



## **Sensing a Seismic Shift – Is there a crisis in the legal profession?**

with WSBA Executive Director Paula Littlewood and  
University of Washington School of Law Dean Kellye Testy

October 2, 2012

11:52

**Moderator:**

Thank you all for joining us today! The chat will begin in just a few minutes.

11:56

**Moderator:**

We'll be underway in just a few moments. In the meantime, feel free to begin submitting your questions.

12:00

**Paula Littlewood:**

Welcome to all our participants. Dean Testy and I are looking forward to this next hour to chat about the future of our profession! We welcome your questions to get us started.

12:01

**Comment From Dan**

Why does law school cost so much? I graduated from law school about 6 years ago (UW) and it was never clear to me what was particularly expensive about teaching law (unless we were helping pay for the new building).

12:02

**Dean Kellye Testy:**

Law school tuitions have increased and for state school's (as UW is) the reason is that the state has disinvested substantially in higher education. Legal education is more expensive because there are more skills classes and those must be taught in smaller groups.

12:03

**Comment From Jordan**

I'm in the process of retiring and would like to do some sort of legal work on a part time basis, maybe letting my bar dues lapse. I figure one person's crisis is another's opportunity. What sort of things are law firms farming out to contract workers, or do you have any ideas for a low-stress occupation?

12:03

**Paula Littlewood:**

Thanks, Jordan. We are in the process of developing programs to provide opportunities for our retiring members to stay engaged. Examples include our Moderate Means Program, our Home Foreclosure Legal Aid Project, and our Wills for Heroes. Also, we are in the process of launching a program through myWSBA that will allow employers to look for contract attorneys.

12:05

**Comment From Dan L**

Hello Director Littlewood and Dean Testy: A two-part questions: First: what are the skills that you believe lawyers and law students will need to thrive in the new economic and professional legal paradigm? Second, can you provide some specifics examples of what the WSBA and law schools are doing to provide lawyers and law students the opportunities to receive/seek out training to obtain

those skills?

12:05

**Dean Kellye Testy:**

Law students will need many of the same skills they have always needed, such as critical thinking, problem solving, good writing and communication skills, and good judgement. They will also increasingly need to have cross cultural competency skills and skills to address increasingly complex problems in many sectors, such as the environment, health, and finance. There are a host of ways we are expanding our students opportunities to gain these skills, both in classes and in partnership with the WSBA and other organizations.

12:07

**Paula Littlewood:**

We're excited in particular about our Moderate Means Program. WSBA pays for staffing at each of the law schools so students can be recruited and trained to do the client intake for these moderate means clients. Law students also work up the cases and hand them off to our members who have agreed to take these cases for a reduced fee. Our practice section members also get out to meet with law students often and the law schools have welcomed us into every ethics class at each school each year to do a presentation on what it means to be a member of the only self-regulated profession in the United States and how to operate professionally in this great profession.

12:09

**Comment From Mark Bardwell**

I'm curious why we're asking, "Is there a crisis in the legal profession?" Is it not apparent? The legal profession has lost several large firms (Heller Ehrman among them), graduates of the last several years have left school with mountains of debt and few/no legal jobs to pay it off, and many have given up on a legal career and returned to school for another field. In short, we've lost a generation-- the judges and partners of the future ... aren't. We should be asking, "How do we recover from this lost generation?"

**12:09    Comment From G. Benjamin Lindsey III**

The law was my second (or third) profession. After working for a large firm and in-house, I've opened my own solo practice. In talking to my peers who didn't have prior careers before law school it would seem that law schools should adding more content around the "business" of running a law firm.

**12:09    Comment From Rob Apgood**

Do you anticipate a measurable increase in pre-paid legal fees and, if so, to what extent?

**12:09    Paula Littlewood:**

Hi Rob. Pre-paid legal fees have been discussed and somewhat implemented over the years, but I think we have yet to see this trend increase significantly.

**12:11    Comment From Emily Hahn**

I graduated in 2011 and passed the Bar last October. I have not been able to find a job so I opened my own law practice. This is not ideal and does not pay the bills. When can we expect the legal market to begin to turn around? Will it ever be the same as it was?

