

# LEGAL SECRETARIES, INCORPORATED

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*LSI – Educating California’s Legal Professionals*



## OFFICERS AND CHAIRMEN WORKSHOPS

### MAY 2014 ANNUAL CONFERENCE

#### **CAREER PROMOTION/SCHOLARSHIP**

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2014 ANNUAL CONFERENCE  
CAREER PROMOTION / SCHOLARSHIP WORKSHOP

Finding a scholarship chair continues to be an issue for local associations. I wish I had a magic solution. Unfortunately, all you can do is ask. I believe this chair position is one of the most rewarding and I want to be sure the local chairs have what they need to get the most out of the experience. If you have a member who is considering acting as scholarship chair, I would be happy to talk to him or her to answer any questions and provide encouragement.

This chair position is not only about raising awareness, but also about promoting our chosen careers. Admittedly this takes some effort but it is well worth it!

CAREER PROMOTION

Here are some great ideas submitted by local associations regarding ways to promote a career in the legal field:

- attend career fairs or career days at colleges and/or high schools;
- serve as mock interviewers to assist students in preparing for employment interviews;
- teach legal secretary and paralegal programs;
- represent LSI at local community college advisory committee meetings;
- reach out to the Law and Business section of high schools which offer a mock courthouse and express a desire to work directly with those teachers and students by presenting in their classrooms and helping with the courthouse and Law Week events;
- invite students to your membership meetings.

If you cannot personally attend some of these functions, put the word out to your association and see if any other members can help. Even if you can't be there in person, that doesn't mean your association cannot be there – print up flyers and talk to the event coordinator to see if he or she will distribute them. Talk to the school newspaper editor to see if the school will print an article for you (or if they will send one of their budding journalists to interview you).

You can also host a mixer for students (young and old) in your area so they can talk with your members. Perhaps one or more of your local vendors would be willing to sponsor the event (thus paying for the event location and food or snacks). Make it an informal,

fun event and have a couple of vendor-donated items to raffle off (giving free raffle tickets to students). The best way to promote a legal career is to speak positively about it whenever you are asked about your job. We all have days when our bosses, co-workers, or clients are driving us crazy, but I think we can all agree that we are proud of the job we do!

## SCHOLARSHIP DUTIES

So now that you've taken on the challenge of acting as scholarship chair for your association, let's see what you need to do.

### *OCTOBER – DECEMBER:*

This is the time to familiarize yourself with the Plan of Administration and all the forms. Applicants are going to have questions and you want to be able to answer them quickly. All of the scholarship information is available on the LSI web site under the Programs tab.

This is also the time to create or update a mailing list of local high schools, colleges, and business/court reporting schools in your local area. Use Google to search for schools with legal programs. Establish a contact person as you are more likely to get noticed if the mail is directed to an actual person versus just putting "career counselor."

Create or revise existing scholarship letters, flyers, press releases, etc. With the holidays coming up, it is best to have all of this done by mid-November.

Don't forget to make sure you have all the supplies you'll need (paper, envelopes, and stamps). This is the planning stage; get everything in place now so come January, you aren't scrambling.

If your local association has a web site, be sure the scholarship information and/or a link to the LSI web site is posted, along with your contact information.

Don't panic. I'm not implying that it will take three months to do this. I'm merely giving you a sample time management outline. It may be that it will only take a couple of weeks to get it all done.

## *JANUARY:*

Mail letters and flyers to high schools, colleges, court reporting schools, and business schools in early January. You don't have to do this alone – have an envelope stuffing party! Two or three members can get together one afternoon and put everything together in a few hours.

Talk it up! Some suggestions are:

- be a guest speaker at colleges or high schools to motivate applicants and give them an opportunity to have their questions answered in person;
- visit schools to promote the scholarship program and meet in person with career counselors;
- post on your local association web site or Facebook page;
- invite past winners to a meeting to say a few words about how the scholarship helped them;
- invite students or career counselors to a membership meeting so they can see what we are all about;
- send press releases and ads to local newspapers, radio, and other media;
- ask your President for a few minutes at the membership meeting to make an announcement;
- invite the LSI Scholarship Chair to a membership meeting to answer questions;
- tell your co-workers, neighbors, friends, and relatives (everyone knows someone who could use a little extra money for college).

## *FEBRUARY AND MARCH:*

Now that the information has been sent out, you likely will be answering lots of questions and awaiting the delivery of the scholarship applications.

Your association should have a determined deadline for the last date to receive scholarship applications, either postmarked or in hand. The first week of March would be a good choice so that you have plenty of time to have the applications judged, determine your winner(s), and forward the application(s) to the LSI Chair by the April 1 deadline. Here is a sample timeline:

March 1 Deadline to receive applications

March 8 Last day to forward applications received to your chosen judges

March 22 Last day for judges to return score sheets

April 1 Deadline to submit scholarship applications to the LSI Chair

*MAY:*

This is the best part! Scholarship winners are announced at Annual Conference in May. Six awards of \$1,500 will be given (two in each of the three categories). Be sure to take phone numbers with you to conference so if one or more of your applicants wins, you can call them right away (trust me, they are waiting to hear). While the LSI Chair will send an official notification to all winners after Annual Conference, it is nice for them to also receive a congratulatory letter from their sponsoring association.

Now that Annual Conference is over, you can rest and recuperate for the next year!

### SOME FINAL THOUGHTS

I think there is a misconception that if your association is not in a position financially to offer scholarships at the local level, that you cannot submit applications to LSI. Nothing could be farther from the truth. All the applicant needs is a local association willing to sponsor him or her. Even if you don't have a local chair, it requires very little effort on your part to sponsor someone. You need to fill out the cover sheet and mail the application to the LSI Chair by April 1 – that's it! So don't let anything keep you from participating in this very worthwhile program.

Talk to your association about having a scholarship fundraiser. You don't have to raise a large amount. You can award smaller amounts to help with books and supplies or short-term classes. I have found that students appreciate any help so get creative with your scholarship funds and think outside the box.

Finally, always remember that you can structure your local scholarship plan however your association chooses. You only have to follow LSI's scholarship plan if you intend to submit applications for state judging.

LSI is passionate about the Eula Mae Jett Scholarship Program, so if you have questions, comments or concerns, feel free to contact the LSI Scholarship Chair at any time.

