

MEMORANDUM

To: Mike Ende, NALP Board Liaison, Public Service Section
Cc: Fred Thrasher, NALP Deputy Director; Samuel Halpert, NALP Director of Public Service Initiatives
From: Sharon Buckingham (Villanova), Chair, Public Service Section (2021-22)
Date: February 2, 2022
Re: Public Service Section – Third Quarterly Report

This report contains updates on the activities of the NALP Public Service Section and its Work Groups for the third quarter. The 2021-2022 Public Service Section Work Groups and Vice-Chairs are:

LRAP/CCRAA Work Group:

- Jennifer Geller**, University of Oregon School of Law
- Aoife Delargy Lowe**, Equal Justice Works

Member Relations Work Group:

- Diane Fears**, Wayne State Law School
- Susan Curry**, University of Chicago Law School

Mini-Conference Planning Work Group:

- Glory McLaughlin**, University of Alabama School of Law
- Melanie Rowen**, Berkeley Law

NALP Annual Education Conference and Webinar Planning Work Group:

- Katie Behan***, University of Windsor Faculty of Law
 - Jana Matthews**, Seattle University School of Law
- *Katie will be taking disability leave for the remainder of the term.**

Pro Bono Work Group:

- Laura Burstein***, SMU Dedman School of Law
- *Laura's co-vice chair, Lauren Worsak, left her law school position and is now with Lawyers for Good Government.**

PSJD Resources Development Work Group:

- Brent Page**, Public Interest Law Initiative (PILI)
- Jocelyn Witzel**, Saint Louis University School of Law

Publications Work Group:

- Brooke Meckler**, Equal Justice Works
- Michelle Takagishi-Almeida**, Southwestern Law School

On January 26, the Section held its third quarterly call. We began with our public service employer spotlight, featuring Shareese Pryor, Director and Senior Staff Counsel, Criminal Legal System, for BPI, a Chicago nonprofit dedicated to advancing nuanced solutions to pressing racial, economic and social justice issues. She described the organization's various components, and discussed their summer, academic year, and post-graduate opportunities,

including their internal two-year fellowship, which is not project-based. More information can be found on BPI's web site, at <https://www.bpichicago.org/>.

Mike Ende followed with his report from the Board. He reminded everyone that registration is open for the Annual Education Conference, and encouraged people to reach out to him, Jen Henfey or Karl Riehl with any input they have about the search for Jim Leipold's successor. The group discussed the concern that the committee tasked with the search does not include a public service member. Whether or not a public service member can be added, the group would like to ensure that Jim's successor have practical insight into public service issues.

The work group vice chairs participating in the call gave their reports. No new business was discussed.

Here is the information from the work groups:

AEC/Webinar Planning: Jana and Katie reported that Teresa Schmiedeler and Katherine Mikkelson are continuing to work on a webinar on Federal Honors Programs. Katie will be taking maternity leave shortly, for the rest of the academic term, and Jana is open to working with a new co-vice chair for the remainder of the term, if anyone is interested.

Environmental Scanning: Since the last quarterly report, Moriah and Sarah have held two additional environmental scanning networking calls, with the Midwest and Northeast regions of NALP. They continued to focus on the three discussion themes established at the outset of the academic year (the experience of students, schools, and public service employers during the 2020-2021 summer internship recruiting cycle; public service sector job outcomes, including internships and post-graduate positions; and the future of remote work), but also allowed for discussion to flow organically to other topics. Below are a few highlights.

- **Midwest Region, October 26, 2021:** 11 participants, including workgroup co-chairs and NALP Director of Public Service Initiatives

Law school colleagues all reported that school-sponsored, public service job fairs in 2020-2021 were virtual. Unlike the Mid-Atlantic Region, where call participants reported being able to attract a broader range of employers to a virtual job fair, Midwest Region participants reported that there was little to no change in employer job fair participation. This could be due in part to lack of expansion of student geographic focus and practice area interest.