**12:11****Dean Kellye Testy:**

Emily -- I'm sorry your entry into the profession has been a challenge. I wish I could say that the market would become "the same as it was" but I don't think that is going to be the case. The changes we have seen have been in the works for a long time, and I think the transformation is one that will be lasting. We are, though, seeing a current improvement in the market that we think is a great sign of progress. Also, Director Littlewood and I are working together to try to support new lawyers like you in having the mentoring and support you need to enter practice successfully.

**12:12****Comment From Donna Beatty**

Lawyer's inability to collect fees we are owed is a contributing factor in the crises situation that we are facing. Clients are getting very wise to the fact that lawyers cannot easily collect fees due to malpractice insurance concerns and the fact that we cannot report their delinquencies to credit agencies. What, if anything, can lawyers do to change the broad scope of the interpretation of our "duty of loyalty" so that there are consequences to clients who fail to pay?

**12:12****Paula Littlewood:**

Excellent question, Donna. I'll take this issue up with our leadership.

**12:13****Comment From Jane**

Can you explain why the title was selected? Sensing a Seismic Shift — Is there a crisis in the legal profession?

**12:13****Dean Kellye Testy:**

Jane, "Seismic Shift" and "Crisis" refer to the numerous trends impacting how we deliver legal education and legal services in a changing global context.

**12:13    Comment From John Shaffer**

In some Asian thinking, a crisis is a time of dangerous opportunity. If we are in crisis in this sense what is our dangerous opportunity?

**12:13    Dean Kellye Testy:**

John, this is a great point. And I think this time is one of enormous opportunity. Just on my way in to the WSBA, I saw some former students and they were very happy in their work and felt that the changes had enabled them to respond more fully to persons of moderate means and to thereby enhance access to justice. We are also seeing our students go to a wider variety of careers, and this has helped them find their passion earlier in their career. Here in Washington State we are seizing the changing profession as an opportunity.

**12:17    Comment From Guest**

How are law schools adjusting enrollment numbers in light of the reported increase in the number of people seeking degrees due to the persistent unemployment levels, balanced against the rising unemployment rate within the legal profession?

**12:17    Dean Kellye Testy:**

Many law schools are decreasing enrollment numbers. UW has always kept our class small (around 175), so we are keeping steady. There were almost half of law schools in the country this year that did not meet enrollment goals, and I think that we will see some further adjustments that needed to be made. We actually had a large increase (10%) in applications this year, but that was counter to the rest of Northwest and overall in the US, which saw declines in applications of around 12.5% We need good law schools and good lawyers and I'm hopeful some of the pressures we feel now will enhance overall quality of legal education in the nation.

**12:17 Comment From Lee**

Can you briefly describe what we learned from the membership study regarding the future of our Bar and what concerns you most about that information?

**12:18 Paula Littlewood:**

The study confirmed a trend we have been watching for several years, which is that large portions of our membership will be transitioning out of the profession in the next 10-15 years. Our president last year has committed much time to educating our members about succession planning so that an attorney's transition out of the profession doesn't impact adversely the clients and the public. In addition, as I referenced in my answer to Jordan earlier, we are also seeking ways to engage our retiring members in public service efforts so we don't lose all their experience and leadership.

Finally, we are working with the law schools on a new program where we will match retiring attorneys with law students and/or other lawyers who would like to take over the retiring attorney's practice.

**12:19 Comment From Scott**

Has the WSBA noticed any significant rise in the number of people opting to become lawyers through internship rather than law school?

**12:19 Paula Littlewood:**

Scott, our Law Clerk Program has maintained a fairly steady, but small increase in enrollment over the past several years.

**12:22      Comment From Joel Murray**

Dean Testy, can you describe the process of how UW Law reports employment outcomes for recent graduates to US News and World Report, as well as to potential students?

**12:22      Comment From SJ**

Based on this, has the availability of law school scholarships (private & public) increased or do we see a decrease or the same?

**12:22      Comment From Robin**

Have those tuitions increased at a rate that is not sustainable?

**12:22      Dean Kellye Testy:**

Joe, SJ, and Robin -- your questions are related. We are fortunate that our students' tuition remains very fairly priced and it goes to support their education directly -- there is no sense in which UW law is used as a "cash cow" at UW as has been asserted by some law schools around the US. Still, we will seek to keep our tuition affordable so that access to the profession is not limited only to those from means. We have added scholarship funding in the past few years as well to help offset rising tuition. We also hope that our state will again reinvest more heavily in higher education going forward.

