

Twelve Possible Prompts for the NALPathon

1) The 1Ls – Let's Get Engaged!

The 1L year is a critical experience in the life of a law student that can be an overwhelming and difficult adjustment. Students need to get their feet on the ground academically, while also establishing building blocks of professional development, career goals, and job searches. How can law school career development professionals reimagine their engagement with 1Ls? How can employers more effectively engage 1Ls? Are there ways for employers and career development professionals to work together more effectively on this?

2) Making the Perfect Match

Employers are desperate to hire right and hire smart, but they often settle for an imperfect match. How could law firms make better matches with law students? Other professions rely much more on assessments, writing prompts, and even personality tests as they try to identify talent and make good matches. What would a better system for legal employers look like? How could the hiring process be re-centered on match? Are there ways for technology to play a greater role?

3) The 3Ls – The Forgotten Class Year

Employers focus the lion's share of their recruiting efforts on engaging with 1Ls and interviewing 2Ls for summer programs, while overlooking 3L candidates, who might arguably be stronger candidates, with more grades and more summer work experience under their belts and a better sense of their own interests. How could recruiting be reimaged to increase the engagement of employers with 3L students?

4) Keeping Summer Programs Relevant

Summer programs have changed little over the years, even with a recent shift away from wine and dining in favor of a greater emphasis on the work experience. How could summer programs be reimaged to allow employers to more effectively use the time to train and evaluate potential associates, and allow summers to more effectively evaluate their potential employer?

5) On-Campus Interviews: 20 Minutes of Football and Summer Vacations

The on-campus interview is among the most archaic pieces of the law firm recruitment process, and is arguably an inefficient (or ineffective) tool for selection decisions – what can you meaningfully discover about a person in 20 minutes that you don't already know from the cover letter and resume? Students complain that lawyers only want to talk about sports and hobbies that they have in common, while lawyers complain that they cannot discern a student's performance potential in such a short conversation. How could the process for screening candidates for summer associate positions be reimaged?

6) The Callback Interview Process: Taming the Chaos

Following the screening interview, candidates for summer associate and entry level positions are customarily invited to employers' offices for lengthy callback interviews, which might entail 5-6 meetings with various lawyers or groups of lawyers. Students who are considering their offers may also ask for return visits to facilitate their decision. How can the callback process be reimaged to make a more effective use of everyone's time, and result in better hiring decisions?

7) First Generation Law Students

First-generation generally refers to law students and recent law graduates whose parents did not attend college. First-generation students may come from lower economic backgrounds than their peers whose parents are professionals and they may lack exposure to professional role-models. Assimilating into law school and the legal profession can be more daunting for these students. They often feel out of place in law school and experience discomfort and disorientation when they get to law firms. What opportunities are there to reshape the experience of first-generation law students and job seekers?

8) Diversity Among Lawyers and Law Students

The diversity disparity at major law firms is staggering – in aggregate, in 2018, 35.04% of summer associates were diverse yet only 16.10% of attorneys were diverse and only 9.13% of partners were diverse. Law firms do a great job of recruiting diverse candidates but fall short when it comes to retaining and promoting the careers of diverse attorneys. How can this gap be closed? What might be reimagined to finally turn this around?

9) Law Student Debt Levels

The cost of legal education consistently rises more quickly than inflation and law student debt numbers are astonishing. Many graduates are leaving law school over \$150,000 in educational debt. Research shows that student debt delays home ownership, marriage, and starting families. And while some law graduates make relatively high starting salaries, most do not. And, even with high salaries, many new lawyers struggle to make ends meet. What could be done to change this paradigm?

10) Focusing on Wellness and Well-Being

Brian Cuban's best-selling book, *The Addicted Lawyer, Tales of The Bar, Booze, Blow, & Redemption* is an unflinching look back at how addiction and other mental health issues destroyed his career as a once successful lawyer and how he and others in the profession redefined their lives in recovery and found redemption. Stories like this are more and more common as the legal profession deals with a higher than average rate of alcoholism, depression, and other mental health issues. The ABA Commission on Lawyer Assistance Programs has promoted many ideas for wellness and stress management for lawyers, but what more can be done? How can we alleviate some of the stress on law students and lawyers? How can we make wellness a centerpiece of law school curriculum and law firm training programs?

11) No GPA? No problem!

Imagine a world without law school transcripts or class rank. Consider law student resumes with only activities and experiences instead of numbers like 3.5 or 4.0 or Top 5%. Could candidates be effectively evaluated without a GPA? Without rank? Without a transcript? How else could employers judge a person's intellect or legal prowess? What might a system without transcripts or ranking look like?

12) The Robots Are Coming!

Technology and artificial intelligence are seeping into every aspect of our lives from telephones to doorbells and refrigerators, from missile tracking systems to power grids, from Alexa to Siri Google Assistant. How could technology and artificial intelligence be leveraged to benefit the legal careers industry? How could AI improve the recruiting process? What opportunities are out there for just the right product or service to help us solve some of the thorny issues we struggle with?