October 1, 2010

RE: Advance Notice Regarding Change in Student Demographic Data Collection in the NALP Directory of Law Schools: Addition of LGBT Student Demographics

Dear Colleague:

As you may have read in the September NALP Bulletin and in earlier editions of NALPnow!, starting with the 2011 NALP Directory of Law Schools (NDLS) the Composition of Enrollment Section will include a column for law schools to provide aggregate student LGBT demographic information by year and gender.

NALP employer members have been gathering and reporting LGBT attorney information in the NALP Directory of Legal Employers since 1996. This information has proven invaluable for students seeking demographic information about legal employers and provides a realistic way to help students assess employers more effectively. Similarly, and in keeping with NALP’s mission to advocate for diversity and inclusion in the legal profession, the addition of LGBT student demographics will allow employers and pre-law students to assess law schools more effectively. Following a survey of a representative group of 30 member law schools by the Recruitment Practices Advisory Group in 2010, the Board adopted the Advisory Group’s recommendation to commence collecting student LGBT demographic data.

Detailed information on the collection of the data will accompany the NDLS instructions when they are distributed in early 2011. In essence there will be a new column in the Composition of Enrollment section entitled “Openly LGBT” that will be subdivided into a column for men and one for women to be completed by class year and in total. The system will allow schools to report “not collected” or “unknown” but will default to zero if left blank.

The September 2010 NALP Bulletin included an informative article entitled “Collecting and Reporting Data on LGBT Students at Law Schools” that provides additional background along with tips for collecting and reporting this data. In particular the authors note that (1) some law schools currently gather this information about applicants through self-identification on their applications;
(2) the Law School Admission Council (LSAC) has an opt-in interest category in which applicants can share LGBT status with the LSAC; and (3) an on-campus LGBT student organization may be the best source for assistance in gathering this data. The article provides additional concrete tips for working effectively with students to gather this data. The article is available on NALP’s website at: http://www.nalp.org/uploads/Collecting_LGBT_data.pdf.

Members of NALP’s GLBT Section and staff are ready to assist with any questions you may have regarding completing this new section of the NDLS in 2011.

Sincerely,

Carol Lee H. Sprague
2010-2011 NALP President

Jeff Becherer
Chair, NALP GLBT Section