

NALP Board Report
Student Professional Development Section
July 2007

It should be no surprise that professional development activities are either going forward "full speed ahead" or being stopped dead in their tracks. Law schools are like that.

PROPOSED NEW WORK GROUP

The Law School and Employer PD sections are requesting a joint work group. The new work group will develop some guidelines for collaborations between schools and employers. We have leadership (David Diamond from the school side), waiting for the Board to approve this.

WORK GROUP RECAPS as of July 6, 2007

1. **Create a tool for students going to employers without PD infrastructure.** The chair of this group is recovering from surgery, and will move on this when she is back on her feet.
2. **The standards work group:** Has identified a few additional questions that they will pose to the schools whose staffs had responded to the survey.

NEW PD PROGRAMS AT SCHOOLS (a little bit of recap; a little bit of programs in progress)

1. **(Jennifer Flexner, University of Tulsa College of Law)** We have added a business networking speaker followed by a reception (to practice what students learn) to this year's fall pd line up. This program is being done in conjunction with the graduate school.
2. **(Amy Schwarzenbach, Loyola University New Orleans)** Our upcoming SBA President has made professionalism one of his platform issues and I like to think it's partly because our office has such a good rapport with him. We haven't made specific plans yet, but the students are pushing for more topical programming. A professionalism day is planned for August and I had my first nightmare about it last night (I forgot to order the food and it went south from there). I am also going to try to add a Golf 101 program for women law students and women attorneys, hopefully before the annual golf fundraiser. I've noticed our women law students and alumni who golf are adored by law firms.
3. **(Susan Gainen, University of Minnesota)** We have spearheaded a collaboration with our office, the Legal Writing Program, both Law School and local Law Firm Librarians, and our Alumni to give a new and practical focus on law students' legal research methods and skills.

We have a generation of students whose instincts are finely honed to electronic search (Google/cut & paste/find & replace), and they come to law school and replace "Google" with

"Westlaw/Lexis." We will all be working together to walk them back to the place where the first research strategy is neither a relative nor a derivative of "Google."

Our collaboration (without the finer details worked out) will likely include a series of workshops with a Law Firm Librarian, Law School Librarian and Alum working through hypothetical or real research problems as follows: What is the research problem? What research strategy to you recommend? What research sources to you expect me to use?

The goal won't be to show the answer, but to work through the strategy. This series will run under the Legal Writing umbrella of "mandatory." There will be additional sessions focused on specific subjects based on our 2L Legal Writing Program which requires participation in either a law review-caliber journal or on a moot court, which is a year-long academically supervised and graded appellate practice. For instance, we have an international journal and an international moot court, so we will have a specific session for those two groups.

Another element of this collaboration will be examples of research problem/research strategy which we will feature twice monthly in our new (ConstantConnect) html newsletter which will replace our weekly plaintext email that includes blog links, advice, calendar, etc.

4. **(Tara Miller, W&L)** We tried this past year holding our Spring PD programs ("Preparation for Practice") during a one-week period named "Career Development Week." While successful, a number of students felt the programs were too crammed together and they could not get to as many as they had wanted. So, in Spring 2008, we are going to expand the idea to "Career Development Month" and offer more programs.

We also this year partnered with the Library, which scheduled its prep for practice research sessions during Career Development Week. We included the Library's programs in our advertising. That pairing was very well received, and we will do it again next year.

Partnering with the SBA in advertising the programs and encouraging attendance worked well, and we plan to do it again next year.

We also had a firm host a closing reception to Career Development Week, and will do so again next year.

I would be interested in working on this collaboration -- we've partnered successfully with firms on PD issues. One thing I will do this summer is to send a "blast" email to employers asking for PD feedback based on their summer class -- not necessarily our students, but law students in general.

We are going to try to have the YLD give one of our PD sessions next Spring. I do not know of changes employers are making.

PD CAME TO A STANDSTILL

(Pam Day, U of Pittsburgh) Unfortunately we are kind of at a standstill with our professional development programming. This past year the CSO Faculty Committee developed a proposed model for professional development which would involve faculty, alums and students. These Professional Development "PODS" (we were really trying to come up with a better name) would involve mentoring, networking and formalized professional development programs. This proposal has not yet been approved and the CSO Faculty Committee now has a new chair so we are back at the table. This model may be implemented, but we are now exploring different ways to perhaps work with some existing programs.

PUBLICATIONS and a new business

Professional development has gone mainstream. West, which wastes no money on things that won't earn hard cash quickly, has published *Excellence in the Workplace: Legal and Life Skills*, by Kay Kavanagh & Paula Nailon, and it should be required reading for every law student, for every law teacher, and for everyone who supervises law students. One of my students reviewed it for our blog. Read the review at http://blog.lib.umn.edu/lawcso/vocare/2007/06/excellence_in_the_workplace_le.html

Professional development is a commercial venture. With a growing cadre of Professional Development Professionals in law firms, it should surprise no one that there is a growing cadre of professionals willing to sell their professional development expertise to law firms and law schools. The most recent one that I have learned about is www.pastthebar.com and the email from the firm's owner and an article that she wrote for the *New Jersey Bar Journal* are attached. **A WORK GROUP PROPOSAL: Identify the Professional Development Professionals who are working as consultants and trainers for law schools and legal employers.**

The June 4 issue of *the DC Legal Times* had a terrific article that should be embraced by both school and employer professionals: "On the failure to communicate -- summer associates need to master one of the most important tasks: oral communication." There were a number of other excellent articles in that issue.

(Kia N. Scipio, U of Baltimore) From a thread on the student PD list in response to a request for information about making the case for Student PD: "Perhaps this handout from the NALP Conference Concurrent Session entitled *Best Practices in Law Student Professional Development* might be of help. This program was really amazing and the women who lead the session would be a wonderful resource." https://www.nalp.org/assets/703_thursstudentpd.pdf

Gihan Fernando (President) posted to the PD list: I thought you might be interested in this New York Times article on a group of Colleges that are considering not participating in the U.S. News College rankings. <http://www.nytimes.com/2007/06/20/education/20colleges.html?th&emc=th>

Respectfully submitted, Susan Gainen