Best Practices in
Law Student Professional Development

Described below are Best Practices for addressing Professional Development and standards of Professionalism with law students. Also included are Strategies for pulling it all together. Thanks to those who dug in and uncovered the good stuff that so many of us want to hear about: Josie L. Mitchell, Nancy L. Lochner, Anne-Marie Fulfer and Heather Karns.

I. Professional Development: Practices, programs and strategies for helping law students grow professionally and develop their skills.

A. *Classroom or Orientation Initiatives*

1. Timekeeping
L R&W course covers professionalism in timekeeping. Students are required to record time to learn how to bill honestly and fairly, develop a professional attitude and appreciate efficiency. (West Virginia University College of Law)

2. Time Management
A time-management segment is taught in this class. The segment includes practical things like teaching students how to best utilize their Outlook calendars by using auto-reminders. (Paula Nailon, U of AZ)

3. Legal Research & Writing, Ethics Courses

a. The curriculum focuses on teamwork, coalition building, negotiation, leadership. (David Diamond, Northwestern)

b. A year-long seminar on ethical values for 2 and 3Ls is limited to about 15 enrolled. This unique course is hosted by a professor at his or her home. It is run much like a book club. They have dinner and discuss issues from war to billing to other situations in practice. (Polly Lawson, U VA)

c. The Career Services Office works with faculty and student organizations to host a "Women of Color" mentoring small group lunch. Issues facing women in large firms are addressed during meetings. They begin with a reception in the fall and the students select topics, then they discuss at a faculty member's home in small groups. (Polly Lawson, U VA)

4. Stand-Alone Courses or Orientation Series

a. "The Lawyer as a Problem Solver" is designed for 1Ls and LL.M's and is offered over two months in early spring. It is a hands-on program. Students must attend five areas of emphasis: Client Counseling and Interviewing; Communications in the Legal Office (role playing and debriefing, several length presentations including use of A/V aids); Negotiation and Conflict Management (deal-making and dispute situations; creative and competitive; assess conflict style and learn how to manage high conflict situations); Understanding Financial Data (uses Microsoft Corp. as a case study; learn about kinds of incentives that motivate managers to select various methods of reporting income, extent decisions reflect reality of corp's financial well-being, and interplay between managers, analysts, and the capital markets; covers basics for those new to financial data"); Improvisation Skills for Lawyers (safe space to learn helpful skills for public speaking, presentations, interviews, small-talk, networking, and much more; fast-paced, interactive). (David Diamond, Northwestern)

b. The “PORTAL Series” is designed to expand on “Lawyer as Problem Solver” (above). This series is taught in small group sessions during orientation. This is discussed further in the Hybrid approach section. (David Diamond, Northwestern)

c. Pitt Law piloted a Professional Development Program designed by the Career Services Office Faculty Committee. The Program was comprised of alumni, faculty members and 2Ls and students were expected to attend a kick off event and two structured meetings where topics relating to professional development were presented. Students were also required to attend 2 professional development events with the alumni during the semester. (Pamela Day, University of Pittsburgh School of Law)

5. “The State of the Legal Profession”
Presented to 1Ls during Orientation and upper-classmen a few weeks later early in the fall semester, this presentation covers topics including: What Lawyers Do; Where Lawyers Work; How Hard They Work (including general billable hour expectations); Job Satisfaction Rates; How the National Job Market Works; National Employment Trends for New Law and Where Our Graduates Fall; How Law Graduates Find Jobs; Timing of Offers, Median Starting Salaries; Work-Life Balance. The program ends with tips and suggestions for success in translating students’ experiences into employment results. (Heather Karns, University of Toledo College of Law)

6. “Bridge the Legal Research Gap”
Seattle-area reference librarians coordinate with others to offer a program at each school, open to all summer associates in the area. This program provides students with opportunities to hone their research skills while working throughout the summer. (Josie Mitchell, U of Wash)

