

From the Vice-President for Member Services and Education

The Regional Resource Council: An Important Part of NALP's DNA

By Kristine McKinney

Fifteen years ago, I accepted a position in the Legal Personnel department of a large law firm. It was my first full-time job and I was ecstatic. After a daunting interview process, I could hardly believe they had chosen me to work in such a professional environment with such smart colleagues.

Wearing my new suit and carrying a shiny padfolio, I showed up to my first day feeling ready and confident. But oh, how quickly I realized that I had a lot to learn. My new colleagues used strange words like “1L” and “lateral” and “NALP”—as if those words should mean something to me. I smiled on the outside and completely panicked on the inside. What universe had I just joined? Would I ever figure out the lingo and the unwritten rules of this new job?

It turns out my colleagues were incredibly patient. They explained things to me time and time again. I listened carefully. I read books and articles. And in hindsight, the most important thing I did was join NALP. Over time, NALP became my go-to source of industry information and a network bigger than I could ever have imaged.

So how does NALP, a 45-year-old organization of over 2,500 individuals remain relevant to members in markets as diverse as Southern California to Minneapolis or New York to Dallas? There are many reasons, but one of the advantages is the agile structure of our organi-

zation. An important example of this was the creation of the Regional Representative position in 2012. With this new position, 21 elected Regional Representatives serve two-year terms as leaders within their Regions. Together they form the Regional Resource Council (RRC).

In my NALP role as the Vice President for Member Services and Education, I've had the privilege of leading the RRC for the past eighteen months. Building on the fantastic legacy of the last two VP's in this role, Marilyn Drees and Beth Moeller, the members of the RRC have become integral ambassadors embedded in every NALP region. They focus on regional interests, concerns, interaction, and communication.

As evidenced by my experience as a new professional, helping members connect with each other so they can collaborate and share expertise, research, and best practices is the DNA of NALP. The Regional Representatives play a critical role in fulfilling this mission. As volunteer leaders, they have significant responsibilities within their region. For example, they lead quarterly regional calls, participate in city groups and consortia, welcome new members, and plan the Regional Receptions at the Annual Education Conference.

One of the highlights of my time as VP of Member Services and Education has been leading the day-long orientation program

with the RRC. Held in conjunction with the Annual Education Conference each year, it has been rewarding to grow and develop alongside the RRC members. Often strangers at the beginning of the day, RRC members leave orientation with new-found NALP colleagues and an action plan for the coming year.

Throughout the remainder of the year, the group comes together via phone on a regular basis to discuss trends as well as upcoming plans and programs. We also utilize two of our calls to focus on the professional development of the RRC. For example, last year we conducted a LinkedIn workshop as well as a Myers Briggs program. While the Regional Representatives are responsible for communicating information back and forth between the Board and the membership, we have found that it is important to invest in this group of NALP leaders.

Serving on the NALP Board and working with the RRC has been one of the most rewarding experiences of my career. I've come

a long way from that first interview 15 years ago. I've worked in three firms in two different markets. My suits are a different style and my hair is showing signs of gray, but I am confident in my knowledge because of the research and best practices available in NALP. But most importantly, the people in NALP have become my friends and my lifeline in an industry that is changing at a rapid pace.

If you don't yet know your Regional Representatives, I highly recommend you contact them with questions or suggestions. You can find your RRC representative online at www.nalp.org/directors#reg.

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