



INTERIM REPORT LEGAL PROFESSIONALISM COMMITTEE

JULY 2016



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PREFACE

These interim reports outline the work-to-date of the North Carolina Commission on the Administration of Law and Justice (NCCALJ). Chief Justice Mark Martin convened the independent, multidisciplinary commission in September of 2015, and charged the members to evaluate the North Carolina judicial system and provide findings and recommendations for strengthening our courts within the existing administrative framework.

Sixty-five voting members and additional non-voting guests were asked to serve, drawn statewide from business, academia, the bar, the non-profit sector, the Legislature, and the Judicial Branch, to ensure a well-rounded evaluation of the judicial system. Each of the members serves on one of five NCCALJ committees studying the areas of civil justice, criminal investigation and adjudication, legal professionalism, public trust and confidence, and technology. Over the past 10 months, these committees have held forty meetings where members heard presentations from more than ninety different national and statewide experts, practitioners, and court officials, resulting in productive and focused dialogue.

The NCCALJ Wants to Hear From You

The NCCALJ recognizes the vital importance of public participation in the process of court system improvement. The interim reports that follow are intended to inform the public of the relevant issues the committees are addressing and to invite input and feedback. Submit comments online at www.nccalj.org/interim-reports or sign up to speak in person at one of the four public hearings scheduled for August 2016. The dates, locations, and sign-up forms for those meetings are also at the commission's website.

In the fall of 2016, the NCCALJ's five committees will incorporate the public feedback into final recommendations to be presented to the Chief Justice, the Legislature, and the public in early 2017.

The NCCALJ thanks you for your feedback on how North Carolina courts can best meet institutional needs and 21st century public expectations. We look forward to hearing from you.

This Interim Report states and describes the interim recommendations of the Legal Professionalism Committee of the North Carolina Commission on the Administration of Law and Justice. Before stating these recommendations, the report offers background for them.

I. THE CHARGE OF THIS COMMITTEE

At its meeting on September 30, 2015, the Legal Professionalism Committee discussed the following charge to guide its work:

- The mission of the North Carolina Commission on the Administration of Law and Justice is to consider how North Carolina courts can best meet our 21st century legal needs and the expectations of the public, ensuring that we can continue to provide justice for all.
- The role of the Legal Professionalism Committee is to consider and evaluate possible changes in our system of delivery of legal services. The committee will explore ways to address structural challenges that affect access to justice, including the barriers that create a lack of affordable legal services for large segments of our population, the costs and debt associated with a legal education, and the challenges of developing and sustaining a legal career.
- Democratic societies are founded on a shared belief in the rule of law and the integrity of the judiciary. Any change that the committee considers must take into account the core values of our system of justice, including the exercise of independent judgment on behalf of clients, the absence of conflicts, and confidentiality of client communications. The committee will also consider the need to protect the public from unskilled advisors and the effects of unrepresented parties on the court system.

II. THE STATUS QUO ON THE ISSUES UNDER STUDY, AS WELL AS FACTORS THAT ARE CAUSING CHANGE IN THE STATUS QUO

Over the last year, the committee has studied the delivery of law-related services in North Carolina and nationwide. The committee has identified several issues that are affecting, and will continue to affect, the dynamics of law-related services and the needs of clients.

Access to Justice in North Carolina

Civil legal services are currently beyond the reach of many North Carolinians. Many of our citizens cannot afford to hire a lawyer even for relatively inexpensive services, such as a will or an uncontested divorce. In a recent North Carolina poll, 73% of survey respondents disagreed with the statement that most people can afford to bring a case to court.¹

¹ High Point University Poll, Nov. 19, 2015.

Further, it is not only the indigent who find themselves priced out of the market for legal services. Small and mid-sized companies, for example, find it increasingly difficult to afford to retain lawyers to address the legal issues that inevitably arise in a modern business.

In addition, access to lawyers can have non-economic dimensions. For example, some rural areas of North Carolina are losing lawyers as lawyers retire or move to more densely populated areas. Likewise, non-English-speaking North Carolinians have trouble finding lawyers who can advise them in their own languages.

These problems have led many people to try to represent themselves — not only in transactions, but in court as well. A 2015 study by the National Center on State Courts found that “at least one party was self-represented in more than three-quarters of civil cases.” Although some of these parties might represent themselves for idiosyncratic reasons, most of them do so because they cannot afford a lawyer (or believe that they cannot).

The increasing prevalence of self-represented litigants poses many challenges to our civil-justice system. These litigants are often tripped up by procedural rules and other features of our complex legal system. They often seek help from clerks and judges, draining the courts’ limited resources and making the judicial process less efficient. In addition, requests from self-represented litigants sometimes create dilemmas for judges and clerks, whose ethical duties bar them from giving legal advice.

