

## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Lynn Iding, NALP Board Liaison

**CC:** Fred Thrasher, NALP Deputy Director  
Claire Nash, NALP Member Services Coordinator

**FROM:** Amy Ross, Ropes & Gray  
Carrie Weintraub, Holland & Knight

**DATE:** October 21, 2021

**RE:** Second Board Report – Legal Employer Chief Officers Interest Group

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We are pleased to submit our second quarter NALP Board report as co-chairs of the Legal Employer Chief Officers Interest Group for the 2021-2022 year. We held three meetings during the second quarter. The first meeting was in August. The second meeting was in September and the third was held in October. We are pleased that we have been able to hold monthly meetings during this quarter with the exception of July.

### **August Meeting**

We started the meeting with a board update. We then continued our discussion about firm plans regarding return to office as this is a topic that is top of mind for many. Specifically, we shared with one another information regarding when firms would require their personnel to return to the office, whether the return would be accomplished in phases, and firms' plans with respect to remote work post return for lawyers and staff. This discussion provided helpful market information to group members. We also shared information about vaccination requirements, as well as which databases could help with coordinating scheduling in this new hybrid work environment.

We also discussed how to ensure associates receive equal access to work; what software firms are using to track skills, development, etc.; and who within firms oversees the distribution of assignments.

### **September Meeting**

Again in September, return to office was a hot topic. Firms shared whether those that intended to return in September or October would delay their returns due to the Delta variant and increased COVID-19 infections in many parts of the U.S. News reports seemed to indicate that most firms had pushed off their return dates. The firms on the call generally confirmed this. Most firms decided not to commit to a new return date but instead to provide at least 30 days' notice to its personnel when it is time to return. A number of firms, however, shared that they still planned to return in October. Of those, some believed that the October date would not hold; they expected the date to be pushed out again. But a few said they were confident that the October date would

hold. Of those firms that are returning to the office, most are easing people back into the office by requiring, to start, only one day a week in the office. After a period of time, they will require 2 days, then 3 days.

Firms on the call are all generally concerned that it will be difficult to get people back into the office consistently and willingly if, when they do return, they are doing what they would do at home – sitting in front of their computer screens all day and not interacting with others. If that is what occurs, individuals may decide that the extra time getting ready for work and commuting isn't worth it. So firms are starting to think about what they can do to change the structure of the work week or to at least provide tools and guidance to individuals to help them change the structure of their work week.

Firms again discussed the technology tools they are leveraging to manage their hybrid work schedules. Most firms are utilizing tools they already had available in house. However, one of the firms shared that it has purchased specialty software to manage hybrid work schedules - Maptician. This software also has features to manage hoteling, which the firm is considering down the road. The color-coded floor maps indicate who is in the office and who is working remotely on any given day – lawyers and staff – and these floor maps will be visible to everyone so individuals can plan to be in the office at the same time as others if needed for collaboration/meetings.

We ended the meeting with a Board update.

### **October Meeting**

Today's meeting was opened with a Board update. We did not receive any agenda items in advance so we opened up the floor to allow people to talk about current interest items and concerns. First, there was a discussion about attendance at PDI in Washington, D.C. We then discussed return to office concerns, including questions about requiring booster shots upon return to office and whether firms were offering testing as an alternative to vaccination. None of the firms were doing this. In cases where firms have been back for a significant period of time, questions were raised about what to expect, do's and don'ts. One suggested holding Practice Group Connecting Days – each PGL was asked to run a meeting on a particular day and use it as a “practice day” for attorneys to come to the office for the first time. Another firm attended each practice group meeting to remind attorneys about the resources available to them if they were feeling anxious about their return to the office.

The group then discussed work allocation system and one firm said that Diversity Lab may be coming out with a program to help ensure equitable work assignments. Another firm mentioned that they customized their own work allocation system and that it was working well because each practice group designed the system that worked best for their group.

We moved onto training and development how firms thought their new hires were integrating into the firm. One firm surveyed three cohorts of attorneys: partners, counsel and associates to find out what was working and what wasn't working and how to retain culture in a hybrid environment. The results were consistent by cohort but inconsistent with each other.

The meeting adjourned about 15 minutes early since there were no more questions.