



LSI

*Educating California's
Legal Support Professionals*

OFFICERS AND CHAIRMEN WORKSHOPS

MAY 2018 ANNUAL CONFERENCE

CAREER PROMOTION / SCHOLARSHIP

Sylvia Marsh
LSI Career Promotion/Scholarship Chair

2018 ANNUAL CONFERENCE
CAREER PROMOTION / SCHOLARSHIP HANDOUT

As the Career Promotion/Scholarship chair for your local association, your job is not only to provide much needed funds to struggling students, but also to promote careers in the legal field. So now that you've taken the first step by volunteering your time, let's see what is involved with this position so that you have a clear understanding of your duties.

CAREER PROMOTION

Did you know that "career promotion" is part of your title? We tend to focus so much on the scholarship side that we forget to pay any attention to the career promotion side. While the scholarship program is certainly important and worthy of our focus, promoting a career in the legal field on a regular basis will (ideally) help increase the number of scholarship applications received.

Here are some great promotion ideas submitted by local associations:

- invite students to your membership meetings;
- make sure all of your educational programs are open to the general public;
- use social media to promote your educational programs;
- attend high school or college career day events and offer to be a speaker;
- attend job fairs at your local career center; and
- encourage others who are attending school but may not have yet chosen a career path.

Even if you cannot attend a function 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, better yet, if they will send one of their budding journalists to interview you).

Try hosting 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 either at their location or help with the cost of another location and/or refreshments. Make it an informal, fun event with a few 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 we can all agree that we are proud of the job we do!

SCHOLARSHIP DUTIES

Don't panic. The following schedule is not meant to imply that this chair position is going to take many months' worth of your time. This is merely a sample time management outline. It may be that it will only take a couple of days over a few months to get everything done.

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. If you have any questions, contact the LSI Chair for assistance.

Allow me to repeat myself - **familiarize yourself with the Plan of Administration.** The Plan may change from one year to the next, so read it! While you can do whatever you'd like at the local level, there are certain conditions to be met when submitting to LSI. Make sure your applicants meet those conditions before you submit the application and if you are unsure, ask! You may assume that because we receive so few applications, we just accept them all. Nothing could be further from the truth. Applicants do get disqualified.

This is also the time to create or update an (e)mail list of high schools, colleges, and business/court reporting schools in your area. Use Google to search for schools with legal programs. Try to get the name of a contact person so mail is directed to an actual person versus just putting "career counselor."

Create or revise existing scholarship letters, flyers, press releases, etc. If you are starting from scratch, contact the LSI Chair for samples. 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 if you are mailing out your scholarship information (e.g., 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 is current or post a link to the LSI web site, along with your contact information. Does your local association have a Facebook or Instagram page? That is a great place to start a conversation about the program!

JANUARY:

(E)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 get this done in a few hours. If you are emailing everything, start an email list as you go along during your planning stage by putting all of the addresses in one Word document. When you are ready to send the information out, all you have to do is copy and paste the email addresses into the “bcc” part of the message. **Always remember if you are sending out a bulk email, to use “bcc” – not everyone wants their email address shared with strangers.**

Talk up the scholarship program! Some suggestions are:

- be a guest speaker at colleges or high schools to give students an opportunity to have their questions answered in person;
- visit schools to promote the scholarship program and meet in person with career counselors;
- 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 about the program (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 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****

The April 1 deadline is the only one in this sample schedule that is set in stone. Think of it as your statute of limitations. Miss it and it's all over.

Please remember – locally you may have as many winners in each category as you choose, but you may only submit one application per category to LSI, for a total of three applications (i.e. one for Plan A, one for Plan B and/or one for Plan C).

MAY:

This is the best part! Scholarship winners and alternates are announced at Annual Conference in May. Six scholarships will be awarded (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 or text 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

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. It bears repeating - read the Plan of Administration and ask if you have any questions!

Read the applicant's biographical letter! Make sure it says something about a future in the legal field (versus business administration or healthcare). Make sure the biographical letter does not say anything about going to law school as our scholarships are not for budding attorneys. Each and every piece of paper submitted is read before sending to the judges, and if something slips by the LSI Chair, it is very likely that one of the judges (if not all of them) will catch it and question it. It is not unusual to have a judge score an

application with one or more zeroes (or not score it at all) because something does not fall within the parameters of the Plan of Administration.

When you submit an application to LSI, make sure all of the requested information is included. Has the local association included a cover sheet? Are there three letters of reference? Are there school transcripts? If the application is submitted under Plan C, is there a resume included? If any requested information is not included, points are deducted during judging.

There is still 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 further 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. Smaller amounts can help with books and supplies or short-term classes. Students appreciate any help so get creative with your scholarship funds and think outside the box.

Interact with your local counterparts! Bounce ideas off of each other and if you would like the LSI Chair to send out an email to all of the local chairs with a specific question for discussion, just ask. Always remember that your LSI Chair is here to help.

If you have a member who is considering acting as scholarship chair, the LSI Chair would be happy to talk to him or her to answer any questions and provide encouragement.

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.