2026 NALP Professional Development Institute

Celebrating 25 Years of Learning, Leadership, and Community

Join colleagues from across the legal profession for the **25th Anniversary NALP Professional Development Institute (PDI)**, taking place December 2-4, 2026, at The Conrad Hotel in Washington, DC.

For a quarter century, PDI has brought together the professionals who shape the development and success of lawyers and law students. As the legal profession continues to evolve, this milestone year offers a unique opportunity to reflect on how far we've come while exploring the trends, innovations, and leadership strategies that will define the future.

As NALP's premier educational event for lawyer and law student PD professionals, PDI delivers two engaging days of thought leadership, practical solutions, and meaningful connections. Join peers and industry experts as we tackle the most pressing challenges facing legal talent today, from evolving career expectations and leadership development to emerging technologies, workplace culture, and the future of professional growth.

At PDI, you will:

- **Gain fresh perspectives** on the trends and challenges shaping the future of the legal profession.
- **Discover proven strategies** to strengthen lawyer and law student development and advance organizational success.
- **Explore innovative approaches** to talent development, leadership, career growth, and professional learning.
- **Connect and collaborate** with colleagues and thought leaders from law firms, law schools, legal organizations, and government agencies.
- **Celebrate 25 years of PDI** while helping shape the next chapter of professional development in the legal industry.

Whether you are an experienced PD leader or new to the field, PDI provides the knowledge, inspiration, and network you need to enhance your impact and lead with confidence.

New This Year: Wellness Power Hours Prioritizing You

Amid the learning, networking, and idea-sharing, take time to recharge and invest in your own well-being. Wellness Power Hours offer attendees the opportunity to explore health and wellness topics outside the traditional conference blocks, with sessions focused on areas such as nutrition, performance, and menopause. Designed as a form of professional development for the whole person, these sessions provide actionable insights to help you sustain your health, energy, and success both inside and outside the workplace.

New This Year: Coaching Community Roundtables

Join fellow professionals who coach law students and lawyers for a dedicated roundtable discussion focused on connection, collaboration, and shared learning. This informal session provides a unique opportunity to exchange ideas, discuss common challenges and successes, and explore emerging trends in coaching within the legal profession.

PD Management Foundations Course

December 2, 2026 | 1:30-5:30 p.m. ET

Begin your conference experience with the highly acclaimed **PD Management Foundations Course**, offered as a pre-conference workshop on December 2.

Designed for professionals who are new to lawyer professional development or transitioning into a professional development leadership role, this interactive program provides practical guidance, foundational knowledge, and real-world insights from experienced PD professionals.

Participants will:

- Develop a strong understanding of the fundamentals of lawyer professional development.
- Build confidence in managing key responsibilities and navigating the profession.
- Learn practical strategies and best practices that can be implemented immediately.

If you're looking to establish a strong foundation for success in lawyer professional development, this workshop is an invaluable opportunity to learn, connect, and grow.

Continuing Legal Education (CLE) Credit

Most Professional Development Institute sessions are expected to be eligible for accreditation in Mandatory Continuing Legal Education (MCLE) jurisdictions for varying amounts of CLE credit. PDI is anticipated to qualify for CLE credit in jurisdictions that accredit live programs focused on law practice management.

Don't miss this opportunity to expand your expertise, strengthen your professional network, and help shape the future of lawyer and law student development at the **2026 NALP Professional Development Institute**.

Registration Information

Registration for PDI is **$989** for NALP, ALI CLE, and PDC members
Non-member rate is **$1119**
Public Interest/Government rate is **$709**

Registration for the Pre-Conference Workshop:
PD Management Foundations Workshop on December 2 is $179 per person for attendees of PDI or $279 per person for attendees of the pre-conference workshop only.

Cancellation Policy

Full refund for cancellation received by November 6, 2026, with a $100 cancellation fee.
No refunds after November 6, 2026.
For more information and to register, go to www.nalp.org/events

Hotel Reservation Procedure

The Conrad Hotel
950 New York Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20001

Attendees will make hotel reservations during the registration process. Rooms will not be reserved without a credit card. You must book the hotel through the online system. The hotel will not accept reservations by phone.

- Register early. The room block tends to fill up quickly and once the block is full (or after the cutoff date of October 30, 2026 whichever comes first), rooms are subject to availability.
- The room rate at The Conrad is $339 (plus applicable tax) per night based on single or double occupancy.

Meeting Policies:

Open Meetings: NALP is committed to the free exchange of information and open meetings at its conferences, and we recognize that there may be differences of opinion during sessions. We rely on our attendees to respect each other and our invited guests and speakers, and to honor the conventions of civil discourse. Disrespect for any attendee, including non-members, program speakers, vendors, and members of the press, will not be tolerated and a violation of this policy may result in, but is not limited to, termination of an individual's right to attend the conference. NALP opens registration to non-members, including program speakers, vendors, and members of the press.