B. *Advising & Other Collaboration*

1. Northwestern’s Academic Counseling and Professional Excellence (APEx) program. Students participate in interactive programs designed to meet a range of academic and career needs throughout all 3 years of law school. Topics include: Acclimating to a law school learning environment; Building a law school curriculum; Establishing personal and professional awareness of the demands and responsibilities of their careers; and Developing the teamwork and leadership skills necessary for their professional lives in the law, business, and public service. (Northwestern)

2. Partner with Alumni
An alum hosts a 3-hour event for female 2Ls to help them identify and develop their leadership potential. This program usually attracts 20 students and 10 practicing attorneys. (Gina Rowsam, Oklahoma City)

C. *Career Services -Sample Programs*

- Business Development
- Law Firm Economics (Simone Leavenworth, University of Texas)
- Developing a Solo Practice (Simone Leavenworth, University of Texas)
- Work/Life Integration (Gina Rowsam, Oklahoma City)
- “Maintaining Career Health – How Stress & Substance Abuse Can Derail Progress” (Gina Rowsam, Oklahoma City)
- Defining Goals/Assessing Yourself
- 3L Transition to Practice Programs
- Bar Application Preparation (Heather Karns, University of Toledo College of Law)

II. Professionalism: Programs, ideas and strategies designed to help students become more aware of conduct and qualities characteristic of the legal profession.

A. *Policies in Syllabi*

1. Professionalism Points
A non-exclusive list of professionalism-based points is provided as part of the syllabus. This list and the focus on ways students can lose points serves as a grade motivator. (Arizona State U)

2. Class Participation
A 20% Professionalism component is tacked on to the class participation grade to cover many aspects of professionalism, including conduct in the classroom, such as packing up to leave before class is over. (Georgetown)

3. E-Mail Policy and Plagiarism/Collaboration Policy
A detailed e-mail policy is provided for student-professor communications and a separate Plagiarism/Collaboration Policy exists. (Southwestern Law School)

4. Web Surfing Policy
A laptop use/web surfing policy is in place. Faculty members have tied expectations to state bar professionalism requirements. (Nancy Lochner, Hamline)

5. Academic Integrity Policy
A two-page policy was created to appeal to Millenials' sense of community and collaboration. (Touro Law)

B. Classroom or Orientation Initiatives

1. E-Mail Etiquette
An entire LRW class is devoted to email etiquette. (West Va. College of Law)

2. Hypotheticals
Hypotheticals are used to get students thinking about their law school years as the beginning of their legal careers. These hypothetical exercises are presented during segments of professionalism during Orientation and at the end of the semester. Each is discussed after students have had a chance to determine the appropriate University rule. (Suzanne Aronowitz, Golden Gate University School of Law)

3. Professionalism Series
A Professionalism Series targets 1Ls and is modeled after the Inns of Court concept. This series is run jointly between the Student Life Office and the Dean's Office and several volunteer faculty. Students are required to attend 6 meetings in the first year. Each meeting includes 60-70 students divided into groups of 6 where each group is responsible for creating a presentation to show to the larger group on an assigned topic related to professionalism. (Stetson College of Law)

4. "Pope and John Lecture Series on Professionalism" Since 1991, Chicago firm focuses on many dimensions of a lawyers professional responsibility. (Northwestern)

5. Professionalism Day
A mandatory Professionalism Day requires all classes to be canceled and each class receives specific professionalism programming related to their class year. Ex. 1Ls hear about professionalism in creating Facebook pages. (LeaNora Ruffin, Widener)

6. Oaths

a. Session closed by a local Judge who administers the oath of office to all students. This is the same oath taken by new members of the Bar. (Susan Aronowitz, Golden Gate University School of Law)

b. A Professionalism Pledge is administered. (Jennifer Flexner, U of Tulsa College of Law)

c. Professional Dress day during orientation; day in which pledge is taken. (LeaNora Ruffin, Widener) (Nancy Lochner, Hamline)

