

# Just The Facts

## Welcome to the September 2023 issue of the “Just the Facts” Law Student Newsletter

Welcome, future lawyers! I hope you have had an amazing start to this year. The State Bar of Wisconsin is aiming to make your transition, whether into law school or into the legal field, as easy and painless as possible. Keep an eye out for this newsletter to stay informed on the benefits and opportunities that are available to you. Have a great year!

”The way of success is the way of continuous pursuit of knowledge.”  
– Napoleon Hill

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## ABA Urges Law Firms to Diversify Hiring Practices for Law Students

**By: Rachel E.**

To foster diversity within the legal profession, law firms have moved away from the traditional way of recruiting. The ABA has suggested a call to action, recently passing a resolution proposing a holistic approach to candidate evaluation for law firms. The resolution advises law firms to consider attributes beyond academic performance such as personal history, experience, pro bono engagement, community engagement, extracurricular activities, teamwork collaborations, and research and writing. The resolution emphasizes the reform of hiring practices.



The ABA recommends hosting workshops and webinars to educate law firms about holistic evaluation practices. Law schools are encouraged to integrate these principles during the on-campus interview process. The resolution also advocates for recognizing and commending law firms that adopt and excel in holistic evaluation.

As you read the article by Rachel E., let me know your thoughts. [Happy reading!](#)

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## Law Student Benefits

Law Student Associate Members, TODAY is the time to start taking advantage of State Bar of Wisconsin benefits that will help you in your present and future law career, including:

- A network of important contacts
- Job search assistance
- Diversity Clerkship Program
- Resources to help you in your studies and professional career
- Experience with issues and concerns you will encounter as a lawyer
- A realistic sense of what to expect in your day-to-day professional life
- Familiarity with the profession that could otherwise take several years to develop
- Current information on the changes in law and impact of coming legislation



**As a Law Student Associate, you can attend State Bar of Wisconsin PINNACLE® continuing legal education programs free of charge!**

State Bar of Wisconsin [PINNACLE](#) is the largest provider of continuing legal education (CLE) in the state. With an emphasis on providing current, relevant, and practical legal information in a convenient manner, PINNACLE is dedicated to meeting the needs of Wisconsin practitioners for CLE in the information age. PINNACLE seminars are available in a variety of formats: Live programs, webcasts, webcast replays, telephone seminars, and web audio programs. Attend the live or webcast version of a seminar and receive free access to the webcast recording for 90 days.



[Check out the current PINNACLE CLE offerings](#)

**Law Student Associates also receive complimentary access to Books UnBound®, the exclusive online digital resource from State Bar of**



Wisconsin PINNACLE<sup>®</sup> that gives you online access to PINNACLE books! Featuring a fast, user-friendly interface, a powerful search function, and one click access to primary law resources, Books UnBound is a one-stop shop for your legal research needs.

Try it today at [booksunbound.wisbar.org](https://booksunbound.wisbar.org)

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## State Bar of Wisconsin Pro Bono Program

Every lawyer has a professional responsibility to provide legal services to those unable to pay, and lawyers should aspire to render at least 50 hours of pro bono public legal services per year.

The Pro Bono Program at the State Bar organizes volunteer opportunities, benefits and resources, and volunteer recognition for members who provide pro bono services. For law students, pro bono work provides an opportunity for hands-on experience helping real consumers resolve their legal problems through established programs. In addition to learning new skills, volunteering serves as an opportunity to meet practicing and retired lawyers within the legal community.

