

NALP LAWYER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SECTION

Quarterly Report to the Board of Directors
April 11, 2011
Gillian Murray, Bryan Cave LLP, Section Chair

SUMMARY

During the final quarter of the 2010-2011 NALP year, one section project ended (the NALP Foundation issued the final report on the Survey on Law School Experiential Learning) and another project began: a webinar series arising from several of the most popular sessions of the December 2010 Professional Development Institute (PDI). The status of these initiatives and other items is detailed below.

SURVEY OF LAW SCHOOL EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

The final, 41-page report of the Survey was released by the NALP Foundation. The report was posted to both the NALP and NALP Foundation websites; in addition, a courtesy copy of the report will be mailed to law school deans. Judy Collins of NALP is planning to write a summary *Bulletin* article with a target publication date of May 2011.

A few initial highlights from the responses were mentioned in our previous quarterly report. Now that the numbers have been crunched thoroughly, more statistics of interest have become apparent:

- Our assumption going in was that the “target market” of survey respondents would be junior associates, as we believed they were the likeliest group both to have attended such learning opportunities, and to have the clearest recall of whether such programs prepared them for law practice. Yet nearly half of the respondents (45%) had more than three years of practice under their belt. Response to the survey among those with one year or less of experience was 34% and dropped off sharply in the 2nd and 3rd year (20%). It appears as though associates have two points in their career when they are most aware of the effect of these learning opportunities: just coming into a firm when the experience is fresh; and years later when they have had a chance to internalize and reflect upon what, if any, long-term advantage they received from their participation.
- The overall response skewed significantly toward associates with a practice in litigation (57% vs. 32% in a transactional practice). The comparative participation rate in experiential learning opportunities, however, tracked more closely. Although more litigators took part in legal clinics and practice skills courses, the difference between their participation and those of transactional or regulatory attorneys was only 8% – 9%. Furthermore, transactional associates found those opportunities only slightly less useful than litigators, despite the litigation/advocacy focus of many such programs. A clue toward understanding transactional lawyers’ satisfaction with experiential learning, even though the content is not directly applicable to their practice, may be found in the following statistic: nearly 72% of those who did participate in clinics reported that they served as lead or co-counsel. Substantive

lawyering skills — interviewing clients and witnesses; drafting complaints, motions and briefs; standing up in court — are only one aspect of the learning that goes on in a clinic. Serving as lead or co-counsel provides law students the opportunity to take responsibility for a matter, exercise practical judgment, make tactical and strategic decisions (and live with the consequences of same), and become a self-propelled problem-solver. These learning outcomes are about the student assuming the mantle of a professional, and developing a sense of identity as a professional is vital to a lawyer's success, irrespective of their practice area. As such it is not surprising that transactional lawyers ranked their experiential course work highly.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE (PDI)

As noted in our previous report, we decided that several sessions from the annual Professional Development Institute held in December 2010 merited consideration as webinars. As reported by Elizabeth Tingey, Vice Chair, the status of the PDI webinar project is:

- *Training More Lawyers in More Offices with Fewer Resources: Videoconference and Other Distance Learning Solutions* — The speaker, Marsha Redmond, has agreed to conduct this webinar and it is planned for May 2011, date TBD.
- *Budgeting and Financial Savvy for the PD Professional* — Kay Nash, one of the three original speakers, has agreed to conduct this webinar and is checking with her co-presenters on their participation. It is planned for an October/November timeframe.
- *Using Adult Education Insights to Improve your Programs* — Jennifer Queen, one of the three original speakers, has agreed to conduct this webinar and is checking with her co-presenters on their participation. It is planned for either July or September 2011.

NALP BULLETIN ARTICLES 2010-2011

Hope & Change Emerge Amid a Profoundly Altered Landscape, Amy Hancock (February 2011)

How to Coach Partners to be Better Trainers in 4 Easy Steps, Marsha Redmond (February 2011)

* * *

In conclusion, the Lawyer Professional Development Section thanks NALP for its ongoing support and expertise, and welcomes any feedback from the Board of Directors.

Personally, as Chair, I would like to thank Stacey Kielbasa for her wonderful service as my board liaison, and our Vice Chairs (Liz Tingey and Kris Butler) for doing such great work on two highly significant and visible projects. I understand from Marcy Cox that Kris has agreed to take on the role of Section Chair in 2011-2012, and look forward to supporting both Kris and Marcy during the upcoming NALP year.