

# MEMORANDUM

**To:** Rashida West, NALP Board Liaison, Public Service Section  
**From:** Jasminder Deol and Jana Matthews, Public Service Section Co-Chairs  
**cc:** NALP Office ([reports@nalp.org](mailto:reports@nalp.org))  
**Date:** February 1, 2024  
**Re:** Public Service Section – Third Quarter Report

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## I. 2023-24 Public Service Section Leadership

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<b>Employer Relations</b>	TBD

## II. THIRD QUARTER SECTION MEETING

The third quarterly meeting for the 2023-34 year took place on January 24, 2024, under the leadership of Co-Chairs Jasminde Deol and Jana Matthews. Thirty-two members were in attendance, including Public Service Section (PSS) Board Liaison Rashida West.

The meeting began with a wellness tip shared on behalf of Well-Being Champion Teresa Schmiedeler.

The section then discussed the need for additional responses to the Public Service Attorney Salary Survey, sharing the link to the survey, benefits for participating employers, and a sample LinkedIn post from Rashida West.

Sam Halpert then shared the names of the six Pro Bono Publico Award finalists (listed below). Prior to this meeting Sam convened a committee of section members to select finalists from all applicants.

Daniel Armstrong, PSJD Fellow, explained PSJD webinars that are planned for students this spring and shared the survey questions that will be used to receive feedback from students to learn more about how they use the site.

Jasminder Deol provided a reminder of the early registration deadline for the Annual Education Conference, highlighting that all conference proposals endorsed by the section were selected.

Led by Jana Matthews, the section then discussed the Public Service Conference (detailed below).

Section works groups did not have any updates. Rashida West reiterated a request for volunteers for the Employer Relations Work Group.

The meeting closed with a request to begin brainstorming conference proposals for 2025.

### **III. PUBLIC SERVICE CONFERENCE**

On December 12, 2023, Jasminder Deol, Jana Matthews and Sam Halpert met to discuss feedback received on the Public Service Conference, specifically that related to the Focus Group from Equitas. The issues identified were then brought to the section for a broader discussion at the third quarter meeting.

On behalf of the Department of Justice's Bureau of Justice Assistance, Equitas was seeking information to help understand why recruitment, retention and hiring is slowing down in prosecutor's office across the county, especially in smaller and rural areas. The panelists conducting the focus group did not include anyone of color and the nature of the conversation led to disengagement by section members. The discussion was described as troubling by a section member who is a black woman and resulted in the member tuning out during the discussion. She was not the only member to do so. This feedback was shared by Sam with Equitas prior to the section meeting. It was also noted that this session was in stark contrast to earlier programming during the conference.

We recommend implementing some protocols for the next conference to ensure NALP is inclusive in its approach to selecting speakers and panelists and they reflect NALP's values. In planning this conference, NALP should be more intentional about who the panelists are. This point was not just made in reference to the composition of the panel, but also in reference to the attendees given the employer +1 option to encourage other employers to attend the conference.

The section also had questions related to the planning of this conference. While we are all appreciative of NALP's intent to align this with other conferences and shift planning responsibilities away from Work Group volunteers, there should be some consultation with section members. This could either be with the section Co-Chairs or with the Vice-Chairs of the Annual Education Conference and Webinar Planning Workgroup. As section Co-Chairs, we want to ensure that the conference is meaningful and relevant to section members.

The section understands that historically the public service mini-con agenda was determined in part by submissions and selections from the AEC RFP process and

this has now changed. Therefore, we recommend considering some type of process that allows for submissions and assessment of agenda items. At the third quarter meeting we encouraged members to submit any and all ideas in response to the Annual Education Conference RFP as some of the proposals may inform or be used in Public Service Conference planning. Additionally, if we continue to see interest and engagement from public interest employers, sessions related to recruiting, retention, running a summer program, or something else aimed at public sector employers should be considered.

The section also began a discussion on the format of future conferences. At this time, there is a consensus that the Public Service Conference should continue as a stand-alone conference, but no consensus on whether the conferences should be virtual or in-person. Many section members value the opportunity to be in community together but acknowledge travel costs are prohibitive for others. An in-person conference would also likely decrease the number of new employers who attend, if NALP continues the employer +1 feature. Some ideas for NALP to consider for future conferences are:

- Alternating between in-person and virtual conferences
- Schedule the conference every 2 or 3 years instead of annually
- Look at in-person events that are already attended by section members and determine if NALP wants a presence there.
  - ABA Equal Justice Conference
  - Equal Justice Works – planning something new that is not focused on students like the Career Fair
- NALP AEC – add in a pre-conference day or half-day

We do not recommend that future conferences include focus groups. Section members are open to providing feedback and insight into different sectors of public interest hiring, but this can be accomplished through a webinar or section meeting, rather than at a conference which has a registration fee. If NALP members are asked to participate in a focus group, we recommend identifying a model in advance to allow for productive conversations.

The section is generally supportive of the idea to allow one free employer registration per attendee and one member who invited an employer also suggested collecting feedback from employer attendees in a short survey.

Moving forward, the section agrees with NALP staff planning the Public Service Conference and aligning it with all other NALP conferences, but for next year would like more communication or coordination with section leadership.

#### **IV. PRO BONO PUBLICO AWARD**

The finalists for the Pro Bono Publico Award are:

- Amanda Alvez, Baylor, Class of 2024
- Rowan Biens-Allen, Tulane, Class of 2024

- Haley Brechwald, GMU, Class of 2024
- Jacob DeFazio, Emory, Class of 2024
- Erika Hodges, Tulane, Class of 2025
- Stefanie Stockwell, Stetson, Class of 2024

The finalists will be asked for supplemental materials, due by March 29, 2024. In April the committee will select the winner of the award, with the announcement being made during the Annual Education Conference.

## **V. SECTION MEMBERSHIP**

Forty-Three new members have joined the section since May 1, 2023. This year, NALP eliminated a new member outreach role within each section. If the Board has concerns about member engagement, this role can be reinstated with specific instructions. Each section is different and the public interest section members have many different roles. An introduction to the section and to how the section members use PSJD may be helpful.

## **VI. PSS WORK GROUP UPDATES**

There are no formal updates from any of the section's workgroups. The section's Well-Being Champion continues to attend committee meetings and will share more information regarding plans for Well Being Week once they are available.

Although the Employer Relations Workgroup has no volunteers, the discussion from the last meeting has led to more concrete planning for Public Interest Recruiting 101. Sam Halpert has confirmed individuals who are interested in meeting to discuss the idea and identified others to include in the conversation and will schedule an initial meeting.

Although this work group does not have any Vice-Chairs, it should continue as a work group in 2024-2025. With more public interest employers attending the Annual Education Conference, there may be more interest in volunteering at the section meeting held in April.

Lastly, the charge of the Annual Education Conference and Webinar Planning Work Group should be amended to include PS 101. This will ensure that planning is not overlooked when there is a transition to new section Co-Chairs.

## **VII. 2023-24 SECTION MEETINGS**

All scheduled meetings have the same Zoom link:

<https://uci.zoom.us/j/97694623135?pwd=S3BidURNdVhpMnFXVis3cmk5ZytIQT09>

Future meeting dates are:

- March 20, 2024; 11am PST