Awareness of Antitrust and Competition Laws: As members of a professional trade association, NALP members should always bring a heightened awareness of antitrust and anticompetitive risks and behaviors to professional gatherings. NALP's law school members compete with one another and NALP's employer members compete with one another. Accordingly, NALP's members should avoid entering into any sort of agreement or understanding with competitors related to any aspect of competition, including the sharing of competitively sensitive information with competitors. However, it is appropriate for NALP members to discuss information that is not competitively sensitive, such as industry trends, best practices, or general opportunities and challenges that arise in the legal careers profession and to participate in NALP's benchmarking studies.

No Solicitations: This conference is specially designed to be an open forum for NALP conference attendees. Solicitation is strictly prohibited unless you are an official conference sponsor or vendor. If you are interested in becoming a conference sponsor or vendor, please contact Jay Richards, Senior Director of Operations, Member Services, and Meetings, at jrichards@nalp.org or 202-835-1001.

Consent to Use of Photographic, Video, and/or Audio Materials: Registration and attendance at, or participation in, NALP meetings and other activities constitutes an agreement by the registrant to allow NALP to use and distribute (both now and in the future) the registrant or attendee's image or voice in photographs, video recordings, electronic and print reproductions, and audio recordings of such events and activities.

SCHEDULE

Wednesday, December 2

Pre-Conference Workshop 1:30 – 5:30 pm ET

Management Foundations for Law Firm PD Professionals

This hands-on workshop gives newer PD professionals the fundamental skills and knowledge they need to get off to a great start and grow into their PD roles. Participants in this pre-conference workshop get valuable insights into the responsibilities of PD professionals, as well as helpful forms, templates, and resource lists. Topics covered include associate orientation and integration, training, MCLE compliance, core competencies, benchmarks, evaluations, and mentoring programs. Participants also have the opportunity to discuss current projects, successes, and challenges.

Shannon R. Burke, Director of Talent Development and Inclusion, Chapman and Cutler LLP
Andy Hales, Vice President of Professional Development and Training, Venable LLP

Whether you are newer to the PD field, assuming new PD responsibilities, or have a staff member in your office who could benefit from training, this optional workshop offers a wonderful opportunity to learn and build a network within the field.

This program requires advanced registration and a separate registration fee.

New This Year: Wellness Power Hour

5:00-6:00 PM ET

Pushing 'Pause': Perimenopause, Menopause, & Manopause – Hot Topics and Flashes of Insight

Let's get educated! Perimenopause, menopause, and man-o-pause are life stages that we, our loved ones, or our constituents go through. As these life stages gain prominence in the public zeitgeist, we should make sure that we are educated about the symptoms and potential impacts these changes can have on our work or in our personal spheres so that we can support ourselves, our colleagues, and our lawyers. Come learn about common symptoms, myths, and impacts, and leave with concrete and actionable information and best practices to support yourselves and your stakeholders.

Miriam Benor, Director of Attorney Coaching, Pillsbury Winthrop Shaw Pittman LLP
Jennifer Gibert Mencarini, Director of Cultural Engagement, Fox Rothschild LLP

Welcome Reception

5:30-6:30 PM ET

Start your PDI experience by reconnecting with friends, meeting new colleagues, and celebrating 25 years of learning, leadership, and community. Join us for an evening of networking as we commemorate this special milestone and look ahead to the future of professional development.

Thursday, December 3

Registration and Breakfast
8:00 am – 9:30 am

New This Year: Wellness Power Hour

8:15-9:15 AM ET

Optimizing Energy, Productivity, and Performance in Legal Practice
Legal career professionals are expected to sustain high levels of focus, productivity, and performance in demanding environments, yet traditional approaches to time management often fail to address the underlying drivers of cognitive output. This session reframes productivity through the lens of physiology, exploring how energy, stress, sleep, and daily habits directly impact performance. Grounded in science and real-world application, attendees will learn practical strategies to help themselves and their lawyers and law students improve focus, reduce burnout, and sustain high performance over time. This session builds on Dr. Megan Lyons' highly rated NALP webinar on cognitive resilience and offers actionable tools that can be integrated into professional development programming.

Megan Lyons, Doctor of Clinical Nutrition and Functional Medicine Practitioner, The Lyons' Share Wellness LLC

9:30 am – 10:30 am
Opening Plenary

Triumph Through Challenges: Cultivating Resilience in Life and Work
Drawing on his legal career and personal experiences, Brad Kaufman shares practical strategies for building resilience in a high-pressure profession and an increasingly stressful and negative world. He explains how lawyers can adapt to adversity, manage stress, and maintain perspective by shifting mindset, strengthening connections, and focusing on life's positive aspects. Through stories from his career and his battle with cancer, Brad offers an authentic and inspiring

perspective on overcoming challenges. This program equips attendees with tools to enhance well-being, build stronger relationships, and bring greater intention, positivity, and resilience to both their professional and personal lives.