7. Orientation Public Service Activity

Learn about pro bono via public service activity and lunch time speakers (Jennifer Flexner, U of Tulsa College of Law)

C. *Career Services Sample Programs*

- St. Louis University School of Law charges students $13 for etiquette dinner.
- University of Texas School of Law's etiquette dinner is only open to 1Ls.
- Widener has annual dress for success fashion show.
- What not to wear-for the gentleman lawyer. (Oklahoma City)
- Oklahoma City held mandatory 1L Success Luncheon.
- "Professionalism: The Infrastructure of Career Success". (University of Texas)

III. Hybrid Practices: Programs, ideas and strategies designed to address growth in both law student Professional Development and law students' awareness of Professionalism within the legal profession.

A. *Classroom or Orientation Experiences*

1. Case Studies, Exercises using Rules

Students are presented with three client counseling exercises that require them to evaluate ethical issues.

2. Dean Interviews

The Dean interviews several alumni about issues related to professionalism and presents this information to all 1Ls during a special "professionalism" segment attached to 1L LRW. (Gary Greener, Southwestern University School of Law)

3. Orientation Comprehensive

a. The "PORTAL SERIES" provides a foundation for students to begin understanding the concept of professionalism as it relates to a law student and practicing attorney. Includes topics such as: Entering the Business and Profession of Legal Services; Legal Ethics; Working Effectively in Teams; Technology in the Legal Workplace; The Professional Work Ethic; Self-Assessment and Effective Management of a Career in Legal Services (MBTI – sometimes done separately). All topics are structured around a "case file," where each session relates to an overriding case. (Northwestern)

b. "Foundations for Legal Study" is an Orientation for 1Ls that has been expanded from 3 to 8 days and now incorporates several professionalism segments, including topics such as: Career Planning presentation on working with our office, and expectations of students as professionals while in law school; Alumni panel; Welcome from Bar Ass'n Exec Dir; Welcome and professionalism presentations from 3 judges representing high courts; Welcome from alumni pres; Mock client interviews; Workshop on learning styles; Rules of professional conduct and their enforcement; Elements of a claim and drafting a complaint; Interviewing and counseling the corporate client; The lawyer's duty of confidentiality. (Josie Mitchell, U of Wash.)

4. Disbarred Attorney Talk
A disbarred lawyer addresses a Professional Responsibility Ethics Class. (Gary Greener, Southwestern Univ. School of Law)

5. Use "Excellence in the Workplace" or "The Curmudgeon's Guide to Practicing Law" as assigned reading to address issues of professionalism. (West Virginia University College of Law and University of Texas School of Law)

B. *Career Services Sample Programs*

- Professionalism & the Initial Client Intake
- How to Have a Successful Summer
- Turning Summer Experiences into Employment (Amanda DiPolvere, Penn State)
- Roundtable Lunches with National Advisory Board (Heather Karns, University of Toledo College of Law)
- Mentoring Programs
- Legal Career Options Day (Todd Rogers, University of Kansas School of Law)
- Mock Interviews (Josie Mitchell, U of Wash)
- Speed Networking
- Networking (How, to)

C. *School Miscellaneous*

- Admissions policies-increased focus on work experience and other factors (Northwestern)

IV. Strategies

A. Presenting Information

1. Show, Don't Tell; Cross Purpose
Ask firms or groups to help you "show" standards of professionalism or professional development when they are meeting or presenting to students. For example, the District Attorney came and showed how a case came together and what each person's role was in the process. A public defender who used to be a psychologist came in to talk about how to interview a witness and then demonstrated and "cut away" to talk about techniques as he was using them". (Paula Nailon, U of AZ)

2. Bring in outside speakers to address professional development issues and strategies for growth but also use programs that have a more substantive focus (How to Have a Successful Summer) to address professional development related issues. (Malini Nangia, UCLA)