**12:26      Comment From Ken Masters**

Paula, I know you've been talking a lot about the future of the legal profession over the last few years. Sadly, I've had to miss those presentations, but I would be interested in hearing your "elevator speech" on the issues you seeing facing us -- I know you can't do all of it here, but a brief explanation of some of your central views might be conducive to the conversation....

**12:26****Paula Littlewood:**

Thanks, Ken. The main trends impacting the profession I believe are: the aging lawyer population referenced above; a changing client mentality where they do much of it on their own (a "Home Depot" mentality); a changing business model where clients are demanding predictable expenses (value-based billing versus the billable hour); huge changes in legal education that will be coming in the near future; outsourcing of legal services both offshore and onshore to reduce overhead; technology is also impacting the profession hugely, but as a profession we have tended to be late adopters of technology; finally, borders are coming down, not only within the United States (e.g., the Uniform Bar Exam) but cross-nationally.

There is a wave of change coming and I have been urging us as a profession to paddle out and ride the wave, rather than wait for the wave to crash down on us and we are left picking up the debris.

**12:26****Dean Kellye Testy:**

Joel,

Employment statistics are critical and also very time intensive to gather. We survey every student (and keep trying to get a response until we do!) so that we know exactly where they are and what kind of job they have. We use this data to then respond to the many organizations to which we report, including the ABA, US News, NALP, etc. Many of those organizations ask for different stats and timing measures, so we respond carefully to what is being asked of us. For our students (and potential students), we try to put it on our web as clearly as possible.

**12:26****Comment From David**

Does the WSBA keep track of the percentage of licensed attorneys with some experience that are either unemployed or under employed?

**12:26****Paula Littlewood:**

David, no we don't keep those statistics. However, WSBA does offer a Career Center where those seeking work can post their resumes. We're also exploring the ability seeking contract work to post their services.

**12:27****Comment From Ray**

I second the need for more education around the business of running a firm. I'm in the same situation as Emily, but more years out.

**12:28****Comment From Colleen M.**

Paula's answer to Ken was very helpful.

**12:28****Comment From Guest**

it is my observation that lawyers have priced themselves out of existence both for routine legal services and large corporate firms - large corporate firms will do anything to avoid hiring lawyers - I know of instances where firms with large infringed patent portfolios won't exploit their patents because of the cost of litigation

**12:29****Comment From Dustin Klinger**

When do you see a National Bar legal licensing system developing? Particularly for transactional lawyers and our clients it is difficult to identify the benefits of maintaining multiple licenses.

**12:29 Paula Littlewood:**

Hi Dustin. As you may know, Washington has already adopted the Uniform Bar Exam and the first administration of the exam will be this July. 10 or more states have already moved to the Uniform Bar Exam and many states are poised to adopt the UBE as its form of bar exam.

**12:29 Comment From SJ**

there should also be a class or content on emotional intelligence, cross-cultural skill development for new attorneys, particularly coming from schools that are in more remote locations and not in big cities- as lawyers, we serve a wide and diverse group of people, government and corporations worldwide and having those skills are imperative in a global economy

**12:29 Comment From Bruce**

I agree with Colleen.

**12:29 Comment From Dan Ballbach**

for Dean Testy: I am surprised you did not mention leadership, management and business skills as necessary in the new legal services environment.

**12:30 Dean Kellye Testy:**

Dan -- I do include those. This format is a funny one, and we're typing as fast as we can! Leadership is a cornerstone of what lawyers need to be able to provide our society -- in all sectors. And project management skills are critical, as are financial literacy (and scientific and technological literacy). This may be why we need to leave law school at 3 years! Lots to accomplish!

**12:30****Moderator:**

We're getting some questions about the live chat transcript - it'll be live on the WSBA website after the chat. You can use the same link that you used to join us today.

**12:31****Comment From Vic**

What are some examples of the "web-based lawyer-in-a-box services" referred to in the email notification for this chat?

**12:31****Paula Littlewood:**

A few common ones are [LegalZoom.com](http://LegalZoom.com), [ingenio.com](http://ingenio.com), [cybersettle.com](http://cybersettle.com) -- and it is interesting to note that Google and Lexis-Nexis have invested millions in Rocket Lawyer.

**12:32****Comment From Mark Patterson**

Paula's Littlewoods answer to Ken Masters really hit home, I have copied for future referenced and saved i tto my machine.

