

Small & Mid-Sized Law Firm Interest Group

2nd Quarter Report to NALP Board

October 2025

Jennifer Lucas-Ross and Sheryl Roberts, Co-Chairs

Updates

Our Interest Group currently has 85 members, which is an increase of 16 members since our last Board report.

Quarterly Meeting Dates

We held the following quarterly meetings:

June 10, 2025 at 2:00 pm—In addition to NALP business, the Group discussed staff hiring and the challenges faced with early recruitment for summer associates. An informal survey of the participants found that a little more than half the firms participated in early recruitment with the timing of first offers split between April (40%) and June (40%).

September 9, 2025 at 2:00 pm—In addition to NALP business, the PD Working Group hosted a panel on Designing Scalable Professional Development for Small and Mid-Sized Firms. Panelists included Julie Beavers, Director of Marketing and Business Development at Lawyers Mutual Insurance, Shannon DeGennaro, Director of Recruiting & professional Development at Brooks Pierce in Raleigh, NC, and Rob De Toni, Director of Student and Associate Professional Resources at Siskinds in London, Ontario. Topics included the importance of PD curriculum at small & mid-sized firm, the challenges, and considerations for adopting internal vs. external programs.

We have the following quarterly meeting scheduled:

December 9, 2025 at 2:00 pm – In addition to NALP business, Ian Nelson of Hotshot Legal will speak to our Group regarding training specific to summer associates, entry-level associates, and laterals and how AI can assist professionals in a small/mid-size firm setting.

Interest Group Webinar Presentations:

FloRecruit Recruiting Presentation - Monday, June 23, 2025, 2:00 pm

We held a meeting hosted by Christina Wells of FloRecruit, who spoke to the legal market, the recruiting season, and offered data and intel specifically designed for our small and mid-sized firms. We had a strong turnout and good questions, and I believe FloRecruit's Fast Forward is quickly becoming an affordable option for our members in the student recruiting market.

Suited: Intelligent Recruiting for Law and Finance Presentation – Mon, Oct. 27, 2025 @ 2:00 p.m.

Given the changes to the law school recruitment cycle, many small to mid-sized law firms would like to leverage assessments to positively impact their processes. However, many do not have enough attorneys for Suited to create a custom AI hiring model and the price point for a custom build might be out of reach. Suited believes they can solve this by building a new, candidate scoring model that aggregates data from multiple smaller firms to produce an industry-based model focused on what makes attorneys successful at small- to mid-sized firms. Suited would like to gauge the NALP Small and Mid-Size Employer Group's interest in this initiative. During this meeting, they will go into detail about their model-building process and discuss the inputs needed to create a valid and accurate model built specifically for smaller firms.

Environmental Scanning

During our quarterly Interest Group meeting in September, it has become clear that pressure points remain in the current student recruiting environment, including timing compression, OCIs and other recruiting opportunity timelines being different at each law school, and resources to conduct recruiting in a manner that benefits our firm sizes, business models, and resources. We are a resilient bunch with incredibly diverse backgrounds, so we are figuring it out. But we do continue to struggle given that many of the same staff members handling student recruiting, are also handling lateral recruiting, PD, and other duties. We all continue to flex, however, and our group has been incredibly supportive of each other in sharing ideas, resources, and ways to manage the new world of student recruiting.

In terms of professional development in small to mid-sized firms, there has been dissatisfaction that the market does not scale to our size, leaving us with less options. Small to mid-size firms still need to address associate development and are left to do so with fewer options, less resources, and lack of pedagogical expertise inside our firms.

There has been ongoing interest throughout the year on how AI can assist small to mid-size firm professionals with both recruiting and professional development as a way to address some of the challenges noted above.

Question for NALP Board: Summer recruiting is increasingly turning into campus outreach. Due to limited resources in small and mid-sized firms, this puts firms of our size at a disadvantage. Are there broad concerns within the NALP leadership about using this Group to offer virtual panels to law students on why attorneys choose to practice at small/mid-size firms over biglaw?

2025-2026 Leadership Update

Co-Chairs - Sheryl Roberts and Jennifer Lucas-Ross

- Lawyer Professional Development Working Group Co-Chairs: Rob De Toni and Kate Harrison
- Recruiting Working Group Co-Chair: Katie Greene
- Diversity, Equity & Inclusion: Sherry Lamb
- Well-Being Champion: Sherry Lamb

Interest Group Member Articles and Presentations

- Professional Development Institute, Dec. 4-5, 2025 in Washington, DC
 - Shannon DeGennaro and Melissa Forsey-Schwind are both on the Conference Planning Committee for the December 4-5, 2025 PDI in Washington, DC.
 - Jennifer Lucas-Ross will be serving on a panel with Jessica Vanot of Seward & Kissel and Ian Nelson of Hotshot Legal on “Brainstorming with AI in Small Law.”
- Lateral Recruiting Summit, January 21, 2026, New York, NY
 - Sheryl Roberts is serving on the Lateral Recruiting Summit Planning Committee.

- NALP Bulletin—The following articles authored on behalf of our Interest Group have been accepted:
 - *2L Recruiting Takeaways From the Mid-Size Firm Perspective* by Sheryl Roberts (November 2025)
 - *How to Succeed in Transitioning from Private Practice to a PD/Recruiting Role* by Robert De Toni (December 2025)
 - *DIY PD: How to Build Lawyer PD Curriculum on a Budget* by Jennifer Lucas-Ross (February 2026)
 - *Using takeaways from the 2L recruiting season to assist small/mid-sized firms when planning for recruitment* by Katie Greene (March 2026)
- Annual Education Conference, Apr. 14-17, 2026 in Hollywood, FL—the following RFPs were submitted on behalf of our Interest Group. We are waiting to hear if any have been accepted.
 - Beyond the Big Law Blueprint: Recruiting Strategies for Small & Mid-Sized Firms, Melissa Forshey Schwind, Kasey Fenn, Katie Greene, Halle Sabo
 - Lateral Dream Team Recruiting: When Search Firms and Law Firms CLICK, Sheryl Roberts, Alex Doll, Kate Reder Sheikh, Colin Petersen
 - Racing the Clock: Strategies for Mid-Size Firms and Law Schools to Thrive in a New World, Sheryl Roberts, Veronica Elizalde, Sara Marshall, Cinnamon Baker

We continue to receive outreach and interest in our group from law firms, law schools, vendors, and others who are members of or connected to NALP. There is strong interest in hearing insights and feedback from small to mid-size law firms with respect to our industry. The law schools in particular are interested and we continue to invite them to meetings and collaborate with them where possible.

We will continue to promote our new Interest Group through information sharing, education, and leadership over the coming year.