- Our colleagues pointed out that they have noticed a trend among students, who increasingly want to stay closer to home.
- And at Drake University, in Iowa, state government was already a big draw, as the school is positioned in the state capital.
- Also regarding annual job fairs, law school colleagues observed that students focused on public service opportunities displayed more confidence. The close proximity of law firm OCI opportunities to public service hiring proved helpful in this regard.
- Additionally, schools clearly communicated their policy on reneging on offers, and did not see an uptick in students backing out of their commitments.
- Law school colleagues observed a lot of opportunity for students with public service employers.
- Some of this opportunity stemmed from COVID, including work with eviction hotlines.
- There was an uptick in post-graduate opportunities with prosecutors' offices.

- Legal aid organizations were also doing quite a bit of hiring.
- Law school colleagues noted exhaustion, on the part of employers and students, with remote work.
- Some employers still are disinclined to train interns and externs remotely, and have decided not to hire student interns.
- The current 3L class in particular is showing a lack of interest and engagement, after spending half of their law school experience online, and after potentially two remote internships.
- The current 2L class is showing much less appetite for a remote internship in summer 2022.
- Mental health and wellness are serious concerns.
- **Northeast Region, December 7, 2021:** 7 participants, including workgroup co-chairs, Public Service Section chair, and NALP Director of Public Service Initiatives

Similar to the Midwest Region, we learned during this call that there is quite a bit of hiring happening in prosecutors' offices. Our employer participant shared valuable insights about recruiting, hiring, and the future of remote work, particularly as it relates to prosecutors. For reference, this employer's office had returned to in-person work, 100% of the time, in October 2021 and as of the December call was still in-person.

- The employer noted that there has been noticeable turnover, especially as many individuals left bigger cities to move closer to their families. Since this migration, cities have not seen a large amount of people moving back, making it harder to recruit people to work in-person in a city.
- A prosecutor's job has come to involve a lot of paperwork and tedious review of evidence, such as body camera footage. Some individuals are losing interest in the work itself, especially those who have been working in the same office for a number of years, and others see no reason to have to report in-person to the office to do that work.
- As a result of needing to bring people to come work in the city, offices are increasing their recruiting efforts, and thanks to virtual job fairs hosted by law schools, they can focus on a greater number of schools in a larger geographic area. There is an interest, though, in returning to in-person engagement, at least for marketing and networking, if not for interviewing. Our employer colleagues are eager to know what schools are planning for the spring 2022 semester, specifically whether they are hosting in-person panels and other events at which employers can mingle with students.
- Prosecutors are noticing an increased commitment among students to criminal justice reform. Those considered to be progressive in their approach to prosecution are finding increased competition for students and graduates with public defender offices.
- Prosecutors are increasingly looking to hire for post-graduate positions in a student's 3L year, as they see a higher number of vacancies, and an increase in competition for students.
- A robust subject of discussion during this call was student engagement. We focused on some of our pre-established environmental scanning themes, including renegeing on offers, but discussed other observations as well.
- Law school colleagues in the Northeast noticed an increase in students renegeing on summer internship offers in 2020-2021. Our employer colleague also observed that entry-level hires have shown greater willingness to renege, with no apparent regard for the consequences to their professional reputation.

- Employer and law school colleagues are starting to notice a disinclination among students to do work that is required, but in which they have no interest. Document review, intake, and other “grunt work” that used to be an accepted part of the job is becoming work that students feel they should be able to opt out of. We discussed whether some of this might be pandemic-related. With increased focus on mental health and what new attorneys want to get out of a job, students are demanding more of employers.
- Similarly, our law school colleagues have observed that students feel an increased level of mistrust toward established institutions. For example, the difficulty many have faced in securing Public Service Loan Forgiveness has caused students to rethink whether they will commit to public service, if they cannot trust the PSLF program. Also, it seems students have come to assume that a school-sponsored public service job fair will lead to employment offers. When it does not, they express frustration with the school as an institution, and one that has betrayed them.

- **Future Plans**

We have calendared our remaining environmental scanning networking calls, and have sent out invitations for the Southeast Region’s call. We plan to meet on February 9 with the Southeast Region and on March 8 with the West/Rocky Mountain Region. We hope to conduct individualized outreach to our colleagues in Canada.