Bradford Kaufman, Senior Chairman, Greenberg Traurig

Concurrent Sessions 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM ET

LOL for ROI: The Science Behind Humor in Training
Laughter might not be in your learning objectives, but it should be in your strategy. In this research-backed session, we will unpack why humor is a powerful and underused tool in legal training. We'll explore the science behind what makes humor effective, how it boosts psychological safety and retention, and why "funny" doesn't mean "fluffy." Think of it as broccoli in a dinosaur nugget costume: the science is serious, but the delivery keeps learners engaged. Whether you're designing curriculum, facilitating programs, or choosing outside speakers, you'll walk away with fresh insights and practical tactics to make learning stick (and spark a few smiles in the process).

Rachael Bosch, CEO & Founder, Fringe Professional Development
Katie Aldrich, Chief Strategy Officer, Fringe Professional Development
Deepa Selvam, Senior Director of Professional Development, Morgan Lewis

Managing Across: Helping Associates Navigate Peer Dynamics and Work Friend Challenges
Associates are increasingly expected to "manage across"—collaborating, influencing, and sometimes delegating to peers—well before they have formal authority or management training. At the same time, peer relationships in law firms are often emotionally complex: today's collaborators are tomorrow's competitors, and "work friends" can quickly become sources of tension, resentment, or avoidance. This session will explore how PD professionals can better support associates as they navigate peer dynamics, particularly when those peers are friends. Drawing on Gallup research underscoring the importance of having close relationships at work—including the well known finding that having a "best friend at work" is strongly correlated with engagement and retention—the program will examine why peer relationships matter deeply, and why they can also be so fraught in law firm environments. Through realistic scenarios and coaching frameworks, participants will learn how to help associates manage common peer challenges such as uneven contribution on assignments, jealousy and competition, perceptions of favoritism or unfairness, and the discomfort of holding friends accountable or delegating work to them. The session will emphasize practical, repeatable tools PD professionals can use in coaching conversations to help associates preserve relationships while still meeting performance and professionalism expectations.

Mary Maher, Career Development Advisor, Winston Taylor
Laura Hulce, Senior Director, Career Strategy, Jenner & Block
Alison Blackburn, Director, Career Strategy, Jenner & Block
Elise Powers, CEO/Founder, Eleview Consulting

More Than Mock: Interview Coaching That Works
Mock interviews help students refine answers to standard questions. Coached interviews build core interview skills by teaching students to create persuasive answers to any question so they feel prepared to make their case for any job. Using the same persuasive framework they learn in legal

research and writing, they identify relevant skills, give specific examples of how they built those skills, and present the skill's relevance to the job, no matter the question. Learn how we teach students these skills in large lectures, small groups, and one-on-one sessions so you can see how to implement this approach with your students.

Leslie Hauser, Director, Private Sector Programs, UC Berkeley Law, Career Development Office
Mindy Finnigan, Director of Professional Development, The University of Texas School of Law

Next Level Leadership: Feedback for Partners
Throughout a lawyer's career, feedback drives development. However, as lawyers become partners, they receive less and less feedback. Feedback helps partners become more effective leaders, develop team members, deliver excellent work, and foster client relationships. Through programs like upward reviews, peer reviews, and 360 tools, you can ensure partners continue to level up. This expert panel will discuss why partners need feedback, how to earn buy-in, and how to design a safe and useful process. Most importantly, we'll give concrete suggestions on creating a feedback culture, including how to share themes, drive change, and build credibility so participation grows.

Juliet Aiken, Organizational Psychologist in Residence, Volta Talent Strategies
Arna Zohlman, Director of Legal Personnel & Development, Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld LLP
Devin Lintzenich, Chief Attorney Talent Officer, Bass, Berry & Sims
Bronagh Hollywood, Director of Legal Personnel and Development, WilmerHale

Small Groups, Big Impact: Creating Cohort Programs that Stick
Cohort programs for lawyers are one of the highest-leverage PD investments a firm can make: small enough to build trust, structured enough to surface patterns, and flexible enough to weather disruption. This session walks through how WilmerHale piloted a year-long cohort for its first-year associates, designed and delivered in partnership with Optia Consulting. We will share what we learned from scoping the pilot, selecting topics, recruiting and training internal facilitators, gathering participant input, and handling disruptions that inevitably arose along the way. You will leave with inspiration and a working draft of your own program's first six sessions.

