

**St. Mary's University School of Law  
San Antonio, Texas  
Suzanne Patrick, Esq., Director of Career Services  
Presentation to ABA Questionnaire Committee  
December 13, 2010  
Fort Lauderdale, FL**

My name is Suzanne Patrick and I am the Director of Career Services at St. Mary's University School of Law in San Antonio, Texas. This is my more than eight years in this profession, I have severed at four law schools and am very familiar with the surveys and requests we get annually. I have also worked at large national schools and smaller regional schools and understand the prospective each bring to the table.

I appreciate the time and ability to present my thoughts on behalf of my school at this meeting. In the interest of trying not to be repetitive I am limiting my comments to those not addressed by Holly Brajcich of Gonzaga University and the Chair of the Small and Solo Career Section of NALP and Barbara Weinzierl of the University Of Akron School Of Law who I am co-presenting with today. I believe all of our schools share similar ideas and thoughts and we are happy to be presenting this together.

#### **IMPROVING THE CURRENT REPORTING FORMS**

I believe it is imperative that we incorporate more categories and questions in the existing ABA and NALP surveys to create lesser room for rogue surveys such as the LST Survey. I also think there are many ways to take the current data we already provide and use it more comprehensively. We also need to strive to be able to compare "apples to apples". Currently I am not sure all schools report positions such as part time clerks and solo practitioners in the same way. Creating more categories to alleviate confusion in reporting may be help. In the current NALP survey those who work retail or other non-professional jobs are given the same weight in the surveys as those who have a judicial clerkship. There also have been some new jobs created that should be addressed such as those jobs schools have created for their recent graduates or positions schools have funded outside of their law school for recent graduates. We need to be careful to be able to distinguish this new category from current clinical fellowships that have existed at many schools for years.

Currently, the US News and World Report's ranking formula provides a credit toward those who are unknown. Therefore most schools see it as better to have listed students as unknown as opposed to seeking. We need to see if we can alleviate this problem by removing unknowns from the equation or eliminating the 25% credit given to schools for them in the survey. This would discourage schools from moving people to that category or forcing them to making a judgment call. It may also be helpful to include a category for non-bar passage students. Since these students will likely have to take the bar again in February and may not be employed or seeking while they are studying, a new category would further encourage schools to not include them in the unknown category.

## **ADJUSTING QUESTIONS TO PROTECT ANONIMITY**

One minor issue but one that could be helpful to address is that the ABA currently asks schools to report which states students work in and asks for the breakdown. It might be better to match this with the NALP requests and report by NALP region instead of states. It would help provide a bit more anonymity for schools that have very few out of state students.

## **EDUCATING PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS ON HOW TO INTERPRET THESE SURVEYS**

I think it is very important that we help educate prospective students trying to read and evaluate the information in our survey so that they better understand the legal profession. While we all supply “9 month “numbers to the surveys, there is a big issue or mystery about why we do not provide the “at graduation” numbers. Many prospective students may think this would be a good indicator to help them make decisions about schools. It would be very helpful to create language for prospective students that explains to them the types of legal employers that actually make offers prior to bar results and what percentage of law students nationally actually go into those employers (i.e. large firms, some federal agencies and judicial clerkships). Most other employers such as small firms, state and local governments, including District Attorney and Public Defenders, and those choosing a career in solo practice will most likely not be offered positions until they have bar results. Therefore it is actually more accurate for prospective students to analyze the “9 month” numbers to have a better understanding of the likelihood of their job prospects upon graduating from the school they choose. Prospective students should understand the norms of legal hiring and limbo waiting period most graduates find themselves in as they sit for the bar and await results. Understanding these industry norms will make for less confusion in evaluating the best law school for them.

## **COMMENTS FROM HOLLY BRAJCICH:**

**From:** Brajcich, Holly [mailto:hbrajcich@lawschool.gonzaga.edu]

**Sent:** Friday, December 03, 2010 5:04 PM

**To:** willliamk@staff.abanet.org

**Cc:** Patrick, Suzanne; bew@uakron.edu; bcw@uakron.edu

**Subject:** Comments regarding potential revision of ABA's graduate employment statistics

Dear Mr. Williams:

Thank you for the opportunity afforded Career Services Directors regarding the placement statistic discussion to be held by the ABA on December 13. Unfortunately, neither my Dean nor I will be able to attend the hearing in person. I would, however, like to share some ideas regarding this issue on behalf of Gonzaga University School of Law. My goal is to encourage a balance between providing more useful information, maintaining graduates' confidentiality and minimizing the additional burden on small Career Services Offices to obtain placement information.

Under the current system, NALP and the ABA receive detailed placement information that could be used to create better information for the public. For example, we currently report positions as part-time,

temporary, JD required, JD preferred, non-professional, etc. However, when computing placement figures, these categories are disregarded and every job reported is included in the school's placement percentage. A job at Starbucks has the same weight in the equation as a judicial clerkship. Perhaps non-professional jobs should not be included in the equation. Furthermore, the current survey could be updated to include more concise categories that would assist in this endeavor. For example, there could also be a category for employment funded by the law schools. Schools that provide funds to employers for graduates' employment would be reported in this category enabling the ABA to provide better information.

In addition, the ABA could be the entity that reports a school's placement figure to outside entities (US News for example). This would allow the ABA more control in the placement equation computation that would be given to the public.

Lastly, a request to provide more information may be more burdensome on small Career Services Offices and may not actually produce better information. Many of the Career Services Offices in law schools are staffed with 1, 2 or 3 professionals. The time expended to obtain placement information under the current system is extensive. Many of the law graduates in the nation do not obtain employment until after bar results are released. To obtain placement information from this large segment of graduates can be difficult. Furthermore, many of these graduates feel that the information is private and choose not to share it. These requests for information can create acrimonious relationships between the school and the alumni. In addition, the time expended to obtain this information reduces the time available to CSO professionals that could be better spent assisting graduates in their job searches.

One issue raised is that the placement information may not be uniformly reported. Our school welcomes a method created to ensure uniform reporting so that the information will be more useful to the end users. Again, I would encourage the ABA to consider the added burden on Career Services Offices necessary to comply with any new requirements.

Thank you for this opportunity to participate in this process. Please let me know if you have any questions. I am the Chair of the NALP Small and Solo Career Services Office Section. While the recommendations in this email are not representations of this NALP section, I feel strongly that I provide you with some feedback from at least one small CSO.