**12:32****Comment From Eva Tuxbury**

In addition, part of the problem is that as a non-wealthy attorney, I cannot necessarily afford necessary legal research item, most importantly, Washington Practice, which seems should be available to all WSBA members at no cost. No cost of course means to include no \$4 per gallon gas to drive to a law library where we pay for parking.

**12:32    Comment From Dan Ballbach**

Great summary by Paula about the change pressures. The fact that the question was asked may indicate an opportunity for WSBA to communicate more about the change pressures so the bar can become more active in addressing them.

**12:33    Moderator:**

Eva, are you familiar with Casemaker? It's free for WSBA members. <http://www.wsba.org/Resources-and-Services/LOMAP/Legal-Research>

**12:33    Comment From David**

Do you see a trend in companies hiring more in-house counsel because of the high cost of outside counsel?

**12:33    Paula Littlewood:**

Yes -- outside counsel use is down in the past ten years due to the corresponding increase in billing rates over that same time period.

**12:33    Comment From Emily Hahn**

I agree with Ray, I have had to become a qualified lawyer, business owner, account manager, and legal secretary in one year. I am often extremely overwhelmed with my situation of running a law practice on my own with no experience. New graduates have to have resources and mentors available their first few years of solo practice because it very daunting but is a path many new lawyers are taking in order to stay afloat.

**12:34    Comment From Forrest Carlson**

Has the law school leadership in Washington given much thought to the idea of the "Law School Firm", or similar ideas? I refer to Richard Mitchell's recent article discussing this paper: [http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract\\_id=1906797](http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1906797).

**12:34    Dean Kellye Testy:**

Forrest, yes, we are considering innovations such as this and other ways to both educate our students and to assist with access to justice issues. There is a lot to consider. Sometimes lawyers in the local area do not relish the idea of a law school getting into the practice, especially when economics are in a challenging time. However, I do think that the future will need to see our faculty members engaged in teaching, practice, and research -- more like the medical school model. I know that my good friends Mark Niles and Jane Korn -- deans of SU and GU Law schools are also considering innovations like this too. All three of us try to collaborate as much as possible, and there may be potential in this realm for us all to work together.

**12:34    Comment From Lish Whitson**

I'm interested in how each of you would answer your question: "Is there a crisis in the legal profession?"

**12:34    Paula Littlewood:**

As Dean Testy noted above, I believe here in Washington we are seeing these trends and changes to our profession as an opportunity rather than a crisis.

**12:35    Comment From Elizabeth Chang**

Agree with Mark's comment. I have also copied Paula's answer and Dean Testy's leadership answer to my machine.

**12:36    Comment From Darrell Julian**

Your former student (SU Law '04). I am currently an assistant district attorney practicing in my home state of Tennessee. There is such a disconnect between the study of law and the practice of law, I am curious to know if there have been any changes in the curricula to make the study of law more immediately applicable to the real-world needs of recent graduates. In this economic environment it would behoove professional schools to realign their priorities to prepare newly-minted attorneys with the basic skill set needed to serve their clients at the earliest possible time (this view is precisely the opposite one I held when I was a student). On a personal note, I remind myself almost daily in my current position to "do justice" and often recall with great fondness it was you above all others that made sure your students learned this, if nothing else.

**12:36    Dean Kellye Testy:**

Darrell -- great to hear from you! Yes, I think that all of our law schools are adding more and more skills education. Firms are in a tough position on this because their clients no longer want to pay for any kind of training, and the firms find it difficult to want to invest in it. So, law schools are being asked to fill this gap more fully and help their students be even more practice ready. Keep up your love of justice!

**12:37    Comment From Elizabeth**

To help deal with the unemployment of lawyers will the WSBA and/or law schools be providing CLE's in the future to assist in how a law degree could be helpful in alternative careers?

**12:37****Dean Kellye Testy:**

Yes, Elizabeth, you will see more on this issue from UW School of Law and the WSBA in the near future.

**12:38****Comment From Madeline**

What do you think could or should be done about legal work being outsourced to other countries. I have heard numerous stories of large law firms outsourcing legal research rather than using new associates for such work. Will this exacerbate problems in the job market for our new law school graduates?

