

# MEMORANDUM

**To:** Lynne Traverse  
Board Liaison, Lawyer Professional Development Section

**From:** Michele Bendekovic  
Lawyer Professional Development Chair

**Date:** February 8, 2010

**Re:** Lawyer Professional Development Section Board Report

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This memo summarizes the activities of the Lawyer Professional Development Section for the period November, 2009 – January, 2010.

The Lawyer Professional Development Section held its quarterly conference call on January 29, 2010. Based on responses of the section members on the call, the majority are attending the annual conference in Puerto Rico. Travel restrictions are still in place, but do not seem as prohibitive as in 2009.

A topic of discussion on our recent call dealt with the listserv. The consensus is that the listserv is not being utilized. It has the potential to be a resource to the Section, but the listserv has its limitations. The Section commented on the limited functionality of the listserv, the difficulty of sending documents/attachments and if it's not a tool that is easy to use, it won't be used. The Section was pleased to see technology figure so prominently in the new strategic plan and hopes that the limitations on the listserv will be addressed.

Based on a prior conversation between Lynne Traverse and me, the Section discussed the use of mentors for our newer Section members. The Section membership appears to be heavily comprised of those new to the PD profession. Mentors are a great way to get our newer Section members involved, to pass down knowledge and to begin to build your own NALP network. The Section agreed that this was a good idea, especially those newer PD professionals on the call. I recommend that this be an initiative for the next Section leader to consider.

## **Work Groups**

The Section currently has 5 work groups and an update/summary for each group is provided in the attached document.

I'd like to elaborate more on the Lawyer/Law Student collaboration work group. As stated in the summary, the work group will begin to explore the two themes among the group with the goal of working on and completing any projects before the 2011 conference. What we are initially looking at is how schools and firms can work together to define the baseline competencies; how do firms want these skills taught; what should law schools emphasize; are there

programs that firms and schools can share; what competencies are meaningful to employers in the recruiting season; prioritize what schools should focus on, and if schools addressed these skills, would firms have to teach them. The end product is not very clear at this point, but what we envision is to have a better understanding of what schools and firms are doing to prepare our newest associates and to develop a common language/definitions when we talk about baseline competencies that can be taught in law school and then refined (specific firm knowledge) in law firms.

### **Environmental Scanning**

Given the timing of this call and the closing of 2009, the Section members had budgets on their minds. Overall budgets are still tight. Members are being more strategic, conservative, making difficult choices and having to make the best use of their dollars. For those in charge of both recruiting and PD budgets, dollars are being traded among the two budgets to cover what is needed. Outside consultants are still being used, but no where near the extent of past years. Coaching expenses are being supported in budgets. Social expenses and retreats are still being cut. Diversity budgets have been cut. The common theme is that we are still being asked to do more with less. As one Section member commented, we have to approach the budget with a different view.

Please let me know if you have any questions, need clarification or additional information on anything in this report. Thanks.

Cc: Fred Thrasher, NALP Deputy Director