Jessie Spressart, Managing Director, Optia Consulting
Becky Gentry, Director, Professional Development & Training, WilmerHale

Train the Champions: Scalable AI Training for Every Practice Group
You can't hire AI trainers for every practice group, so you identify AI enthusiasts in each group—your champions—to carry the torch from firmwide AI trainings to practice-specific evangelism. But those champions, however skilled, aren't trained to teach. They default to demonstrating a nifty prompt, not systematically helping others build AI skills. This session arms PD leaders with a plug-and-play playbook for solving this problem: Mad Libs-style lesson plans that champions adapt to their group in minutes, ready-made exercises and discussion prompts that slot into existing practice group meetings or lunches, and a suggested cadence for keeping AI on the agenda. Champions don't need to become expert trainers. With these tools, PD leaders guide them through filling in the blanks, and the firm gets consistent, scalable AI training across every group.

Benjamin Sachs, Professor, University of Virginia School of Law
Erica Gholson, Director of Learning & Development, Quarles & Brady

Lunch 12:00 – 1:15 PM ET

Concurrent Sessions 1:15 - 2:15 PM ET

Beyond Transition: AI and the Future of Law Firm Succession Planning
Whether supporting individual lawyers preparing for practice transitions or helping firms stabilize succession challenges, preserve institutional knowledge, and strengthen client continuity, succession planning increasingly requires new tools and new approaches. This session will explore evolving strategies for law firm succession planning, with particular focus on how AI can support knowledge transfer, relationship continuity, talent development, workflow visibility, and long-term client retention. Amy Curren, Eva Wisnik and Rob Burger will discuss emerging opportunities, practical considerations, and organizational challenges facing firms as they navigate succession planning in a rapidly changing professional environment.

Eva Wisnik, President & Founder, Wisnik Career Enterprises, Inc.
Amy Curren, Chief Talent Officer, Beveridge & Diamond PC
Robert Burger, Chief Operating Officer, Sterne, Kessler, Goldstein & Fox PLLC

Flip 'Em Like a Pancake: The Neuroscience of Influencing Difficult Personalities
Many of the challenges PD professionals face inside law firms arise not because their ideas, advice, or initiatives are flawed, but because success often depends upon their ability to build trust, navigate resistance, influence difficult personalities, and generate genuine buy-in from others. Throughout our lives and professional training, we are conditioned to believe that persuasion -- whether in the workplace or in our personal relationships -- is primarily about proving our point through facts, evidence, logic, and forceful argumentation. Yet modern neuroscience and psychological research suggest that many of the hard-nosed communication styles glorified within the legal profession (and society at large) actually trigger defensiveness, resistance, ego-protection, and entrenchment -- particularly among strong-willed, skeptical, closed-minded, or assertive personalities. In this engaging and practical session, we will explore the neuroscience of influence, resistance, emotional regulation, and behavioral change, while teaching participants a collection of psychologically sophisticated communication techniques designed to build trust, reduce defensiveness, navigate difficult personalities, and create greater buy-in around ideas, recommendations, behavioral changes, and important initiatives. Participants will leave with practical tools for navigating difficult or strong-willed personalities and influencing others more effectively -- whether they are colleagues, partners, and stakeholders inside their law firms or spouses, children, siblings, friends, and others in their personal lives.

Jarrett Green, Co-Owner, NKB Consultancy, Lecturer, UC Irvine Law School
Rebecca Green, Co-Owner, NKB Consultancy, Lecturer, UC Irvine Law School

Messaging and Presence (Impression Management)

This highly interactive session will focus on two key presentation skills: messaging and presence. The audience will be given an overview of what it means to have "executive presence" and subsequently learn the basics of effective messaging. They will then be given time to create and practice messaging in the form of "Layered Messages." All of this will be contextualized with respect to fully leveraging in-person and virtual platforms to present to individuals or groups as well as touching on networking best practices for introverts and extroverts. Come learn about the behaviors and physicality relevant to being seen as possessing an engaging presence!

Chris DeSantis, Principal, C.P.DeSantis LLC

Modernizing Mentoring: What Actually Works Today
The 2025 PDI opening plenary declared the apprenticeship model dead. So what now? The pace of change, hybrid work and AI-first collaboration have eroded the organic relationship-building that apprenticeship once produced — and structured mentorship is where firms are currently rebuilding that connective tissue. But most mentorship programs were designed for a different era: random pairings, vague expectations, no measurement. This panel of professional development leaders from leading Am Law firms shares what they've changed, what's working, and what the data reveals about what's actually working now — a practitioner's view of how to modernize mentorship.

Adrienne Prentice, Co-Founder & CEO, Keep Company
Tammie Garner, Director, Professional Development, A&O Shearman
Cindy Lindsley, Professional Development Manager, Holland & Knight

The Whole Firm Benefits: Executive Function Tools for Legal Professionals
The legal profession is structurally difficult for the human brain. Open-ended deadlines, constant context-switching, high-stakes decisions under time pressure, and dozens of simultaneous matters challenge executive function in every lawyer, not just neurodivergent ones. The tools coaches and PD professionals use to support neurodivergent lawyers work because they address real cognitive demands, and those demands do not care whether an lawyer has a diagnosis. Drawing on perspectives from external coaching, internal coaching, and legal PD, this panel introduces practical tools across task initiation, working memory, time management, unstructured work, and emotional regulation, and explores how they move from individual coaching conversations into firm-wide development practice.

