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March 10, 2016

TO: NALP Members

FROM: NALP Board of Directors

RE: Proposed Revision to NALP's Principles and Standards Part V.D.,
Summer Employment Provisions for First-Year Students

At its most recent meeting last month, the NALP Board of Directors voted to release proposed revisions to NALP's Principles and Standards Part V.D., Summer Employment Provisions for First-Year Students, for a period of notice and comment. The proposed revised language appears below for your review. You will notice that the primary change is the removal of specific date restrictions for interactions between 1Ls and career services professionals for certain kinds of career counseling, and between 1Ls and employers. The proposed draft language retains the emphasis on the importance of devoting first semester energies to academic studies rather than job seeking activities, but recognizes that as the legal employment market continues to change, it is important to provide students with information and counseling about careers and career objectives early in law school. The draft provision recognizes that individual law schools may choose to set dates before which they will not offer one on one career counseling or application document review to first-year students, or before which employers and students may not initiate contact with each other or make offers for employment, and it urges employers to honor all such school-specific timing guidelines.

**THE DRAFT PROPOSED REVISION TO THE SUMMER EMPLOYMENT
PROVISIONS FOR FIRST-YEAR STUDENTS READS AS FOLLOWS:**

- 1. To position law students to be as successful as possible, their primary efforts during the first semester of law school should focus on their studies. Nonetheless, opportunities to learn about professionalism, professional**

development and the legal profession are appropriate early in law school. Recognizing that law schools will differ in philosophy as to first-year career development activities, individual law schools may set dates before which they will not offer one on one career counseling or application document review to first-year students, or before which employers and students should not initiate contact with one another or interview or make offers for employment. Employers should honor any such school-specific timing guidelines.

- 2. All offers to first-year students for summer employment should remain open for at least two weeks after the date made.**

ADDITIONAL BACKGROUND:

The Board was motivated and informed in its decision-making on this matter by the changing market, changing law school career services office behavior, and, in particular, by the recent report from the Innovating Talent Acquisition (ITA) Work Group, a copy of which can be reviewed [here](#). Feedback from member law schools suggests that as the market for entry-level jobs has changed and tightened following the recession, many law schools have felt the need to find ways around the current first-year provision in order to be able to provide counseling opportunities earlier in the first year. In addition, employers and students continue to seek early contact with one another. We note that the ITA report emphasizes that in graduate MBA programs, career counseling and contact with potential employers starts almost immediately upon matriculation. As voluntary community guidelines by which members agree to abide, rather than accrediting regulations, NALP's Principles and Standards are only effective to the extent that there is broad consensus that they make sense, and that there is widespread adherence to them. Because of the many recent challenges to the first-year guidelines, the Board of Directors determined that it was important to introduce these proposed revisions at this time.

MEMBER INPUT SOUGHT:

Members are invited to submit comments on the proposed changes not later than March 31. Questions or comments can be directed to partvcomments@nalp.org, and should be sent with the subject line "First-Year Provisions Proposed Changes." The NALP Board of Directors will take up a final discussion and vote on whether to adopt these draft changes at its meeting on April 12 immediately in advance of the NALP Annual Education Conference. A redline version of section V.D. of the Timing Guidelines showing the markup of the current provision can be found [here](#).