For information about Pro Bono Volunteer Opportunities, browse the Pro Bono Portal for Law Student Opportunities at [Pro Bono \(wisbar.org\)](https://probono.wisbar.org)

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## Networking Opportunities

The most important factors in your job search, besides graduating, is having a large, well-connected network of professional contacts on which to call. Becoming involved in the activities and programs sponsored by the State Bar helps you establish that network. You have opportunities to meet and interact with professionals in several ways, including:

- Attending seminars
  - Attending PINNACLE<sup>®</sup> conferences and institutes
  - Submitting articles for publication in section and division newsletters
  - Attending programs with practicing lawyers
  - Attending programs sponsored by the State Bar at your law school
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## Run into Your Career on Purpose

**Law Student Associates can subscribe to State Bar Sections and start making connections today!** When you become a Law Student

Associate to a section, you gain access to section blogs and newsletters and get connected to experienced attorneys in specific practice areas. After graduation,



**Sections**

join as many sections as you like for one year of FREE membership. In addition, the Business Law, Elder Law and Special Needs, Family Law, Intellectual Property and Technology Law, and Litigation Sections offer two years of free membership to new attorneys. Joining is easy! To see a list of State Bar Sections and Divisions and subscribe, click [here](#).

### **Section Spotlight: Elder Law and Special Needs Section**

Attorneys in the Elder Law and Special Needs Section work to protect the rights of older adults and persons with disabilities and provide advice, information, and advocacy in areas relating to the legal issues that affect their lives. This includes preparing advance directives, counseling clients on long-term care options, assisting clients in applying for and retaining their rights to public benefits that help cover the cost of care, and counseling clients on special needs and pooled trusts. Attorneys in the section represent older adults and persons with disabilities who are victims of abuse and exploitation and work with veterans to obtain needs-based benefits and health care.

The section has an email list and a mentoring e-list, sponsors CLE programs, monitors and proposes legislation, publishes Blogs, and the Elder Law Journal of Wisconsin. The section strives to be open and diverse in its membership, as well as equitable and accessible to all State Bar members. Click [here](#) to find out more about what section members are saying.

Learn more by visiting <http://www.wisbar.org/groups> or by contacting one of our Section Coordinators, Christine Casey ([ccasey@wisbar.org](mailto:ccasey@wisbar.org)) or Kara Olson ([kolson@wisbar.org](mailto:kolson@wisbar.org)).

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## **Rural Practice Newsletter**

**by Paige Juel**

- **Lifestyle.** Why vacation “Up North” when you can live there? The list of all the great activities you could enjoy would be too long to list here, but even just being near it , or out in the middle of it, can be a pleasure and a privilege.
- **Demand. Demand. Demand!** The biggest myth about Northern and rural Wisconsin counties is that they are practically empty and do not need attorneys. In reality, every county in Wisconsin has thousands of residents. And many are facing a shortage of attorneys and an unmet demand for a variety of legal services.
- **More General Practice.** Variety is the spice of life, and general practitioners thrive in rural Wisconsin.
- **Immediate Experience.** Whether it’s direct contact with clients, courtroom experience, or larger responsibility, you can probably find a firm or town that will gladly let you do just that - and sooner than you

imagine.

- **Excited Mentors.** Your future peers can't wait for you to join them. I've yet to meet an attorney who wasn't thrilled to welcome new members to their county. You can also access a bounty of support from the State Bar.
- **Lower Cost of Living.** Your daily, monthly, and yearly expenses can be significantly lower in many towns across the state. And if you want to be a homeowner, in some towns your mortgage can be a literal fraction of what it would be in Madison or Milwaukee. If you think that you have too much student debt to work in rural Wisconsin, you might be looking at it all wrong.
- **Bigger Impact in a Local Community.** Both in and outside of work, you have a real opportunity to be a leader in your hometown.
- **Something for Everyone.** Rural Wisconsin has many of the same opportunities as Madison and Milwaukee. It has specialists, contract attorneys, big firms, in-house attorneys, you name it. And its towns have thriving communities and businesses that you'll want to experience for yourself.
- **No Traffic!** Just trust me, it's awesome.