Julie Remer, CEO/Executive Coach, Amicus Coaching, LLC
Aisha Greene, Chief Attorney Development and Inclusion Officer, Cadwalader, Wickersham & Taft LLP
Carrie Marker, Director of Career Counseling & Planning, Akin
Jessica Natkin, CEO, Total Talent Design

What the Robots Can't Do: Teaching Durable Human Skills
Law schools and employers share a frustration: graduates and junior lawyers can "think like lawyers," but with AI making daily advancements and becoming more prevalent in the industry, early success hinges on the durable human skills that drive client trust, teamwork, judgment, and performance under pressure. These skills are often taught implicitly, inconsistently, or too late. In mixed groups that bridge the law school-professional threshold, this interactive session offers a shared vocabulary, curriculum blueprint, and concrete case studies to show how firms of different

sizes operationalize this learning and receive tools to adapt a framework to their own employment context.

Robyn Schuster, Director of Professional Development, Winston & Strawn (Winston Taylor effective June 1)
Julie Dietrich, Asst. Dean for Career and Professional Development, The Catholic University of America, Columbus School of Law
Anna Hanzelka, Learning & Development Manager - Americas, Hogan Lovells Cadwalader
Rheanna Jacoby, Attorney Development Manager, Snell & Wilmer

Concurrent Sessions 2:45 – 4:00 PM ET

A Prototype AI Judgment Workflow and Adopting It Successfully
This presentation showcases a practical use case for helping law firms define what AI competence should look like across roles, experience levels, and real legal workflows. The presenter uses her existing prototype to achieve this. Rather than treating AI training as a one-size-fits-all tool session, this presentation gives PD professionals a customizable process for building AI competency benchmarks that lawyers can use. Attendees leave with a working roadmap for their firm, a training design structure that maps to those benchmarks, and a rollout strategy that accounts for partner resistance.

Lori Zeoli, Founder and CEO, xpLORIZE AI Advisors, LLC
Linda Anderson, Professor of Law; AI Governance and Legal Decision Systems Consultant, Stetson College of Law | LAnderson Decision Systems

Beyond Billing Mandates: A PD Framework for Lawyer Competency
Law firm PD teams own lawyer development from onboarding through partnership, yet billing competency is rarely part of the curriculum. The result: firms lose 15 to 30 percent of daily billable revenue to forgotten time, confusion cutting, and underbilling, while associates absorb the anxiety of a skill nobody explicitly teaches. This session reframes billing as a developmental competency PD teams can build firmwide, introducing frameworks for narrative quality, contemporaneous timekeeping, and mindset work that replace shame and compliance messaging with skill building. Attendees leave with adaptable tools, sample curricula, and implementation strategies for integrating billing development into existing PD programs.

Molly Kremer, The Billing Coach

Beyond the Lecture: Engaging Associates and Enhancing Efficiency
This session demonstrates a proven, facilitated “speed networking” model that connects new lawyers with business services partners to accelerate productivity, reduce workflow friction, and strengthen cross-functional collaboration. Attendees gain a scalable framework they can immediately adapt to improve onboarding, efficiency, and early-career lawyer performance.

Veronica Blockowicz, Legal Learning Senior Manager, Hogan Lovells Cadwalader
Abby James, Legal Learning Senior Coordinator, Hogan Lovells Cadwalader

Cultural Fluency as a Lawyer Development Skill
Lawyers are expected to communicate clearly, give and receive feedback, supervise others, serve clients, collaborate across teams, and build trust. PD professionals rely on many of these same

skills to coach, influence, design programs, and lead across difference. Yet these skills are shaped by culture, identity, lived experience, communication norms, power, and assumptions about professionalism. This session reframes cultural fluency as a core professional development skill, not a separate or secondary topic. Participants will examine how cultural fluency strengthens feedback, supervision, client service, collaboration, and trust, and how to integrate it into lawyer development and PD leadership practices.

Koriambanya (Kori) Carew, Chief Catalyst Officer, Bridge 68 LLC

How PD Leaders Build Post-Merger Bridges
Professional development leaders are increasingly asked to help firms navigate mergers, lateral growth, and other transformational change while proving business value. Using a case study from a global post-merger law firm, this session shows how PD can align business development, practice leadership, and talent stakeholders around shared norms, practical collaboration habits, and leading indicators. Participants will learn how to diagnose collaboration barriers, embed collaboration into development efforts, and measure progress in ways that strengthen PD credibility with firm leadership. The lessons also apply to firms managing major lateral hiring, practice integration, or other high-stakes change.

