

**To:** Georgia Gray, NALP President  
Eric Bono, Board Liaison  
Fred Thrasher, NALP Deputy Director  
NALP Board of Directors

**From:** Andrianna Dunbar, Chair, Lawyer and Law Student Well Being Working Group  
Amy Perez, Vice Chair, Lawyer and Law Student Well Being Working Group

**Date:** April 13, 2020

**RE:** Lawyer and Law Student Well Being Interest Group – Q4 Board Report (+ ABA CoLAP Liaison Report)

What a difference a few months can make in the lives of our students, lawyers, and colleagues. In reviewing the Q3 report, it felt like getting in a time machine to the “before” pandemic conversations, worries, considerations. What struck me most, is how quickly our colleagues pivoted to support, adapt, and create a new normal - it is really impressive and important to recognize.

#### Q4 Call and ABA CoLAP Updates

The Well Being Interest Group had a robust Q4 call. It was a mix of building connections with each other through sharing ideas about working from home, adapting to distance learning programs, and focusing on how members are addressing well-being with students and lawyers during the pandemic. Some strategies we discussed include:

- Practicing self-compassion
- Meditation
- Parents - let the kids play video games! Adjusting expectations.
- Encouragement by leaders that “life noise” (children, roommates, dogs, etc.) on calls is okay!
- Approaching video-calls as encouraged but optional to make allowances for those who are managing schedules, emotions, and difficult or cramped living quarters.
- Thinking creatively about daily schedules and how to make it work with significant others, roommates, distance learning schedules.
- Be realistic - everyone is experiencing this together - you are not alone.

On the Q4 call Eric Bono provided a Board update to the group, including the welcome news that well-being will figure prominently into NALP's next Strategic Plan and President Elect Beth Moeller's Business Plan. Recently, Amy Perez and I also spoke with Beth Moeller regarding her plan to appoint a Task Force to address issues related to well-being during the recruitment process. We look forward to hearing more about Beth's Business Plan for 2020-2021.

Finally, Amy Perez, along with Jordana Confino from Fordham University (who has been an active member of the Interest Group this term), provided an update on the ABA Well-Being Pledge Signatory Meeting, which was held via conference call on March 24<sup>th</sup>.

*[Due to the present circumstances, Amy Perez was unable to submit a separate ABA CoLAP Liaison Report. Accordingly, please allow the foregoing to serve as that update as well.]*

The ABA Well-Being Pledge is now officially "housed" within the Well-Being Committee of the ABA CoLAP. The Second Annual Pledge Member's Workshop, which was initially scheduled as an in-person meeting at American University in Washington, DC, featured short presentations by Patrick Krill, Anne Brafford, Terry Harrell, Janet Stearns, Jordana Confino, Kelly Wing and Jarrod Reich. Over 180 attendees dialed into the Workshop. The presentations were informative and well done, which is not surprising given the caliber of the presenters.

The deadline for signatories to submit their ABA Pledge update has been extended to May 15<sup>th</sup>. Additionally, Lawyer Well Being Week is still very much moving forward in the first week of May given an even greater need for this focus because of the pandemic. We will continue to promote Lawyer Well Being Week within the Interest Group.

#### "Well-Being" vs. "Wellness"

Finally, we wanted to take this opportunity to advocate for use of the term "well-being" (or "wellbeing") as opposed to "wellness" within NALP's programs, literature, task forces, etc.. The August 2017 Report of the National Task Force on Lawyer Well-Being ("Report") defines "well-being" as:

*[A] continuous process whereby lawyers seek to thrive in each of the following areas: emotional health, occupational pursuits, creative or intellectual endeavors, sense of spirituality or greater purpose in life, physical health, and social connections with others.*

*While the terms “well-being” and “wellness” are sometimes used interchangeably in conversations around mental health and substance abuse issues within the legal field, our Task Force is mindful of some key differences:*

*The Task Force chose the term ‘well-being’ based on the view that the terms ‘health’ or ‘wellness’ connote only physical health or the absence of illness. Our definition of ‘lawyer well-being’ embraces the multi-dimensional concept of mental health and the importance of context to complete health.*

*Source: National Task Force on Lawyer Well-Being Report, pages 9-10*

Now more than ever we are all having to marshal internal and external resources that extend beyond physical health. Therefore, we believe that the term well-being better supports the important work that NALP is doing in this area.

As the Board and President Elect consider the upcoming year, we want to share our appreciation for the opportunity to serve as chair and vice chair for this Interest Group. We hope that the Interest Group will continue to grow and provide more members with opportunities to become involved with NALP, connect with colleagues, and most importantly, provide a forum for supporting the well-being of our lawyers, law students, and one another.