

To: NALP Board of Directors

From: Michelle Stevens, Chair, NALP Public Service Section

Date: March 31, 2008

Re: Fourth Quarterly Report

The 2007-2008 year has been a busy one for the Public Service Section. The year started off with the section's semi-annual meeting at the NALP Conference in Keystone, CO. During that meeting, co-led by Steve Grumm and me, we assigned work group leaders (see Work Group reports below for details) and updated the section on the progress of several projects of interest, including a large-scale re-design of the PSLawNet website and the development of a monthly e-newsletter called *PSLawNet Now!*

WORK GROUP REPORTS

Coordinating NALP's Request for Proposals for the 2008 Annual Conference

Karen Comstock (Cornell) offered to coordinate RFPs from the Public Service Section members for the 2008 conference. The following Proposals were submitted:

- 1) Creating, Building and Strengthening a Law School Pro Bono Program
- 2) Public Service Projects for Incoming Class (working title)
- 3) Coaching Students Through the Post-graduate Fellowship Application Process
- 4) Maximizing Your Public Interest With a Scholars Program
- 5) A Beginner's Guide to Public Interest Counseling
- 6) Fostering Partnerships: Private Sector Funding of Public Interest Initiatives
- 7) Alternative Winter/Spring Break Trips (working title)
- 8) A Candid Dialogue Between Law Firms and Law Schools on the Impact of Pro Bono in the Hiring Process

All of these proposals were accepted and will be offerings in Toronto. It should be noted, though, that two were combined into one program. The programs about Public Service Projects for Incoming Classes and Alternative Winter/Spring Break Trips were combined and will be presented as *Public Service Projects During Orientation and Alternative Break Trips: The Lasting Impact of Short-Term Student Time Commitments*. In addition, as a result of the overwhelming interest in the topic of the new loan repayment assistance legislation signed into law this past year (the College Cost Reduction and Access Act), an additional session was added – *The College Cost Reduction Act and Law School LRAPs: Update and Discussion Group*.

Public Service Mini-Conference Planning Work Group

This group was led by Steve Langerud (Iowa). The conference was held on October 4 at the Offices of Arnold & Porter in Washington, DC and was attended by 113 professionals. The plenary session was entitled *Opportunities in International Public Interest Law* and featured the following panelists:

- Elizabeth Andersen, American Society of International Law
- Sara Rakita, New York University School of Law
- Michelle Mohr Vodenik, Chicago-Kent College of Law
- Steve Langerud, University of Iowa School of Law
- Tori Andrea, 2L Student, Georgetown University Law Center

There were three break-out sessions following the plenary session. Those were:

- *Law School Pro Bono Toolbox: A Nuts and Bolts Approach to Program Management* featuring
 - o Elizabeth Kane, Brooklyn Law School
 - o Melanie Kushnir, ABA Center for Pro Bono
 - o K Royal, Arizona State University Sandra Day O'Connor School of Law
 - o Teresa Schmiedeler, University of Maryland School of Law

- *Public Interest Law Firms: Exploring the "Third" Way* featuring
 - o Michael Allen, Relman & Dane, PLLC
 - o Deborah Ellis, New York University School of Law
 - o Carolyn Smith Pravlick, Terris, Pravlick & Millian, LLP
 - o Jenny Rae Yang, Cohen, Milstein, Hausfield & Toll, PLLC

- *Everything You Need to Know About Federal Security Clearances* featuring
 - o Brooke Bonhet, Partnership for Public Service
 - o Rena J. Cervoni, U.S. Department of Justice
 - o Lauren Dubin, Georgetown University Law Center
 - o Kim Reid, U.S. Department of State

Law Student/Public Interest Employer Forum Work Group

This group was led by Hillary Exter (Fordham) and was planned as a way to bring together public interest minded students and members of the Legal Services Corporation (LSC) and National Legal Aid & Defender Association (NLADA) for a dialogue on the current and future state of public interest law practice.

NLADA and LSC Panelists were:

John Eidleman, Sr. Program Counsel, LSC Office of Policy and Programs

Michael Genz, Director, Office of Policy and Programs

Don Saunders, Director of Civil Legal Services, National Legal Aid & Defender Association

Brenda Ford Harding, Executive Director, Neighborhood Legal Services Program

Blake Fetrow, Chief Attorney, Legal Aid Bureau Inc.