Heidi Gardner, CEO, Gardner & Co.; Distinguished Fellow, Harvard Law School, Gardner & Co
Tammie Garner, Professional Development Director, Americas, A&O Shearman

When Partners Behave Badly: Practical Strategies That Work
Associate engagement and development suffer when partners manage badly. Poor delegation, lack of communication, unrealistic deadlines, elevated stress, and insufficient appreciation and feedback can create challenges for teams and leaders alike. PD professionals are often called upon to help "fix" the situation. What can you do? Often these partners make significant contributions to the success of the firm in other ways. This session will address how and when to apply a range of intervention strategies successfully, from feedback, training and coaching to establishing structural processes and strong cultural norms.

Tim Leishman, Principal, Firm Leader Inc.
Chandra Kilgriff, Chief Talent Officer, Saul Ewing LLP
Jennifer Queen, Chief Talent Officer, Bracewell

4:00 – 5:00 pm
NALP Lawyer PD Section Meeting and Discussion
Join the Chairs of the Lawyer PD Section for a discussion of hot topics in lawyer PD.

4:00 – 5:00 pm
NALP Law School Member Roundtable
Join other law school members at a meeting to discuss new ideas and hot topics in law student PD.

Networking Reception
4:30 – 6:00 PM ET

Celebrate the 25th anniversary of PDI at this special networking reception. Enjoy the opportunity to connect with peers from across the legal profession while honoring the relationships and ideas that have made PDI a cornerstone of the professional development community for 25 years.

Friday, December 4

Registration and Breakfast
7:30 – 9:00 AM ET

New this Year: Coaching Community Roundtables
8:00 am – 8:45 am

Connect with fellow professionals who coach law students and lawyers during this dedicated networking and discussion session. Share ideas, exchange experiences, and build relationships with peers while spending valuable time with your coaching cohort. This is a unique opportunity to strengthen your network and learn from others advancing coaching in the legal profession. Get breakfast from the buffets and join other coaches at reserved tables.

9:00 – 10:15 AM ET
Plenary

Stop the Fear, Embrace the Help: Using AI as Your Personal Well-Being Guide
What if AI could function as a personal thought partner, emotional guide, or resilience tool during moments of stress, uncertainty, and overwhelm? Despite the deluge of AI discussions in the legal industry, this program addresses a rarely explored aspect of AI in the industry: how “everyday” AI use can meaningfully improve emotional well-being, reduce cognitive burden, and ease stress for PD professionals, lawyers, and staff. Through practical frameworks, real-world law firm examples, interactive exercises, and breakout discussions, attendees will learn how AI can reduce dread around overwhelming projects, help you make difficult professional decisions, assist you in guiding others who are struggling, and even help you navigate challenging workplace relationships through thoughtfully designed AI “personas” that simulate colleagues’ communication styles and tendencies. Designed by legal industry well-being professionals — not technical AI experts — this session equips attendees with tangible tools and worksheets they can immediately bring back to their firms to convert AI from “menacing threat” to “trusted emotional guide.”

Jarrett Green, Well-Being, Leadership & Peak Performance Consultant, NKB Consultancy
Diane Costigan, Director of Coaching and Well-Being, Winston Taylor
James Keshavarz, Chief Wellness Officer, Gibson Dunn
Robyn Schuster, Director of Professional Development, Winston Taylor

Break 10:15 – 10:45 AM ET

Concurrent Sessions 10:45 – 11:45 AM ET

BD for PD: Getting Comfortable Coaching Client Development
Lawyers want to build their business development skills. But, when BD enters the conversation, many PD coaches feel uncomfortable—uncertain about whether and how they can add value. In fact, they are often better positioned than they realize. In this session, a PD coach who has navigated that journey firsthand and a BD coach who works with partners and PD professionals will offer a practical, personal roadmap for getting comfortable. This program will explore foundational BD frameworks and concrete coaching approaches, leaving participants feeling confident that this work is not only within their reach but already within their skillset.

Kristen Mathews, Associate Director, Coaching & Development, Gibson Dunn
Lane Vanderslice, Owner, Winter's Market

Beyond Stay Interviews: Hidden Retention Levers for Midlevel and Senior Associates
When a high-performing midlevel or senior associate leaves, the damage cascades. Partners lose their go-to, peers stretch to cover, and juniors start wondering. While stay interviews, strong onboarding, and community-building are a start, the attrition numbers say they're not enough. This session approaches midlevel and senior associate retention, drawing on job embeddedness research and live initiatives at leading firms. Learn the interventions that work before someone is already looking, the partners and peers whose involvement actually shifts retention outcomes, and the deeper issues hiding behind 'it's just not a fit for me.' Leave with tools to keep your top people.

