

NALP/STREET LAW PIPELINE PROGRAM MARKS FIRST YEAR

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The five NALP member law firms participating in the 2008-09 pilot year of the NALP/Street Law Legal Diversity Pipeline Program have just completed their teaching for the year, and as the final programs drew to a close in late May, in each case the excitement among both students and lawyers was palpable.

When asked to identify the most important things they had learned as a result of participating in the program, student responses varied from quite thoughtful to unmitigated enthusiasm. A young man in the program reflected that he had learned two things: "There are unlimited possibilities for me in the future, and it is important to have evidence to support your arguments." A young woman in the same class responded enthusiastically and simply that "Law is AWESOME!"

The program's purpose is to increase diversity in the legal profession by encouraging young people from diverse communities to pursue legal careers. This is accomplished by bringing law firm lawyers into the high school classroom to teach about the law and about legal careers, and then bringing the high school students to the law firm to engage

in legal activities and to be introduced to the many professional roles that people hold in law firms. Students are involved in hands-on interactive legal simulations and problem solving. Throughout the program, the lawyers teach lessons in several substantive areas of law and also act as professional role models. The students get to see first-hand what lawyers do, and also begin to develop an appreciation for how the law impacts ordinary people in their daily lives.

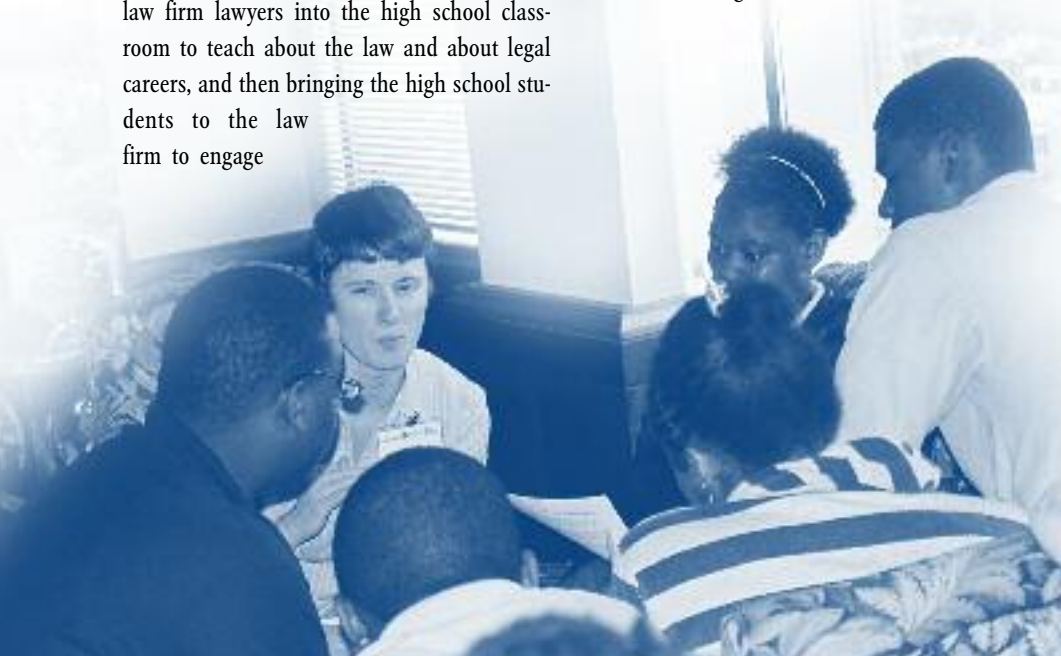
During this pilot year, five law firms (see sidebar) partnered with 200 students at six schools in five different cities around the country to teach about law and legal careers. More than 90 volunteer lawyers, paralegals, recruiting staff, and support staff from the law firms took part in the programs, and more than 20 law students assisted them. Volunteers from the five pilot law firms made 19 visits to students' classrooms and covered a variety of topics, ranging from First Amendment law and contracts to immigration law and real estate.

The high school students also had a chance to meet and interact with current law students, as each law firm partnered with a local law school and involved the law students in both the conference and, in some cases, in the high school classroom lessons as well.

The law firm visits all featured activities that simulated things legal professionals do in their jobs. For example, some students negotiated contracts between a company and a spokesperson, while others investigated a claim of sexual harassment and decided what steps to take regarding the accusations. Some students created new school policies, a few tried a copyright case, and some made arguments in an asylum

PILOT YEAR PARTICIPATING LAW FIRMS

- Holland & Knight LLP, Washington DC — with The George Washington University Law School
- Hunton & Williams LLP, Richmond, VA — with William and Mary Law School
- Kirkland & Ellis LLP, San Francisco, CA — with Stanford Law School
- Troutman Sanders LLP, Atlanta, GA
- Wachtell, Lipton, Rosen & Katz, New York, NY — with New York University School of Law



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hearing. Each workshop involved students in legal simulations that taught both substance and skills and that engaged the students in critical thinking. (See the sidebar describing one of the mock negotiation problems.)

