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Law school career service professionals nationally and regionally regularly meet and speak with one another to share information and best practices and to discuss trends they are experiencing in legal education curriculum and programming, and in their student counseling roles.

Regardless of whether the law school is public or private, large or small, we are all seeing law students suffering from increased levels of stress and depression.

In 2016, a report was published entitled *“Suffering in Silence: The Survey of Law Student Well-Being and the Reluctance of Law Students to Seek Help for Substance Use and Mental Health Concerns,”* 66 J. LEGAL EDUC. 116 (2016).

It noted that, nationally, law students are reporting high rates of depression and/or anxiety, and drinking excessively.

I strongly recommend the book *“iGen: Why Today’s Super-Connected Kids are Growing Up Less Rebellious, More Tolerant, Less Happy- and Completely Unprepared for Adulthood”* by Jean Twenge, Ph.D.

She analyzed several longitudinal studies of Americans born between 1995 and 2012, a generation of Americans who grew up with the iPhone, Facebook, etc.

Since approximately 2015, the majority of law school students have been members of this “iGen”.

Drawing from four large, nationally representative surveys of 11 million Americans, Dr. Twenge concluded that members of iGen “are at the forefront of the worst mental health crisis in decades”. *Id.* at 3.

Dr. Twenge noted that this generation has largely elected to postpone, by approximately 4 years, key developmental events associated with adulthood, such as obtaining a driver’s license, socializing with their peers without a parent being present, dating, drinking alcohol, obtaining their first paying job, etc.

She also noted that iGen spends approximately 7 hours per week less in the company of their peers than prior generations, and are spending more time, alone, in their rooms.

The book suggests that these, and other factors, may have rendered iGen less resilient and more subject to anxiety.

Let's consider the above within the context of the challenges currently faced by law students nationally:

- Average law school debt is \$122,000
- 40% of law school graduates do not have a job waiting for them at graduation
- Law school graduates generally have to start repaying their student loans 6 months after graduation, or 3 months after sitting for the bar exam.

Therefore, huge pressures exist around the search for post-graduate employment.

Data from NALP: National Association for Law Placement

NALP is an association of over 2,500 legal career professionals who advise law students, lawyers, law offices, and law schools in North America and beyond.

Every year, law schools report their individual graduates' employment outcomes to NALP and to the ABA.

When reporting each graduate's employment information to NALP, law schools provide additional information including:

- When the graduate received their job offer (before or after graduation)
- If the graduate received their job offer after graduation, schools must report whether the graduate received the offer before or after obtaining their bar exam results
- How did the graduate obtain their first post graduate job? Via on campus interviews, networking, a referral, being hired by their law school employer, etc.

Below is data taken from the 150+ page book entitled "*NALP: Jobs & JDs: Employment and Salaries of New Graduates, Class of 2018*".

- 89% of the Class of 2018 were employed as of the ABA reporting deadline
- Fully 40% of all employed law school graduates from the Class of 2018 received their job offer after graduation.
- That means that approximately 40% of the Class of 2018 did not have a job waiting for them at graduation.

Why is there such a significant percentage of graduates who don't yet have a job at graduation?

Because of the hiring timeline of most employers.

Most employers don't have the luxury of extending job offers in advance of graduation, or before knowing if the applicant has passed the bar.

NALP also collects and analyzes data on the timing of job offers by *job type*.

The greatest percentage of all jobs for the Class of 2018 – 54.8% - were in private law firms.

Among those law firm jobs, the greatest percentage– 24% - were with law firms of 1 – 25 lawyers.

Among graduates who joined private law firms of up to 25 lawyers, half of those graduates received their job offers AFTER graduation.

TYPE OF JOB/EMPLOYER: Class of 2018	JOB OFFERS RECEIVED <u>BEFORE</u> GRADUATION: Class of 2018	JOB OFFERS RECEIVED <u>AFTER</u> GRADUATION: Class of 2018
ALL JOBS	62.9%	37.1%
Jobs with law firms	68%	32%
Jobs with law firms of 1 – 10 lawyers	45.7%	55.4%
Jobs with law firms of 11 – 25 lawyers	49.5%	50.5%
Jobs with law firms of 51-100 lawyers	70%	30%
Jobs in Government	50%	49%
Jobs in Public Interest	51.9%	48.1%

NALP also collects and analyzes data on *how* each of the employed members of the Class of 2018 obtained their job.

Law school graduates' first jobs are most frequently obtained as the result of:

1. Self-initiated contacts (email/telephone call) and referrals 35.3%
2. Career Services Office Job Listing / Other online Job Boards 21.7%

For the past several years, most law school graduates obtained their first post-graduate job by means other than fall on-campus recruiting (OCI).

Only in large law firms are the majority of jobs obtained through the Fall session of on-campus recruiting.

Class of 2018: 18.7% = Fall OCI, still well below the 24% figure in 2008

So, what does this mean for Bar Associations?

Because so many law school graduates find their first job after graduation, and because the greatest percentage of graduates obtain that first job as a result of networking/ referral/job posting:

There is a tremendous opportunity for Bar Associations to be a huge value add to law students and recent graduates, because networking and referrals are a central function of Bar Associations.

Suggestions for Bar Associations

1. Collaborate with law schools on networking opportunities for students
2. Create law student liaisons to your committees and sections
3. Engage heavily with the career services offices of your local law schools
4. Encourage participation by faculty and law school staff in bar association activities and governance.
5. Executive Directors and qualified bar association staff can provide career counseling assistance and facilitate introductions between law students/recent graduates and practicing attorneys
6. Make sure that your third-year law students' membership doesn't end when they graduate. Their membership should extend up until they receive news of their bar passage in October. The August through October time period after graduates sit for the bar exam is critical to their finding a job and networking. Bar associations can provide substantial assistance during this time period.

Law school students need and deserve the support of their local bar associations,

And local bar associations need more young members.

There are great opportunities here for bar associations to provide truly meaningful assistance.