Jon Krop, Founder & CEO, Flourish Legal Well-Being
Tammie Garner, Director of Professional Development, A&O Shearman
Kelly Druten Green, Director of Attorney Development, Ogletree Deakins
Sona Spencer, Chief Legal Talent Officer, Troutman Pepper Locke

Mission Possible: Making Your Mark as a Firm Leader and Partner
What does it really take to make Partner or Firm Leader in today's legal market? Across firms and practice areas, certain traits consistently rise to the top: reliability, listening, initiative, client focus, and the ability to foster and develop strong, collaborative teams. We'll bring together partners/senior leaders profiled in the ALM series to reflect on the career-defining behaviors and decisions that helped them ascend and explore how talent professionals can help lawyers cultivate those qualities earlier in their careers. The session will focus on how to instill a mindset of ownership, strategic thinking, and leadership well before the partner/leader vote.

Jennifer Greiner, President & Founder, Greiner Consulting Group, LLC
James Barney, Managing Partner, Finnegan, Henderson, Farabow, Garrett & Dunner, LLP
Val Dahiya, Partner, Co-Head of Securities + Derivatives Regulatory Solutions, Morrison Foerster
Brantley Webb, Partner, Co-Leader of ERISA Litigation, Mayer Brown

Rethinking Law Firm Culture Through a Gen Z Lens
As Generation Z enters the legal profession in growing numbers, firms are encountering a widening gap between traditional law firm culture and the expectations of younger lawyers. Gen Z places a high value on mental health, transparency, feedback, and authentic connection – priorities that

challenge long-standing assumptions about how legal work gets done. This interactive session explores how firms can translate emerging data about Gen Z priorities into practical leadership and management practices that create psychologically safer, more supportive, diverse environments for all legal professionals, while also improving performance, reducing risk and strengthening retention.

Yuliya LaRoe, Law Firm Consultant & Coach, LeadWise Group
Michelle Gomez, Shareholder, Littler Mendelson

The Challenging Conversations Lab
Even as skilled professionals, we all have conversations we dread. We may put them off, or find ourselves repeating the same difficult conversation, wanting it to go differently. In this interactive workshop, participants are invited to bring their most- dreaded conversation to role play and be coached on it, including initiating the conversation, collaborating on ground agreements, and having the conversation itself. Participants will come away with tools for managing reactivity, clarifying and expressing their position, listening to understand others, scripting invitations and structuring discussions.

Melanie Rowen, Trainer, Coach & Mediator, Center for Understanding in Conflict
Andrea Gilliam, Coach & Trainer, Andrea Gilliam Consulting

When Feedback Fails: A Multi-Disciplinary Approach to Reversing Performance Spirals
When a junior lawyer or law student hits a performance wall, whether a “no-offer” following a 2L summer position or a formal Performance Improvement Plan (PIP), the initial response may be to provide directive feedback. However, this reaction may backfire, with feedback causing performance to decline. This session offers a high-level masterclass in shifting the intervention from “critiquing” to “facilitating.” Featuring a diverse panel of leaders from law firms and schools, we will explore alternative approaches to performance recovery, including professional coaching and acting as a strategic intermediary as a buffer between the evaluator and the law student/lawyer.

Cassandre Stump, Director, Recruiting & Engagement, New York University School of Law
Janet Hutchinson, Associate Dean for Career Development, University of Richmond School of Law
Shannon Burke, Director of Talent Development and Inclusion, Chapman and Cutler LLP

Lunch 11:45 AM – 12:45 PM ET

Concurrent Sessions 12:45 – 1:45 PM ET

Agent Boss: Creating Your AI Boardroom
AI is moving beyond one-off prompts. In this session, professional development leaders will learn how to build and manage a “boardroom” of specialized AI agents that can draft, research, review, and coach. Using the Agent Boss framework, attendees will explore which PD workflows are ready for AI delegation, how to create a first agent with no-code tools, and how to maintain the human oversight needed for quality and control. Participants will leave with a practical model, a working example, and clear next steps for applying AI across their PD function.

Carolyn Humpherys, Senior Consultant, Traveling Coaches

Beyond 1:1 Mentoring for New Partners
Traditional one-to-one mentoring and sponsorship models often lose momentum in firms because key people become overextended, pairings go quiet, and programs are hard to sustain. While promotion candidates receive focused attention, new partners frequently find that support system wanes precisely when the transition becomes real. This session presents mentor circles as a practical, level-appropriate, and sustainable alternative, with concrete design elements that improve continuity, participation, and impact. Attendees will leave with a scalable model they can adapt to create high-value mentoring and sponsorship experiences that strengthen leadership development, knowledge transfer, and cross-generational connection.

