

To: NALP Board of Directors  
From: Karen Comstock, Chair, NALP Public Service Section  
Date: February 9, 2009  
Re: Third Quarterly Report

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The big news in public service is the same big news we are all dealing with, namely, the terrible economy. The drop in interest rates has resulted in drastic funding cuts to civil legal services offices, which are funded by state IOLTA accounts. State governments are slashing programs to meet their balanced budget requirements. Congress has not yet passed the stimulus package, but many of us hold out hope that whatever package does eventually pass will result in some relief. As it stands now, the job market is extremely tight. Our public service-oriented students are facing the toughest job market in recent memory.

## **WORK GROUP REPORTS**

### **PUBLICATIONS**

Work Group Members: *Marni Lennon - University of Miami School of Law (Chair), Tia Barnes - Duke, Kate Corcoran - University of Washington, Michelle Vodenik - Chicago Kent, Teresa Schmiedeler, University of Maryland, Tari Williams, University of Alabama, Paula Nailon, University of Arizona*

The Publications Committee solicited submissions for articles to be included in the monthly NALP bulletin. Committee members brainstormed re: topics we felt were in need of coverage and several members volunteered to submit proposals. The committee also addressed carry-over submissions which had not been placed last year and identified a schedule for selecting articles. Reminders have been issued to article authors. Here is the schedule:

#### Completed:

December 2008: Civil Justice, Inc.: A Model for "Low Bono" Services  
Authors: Teresa Schmiedeler and Elizabeth Kane

January 2009: Developing Leadership Skills  
Authors: Cait Clarke and Ericka Hines

February 2009: Harvard Law's Public Interest Reunion and 3L Tuition Remission Program  
Author: Alexa Shabecoff

March 2009: Engaging Broad Communities to Engrain Public Service into Legal Education  
Author: Kate Lawrence

#### Upcoming:

April 2009: Predicting Outcomes – What Makes a Good Public Interest Lawyer?  
Author: Charlene Gomes

May 2009: Public Defender Careers

Author: Deb Ellis

June 2009: still open, but we expect to fill it

July 2009: International Public Interest Internships

Author: Sara Rakita

### **MONITORING OF THE COLLEGE COST REDUCTION AND ACCESS ACT**

Work Group Members: *Bill Penn - Lewis & Clark Law School (Chair), Kristen Bryant – University of Florida, Sam Charron – WNEC Law, Heather Jarvis – EJW, Michelle Vodenik – Chicago-Kent, Cindy Wilson – Northwestern*

No new developments.

### **EXPANDING FEDERAL JOB-SEEKING RESOURCES**

Work Group Members: *Nicole Vikan - Georgetown University Law Center (Chair), Lauren Dubin – Georgetown, Norma Freitas – Willamette, Eve Stotland – NYU, Tari Williams – University of Alabama, Paula Nailon – University of Arizona*

Work Group Advisors: *Tim McManus and Kevin Simpson from the Partnership for Public Service*

Steve Grumm, Diane Cross and Nicole Vikan are working with some Partnership for Public Service representatives, ABA contacts, and law school counselors on the NALP Federal Employment Opportunities Guide. They have brainstormed, done outreach to ascertain what is most useful for people, written and edited materials, and gotten new “Spotlight” pieces from current federal attorneys. Now they are on a brief hiatus while the NALP website is reconfigured; they want to integrate the Guide in a more section-based manner onto the new site.

### **PRIVATE-TO-PUBLIC INTEREST PIPELINE**

Work Group Members: *Hillary Exter - Fordham University Law School (Chair), Tia Barnes – Duke, Bill Pen – Lewis & Clark, Nicole Vikan – Georgetown*

The committee has defined their work as a focus on 1) counseling law school alumni on to how to transition from private sector work to public interest work and 2) working with Legal Services Corp.(LSC)/National Legal Aid and Defender Association (NLADA) and law firms to increase recruitment of mid-level attorneys and raise awareness of opportunities with legal services program.

They have defined the work group’s role as 1) writing articles for the NALP bulletin and various Bar Publications; 2) facilitating workshops at future NLADA/ABA and NALP conferences, and 3) developing materials for LSC/NLADA and/or firms.

Strategies for counseling law students and alumni include the following.

Student Counseling:

- Expose students in law school to public interest work and in each of these projects (e.g. student groups, externships/internships, clinics) emphasize opportunity to do pro bono work upon graduation for those who will be going to firms.
- Emphasize in career programs and in counseling for students the fluidity of legal careers and ability to transition among various sectors (e.g. judiciary, private firms, non-profit organizations, government, academia)
- Expose students to opportunities to do pro bono work at firms (e.g. could do panel at law school on split summers, pro bono work at firms, assessing firms' commitment to pro bono, etc.)
- Develop website to feature profiles of alums in public interest, which includes alumni who started at firms
- For students who say they are going to firms for a few years, encourage them to save money to pay down loans and not to get used to lifestyle that could not be supported by a public interest salary
- Inform them of availability of alumni counseling

Alumni Counseling - Some steps to transitions include

- Joining bar committees on particular substantive issues (e.g. housing, children rights, etc. or access to justice)
- Taking pro bono work at firms, tailored to interests
- Attending CLEs in the area
- Joining boards of legal services programs or other nonprofits
- Advertising public interest job fairs to alums
- Career Services staff can raise visibility of transitions by highlighting transition stories in alumni publications, website profiles. The workgroup is discussing proposing a program at 2010 NALP conference and/or article for NALP bulletin

Next steps

- Work group is scheduling a conference call with LSC/NLADA, to get their thoughts on what it would be helpful for work group to do. Some ideas could include writing various articles (see below), and developing materials: e.g. for LSC programs recruiting mid-level people and for law firms doing counseling with associates
- Work group plans to interview attorneys who have made the transition, and has developed a detailed set of questions.
- Work group members plan to reach out to some NALP members to talk with some law firm people who counsel attorneys about their thoughts on an approach to reaching out to attorneys at the firm

**NEW INITIATIVES**

Work Group Members: *Tari Williams - University of Alabama School of Law (Chair), Kristin Davis - University of Wisconsin, Nicole Vikan - Georgetown*

Nothing to report.