

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: June 25, 2020

Re: Board Report, NALP Law Student Professional Development Section

During the first 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 first quarterly call. This report identifies our leadership team, summarizes the environmental scanning we conducted on our first quarterly call, and describes the status of our projects.

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:

Molly Wilensky, University of Missouri-Kansas City School of Law,
wilenskym@umkc.edu

Programming Best Practices Vice Chair:

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

II. Section Call & Environmental Scanning

On May 8, 2020, thirty-five members of the LSPD Section participated in the first quarterly call of the current NALP business cycle.

A. Introductions & Board Report

The call began with a brief introduction by the Section Chair as well as a thank you to last year's LSPD Chair, Elisabeth Beal, and the LSPD Section Leadership Team. Pascale Bishop, our Board Liaison, then provided a Board Report addressing topics including the economic impact of COVID-19, the NALP COVID-19 impact survey, upcoming NALP Town Halls, NALP Annual Education Conference (AEC) virtual programming, and the approval and unveiling of NALP's annual Business Plan and new Strategic Plan. LSPD Vice Chairs then provided updates on their Work Groups and a robust environmental scanning discussion followed.

B. Requests for Proposals for the 2021 Annual Education Conference & NALP *Bulletin*

Members were encouraged to submit RFPs for the 2021 NALP AEC (deadline is July 24, 2020) and NALP *Bulletin* article topic proposals (deadline is June 15, 2020).

C. Environmental Scanning: Professional development challenges facing law students during the COVID-19 era.

As the current public health crisis continues, the LSPD Section Leadership Team wanted to address the professional development issues that students are facing and potential solutions. Jennifer Salyers led a discussion about this topic. Here are the themes and highlights from this discussion:

- Members noted that communication skills have become even more important for students to polish and master during the current public health crisis.
 - Students may need additional support and assistance in deciphering employer communications regarding the impact of COVID-19 on summer employment and/or post-graduate offers.
 - CSOs may need to provide students with additional guidance on when and how to reach out to employers regarding the status of summer programs.
 - One member noted that sample outreach email language was provided to students and students were encouraged to submit drafts of their outreach communications for review.
- One CSO hosted separate virtual Town Halls for rising 2Ls and 3Ls, addressing frequently asked questions collected via anonymous surveys prior to the Town Hall as well as live during the discussion. The Town Halls led to the creation of an FAQ resource for students addressing issues including employer communication, summer employment, etc.

- Coaching students on how to network during the pandemic has also been a hot topic for CSOs during the public health crisis.
 - Students may feel like now “is not the right time” for networking outreach and may be pulling back on their outreach efforts.
 - Members discussed the importance of students remaining engaged in their networking efforts during this time.
 - Several members noted that alumni seem eager and willing to connect with students. For example, an alum observed and shared with an LSPD member that in networking conversations during the public health crisis, students have the rare opportunity to shine by projecting a calm and resilient spirit by asking thoughtful questions.

D. Environmental Scanning: Professional development programming during the COVID-19 era.

As some CSOs plan to move their professional development programming to a virtual/E-Learning platform, others focus on launching professional development programming for the first time. Jennifer Salyers led a discussion about this topic. Here are the themes and highlights from this discussion:

- Members first discussed the overall transition of PD Programming to an E-Learning platform:
 - One member shared that an alum, employed at a firm, offered to host professional development-related programming for students during the summer.
 - Several members discussed the timing and frequency of virtual summer programming. For example, one member shared that their CSO is planning to host twice-weekly programming during the summer by collaborating with student services and alumni to develop a list of speakers and topics. Currently, four webinars have been scheduled and eight are in the works.
 - Reviewing, vetting and seeking permission to re-post and share webinars that have already been recorded by other entities was discussed. A list of pre-recorded professional development-related webinars might be something for the Section to explore sharing via NALPConnect. For example, the NALP Email & Voicemail Etiquette webinar course can be shared with students and could be cross-promoted/advertised via the LSPD Section’s NALPConnect page.
 - There are real upsides to virtual programming – timing does not matter as much, and recordings can be available to students long-term.
- Members next discussed potential topics for PD Programming in light of the pandemic, including:
 - A PD Program specifically focused on communication skills and finding the right balance in terms of frequency, substance, and formality while working remotely.
 - Another idea centered on helping students communicate to employers if they feel uncomfortable working or interviewing in-person.

- How to develop internal networks within an organization when you are working remotely.
- Another section member added that they are hosting a “Lessons from the Last Recession” program addressing how long it took to recover, practice areas that remained busy, and how to fill any gaps in work experience.
- One member shared that their CSO reached out to students who worked remotely during the spring to collect and share tips to students working remotely for the first time this summer. Other members suggested that CSOs could also reach out to students who participated in remote externships to collect best practices for students who will be working remotely for the first time.
- Another PD programming topic was suggested addressing the effective use of instant messenger systems (possibility of over-communicating) and navigating the informality of communication when using instant messenger.
- Other topics suggested included, grit and resilience in facing uncertainty, project management while working remotely and how students, who are also parents, are navigating PD in a remote environment.
- One member shared that their CSO is participating in weekly team meetings with student services and a disability coordinator to be aware of issues as they arise during the public health crisis as well as to coordinate support for students.

