

December 14, 2011

To the Dean:

We are writing on behalf of Law School Transparency to ask that your law school provide employment information about the class of 2010. Our objective is straightforward. We aim to help prospective law students find the law schools that best meet their career objectives by providing access to timely, thorough, and comparable employment information. Fortunately, your law school is ready and able to provide this information because of the school's NALP membership and participation in the annual NALP survey.

Law schools are facing enormous public criticism for a perceived lack of honesty and disclosure, particularly regarding the employment outcomes of their graduates. The ABA Section of Legal Education and Admissions to the Bar has taken important first steps towards reducing the provision of misleading information by law schools. However, these steps have failed to include critical information about the class of 2010, including the rate of graduates employed in legal jobs and the rate of graduates employed in full-time jobs. The section underestimated how prospective law students, pundits, and elected officials would react, despite mounting evidence of widespread consumer-disoriented behavior at law schools and within the section.

What are we asking you to do?

Information that can help prospective law students understand job outcomes for the class of 2010 are contained in the individualized school report your school received from NALP around June 2011. As you know, schools utilize this report—often combining it with NALP's national report, which is already public—to identify placement strengths and improve the services provided to current and future students. We are asking that you provide Law School Transparency with your school-specific NALP report for the class of 2010. We will make your NALP report freely available, enabling your applicants access to the same, critically important information your school receives each year.

To ensure that we can make the information accessible as soon as possible, we ask that you please submit the NALP report by **January 13, 2012**. If your office cannot locate or did not receive the report, we can contact NALP and request that it resubmit the report to your career services office.

Compliance with our request requires no additional work for your staff beyond emailing the report to LawSchoolTransparency@gmail.com. However, to limit privacy concerns, we have two additional yet simple requests. First, we ask that your staff redact all gender, ethnicity, and disability information. Second, we ask that your staff redact salary figures when fewer than five graduates reported a salary for a particular category. (For example, if four graduates reported a salary for the J.D. Preferred category, redact the salary figures, but not the number four.) If your staff is unable to make these redactions, Law School Transparency's staff will redact the reports before publishing the report. If compliance with our request implicates any other sensitive information we are happy to discuss your concerns at your convenience.

What will we do if you do not comply with our request?

Should any school decline to provide us with its NALP report, we will follow up with a school representative and/or work with other parties to obtain your NALP report. This may include submitting open records requests to public law schools, providing assistance to accepted students, and notifying members of the legal media about your decision to decline participation. We will also inform other members of the public, including elected representatives who have advised us of their interest in law school transparency.

How will we use the NALP reports?

We will publish each school's NALP report on our website, www.lawschooltransparency.com. In the event that we do not have a report from your school, we will post notice that your school declined to comply with our request. Our goal is to make comparable information freely available to those considering applying to and attending your law school.

Our website is already regarded as a credible source of employment information for prospective law students. Our Data Clearinghouse repackages the employment and salary information that schools submit to *U.S. News* in order to more clearly explain what the information does (and does not) mean. The NALP reports will allow us to expand this free service and permit further in-depth analysis for site visitors.

What won't we use the NALP reports for?

Law School Transparency will not rank any individual law school based on the data contained in the NALP reports. Except for the redacted portions, we will present all data to the public in a manner consistent with our mission of informing the public about employment outcomes. As a result, some users may create so-called derivative tools, including rankings, to make comparisons based on the data disclosed in the reports. To the extent we can monitor the development of such tools and ensure they do not mislead prospective students, we will do so. We will also continue our policy of not making definitive statements about whether one program is better than another program. The decision to attend law school is fact-sensitive and must be based on each individual's career and educational objectives. We believe it is important to recognize that every law school is different.

What if your school already provides high quality employment information?

Some schools already recognize that schools have a heightened duty to inform prospective law students, understanding that the ABA standards only provide a reporting floor. These schools have surpassed the bare minimum in a timely fashion. Despite this, prospective law students still want and need comparable employment information before they can make an informed decision, and they need it now. Allowing prospective students to make direct comparisons requires that individual schools willingly share information in a standardized fashion. As the Section of Legal Education continues to hone its requirements, the NALP reports can function as a useful stopgap. These reports are thorough and content-rich, especially compared to each school individually selecting whatever information it feels best conveys its placement strengths.

Some schools may wish to withhold their NALP reports in favor of waiting for the Section of Legal Education to get it right. But punting your heightened disclosure duty to the section will leave this year's crop of prospective law students in the dark about the state of entry-level hiring. While the recent changes to the annual questionnaire will prove to be a good start once the new ABA-LSAC Official Guide is up and running, the class of 2010 information, however incomplete, will not be publicly available until July 2012. This means the section will not ensure adequate public disclosure to applicants this year. Virtually all of the law students you accept this application cycle will have decided whether to invest substantial time, money, and energy into your program before that time.

While some law schools may see it as a useful strategy to delay the release of the class of 2010 information beyond a point when the class of 2014 can use it, we believe this is ill-advised. Applicants are increasingly aware of the ways schools have withheld important information in the past, and they are unlikely to prefer schools that continue that behavior in the future. We hope your school values this initiative and will join others in closing this obvious and inexcusable information gap.

Please do not hesitate to contact a member of our staff if you have any questions.

Best,

Kyle P. McEntee, Esq.
Executive Director, Co-Founder

Patrick J. Lynch, Esq.
Policy Director, Co-Founder

Derek M. Tokaz, Esq.
Assistant Research Director

Law School Transparency is a Tennessee non-profit dedicated to encouraging and facilitating the transparent flow of law school consumer information. LST and its administrators operate independently of any law schools, for-profit publications, or governmental bodies related to the legal market. This email was sent to the dean's office for every ABA approved and provisionally-approved law school. If you received this letter in error, please let us know to whom we should direct our request.