place that is actually checking in with students right now and they appreciate it.
- Acknowledging how hard this is!

B. Environmental Scanning: TMI? Teaching students the fine art of sharing, but not too much, when crafting a personal statement.

As application season continues, the LSPD Section Leadership Team thought it would be helpful to discuss how to coach students as they advocate on their own behalf by crafting personal statements. Have you coached a student to think about sharing less or pulling back a bit on the personal details included within their personal statement -while not diminishing their spirit, experiences, and identity? How do you coach students to balance the need to “be authentic” but at the same time avoiding “TMI”? Freda Coleman-Jackson led a discussion about this topic. Here are the themes and highlights from this discussion:

- Members discussed the importance of focusing on how personal experiences prompted action/moving forward, as opposed to focusing on the negative.
- When discussing the contents of the personal statement with the student, probe to see if a student is comfortable talking about what they put in their statement. Can you talk about the content of the personal statement in an interview?
- One section member suggested to frame the conversation by probing to see if the student has thought about how the personal statement responds to the prompt from the employer’s perspective. This section member also recommended taking a look at substantive (not specific word count, formatting advice) provided on the Southeastern Minority Job Fair’s Website (<https://semjf.org/diversity-statements>) which provides a quick bullet pointed list of the employer’s perspective when reading applicant personal statements.
- Consider talking to students about their personal statements versus exchanging emails about the statement.
- Perhaps suggest that students focus on client stories versus their own stories when appropriate.