Finally, we met with the Public Service Section chair and PSS NALP Board liaison on January 14 to discuss where we might take the PSS environmental scanning effort in the future. Following that meeting, we plan to guide the discussion in our remaining regional calls to a conversation about what the PSS wants to see in a new NALP Executive Director, with the hope that we will have helpful thoughts for the committee working on filling that position. For the next scanning cycle, topics of focus include:

- A scan of resources – what resources are our law school colleagues using to advise students on public service opportunities?
- How can we increase public service employer membership, and participation, in NALP? How would our current public service employer members go about marketing NALP to other public service employers?
- What are PSS members looking for in a quarterly section meeting? Now that we are inundated with Zoom calls, how might we increase participation in our Section meetings?

LRAP Initiatives: Aoife reported on the current public service loan forgiveness waiver.

Member Relations: The work group last met formally on Oct 6, 2021 and has not yet scheduled a new meeting in January. However, the work group’s work continues:

- **Member Spotlight** – At our January 26th Section meeting, we featured Shareese Pryor, Senior Staff Counsel and Director of Justice Reform at [BPI](#), a Chicago nonprofit dedicated to advancing nuanced solutions to pressing racial, economic, and social justice issues. During each quarterly Section meeting the Member Relations Work Groups will continue this highlight feature. If any Section members have suggestions

for future Employer or School Member spotlights, please contact Susan Curry (currys@uchicago.edu). Our most recent Public Service Employer Spotlights have also included:

Lauren Worssek, Lawyers for Good Government

Jana Matthews, Seattle University

Stephanie Ball, NY Civil Liberties Union

Rena Cervoni, U.S. Department of Justice

Gregory Whitt and Anika Gzifa, Earthjustice

- **New Member Welcome** – We have continued to acquire lists of new Section members periodically and have issued personalized welcome email and/or phone calls.
- **Best Practices for Member Engagement** - Work group members conferred with other NALP sections and jointly concluded that we should focus on member engagement and de-emphasize job postings/announcements. This position was also adopted by NALP Leadership which reported on December 15, 2021 that NALP had “updated the [NALPconnect Community Guidelines](#) to explicitly prohibit job postings in all communities in NALPconnect. The number of job postings has become a disincentive for members to use the communities, so the Board of Directors has recommended this update. All job openings should be posted on the [NALP Job Center](#).”
- **“Mentoring” Initiative** - The group has discussed structuring an initiative to facilitate connections between new and experienced members but has not yet begun the work necessary to form a pairing guide and advisor relationships.

Mini-Conference Planning: Sam Halpert and work group vice chairs Glory McLaughlin and Melanie Rowen put together a fantastic mini-conference, with three robust presentations on December 13 and 14, 2021. Miguel Willis was the keynote – he is the Innovator in Residence at Penn Law School’s Future of the Profession Initiative. Freda Coleman-Jackson moderated a panel discussion on Building a Public Service Powerhouse, featuring Angie McCarthy and Erica Smock. And there was a great presentation on The Florida Pro Bono Law School Challenge. Glory and Melanie welcome thoughts on how to plan the 2022 mini-conference, which may turn on whether the EJW Conference returns to a live format. (The mini-conference historically has been timed to coincide with EJW. Because EJW was virtual and we were not traveling to D.C., the mini-conference was split, with an early session for new public service advisors, and a later general session. Right now, it is very likely that EJW will be virtual again in October 2022.)

Pro Bono: The work group did not have anything to report for this quarter. Laura Burstein has been serving alone, since Lauren Worssek’s departure, and would very much like assistance,

whether someone would like to serve as her co-vice chair for the remainder of the term, or whether anyone simply would like to be more involved.

PSJD Resources: The work group remains on hold as NALP is auditing the current resources available on PSJD and internally developing methods for community-based updates to resources. We hope to get together and plan some future work soon.

Publications: Brooke and Michelle have commitments for the following upcoming Bulletin articles to run: February - Best Practices for Engaging Students in the Virtual World (Freda Coleman-Jackson, Washington and Lee University School of Law); March – PSLF Update Article (Aoife Delargy Lowe, Equal Justice Works); April – Highlights from NALP/PSJD Public Service Mini-Conference (Sharon Buckingham, Villanova University Charles Widger School of Law); June – Topic TBD (Megan Evanich, Southwestern Law School); July – Environmental Scanning Report (Moriah Allen, Sarah Jasper). They are continuing to solicit authors for future articles for 2022.

Our fourth quarterly meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, March 2 at 2pm EST.