3. Use Outside Speakers
Use lawyers from the community. "Students see them as tangible and real."
(Gary Greener, Southwestern)

4. Use Students. Consider programming conducted by students sharing life experiences and professional situations that resonate with underclass students. Also consider programming conducted by employers willing to share expectations and conduct required for successful practice. (Tulane)

5. Use Other Staff
Student Services includes a strong professional development message throughout 1L orientation which helps to: begin the year on the right foot, share the school's expectations and demonstrate that all faculty and admin. All offices are on board with the same message. (Penn State)

6. Use Employers
GW had success pairing with local federal offices to do trainings for students. Very receptive employers. Had a big breakthrough that they're always telling people to network, but they decided to *show* instead. Suzanne Bell and others from the DOJ came and did it. They had 4 scenarios, career fair, table talk, cold call. (Michelle Cotter Richards, George Washington)

7. Use Professors
Work with professors to catching possible on-the-job issues. We had a Civ Pro 1L prof. who did a bit on networking and options beyond OCI, long-term career planning, just because he was a new prof. and was in touch with that. It was an opportunity driven by an individual professor. LRW covers expectations of attorneys, ethics. (Michelle Cotter Richards, George Washington)

8. Use Alumni
Through conversations with alumni across the country, we've developed a great list of, Interview "How tos, dos and don'ts". We can also explain why employers feel the way they do about interview preparation and other topics. Preparing for an interview can be indicative of how someone might prepare for trial. We also have a National Alumni Network where alumni have signed on to serve as mentors and resources to students. We ask the alumni to be candid with us if issues come up or need to be addressed with students who contact them. (Heather Karns, University of Toledo College of Law)

8. LRW instructors have been very receptive to helping spread messages. We're the most sympathetic audience with one another. They help call people on issues. (Nancy Lochner, Hamline)

9. Use Other Law Schools
All local law schools work to bring speaker to send consistent message on professional image and identity. (Gina Rowsam, Oklahoma City)

10. Use Undergraduate Offices
Have undergrad office help with assessment issues. (Gina Rowsam, Oklahoma City)

11. Make No Assumptions
"They want to be professional but need help." Paula Nailon does CLE programming on generations in the workplace. One thing she has to remind people of is this is a group who wants to be professional and do the right thing. For example, in talking to employers, she's heard complaints that they give 1 hour for lunch, and people come back right at 1:00, and then chit-chat, go to the bathroom, hang up their coat, etc. Employers attributed that to something intentional, but Paula thinks perhaps it's just that no one told the employees, and they need to be told EVERYTHING – no assumptions." (Paula Nailon U of AZ)

12. Start at the Beginning
"Start at the very beginning. You need to be more explicit. If in the past you used to have a program with 15 topics and you breezed right through, now go back. At U Az they've looked at *everything* to make sure they're not making any assumptions. No bit of information is too small or too basic." (Paula Nailon, U of AZ)

13. No Heavy Text
"Use Top 10 lists, use hyperlinks so initial look isn't so text heavy but they can drill down." (Paula Nailon, U of AZ)

14. Get Things Out of the Way to the Group
"We have a philosophy of getting the basics out of the way as a group to open up individual meetings to practical work." (Michelle Cotter Richards, George Washington)

15. Model Professionalism
"They have an agreement that in emails, the reference line will always make it clear whether it pertains or would be of interest to a student or not. If not, they can delete. Build trust." Also, make sure your writing is succinct as possible, etc. (Paula Nailon, U of AZ)

B. Philosophies & Procedures

1 .Individualize/Hold Accountable

a. Individualize and make students accountable-create specific plans. (Michelle Cotter, GW)

b. Ensure students understand steps and hold students to their end of the bargain using counseling notes, such as in Symplicity. Try to use concrete reality. Meet them where they *think* they are and use notes as a concrete point."

