Pro Bono/PD Corner:

Integrating New Attorneys into Pro Bono Practice

from the NALP Pro Bono and Professional Development Task Force

Integrating pro bono and new lawyer orientation sends the vital message that pro bono is a key component of a lawyer’s professional development and the firm’s culture.

- Include the firm’s pro bono policy, up-to-date pro bono newsletters and accolades, and pro bono contacts in orientation packets.

- Schedule a meeting between the new lawyer and office pro bono coordinator within the first week of hire to review policies, key firm pro bono initiatives, and the firm’s pro bono intake and assignment procedures. This meeting should include a discussion about the developmental needs of the lawyer and the types of pro bono matters that can help meet those needs.

- With incoming first-year associates, go a step further and pre-select pro bono matters that will provide them with needed practice experience and a confidence boost in managing a client or matter. Prior to being sworn in, new associates can undergo the pro bono training and shadowing. Then they are ready to take on their own matter their first day as a new lawyer. While adequate supervision must be provided, the opportunity to run a case or matter as a new associate will be greatly appreciated by the pro bono client, by the associate who is making a difference, and by the firm’s paying clients, who will get the benefit of more polished and experienced first-year attorneys.