**12:38****Paula Littlewood:**

One thing we are doing in response to this trend, Madeline, is starting our own contract attorney service that I referenced in my answer to Jordan earlier. This idea came from our president two years ago who asked the same question -- so we are hoping to facilitate contract opportunities right here for our members.

**12:39****Moderator:**

For those interested in learning more about our Membership Study - which Paula referenced earlier - you can view it on our website: <http://www.wsba.org/About-WSBA/Diversity/Membership-Study>

**12:40    Comment From Joe Brotherton**

Comment to Emily - Ms Hahn, I sincerely believe that you and many others are blessed by this upheaval in the market. The hard part is now and the payoff is later, but I promise you it is better than having things go too well too soon. Question/Comment to Dean Testy - As a consumer of legal services, I am always frustrated with the poor business practices of lawyers. The barrier to entry has turned into a right to overpromise, underperform and overcharge. With more efficient business practices, all would be better served. Shouldn't law schools acknowledge that they are training people who will be in business for themselves without training them how to be in business for themselves and adjust the curriculum appropriately? (Not just a plug for my Finance and Accounting for Lawyers class.)

**12:40    Dean Kellye Testy:**

Joe -- good to hear from you! Yes, all students should take your class or a similar one that is offered by their school! Critical skills.

**12:40    Comment From Dan L**

To Elizabeth: Seattle University's "Beyond Traditional" law career fair will be hosted at SU on October 30th. This is a well established event and should be well attended by a number of attorneys who are in non-traditional roles.

**12:43    Comment From Carol**

The crisis I have experienced first hand for decades is the failure of the legal profession to ensure public interest law jobs exist. As a thoroughly dedicated attorney seeking to represent communities, particularly farm workers, facing toxic exposures, I struggled for funding, and faced massive stress for years. Now public interest law jobs are even fewer and farther between. And my sparse funding is gone altogether. I will likely struggle to do pro bono work on environmental policies while getting income elsewhere somehow. Meanwhile lawyers for the "1%" and multi-national corporations abound. Your plan?

**12:43****Dean Kellye Testy:**

Carol -- you have hit on a huge problem. We have far more students who want to go into public interest/service than there are jobs. This stems from huge federal and state cutbacks in funding for public interest/service. We try many things to help with this. One that we are focused on now is to try to create partnerships with agencies and organizations to jointly fund post-grad fellowships in the public interest. This can help grads get a start and helps the agencies by increasing FTE.

**12:44****Comment From Dan Ballbach**

The outsourcing question goes right to the heart of a key profession change pressure. We can not longer assume such work is inferior. Rather it is less expensive and we should be looking at all aspects of legal services to see what can be unbundled and done just as well but more cheaply. Paula's response is great .Face the competition.

**12:44****Comment From Matt**

Was the recent state supreme court approval of rule 28 technicians really needed - is there anyway the WSBA could help direct the poor and undeserved to the population of actual lawyers who just, quite simply, need clients? As an in house counsel I don't really see the need for this new, quasi legal role.

**12:44****Paula Littlewood:**

Matt -- one thing we know is that the spread between the have's and the have not's is increasing and we must figure out how to serve the public in this changing environment. The 2003 Civil Legal Needs study commissioned by our Supreme Court showed us that fully 85% of indigent clients go without the representation they need and the recession has only exacerbated the situation for indigent and moderate income people.

The Supreme Court sees the Legal Technician rule as one of many possible solutions to serve the public. As I referenced above, the WSBA Moderate Means program and other public service programs we are implementing will hopefully help with this important issue

as well.

**12:44 Comment From Bob Cumbow**

It's often said that law school is not a trade school--but in light of recent years I think we should be reassessing that attitude. As an adjunct prof, I often hear students say how much they appreciate being taught issues and approaches that actually relate to the experience of law practice. There is room for intellectual discovery, debate, and learning to "think like a lawyer"; but there should be room also for learning to do what lawyers do.

**12:45 Comment From Emily Hahn**

Joe - Can you please explain in further detail? I'd like know what you anticipate for us new attorney in the future. I'm sure others would agree that it is very hard to "keep your chin up" when bills are mounting that we can't pay. I love and respect our profession but lately I have become very disheartened in the path I chose. I welcome any words of wisdom you have on how this may be a blessing in disguise. Thanks.

**12:45 Comment From Guest**

Paula, you referenced the UBE but isn't it true that the UBE is not the same thing as a national licensing system?

