

NALP 2009 Annual Education Conference
Washington, DC

**Teaching Professionalism to the
Small-/Mid-sized Firm New Lawyer:
An Opportunity for School-Employer
Partnerships**

April 1, 2009, 3:45 to 5:00 p.m.

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**Why is Professional
Development Important?**

- Professional development of students and recent law school graduates has been and will remain a growing concern
- Most legal employers do not have internal PD resources to train and educate students and recent grads.
- Current economy is causing even largest firms to decrease PD personnel and resources
- Extraordinarily competitive job market
 - Students need to stand out in a positive way and demonstrate value as an employee
- Help is needed -- what can law schools do to assist?

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**Why Should CSOs Teach
Professionalism?**

- Serve as link between employers and students
 - CSOs have better understanding than most students for the PD concerns employers have
 - Law schools are best positioned to quickly develop topical programming geared toward addressing professional development concerns

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Views from the Field: PD from the Employer's Perspective

- Pace Law School 2006 Midsize Firm Survey*
 - Surveyed 108 law firms
 - 45% hired experienced attorneys only
 - 23% noted “lack of practical experience” as major weakness in recent hires
 - Greatest strengths of recent grads: “motivated work ethic” and “disciplined, hard-working”

* Survey underwritten through Communitas Online LLC.

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PD from the Employer's Perspective

What do employers look for when hiring new attorneys?

- Excellent Legal Skills
 - Writing and overall communication skills
 - Attention to detail
- Excellent Business Skills
 - Understanding business of law practice
 - Fiscal/economic calculation as to how you should spend your time
 - Efficiency and effectiveness
 - Protecting client AND employer's interests
- Excellent Employee Skills
 - Avoiding rifts
 - Self-interest/self-survival vs. mutual interests that benefit employer and client

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PD from the Employer's Perspective

Other Concerns

- Responsiveness, or lack thereof
- Accountability, or lack thereof
- Business etiquette
- Marketing
 - Internal and external
- Enthusiasm
 - For the employer, for the client, for the work
- The Gen Y/Millennial Dilemma -- it's not about “you”!

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What Can Law Schools Do?

- Make sure students/grads know what is expected of them when they start practicing
- Teach them the skills they will need to make them more valuable to prospective employers
- Enable them to better market themselves and differentiate themselves from their competition

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What Can Law Schools Do?

Teaching Professionalism through Curriculum

- Hofstra's Focus
 - Increased emphasis on teaching aspects of legal practice that students are not normally taught in law school
 - Lawyer Malpractice
 - Business of Lawyering Courses
 - Professionalism programming now part of initial and ongoing 1L orientation
 - Academic Support Programs emphasizing writing skills
- Cal Western's Skills Training for Ethical and Preventive Practice and Career Satisfaction
- Others?

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What Can Law Schools Do?

Teaching Professionalism Through Career Services

- Programming
 - Pace
 - How to Succeed at Your Summer (or First Legal) Job
 - Ethics and the New Lawyer
 - Dining and Dressing in the Professional Setting
 - Prepare to Practice: Advanced and Practical Research Skills
 - Hofstra
 - Building Your Professional Image
 - Ethics and Professionalism Workshop
 - Cost Efficient Research and Other Law Practice Survival Tips

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What Can Law Schools Do?

Teaching Professionalism Through Career Services

- Set the example and practice what you preach
 - Establish expectations for students from the start
 - Career Services Codes of Conduct or Student Professionalism Contracts
 - Be models of professionalism
 - Honor appointments
 - Use formality in email and other communications
 - Be responsive
 - Be accountable
 - Enforce consequences of poor professionalism
 - Mandatory letters of apology
 - Importance of maintaining good relationships
 - Bad behavior in law school translates to bad behavior as a practicing lawyer

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Questions and Answers

THANK YOU!!!

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