The NALP Foundation and NALP Release Joint Study of U.S. Law School Alumni Employment and Satisfaction for the Class of 2019

Boston, Massachusetts and Washington, DC – July 19, 2023 – The NALP Foundation and NALP today released their tenth joint study, *Law School Alumni Employment and Satisfaction*, for the Class of 2019. This annual study examines recent graduates’ employment status, compensation, and mobility, as well as satisfaction dimensions indicating how well alumni felt their legal education prepared them for practice.

This year’s study also included new queries in two specific areas. Responding to the ABA’s new mandate on professional identity formation, the study probed alumni on the efficacy of their law school preparation in professional identity formation, and the ongoing resources they turn to for this, providing important benchmarking. This year’s study also queried recruitment timing for post-graduate positions, as well as the reasons graduates changed jobs.

The new data provides unique insights into the careers of graduates three years after graduation, including:

**Professional Identity Formation**: Alumni rated their law school’s efficacy in training them on specific components of professional identity, with the highest ratings given to their preparation in “lawyer’s obligations to clients and society” and “providing pro bono/community service,” but the lowest in preparation for “well-being practices.”

**Mental Health and Well-Being**: An all-time high percentage of alumni reported the pandemic continues to negatively affect their mental health and well-being (39%), with female alumni reporting this at an even higher rate (44%).

**Mobility**: While a historically low number of employed alumni (13%) reported they were actively seeking a new job, alumni of color reported seeking new positions at higher rates than their White/Caucasian peers (16% vs. 11%), and overall mobility remains high, with over two thirds of alumni reporting they have already held two or more positions since graduating.

**Reasons for Job Changes**: The leading drivers for job movement for alumni who have held more than one position were “better compensation/bonuses” (62%) and “attitude ‘fit’ concerns” (42%). Males and alumni of color identified “no clear
advancement path/prospects” as their motive for changing jobs at higher rates than their female and majority peers.

**Post-Graduate Position Recruitment Timing:** Despite law schools’ and firms’ reliance on OCI recruitment, practicing alumni obtained their first post-graduate job through various channels: 13% reported this took place their 1L year, with the remaining respondents – roughly a third each – stating this occurred during their 2L year (24%), 3L year (31%) or after graduation (32%).

“The study results provide critical information on the early stage careers of attorneys in this shifting market and the efficacy of law school in preparing them for the realities of practice, as well as troublingly persistent data on the differentiated experiences of graduates of color and women,” noted NALP Foundation President & CEO, Fiona Trevelyan Hornblower.

“The data suggests that inclusion, equity, and belonging in the workplace continues to be a particular challenge for graduates of color, who seek new employment at higher rates than their majority peers and for reasons such as attitude or ‘fit’ concerns and lack of advancement prospects, training, mentoring, and role models,” stated NALP Executive Director Nikia Gray. “Employers seeking to improve their retention of diverse lawyers would benefit from taking a close look at the study results and considering changes they can make in their own organizations to address these issues.”

This year’s study reflects data collected from 1,927 Class of 2019 alumni from 42 U.S. law schools. Data collection took place between November 2022 and January 2023. All ABA-accredited law schools were invited to participate. The NALP Foundation and NALP received a generous grant from the AccessLex Institute® to support the participation of HBCU law schools and additional law schools with significant levels of students and alumni from groups underrepresented in the legal profession.

In addition to the topics noted above, the report also contains detailed information, segmented by gender identity, race/ethnicity, and law school rank, on:

- Employment Status
- Compensation
- Career Trajectory
- Efficacy of Law School Preparation
- Experiential Education
- Key Skills for Practice
- Post-Graduate Law School Engagement

The full PDF report for U.S. law schools is available for purchase from the NALP Foundation at [www.nalpfoundation.org/bookstore](http://www.nalpfoundation.org/bookstore). The comparable report for Canadian law school alumni will be released shortly.
About the NALP Foundation
The NALP Foundation is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization; our mission is to improve the quality and delivery of legal services by advancing excellence in strategic and practical organizational leadership, effective management of legal personnel, professional development of lawyers, access to and diversity within the profession and ethical practices and professionalism. For over 25 years, The NALP Foundation has conducted unique benchmark research, and delivered exceptional educational programming and publications based on this research. To learn more about The NALP Foundation, visit www.nalpfoundation.org.

About NALP
NALP is an association of over 3,000 legal career professionals who advise law students, lawyers, law offices, and law schools in North America and beyond. What brings NALP members together is a common belief in three fundamental things. First, all law students and lawyers should benefit from a fair and ethical hiring process. Second, law students and lawyers are more successful when supported by professional development and legal career professionals. Third, a diverse and inclusive legal profession best serves clients and our communities. That’s why NALP members work together every day to collect and publish accurate legal employment data and information, and champion education and standards for recruiting, professional and career development, and diversity and inclusion. For more than 50 years, NALP has played an essential role in the success of our members and the lawyers and law students they serve. To learn more about NALP, visit www.nalp.org.

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