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## Health & Wellness in the Legal Profession

The Wisconsin Lawyers Assistance Program (WisLAP) offers confidential well-being support to lawyers, judges, and law students. WisLAP staff are available for in-person, virtual, or phone



one-on-one consultations, mental health training, and well-being presentations. Additionally, WisLAP-trained volunteers are available for individualized peer-to-peer support upon request. The Lawyers Assistance Program aims to develop a culture within the Wisconsin legal community that fosters work-life balance and destigmatizes mental illness and substance use disorders. WisLAP services are free as a benefit of your membership. For more information or to set up a consultation, visit [Wisbar.org/wislap](https://wisbar.org/wislap)

Interested in writing or reading about the legal profession's wellness tips and tricks? Check out WellNews, the WisLAP quarterly newsletter. WellNews September 2023 will highlight the voice of a 3L Marquette student. If you are interested in getting involved with WisLAP as a mentee, volunteer, or future committee member, email the WisLAP Member Coordinator, Amber Gilles, [agilles@wisbar.org](mailto:agilles@wisbar.org).

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## Prepare for Your Career with Help from an Attorney Advisor

Interested in getting a head start before you



graduate? Would you like to learn more about certain practice areas? If so, the State Bar of Wisconsin's [Ready.Set.Practice. Mentoring Program](#) is for you!



Ready.Set.Practice. matches law students and new lawyers looking for career guidance with experienced attorney advisors. If you're looking for advice on the transition from studying law to practicing law, or you want to know more about an area of practice, this is a great opportunity to learn and expand your professional network.

We strongly encourage diverse law students to take advantage of this opportunity to be paired with an advisor who can help answer your questions about entering the legal profession.

We know time is precious. This program is designed for busy law students and lawyers, complete with supporting materials that enable you to get right to work. We encourage you to communicate with your lawyer advisor via phone, email, or videoconference. You can meet with them as often as your schedule allows during the school year to get answers to your questions about practicing law.

To apply, [visit WisBar.org and complete the online form](#) by October 15th. Contact [Karen Beall](#) with any questions.

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## **Tune in to Bottom Up: The WisLawNOW Podcast for Young Lawyers**

Bottom Up is a WisLawNOW podcast produced by the State Bar of Wisconsin. Discussions are geared toward young lawyers, and include relatable stories highlighting interests, challenges, and opportunities for attorneys in their first decade of practice. Bottom Up is available on multiple platforms. [Listen now!](#)



### **In Case You Missed It:**

Episode 12: Navigating New Opportunities with Confidence: Christa Wittenberg  
Milwaukee-based attorney Christa Wittenberg, a 2012 graduate of the University of Michigan Law School, never thought she would ever work for a law firm. But plans change.

Now after 9 years with O'Neil, Cannon, Hollman, Dejong & Laing S.C., Wittenberg was recently elected to serve on the firm's 3-person Board of Directors. In the firm's 50-year history, she is the first woman to serve in that role. In addition to her commercial litigation practice, Wittenberg will help the firm – which has approximately 40 attorneys – navigate its most important decisions.

In this episode, co-hosts Emil Ovbiagele and Kristen Hardy chat with Wittenberg about how she got there. She provides a look at law firm structure and governance, and how to navigate new opportunities with confidence.

A wife, mother, and self-described “yes person,” she also talks about her nonprofit work with Lotus Legal Clinic and how that fits in with her desire to help make the world a better place. And of course, a major theme for all episodes, the trio explores wellness and work-life balance.

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## Scholarship Opportunities

[Marquette Law School](#)

[UW Law School](#)

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## Opportunities

### Establish Your Reputation: Write for Your State Bar

Raise your profile, advance your career, and share your perspective with other legal professionals by writing for the State Bar. Through our nationally recognized publications like Wisconsin Lawyer magazine, there are so many ways to show your stuff and shape the profession. Learn more at <https://www.wisbar.org/contribute.aspx>.

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Check out the [ABA Journal](#) for Law Student News across the country

### Share ideas or topics you'd like to see us capture in the newsletter by emailing me!

Jacque Evans M.Ed.  
Diversity & Inclusion Specialist  
State Bar of Wisconsin  
[www.wisbar.org](http://www.wisbar.org)  
[jevans@wisbar.org](mailto:jevans@wisbar.org)  
(608) 250-6083  
(800) 444-9404, ext. 6083

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