2. Make it Practical/Tangible

a. Use a Mandatory orientation or 1L Career Conference. Make it a very tangible, practical, how-to program. 300% better w/ hook of steps to take, hook of addressing things students are wondering about. …" (Michelle Cotter Richards, GW)

b. Provide specific tangible examples of professionalism. Providing students with action-based examples helps them understand the implications of lack of professionalism and how to effectively enhance their own professional image. (Malini Nangia, UCLA)

3. Break it Down
This group has a harder time estimating how long things will take, so she works with them on noting it. They talk about how they should bill their time for projects, even if just for them. How long did you research? How much time spent writing? How long rewriting? How many rewrites? This makes them feel good for two reasons: 1) it helps them prepare better next time and budget their time, and 2) they see satisfaction as their time decreases." (Paula Nailon, U of AZ)

4. Infuse
"We make a concerted effort to include the word 'professionalism' in all sessions." (Gary Greener, Associate Dean, Southwestern University School of Law)

5. Consider your Forms
We have appointment intake forms, suggested readings, self-edits. The forms are to make students focus on their question and what it's realistic to address in 30 minutes. We cancel if people don't do their prep. work, if required. On the intake form we ask what they've reviewed already, to reinforce the fact that much information can be found elsewhere – they don't need 1:1 time for everything. We also have them check a category of reason for appointment, because that reminds them there are several facets we can help with. (Nancy Lochner, Hamline)

6. Capture Teaching Moments
"There's a tension because while for some things like professionalism we need to reach them where they are, for other professional *development* issues we need to 'teach things out of them.' It's all about what's timing/place appropriate. (Paula Nailon, U of AZ)

7. Break Habits
Be aware of bad habits and how they will impact job performance. At school you may be able to get by putting things off, but you can't unlearn habits, so start with good ones. Maybe you flub up on an exam, turn in something late, but if you do either at work you will be out on your ear! We are the best and safest sounding board, but if we were attorneys we might fire them! It's hard to unlearn habits, so break them early. She does a ton of writing coaching and says, remember, if you're a JD you're a writing expert, too. Always draw a parallel to the career in every critique." (Paula Nailon, U of AZ).

8. Year-Specific Plans
Be intentional, consider needs. For 1Ls it may be communication and image damage prevention. For 3Ls it may be more professional development. (Polly Lawson, U VA)

C. Seat Yourself at the Table

1. Experiential Learning or Professionalism Committee
Hamline has formed an Experiential Learning Committee to ensure we're connecting on these and other issues. Semiformal. Great chance to bring up my "top 10" list and have several people thinking about addressing those issues in classes. (Nancy Lochner, Hamline)

2. Practicum/Internships
We've talked with our practicum/internship office about mutually beneficial requirements we could impose upon students through that vehicle. (Nancy Lochner, Hamline)

3. Meet with Campus Peers
"Once a quarter, we have a meeting of all the Career Services offices on campus. We are able to share ideas and resources with the Foster School of Business/MBA program, the Alumni Ass'n, UW Career Center which serves the entire campus, the Jackson School of International Studies, Evans School of Public Affairs, the Information School, and others. It has been a tremendous resource, giving us insight into students in other depts., and the ability to work together on events and share resources. Last fall we decided to expand our meetings to include a speaker, so we meet for one hour and have a guest speaker for one hour. (Josie Mitchell, U of Wash)

4. Find Tools to Bolster Your Cause
"Subscribed to the Law School Survey of Student Engagement which provided an opportunity to compare Southwestern's score with 6 peer schools. It was helpful to determine which areas of student engagement were weak and needed to be addressed." (Gary Greener, Associate Dean, Southwestern University School of Law)

5. Trainings
Paula Nailon does CLE's so she gets face time to learn the issues. (AZ)

D. Market Yourself

1. Make sure faculty, staff and students are familiar with your credentials and the work that you do "Faculty have bios, law firms have bios, why not us? That will help people see where things dovetail. They might be interested. We need to market ourselves." (Paula Nailon, U of AZ)