Melissa Berry, Director of Attorney Development, Ashurst Perkins Coie
Darien Fleming, Founder & CEO, Darien Fleming

Lights, Camera, Action: Setting the Stage for Successful Performance Management
Performance management and movie sets have more in common than you'd think. Both have strict budgets and schedules, rely on ensemble performance, and require orchestration of many moving parts. This panel gives a behind-the-scenes peek at making performance management easier without compromising quality. You'll hear about how to increase participation, coordinate a seamless experience, align with firm goals, embrace technology, and get lawyers feedback that helps them grow. Just like your favorite movie, performance management done right has a lasting impact. So, grab your popcorn and join us to talk about the art (and science) of performance management.

Juliet Aiken, Organizational Psychologist in Residence, Volta Talent Strategies
Linda Lee, Director of Associate Development, Cooley LLP
Abby Stover, Chief Talent Officer, Honigman LLP
Jeffrey DaRocha-Boyle, Director of Professional Development, Fish & Richardson

Looking Around Corners: The Mid-Level Guide to Strategic Thinking
As client expectations evolve and legal complexity increases with AI integration, rising lawyers must contribute more than technical analysis. Firms value lawyers who can proactively "add value" by anticipating challenges and identifying downstream implications. This panel, featuring experienced practitioners and law firm leaders, will discuss how associates develop the judgment, awareness, and strategic thinking skills needed to become trusted advisors. Panelists will share candid reflections on learning to anticipate client needs, recognize risks, and contribute strategically. Topics include: 1. Developing proactive thinking 2. Anticipating client concerns and business implications 3. Effectively communicating insights and recommendations.

Rudhir Krishtel, CEO / Facilitator, Krishtel
Stacy Ridgeway, Senior Director, Attorney Development & Retention, Nixon Peabody LLP
Megan Gerking, Partner at Morrison & Foerster LLP, Morrison Foerster
Rosevelie Marquez Morales, Chief Inclusion Officer, Hogan Lovells Cadwalader

The Future-Proof PD Professional: How to Build Influence, Visibility, and Strategic Value
As AI reshapes training, development, and career opportunities in the legal industry, PD professionals must rethink how they demonstrate strategic value. This interactive session explores the human-centered skills AI cannot replace, including relationship-building, leadership presence, communication, and influence, and how these capabilities can future-proof PD careers.

Participants will learn practical, actionable strategies to strengthen their professional brand, increase visibility with firm leadership, and position themselves as indispensable strategic partners within their organizations. Attendees will leave with a personalized, actionable career plan designed to increase their impact, relevance, and career growth in an evolving legal landscape.

Jennifer Gallinson, Coach & Consultant, Volta Talent Strategies
Laura Friedman, Chief Attorney Development Officer, Taft
Laura Dutt, Founder & Executive Coach, PathForward Executive Coaching LLC
Lauren Tapper, Chief Talent Officer, Benesch Law

Concurrent Sessions 2:00 – 3:00 PM ET

Beyond Good Work: Navigating the Unwritten Rules of Success
First-generation lawyers often enter firms without the informal exposure to professional expectations and workplace dynamics that others absorb long before their first day. Yet many of the qualities firms value most — ownership, judgment, communication, business awareness, and relationship management — are rarely taught explicitly and can be difficult to evaluate transparently. Drawing on nearly 50 interviews with managing partners, talent leaders, and partners across North America, this session surfaces what law firm leaders actually look for and gives PD professionals a concrete framework to make those expectations teachable, understandable, and actionable for every associate in the room.

Paul Karvanis, Founder, Leader Rising

Navigating Change Management and AI Adoption: A Panel Discussion
This panel discussion will explore how firm leaders must ready their workforce for AI adoption and change management to meet firm priorities and emerging market trends. Panelists will discuss a real-world case study and discuss industry best practices to coach leaders through change, support individuals during transition, humanize technology adoption aligned to firm priorities, and integrate responsive feedback loops to support organizational agility. Participants will leave with a toolkit of best practices and learning guides for direct implementation at their firms.

Taris Mullins, Vice President of Growth Strategy, Loeb Leadership
Natalie Loeb, Founder and Co-CEO, Loeb Leadership
Bill Cocolis, Director of Talent Management, Akin

The Comfort Trap: Why "Nice" Feedback Stalls Associate Growth (and How to Fix It)
Nice' feedback (polite avoidance of candor) is often a trap that prioritizes short-term comfort over long-term growth. To sustain high-performance cultures, BigLaw firms must move beyond destructive criticism and superficial politeness toward a 'kind' culture built on candor. This session equips PD professionals with a turnkey framework to coach partners and senior associates on delivering direct behavioral feedback. By shifting the internal narrative from 'politeness' to 'effectiveness,' PD teams can directly impact associate retention and development. Participants will leave with a modular 'Feedback Guardrails' toolkit and will practice navigating these interventions through interactive, three-person role-plays.

Mitchell Karp, Partner, VallotKarp Consulting
MaLora McCullough, Senior Consultant, VallotKarp Consulting

Meeting Adjourned