Each workshop at the law firm also included time for a dedicated career pathways activity, where students could explore a variety of careers in the legal profession. Several sites chose to conduct a Business Card Exchange as their career activity – where students and the legal professionals mingle and students must approach the volunteers, introduce themselves, learn a bit about them, and collect their business card. The students who managed to collect the most cards were given a prize, and all of the students were encouraged to establish e-mail contact with the volunteers whose cards they had collected.

In feedback collected from participating students, teachers, and volunteers, all reported that the program was enjoyable, enriching, and worthwhile. One student said, “When my ... teacher told us that we were going to be visiting a law firm, I was kind of expecting a boring field trip and a lot of lectures involved. But when we got to the law firm and went to the workshops, you all had hands-on activities for us to participate in. They were all very fun and educational.”

This sentiment was echoed at each program – students were surprised by how much fun they had, the high school teachers were pleased with the educational quality of the workshops, and the volunteers were impressed with the students’ abilities and the vigor with which they threw themselves into complex legal problems.

One student reflected on the importance of choosing a career path that he will enjoy. “Being able to have fun while working is something a lot of people don’t get or don’t have the chance of even experiencing, so I truly think that because of how much I enjoyed questioning the witness and creating contracts to maximize profit, law will be another major I will be considering.”

In general, the students’ comments stressed the value of exciting and interactive workshops. Many also noted that they enjoyed the time to interact with the legal professionals, ask about their jobs, and learn about their career pathways. Several called the experience “inspirational.” Others talked about their hope to one day have a similar career or “work in a building like this one.”

The students listed a variety of things as the “most important thing they learned” at the conference – ranging from legal content about immigration or their Fourth Amendment rights to negotiation skills to information about ways to pursue a career in the legal profession. Several pointed out that they learned good tips for networking.

During the summer, the pilot year law firms will be planning follow-up activities for this group of students before they get ready to take on a new classroom during the next academic year. Many volunteers are maintaining e-mail contact to support their partner students’ interests and career plans, and a couple of firms are planning to host field trips with the high school students to visit a local law school as a way to expose students to another step in the pathway to the legal profession. The NALP/

MOCK NEGOTIATION PROBLEM USED BY STUDENTS AT THE HOLLAND & KNIGHT CONFERENCE IN DC

Students on Team Zero and Team DC were charged with negotiating an agreement on the following facts: *Due to the economic downturn, the District of Columbia has been forced to close, and now plans to sell, the Hine Junior High School to help make up for budgetary shortfalls. Washington, DC, superhero-in-residence (and overall nice guy) Gilbert Arenas, through his real estate organization, Agent Zero Real Estate, LLC, has agreed to enter into negotiations with the city for the purchase of the Hine Junior High School. Mr. Arenas in a press release to the Washington Post stated that he intends to convert the former school to a place where the community can come together and kids of all ages are welcome.*

Each team had access to secret information about the underlying issues that the other team was not party to — facts that made it clear each side had very different goals in this negotiation. Working in teams of three on each side, the students were asked to reach an agreement on each of five points: price, use, naming rights, signage, and conditions to closing. All of the teams save one were able to reach an agreement — agreements that varied widely on the substantive issues — and the students that failed to reach an agreement learned perhaps the most valuable lesson of all, that not every negotiation ends in agreement, and that sometimes to protect the best interests of your client, it is necessary to walk away from the table at least once.

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Street Law Legal Diversity Pipeline Program has space for ten firms during its second year – 2009-10. Five of those spots are reserved for the returning pilot year firms, and five are open to new law firm participants. As we bring this program to scale, we hope to one day be engaging more than 200 legal professionals in reaching more than 1,000 students per year.

Street Law and NALP provide complete training and support for all participants, connections to local classrooms, a program guide, and extensive web resources, including ready-to-use lesson plans and event activities. Dedicated staff at Street Law and NALP provide hands on support to all participating volunteers throughout the program.

Does this exciting program sound like something you would like to take part in? You can find a copy of the 2009-10 Program Prospectus on the NALP website at <http://www.nalp.org/streetlaw>. For more information, or to inquire about how to participate in the program, please contact NALP's executive director at jleipold@nalp.org. ■