Heather Jarvis, Program Manager, Law School Advocacy, Equal Justice Works

James Leipold, Executive Director, NALP

Approximately 60 law students attended, a number within the goal of the forum's planning team. The goal was to keep the number small enough to have a very interactive, participatory format but also to have diversity (e.g. size of school, geographic region, private & public, small & large) and hoped for ethnic and gender diversity of students as well. Approximately 15 law school professionals attended as well.

The issues addressed included:

- Quality of life/practice of law issues
- Impact of the work: can you make a difference?
- Mobility: types of work, geographic area
- Salary/debt
- Long-term funding of legal services
- Planning for next generation of management and leadership of programs
- Hiring decisions

Overall, feedback of both students and law school professionals was very positive. The overwhelming sentiment was to repeat the program. Many thought that young attorneys should be added to the panel to discuss life as a new civil legal services attorney.

Group Developing Law Student Recruitment/Supervision Best Practices Resources for Public Service Employers

This group, unofficially led by Deb Ellis (NYU) and Nicole Vikan (Georgetown), worked with the Publications Group to develop a “best practices guide” to provide advice to public sector and non-profit employers on summer intern and new attorney hiring and supervision. The title is *Best Practices in Recruiting and Supervising Law Students*, and a preliminary version is available now from NALP. The final version will contain useful links found on PSLawNet and other sites.

Publications Group

The Publications Work Group was led this year by Michelle Mohr-Vodenik (Chicago-Kent). One large project that had begun in the previous NALP year was completed this year, the update and publication of the *Law School Guide to Public Interest Careers*, originally published by NALP in 1998. Last year this group was led by Nicole Vikan (Georgetown), and I am glad to say that the project was wrapped up this year with the final version going on sale in October 2007. The update was completed with contributions from more than 20 section members.

In addition, the Publications Work Group has continued to make contributions to the *NALP Bulletin* from various section members. The following is a listing of the articles with their contributing authors:

- 1) *Working to Encourage Public Interest Careers with Legal Services Corporation Programs: The LSC Quality Initiative*, Karen Sargeant – NALP Bulletin, July 2007
- 2) *Firms Sponsoring Split Public Interest Summers*, Teresa Bryant – NALP Bulletin, August 2007
- 3) *Congressional Action on Public Interest Loan Repayment Programs*, Steve Grumm – NALP Bulletin, September 2007
- 4) *The State of Legal Services in New Orleans Two Years Following Katrina*, Heather Gattuso Lambert – NALP Bulletin – September 2007
- 5) *NLADA Directory of Civil Legal Aid Employer LRAPS Available*, Kate Lang – NALP Bulletin, November 2007
- 6) *It Doesn't Happen In a Day: A Guide to Growing a Small Public Interest Program, Building Institutional Support, and Developing as a Public Interest Professional*, Karen Comstock – NALP Bulletin, December 2007
- 7) *Collaboration Between Career Services Offices and Externship Programs: Multitasking At Its Best*, Dena Bauman and Teresa Schmiedeler – NALP Bulletin, January 2008
- 8) *Guide to Student Practice Rules Being Developed*, Paula Nailon – NALP Bulletin, March 2008

New Initiatives Work Group

The New Initiatives Work Group was led by Alexa Shabecoff (Harvard). Tom Maligno (Touro) also worked on this project. The group formed during the section meeting at the NALP Conference in San Diego and planned to identify hiring timelines for public sector employers to assess the feasibility of encouraging public interest employers to recruit law students on a more consistent timeline. Earlier in the NALP year, a survey of public interest employers was conducted, but the results have not yet been analyzed. It is my recommendation that this project be given a charge by the incoming NALP President, and that the section ask Tom to lead the project. The survey may need to be conducted again since the data may be too old, but this project has a great deal of potential value for NALP's law school members as well as the students with whom they work.

ENVIRONMENTAL SCANNING

The College Cost Reduction and Access Act remains a big topic of interest and conversation among public service section members. It has been suggested by at least a few section members, and I agree, that the NALP Board should consider creating a work group within the public service section to monitor progress of the Department of Education's efforts to promulgate regulations under this new law.

It is important to note though, that while I think a work group has something to offer in the process of tracking the promulgation of regulations for the CCRAA, the work could be duplicative of other groups who will also be following this topic. Since we know that Heather Wells Jarvis of Equal Justice Works is following the progress of the rule-making, I recommend that we ask her to co-chair such a work group along with Annie Goldman (Tulane) and work with Steve Grumm to make sure any updates are shared with the Public Service Section, PSLawNet and the NALP membership as a whole.