

## MEMORANDUM

TO: NALP Executive Board  
FROM: Kelly Ryan and Anna Hanzelka, Lawyer PD Section Chairs  
DATE: March 23, 2026  
RE: Lawyer PD Section Board Report – March 2026

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Below please find a report of the Lawyer Professional Development Section's activities since the last Board Report in January 2026.

### Section Meeting – February

In response to feedback from both the December PDI Section Meeting and the January Section Meeting, we partnered with Greg Miarecki and Julie Dietrich from the Law Student PD Section to host a joint panel on AI. The program featured:

**Moderator** • Michelle Rodriguez, Professional Development Manager, Arnall Golden Gregory

**Law School Representatives** • Marcia Weldon, Law Professor and Director of the Transactional Skills Program, University of Miami • Jackie Russell, Director of Recruitment Programs, Career Development and Professionalism, Chicago-Kent College of Law (Illinois Tech)

**Law Firm Representatives** • Jeffrey DaRocha-Boyle, Director of Professional Development, Fish & Richardson • Amanda Stewart, Director of AI Products and Adoption, Holland & Knight

The discussion centered on how law schools and law firms are integrating AI into teaching and practice as well as what skills firms expect from summer and junior associates. Firms emphasized a baseline expectation that students arrive with prior exposure to AI tools and an understanding of their limitations, particularly around accuracy, confidentiality, and professional responsibility.

Panelists also explored how associate training models may evolve as AI reshapes early-career work. While there is broad concern that AI may displace traditional junior-level tasks, firms still need to develop future senior associates and partners. How to maintain that pipeline remains an open question, and participants expressed interest in NALP's role in shaping emerging best practices.

A key theme was “system three thinking”: the ability to think fast, think slow, and think *with* AI. Panelists noted the risk that new lawyers may over-rely on AI outputs without applying critical judgment. Training associates to review, question, and refine AI-generated work will be essential, yet challenging given their limited substantive experience.

This was our most highly attended section meeting of the year, driven by both the joint-section collaboration and the strong interest in AI across the profession. We anticipate continued evolution in this space and look forward to future NALP guidance.

## **Work Group Reports**

### Education Work Group – Roz Wright, Laura Friedman

Our Co-Vice chairs made a push for Requests For Proposals for both the Annual Education Conference and the Professional Development Institute along with a call for bulletin article writers.

### Lawyer/Law Student PD Collaboration – Susanne Aronowitz

Nothing to report.

### Best Practice in Lawyer PD – Marcia Weldon, Kori Carew

Marcia served as a panelist on the February Section Meeting.

### AI in the Workplace – Elise Tincher, Michelle Rodriguez

Elise and Michelle supported the development of the February Section Meeting panel. Michelle moderated the panel, hosting a prep call for the panelists, and Elise wrote the questions that guided the conversation.

### Lawyer Career Coaching/Advising – Fairuz Abdullah, Mary Maher

Nothing to report.

### DEI Liaison – Doug Ebeling

Nothing to report.

### Small/Midsize Lawyer Professional Development Liaisons – Rob DeToni, Kate Harrison

Nothing to report.

### Wellbeing Champion – Pascale Bishop

Nothing to report.

## **Work Group Feedback and Discussion**

- After some time in this Co-Chair role, we wonder if some of the work groups are effective. Based on other sections within NALP, it seems as if the AI, Coaching, and Small/Midsize groups are duplicative.
- For Coaching, Mary Maher cited both a “Professional Development Coaching and Advising” discussion group within NALP as well as a Coaches in Law group that is actively meeting monthly outside of NALP.

- A note that although NALP does have an AI Task Force, we have struggled with clarity on what that team is doing versus how our section is operating, as we rarely hear from the task force. We did receive some input from our board liaison this year, but I wonder if there is a way to create more streams of communication between the task force and the sections.
- This year we did not hear much from our Wellbeing champion, and I wonder if this function is still productive or whether we need another representative.
- I think some additional clarity and vision around Best Practices in Lawyer PD would be helpful from the board.
- Overall, the Education team is most critical to our needs, and we are seeking feedback from our current Vice-Chairs on what is work and not working in their roles.