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Date: January 7, 2010

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NALP Recruiting Commission Issues Report and Seeks Member Feedback on Proposals for Significant Change

The NALP Commission on Recruiting in the Legal Profession has issued a report including recommendations that could lead to the most significant change in law student recruiting since NALP's timelines for recruiting were first developed in the 1970s. The Commission's recommendations are based on extensive NALP member input and outreach, industry commentary, a review of the recruiting practices in other industries and countries, and in response to NALP members' concerns with the current recruiting process. The current report represents the next stage of soliciting member feedback – not final recommendations.

Once member feedback has been gathered, the Commission expects to submit its final recommendations to the NALP Board of Directors in February 2010. If the Board approves those recommendations, it is expected that they would become effective on a provisional basis starting in August 2010, and that following a provisional period they would be subject to member vote.

At the heart of the Commission's recommendations is a shift away from rolling offer deadlines toward a framework based on specific dates ("Offer Kick-Off Days") before which offers should not be made. In order to address the broadest array of the NALP membership's current (and many longstanding) concerns, the Commission believes that it is essential that Offer Kick-Off Day(s) take place later in the recruiting season. This ensures that candidates are able to complete all of their callbacks — and that employers are able to consider their entire candidate pool against more certain hiring needs — before offers are extended. This, in turn, permits the open offer response period (currently 45 days) to be substantially shortened to assist employers with yield management without materially affecting student choice. At the same time, the recommendations address the special circumstances of 2Ls and 3Ls who were previously employed by a firm — and such issues as a cap on offer holding by students.

If adopted, the recommendations will help NALP members meet the challenges of the recruiting process by affording them the time and opportunity to innovate, which will lead to better student and employer decision-making as well as better and more enduring employment 'fits.' The underlying goal is not merely to extend the recruiting season, but to improve it. The Commission believes that the time is right to move legal recruiting to a more mature model, drawing on the practices used in other professions, and these recommendations are designed to create the space and the incentives for that maturation to happen.

In addition, these recommendations achieve a balance between giving employers additional time to process their hiring needs in light of year-end financial data and giving law schools adequate time to work with their students, especially those who are likely to be the most challenged in the recruiting process.

For the full report, including a summary of recommendations and detailed discussion, and for a list of Recruiting Commission members, see www.nalp.org/commissiononrecruiting.

The Commission on Recruiting in the Legal Profession was formed to review the current legal recruiting model and engage in a holistic national conversation regarding the range of recruitment methods and models. The work of the Commission will proceed in phases, and the recommendations referenced here represent the preliminary report from Phase I of the Commission work.

About NALP: Founded in 1971, the National Association for Law Placement, Inc.[®] (NALP) is dedicated to facilitating legal career counseling and planning, recruitment and retention, and the professional development of law students and lawyers. For an archive of NALP press releases, see www.nalp.org > *Media & Sponsorships* > *Press Releases*.