12:45

**Paula Littlewood:**

That is correct since the UBE must be adopted by each state, but it has the potential to become much more of a national system.

12:45

**Comment From Guest**

This question is for Dean Testy: Do you see returning to a two year legal program? I found that my last year of law school consisted of mostly elective classes that could have been fulfilled with CLE's.

12:45

**Dean Kellye Testy:**

Guest ... There are now some law programs that can be done in less than 3 full years, but I'm not a big fan of them. Rather, I'm a big fan of making better use of the third year. Students don't need another year of case reading, or even too many electives as you note. Rather, that year can be used best as a bridge to practice, doing externships, clinics, etc. It can also be used to add many of the skills lawyers need that round out what we usually think of as a "legal" education -- skills like leadership, communication, project management, business management, financial literacy, language skills, etc.

12:46

**Comment From Mark Bardwell**

Above, I asked: "How do we recover from this lost generation?" Emily had asked whether the legal market will return to what it had been. Perhaps we should consider whether the legal market is irreversably changed. One school of thought might be that the mid-2000s economic bubble produced too many lawyers, and the profession must recognize that it must shrink and try to do so in a more orderly way (e.g. cut back on new law school admissions). Another school of thought might be that the oversupply of lawyers does indeed have a role to play, if only it could be easier to practice (e.g. provide malpractice immunity for pro bono work so that unemployed young lawyers can get experience without fear of retribution).

**12:46    Comment From Mark Bardwell**

I would propose that to help with the business skills aspect of a legal education, we look at more hands-on experience for students. Perhaps a mandatory post-graduate apprenticeship, which I believe is how they do it in Canada.

**12:47    Comment From Muriel**

If there is a crisis in the profession, it is that there is not enough money to cover the expenses of the profession anymore

**12:47    Comment From Guest**

It seems that technology holds great opportunity to "democratize" legal services. However, there are at least three main impediments: rules against specialization; jurisdictional rules that hamper the reach which technology affords; and rules precluding non-lawyers from taking an equity position in law firms. If those three changes could be made the legal crisis would be undermined very quickly and we would be in a much position to do what we are supposed to do - help resolve problems of people - not just those who have a great amount of money for legal services.

**12:48    Comment From Bruce**

I agree, and am heartened to hear of real-life practice preparation being incorporated into law school, such as critical skills and leadership issues. I still remember Professor Beaver, (UPS/SU mid-80s), expounding that the best practice prep was Law Review and interning for an appellate court!

**12:48    Comment From Dan**

Has the WSBA ever considered allowing lawyers to meet a small portion of their CLE hours by doing pro-bono work? For example, if a lawyer does 5 hours of pro bono work, this would count in lieu of 5 hours of CLE time for his or her reporting period. This seems to me like a simple way to increase the amount of pro-bono work done by lawyers but without forcing lawyers to do pro-bono work.

**12:48    Moderator:**

Hi Dan - you'll be happy to know we actually already do this. You can find the details here: <http://www.wsba.org/Licensing-and-Lawyer-Conduct/MCLE/Members/CLE-Accreditation#probono>

Also, there are proposed rules being sent to the Supreme Court that, if adopted, will increase the number of credits you can get for doing pro bono work.

**12:50    Comment From Gary Wolfstone**

Greetings Paula. I commend you and our President for your response to the referendum on lowering dues. It surely has been an internal crisis for the WSBA. How do you feel about social networking web sites that give free legal advice to anyone -- sight unseen -- with a keyboard without researching conflicts of interest? Are these web sites engendering greater respect or disrespect for the legal profession?

**12:50    Paula Littlewood:**

Thank you, Gary. The ethical issues are huge and the ABA has spent much time on them. The ethical quagmires are still being worked out. Other questions being raised are what is the responsibility of the online lawyer if the wrong form is used and who has the financial interest in the representation.

My main concern is that the consuming public is getting frustrated because they cannot access the system and often times cannot afford an attorney. The trend we have seen in other countries as a result of this frustration is an erosion of self-regulation by the

profession (e.g., England, Scotland, Wales and Australia).

**12:50    Comment From Anthony**

Is UW focused on placing students in the NLJ 250? Placement with these firms can be very important for the US News and World Report Ranking. My own informal read on the school's focus seems to be on public interest work, rather than placing students in large firms.

