

MEMORANDUM

TO: NALP Executive Board
FROM: Kelly Ryan and Anna Hanzelka, Lawyer PD Section Chairs
DATE: January 28, 2026
RE: Lawyer PD Section Board Report – January 2026

Below please find a report of the Lawyer Professional Development Section's activities since the last Board Report in October 2025.

PDI Section Meeting – December

We had a meeting for any interested professionals on Thursday, December 4 during PDI. The timing was in a lull between programming and cocktails, which resulted in a room of about 45 individuals. Anna and I used this time for environmental scanning, to inform the remainder of our NALP year programming. Topics of interest included:

- AI; including ways PD professionals are rolling out AI training, what departments are responsible for AI training and how can they best collaborate, questions around evaluating work product that has been enhanced by AI
- Recruiting timelines and the impact to PD: how can we use PD to support our recruiting colleagues in developing brand recognition with first year law students, how can we adapt collaborations with our law school peers so that it doesn't interfere with the changing recruiting timeline
- Associate mental health, including an uptick in sabbaticals and FMLA due to stress and potential causes
- Overprogramming; including AI but also generally, fighting the inertia against in person training
- Facilitating mergers from a PD lens: both tactical skills needed for new employees as well as change management, building culture and buy-in, smoothing the transition

Impromptu discussions on these topics did not leave any time for other structured discussions.

Section Meeting – January

Based on the feedback above, our section meeting in January focused on mental health trends in law. We invited Deb Ndao, head of Wellbeing at Skadden and previously at Columbia University, and Anjali Garg, a wellbeing coach, to help guide the discussion. The discussion started with some general statistics on mental health, including the disproportionate effect on individuals from ages 22-35 (prime associate time) and a 33% increase in mental health leaves since 2023. We talked about potential causes, especially in a law firm, and the importance of

collaborating with your HR/Benefits team. While you may not be the person handling the administrative processes for someone struggling with mental health, it is important to be familiar with your employer's resources. We shared information about Mental Health First Aid, including some unofficial abbreviated trainings that could be appropriate for an audience of partners. We also discussed the impact to PD professionals who are receiving so much information about an individual's struggles that then impact their mental health. One idea that was novel to us was the idea of doing a vacation analysis – reviewing time charged to PTO by individual and by group and responding to trends. We also discussed the possibility of wellbeing credit where time spent taking care of yourself (exercising, therapy, personal days, etc.) was incentivized through billable credit or other rewards. This is only in place at a select few firms.

We also spent about 15-20 minutes after talking about AI. The group was interested both in implementation (sample programming, firm policies, recommended trainers) as well as professional use cases for their roles.

Work Group Reports

Education Work Group – Roz Wright, Laura Friedman

Reviewed programs that were not approved for the Annual Education Conference for potential webinar topics.

Lawyer/Law Student PD Collaboration – Susanne Aronowitz

Working with the Law Student PD liaison to identify areas for collaboration. Suzanne attended the PDI session on Law Firm / Law School collaboration and there was a lot of interest and excitement in maintaining open channels of communication and strengthening the partnership. To further that goal, we are having a combined Lawyer PD / Law School PD section meeting in February to discuss AI expectations for young lawyers. We are looping in our own AI Workgroup and the AI Task Force for awareness and to ask if they'd like to participate.

Best Practice in Lawyer PD – Marcia Weldon, Kori Carew

Nothing to report.

AI in the Workplace – Elise Tincher, Michelle Rodriguez

Elise and Michelle met with Anna and Kelly to discuss how to avoid overlap with the AI Task Force and potential areas of interest for the PD group. We worked with Board Liaisons Myriah Graves and Amy Perez to identify 'lanes' to work within. Elise and Michelle are working on identifying a specific topic for an AI webinar tailored to the Lawyer PD audience.

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.