Call for Nominations — Will You Be NALP’s Next Vice-President for Member Services and Education or Serve in Another Important Role?

by Diane Downs

The NALP nomination process opens on November 4. This article takes a closer look at the position of Vice-President for Member Services and Education, but all of the following positions are available for the 2016 cycle:

- 2016-2017 President-Elect
- 2016-2018 Vice-President for Member Services and Education
- 2016-2018 Directors (4)
- 2016-2017 Nominating Committee members (11 — an employer and school rep from each general region; and a representative from Canada — school or employer member)
- 2016-2018 Regional Representatives (10 — an employer and a school rep from each general region)
- 2016-2017 Regional Representative — Canada (1 — an employer or a school rep)
- 2016-2017 Conference Planning Coordinators (5 — school reps from the Midwest and Northeast regions and employer reps from the Mid-Atlantic, Southeast, and West/Rocky Mountain regions)

To nominate yourself or a colleague, go to www.nalp.org/nominating, where you will also find detailed information about the available positions, including comments from members who have held these positions in the past. While only primary representatives may vote in elections, all members may submit nominations. Questions? A list of Nominating Committee Members with email links is provided at www.nalp.org/directors#nom.

NALP is a member services organization, so it follows that the Vice-President for Member Services and Education plays an important role in NALP. Yet, many members may not know much about what this position entails. I had a conversation with Beth Moeller, Assistant Dean at UCLA Law, who currently serves in this position and is only the second person to do so since it was created in 2012. This VP role has changed quite a bit in these last few years, so I sat down with Beth and asked her what keeps her busy throughout the year and what skills she thought would be helpful for the incoming VP to have.

First, the VP for Member Services and Education serves on the Executive Committee and attends all NALP Board meetings as a full participant. The VP assists also with Board orientation, the budget process, and on any committees and task forces as requested by the President. You don’t need to have prior Board service to run for VP, but Beth did find her prior Board experience to be helpful in knowing what a Board meeting was like and what to expect throughout the year. If you have not served on the Board and are interested in this role, you will need to prepare for a busy spring of learning about Board meetings — particularly about how to prepare and about what to pass on to the Regional Resource Council (RRC) members to share with the membership.

The most significant recent change in the VP role has been the addition of RRC leadership responsibilities. The Vice-President for Member Services and Education is the Chair of the 21-person Council, which includes representatives from all of the NALP regions. The VP is also the critical liaison...
between the NALP Board and the Council. The RRC is such an integral part of the NALP experience now that it may seem as if the Council has been there all along. In fact, there has only been an RRC since 2012, so its role in the organization is still evolving to serve the different needs of the regions. Each region has a conference call for members hosted by the RRC members following each Board meeting. RRC members are also asked to do member outreach before Board meetings and write a Board report to ensure that the concerns of their regional members are known to all Board members.

The VP for Member Services and Education has a prominent role in working with the RRC to develop the best methods for keeping members in all regions connected. The VP for Member Services and Education also hosts the RRC orientation, which takes place on Saturday at the Annual Education Conference, and conducts regular teleconference meetings throughout the year.

Conference planning is also a significant job of the VP for Member Services and Education. The VP sits on the Annual Education Conference Planning Committee, participates in shaping the program content, and “shepherds” several of the programs selected for the conference.

If this list of duties sounds exciting to you, then here is Beth’s advice for success in the position. The successful VP, she says, will have many, if not all of the following qualities:

- Organizational skills — while the role doesn’t require significantly more work than that of a Director, you will need to juggle a few ongoing projects throughout the year, so being organized is a must.
- Ability to connect with others and to connect members with each other — the reason we are all members of NALP is to connect for professional support, so hopefully our VP can help us do just that.
- Leadership skills — the 21-person RRC is a big committee, so the successful candidate will have confidence and skill in leading phone meetings and putting together the RRC orientation with the help of the NALP staff.
- Ability to cultivate leadership skills in others — the RRC was designed as a pipeline for NALP leaders, so cultivating this group of dedicated Council members and encouraging them to run for Board and other leadership positions after they serve on the RRC is a critical part of the job.

As with most NALP volunteer positions, the hard work will pay off in the end. In my experience, connecting with colleagues across the map always works out to my benefit when I need the answer to a question, a second opinion on a “gray area” question, or just a friend to commiserate with after a long day.

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