**12:50    Dean Kellye Testy:**

Anthony, we are focused on opening a wide range of opportunities for our students. Certainly on the NLJ 250, and also on public interest for those who want that path (and everything in between!). We seek to provide our students knowledge about a wide range of careers so that they can choose the pathway that is best for them. We are a global school -- feet in Washington, but reach around the world -- so we also open opportunities for students in other countries as well.

**12:50    Comment From Alexis**

As a fairly new and recently unemployed attorney, I am having trouble keeping up with my CLE credits because they are often expensive. Are the UW and WSBA going to be offering CLE opportunities at a reduced cost or free for those of us who would like to keep up our licenses but cannot always afford to do so?

**12:50****Dean Kellye Testy:**

Alexis, the University of Washington School of Law offers several inexpensive (basic costs of producing handout materials) CLEs throughout the year. If you are in the Seattle area, visit our website under the Events tab for a complete list of upcoming CLEs.

**12:51****Comment From Leslie Gilbertson**

I am right there with you Ms. Hahn...

**12:51****Comment From Emily Hahn**

I would definitely recommend more hands-on experience. Have many lawyer friends in the UK and Europe. They are required to do a one or two year internship post-graduation before becoming licensed to practice. They are only in law school about two years but their practical experience far outweighs any systems we have in place as American lawyers.

**12:51****Dean Kellye Testy:**

Dan -- good point -- all of our law schools do these programs and they are great opportunities for students to learn about the many careers open to lawyers.

**12:51****Paula Littlewood:**

WSBA has a New Lawyer Education program that offers CLEs at free or reduced rates for attorneys with four or less years of experience. There are also opportunities to obtain CLEs for pro bono service. You can find more information at [wsba.org/nle](http://wsba.org/nle)

**12:53    Comment From Beth**

I'm curious what UW does to connect students with internship/externship opportunities? I went to school out of state and while in WA there are internships at all schools with the legislature no such program existed at my school.

**12:53    Dean Kellye Testy:**

Beth -- we have a requirement that students do an externship so that we help them gain insight into careers and practice experience. We have a full-time director of our program and she (and others) link our students to a wide range of these opportunities. We are very grateful for the employers who supervise our students -- we could not do this without their helpful guidance.

**12:53    Comment From Dan**

Thanks for your answer on the CLE credit for pro bono work. I didn't know that existed but I'm glad it does!

**12:53    Comment From Ken Masters**

Thanks, Paula, helpful indeed. On the "huge changes" for legal education, aside from a more clinically-based approach that helps students become more work-ready and knowledgeable about running a business, do you and the Dean have other ideas about how legal education is/should be changing?

**12:53    Paula Littlewood:**

Ken -- the ABA President recently appointed a Task Force to look at the Future of Legal Education. I was honored to be appointed to that Task Force and will be working closely with our law schools, new lawyers and others here in Washington to provide input to that Task Force and hopefully come up with other solutions.

**12:54    Comment From Bruce**

Thank you Dean Testy and Paula for your time and enthusiasm today. Bruce Kelley, #17393, Lake Wales, FL.

**12:54    Dean Kellye Testy:**

Bruce -- thank you. This is a new format and we'll try it again soon so we can reach out broadly. These are key questions for us to all be discussing. Thanks for signing on!

**12:54    Comment From Joe Brotherton**

Back to Ms. Hahn - You will be in the top 1% (forget the negative connotation that term recently acquired) of people ever born on this earth in terms of worldly goods. You will almost certainly die rich. So money will come, but the satisfaction you will gain by facing adversity, starting your own business and succeeding will be greater than the big firm job. I have observed many more lawyers who got the "good jobs" right out of law school who are either burned out or otherwise dissatisfied in the second decade in practice than those who took unusual turns. There are many of us out here who keep an open door for young practitioners for counsel. JOE

**12:55    Comment From Guest**

Regarding comment from guest stating that allowing non-lawyers to have an equity position in law firms would help the current crisis -- I couldn't disagree more. Allowing non-lawyers to have an equity position would result in non-lawyers influencing decisions that only lawyers have the capacity to full understand.

**12:55    Comment From Mark Bardwell**

Yes, thank you very much. I'm encouraged to know that our leadership is thinking deeply about these issues.