III. Work Group Reports

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

The Law Student Professional Development Section held a conference call with members on June 3rd to discuss ideas for potential 2021 Annual Education Conference and *Bulletin* Article proposals.

Annual Education Conference RFPs

We are continuing to work with our members to promote, identify, and submit Annual Education Conference RFPs in advance of the proposal deadline of July 24th. In addition to generating new RFPs, we are also working with authors to identify and improve any promising RFPs submitted last year that were not selected for this year’s conference and to consider resubmitting those that were accepted but not presented.

Bulletin Articles

We are aware of two *Bulletin* articles proposed on behalf of our section. Those articles include:

Experiential Education in the Midst of a Pandemic: Where are we now?
by Kathryn C. Liss and Dena Bauman

(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.)

Virtual Meeting Sessions Reveal Expectation Gap Between Students and Employers

by Megan McGrath Corsetti

(Analyzing feedback from over 100 virtual setup sessions with law students around the country conducted by Fringe Professional Development, Optia Consulting, and Flo Recruit to illustrate students' challenges and concerns about topics such as presenting professionally and virtual networking.)

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

The Work Group represented the LSPD Section on a training call conducted by the KM Advisory Group on June 12th. The training consisted of a knowledge management primer, a review of content modeling, an update on projects completed by prior KM work groups, and a brief review of the NALP content inventory. The various NALP section Vice Chairs were tasked with conducting a content audit utilizing the taxonomy developed by the KM Advisory Group. Our audit will focus on the content most relevant to the LSPD section. Also, feedback from the audit will address the removal and/or merging of redundant, outdated, or trivial (ROT) content and provide suggestions for updating the search tools within the current content library. We welcome any members to join the Work Group and to lend their expertise on LSPD resources.

C. Law Student and Lawyer Professional Development Sections Collaboration (Shahzad Poormosleh)

Shar Poormosleh was selected as the Vice Chair for the Law Student and Lawyer Professional Development Sections Collaboration Group, and was introduced to the Law Firm PD Program Project volunteers. An introductory meeting was held on June 15th, with the Lawyer PD Section Chair and Vice Chairs, including the Professional Identity Formation Vice Chair.

The work group continues to make progress on the Law Firm PD Program Write-Up Project, an initiative to interview and draft write-ups about law firm PD programs. Work Group volunteers, write-up updates, pending submissions, as well as how best to timely and efficiently complete the Law Firm PD Program Project were addressed during the Work Group leadership transition. NALP's Editor in Chief and Senior Editor were contacted to inquire the feasibility of an online publication that would be updated periodically; and the specific steps and formats required for NALP submission. Based on information received, a headline, byline, and repeating text, together with a new schedule for release of write-ups has been submitted for review. The first batch of three write-ups (Series 1) is being reviewed and will be finalized for a forthcoming September publication.

D. Membership Development (Elizabeth Carr)

To increase LSPD Section membership, members were encouraged to invite their colleagues and contacts to join quarterly calls and to engage in discussions on NALPConnect. Twenty-six new members joined the LSPD Section between April 1st and June 9th and a welcome message, which included LSPD Section information, was sent to each new member via NALPConnect to encourage participation and ensure retention.

E. Professional Identity Formation (Molly Wilensky)

A call for volunteers was made during the LSPD Section's first quarterly meeting on May 8th. The Work Group is continuing to collaborate with the Lawyer Professional Development Section to identify and continue last year's initiatives and goals, including the development of a co-hosted webinar. The Work Group has reached out to the Holloran Center and has set up a call to brainstorm ways to collaborate on Work Group charges and initiatives.

F. Programming Best Practices (Sara Marshall)

We are considering creating a best practice guide for CSOs on providing effective virtual programming in a world of physical distancing. We will likely be developing a survey to send electronically to existing and potential members to collect ideas and resources that our colleagues have found helpful in delivering virtual programming during this past spring and summer. This will also be helpful for the Section's contribution to NALP's strategic planning process. If we proceed with this survey, we will follow the appropriate process for approval before distribution. After reviewing the results, we will consider adding updates on virtual programming best practices to the existing PD Booklet.

We are also planning to reach out to the Small and Solo Career Advisor Section on creation of a "To Go Kit" on the basics of launching a professional development curriculum. We are creating a bulletin article on Top 5 Tips/Resources for law school PD programs and may post the tip list as a resource on NALPConnect.