**12:56    Comment From Alexis**

Comment to Joe Brotherton: It's hard to think about "dying rich" when you are buried under \$100,000+ in debt. Please remember that the new attorneys didn't go to law school when you did, when law school was maybe \$8,000 a year and not \$40k+ it is now.

**12:57    Moderator:**

We've had so many great questions from you all! We're working on answering as many as we can in the next few minutes. Thanks!

**12:58    Comment From Dave**

The number of law graduates vastly outnumbers the number of available legal positions, and that trend is likely to continue for the foreseeable future. Do you believe law schools have a societal obligation to significantly reduce their class sizes to account for this disparity ?

**12:58****Dean Kellye Testy:**

Dave,

I do believe that we are responsible for thinking about supply and demand. What is hard about that is that one does not want to be too paternalistic in saying to students who want to go to law school "no -- there are too many of you!" So, I think the critical approach is one of transparency so students know what a legal education can provide and what opportunities will likely open to them. It is a tough issue because one question to ask is "what is the alternative for that student?" And, the good news of a law degree is that it is a three year degree that opens many doors, not just into traditional law practice, but also into business, education, government, etc. I think of it as an advanced degree in complex problem solving, and we all know our world can use some more experts in that!

**12:58****Comment From Jane**

The cost of attending law school has always been high in relation to the starting income at the time of graduation.

**12:58****Comment From Emily Hahn**

Joe - thanks for the comment. I'll hold on to your comment for future reference when the stress begins to mount again. I appreciate the insight of more seasoned attorney and have been very pleasantly surprised at the amount of lawyers who have helped me with advice, mentorship or just a cup of coffee.

**12:59****Comment From Rob Appgood**

Speaking of the Law Clerk program, when is WSBA going to go to bat for its (currently second-class) graduates to receive reciprocity from Oregon and Idaho, just like all the other WSBA members?

**12:59****Paula Littlewood:**

Rob -- you may be interested to see the package of Admission to Practice Rules that the Board is sending to the Court this week. It is a very progressive package, and, if adopted by our Supreme Court, hopefully other states will follow suit.

**12:59****Comment From NP**

First of all, thank you for having this format. There has been lots of studies and efforts regarding diversity issues. Yet, many capable attorneys with diverse backgrounds are leaving the profession. How does our state bar compare to other states as far as diversity issues?

**12:59****Paula Littlewood:**

Washington is recognized nationally for its efforts to promote diversity and inclusion in the profession. Learn more at [wsba.org/about-wsba/diversity](http://wsba.org/about-wsba/diversity). Unfortunately there is not readily available information to show how these results compare nationally.

**12:59****Comment From Jane**

I agree with Rob

**1:00****Comment From Rob Apgood**

Great, Paula! Send me a copy!

**1:00****Dean Kellye Testy:**

Dan L. Given the enthusiastic participation of today's webchat, we will definitely look into the possibility of an in-person Q & A. Excellent idea.

**1:00****Comment From Dan L**

Any thoughts about doing a Q and A like this - on this topic - in person (for those of us in Washington State, at least - no offense to my fellow bar members attending from outside the state)? I think that it might be helpful for those of us who are thinking about these ideas to connect in person and work together.

**1:01****Comment From Beth**

What is being done to assist newer lawyers (last 10 years) who are caught up both by high tuition rates both public and private schools and the job market. I had to take a "non-traditional" job, aka not practicing, after graduation and none of the loan repayment assistance programs help. The only thing I seem to get out of the Young Lawyers membership is invites to events three hours from where I live.

**1:01****Paula Littlewood:**

Beth -- our Young Lawyer Committee in this coming year will continue its focus on transition to practice, leadership opportunities and service to the community. I think you will see some exciting programming statewide focused on the needs of our new attorneys. Thanks!

1:01

**Dean Kellye Testy:**

In closing, thanks to all for signing on today. Paula and I plan to do more of these, so if we did not get to your question, please sign on next time. We also hope that some of our answers to one writer hit on issues raised by others. Our profession has many challenges, but it has never been more important for us all to be leaders for justice and to help address the pressing problems of our world. I'm confident that we can find our way together. We are not immune from change, but need to embrace it for the opportunities it provides.

1:03

**Moderator:**

Thank you everyone for joining us! It was wonderful to have so many people join us and ask such great questions. The transcript will be posted on our website this afternoon.