The North Carolina courts have made efforts to assist self-represented litigants by providing templates and forms. However, our committee has learned that these documents are not standardized from one North Carolina county to another. Further, the forms are largely unavailable online, unlike the forms in most other states. These difficulties magnify the confusion and bad outcomes that self-represented litigants often experience.

Paradoxically, many clients’ legal needs are going unmet at the same time that many lawyers cannot find steady legal employment. The ranks of these unemployed and underemployed lawyers span the generations, and they increase with each graduating law school class. In addition, many law graduates, even those who go into practice by themselves, graduate with heavy debt burdens that make it untenable for them to offer low-cost legal services.² Law school debt also deters many lawyers from practicing in rural areas of the state.

In sum, there is ample demand for law-related services, but relatively few clients can afford the high-cost, customized legal services that law graduates are trained to provide. This mismatch between client needs and the types of services being offered requires careful study and creative solutions.

The Definition of the Practice of Law in North Carolina

Chapter 84 of the North Carolina General Statutes defines the practice of law. The definition is broad: it includes “performing any legal service for any other person, firm or corporation, with or without compensation.” N.C. Gen. Stat. § 84-2.1. In recent years, North Carolina has witnessed intense litigation over whether certain online services, such as LegalZoom, involve the unauthorized practice of law.

² See, e.g., Noam Scheiber, *An Expensive Law Degree, and No Place to Use It*, *N.Y. Times* (June 17, 2016), <http://mobile.nytimes.com/2016/06/19/business/dealbook/an-expensive-law-degree-and-no-place-to-use-it.html>.

North Carolina’s definition of the practice of law has not been comprehensively updated to address changes in the market for law-related services. The General Assembly recently adopted chapter 84 amendments that resolve the lawsuits involving LegalZoom. These amendments are mostly a tailored response to issues raised in the LegalZoom cases. A comprehensive update to chapter 84, in contrast, will be one that (1) addresses the unmet legal needs of many North Carolinians, as discussed above, and (2) decides the status of emerging providers of law-related services, as discussed in the next section.

Alternative Providers of Law-Related Services

In North Carolina today, the majority of legal services continue to be provided by lawyers in small partnerships or solo practices.

In the United States, more generally, however, technology and other market forces are expanding the law-related services that are available. Technology companies and entrepreneurs are making efforts to meet the demand for affordable law-related services.

These technology-based providers offer a variety of services. Some address discrete legal problems, such as preparing wills, deeds, or contracts. Others take on larger projects, such as providing short-term lawyers to corporations, helping companies analyze high-volume contracts, and helping people comply with government regulations.

In addition, some states are experimenting with licensing independent non-lawyer providers of law-related services. These limited-license legal technicians are not admitted to the bar and generally do not have a law degree. Even so, they are authorized to help clients with a strictly defined range of law-related tasks. The goals of allowing and licensing these services include (1) offering an alternative to lawyers’ services in discrete areas and (2) regulating the alternative services in the interest of consumer protection.

North Carolina’s Institutions that Regulate Entry into the Practice of Law

Entry into the practice of law in North Carolina is regulated by chapter 84 of the North Carolina General Statutes. Chapter 84 is implemented by the North Carolina State Bar, the North Carolina Board of Law Examiners, and the courts. The State Bar and Board of Law Examiners are state agencies.

The State Bar is governed by the State Bar Council, which is composed of licensed North Carolina lawyers. The councilors are elected, within geographic districts, by other licensed lawyers. The State Bar, through its Authorized Practice of Law Committee, makes decisions on whether to pursue unauthorized-practice charges or lawsuits against people or companies that provide law-related services.

The Board of Law Examiners considers applications for admission into the State Bar and administers the North Carolina Bar Examination. The Board is composed of lawyers selected by the State Bar Council.

The courts play a role in regulating entry into the practice of law, but only when they decide lawsuits or appeals on unauthorized practice or similar issues. On rare occasions, the courts get

involved in bar admissions when they rule on appeals from decisions of the Board of Law Examiners.

In most states, the State Bar or equivalent agency is housed directly within the Judicial Branch. In those states, the Judicial Branch has greater ability to change who can provide legal services and to change how legal services may be provided. These changes typically do not require approval by other branches of government.

In North Carolina, in contrast, changing the requirements for entry into the legal profession would require amending chapter 84, then implementing the changes through a regulatory structure controlled by lawyers. This structure arguably insulates the status quo from change, even in situations where clients' needs or the dynamics of law-related services are changing.

North Carolina's Institutions that Regulate Lawyers

The State Bar regulates the professional conduct of lawyers by handling disciplinary matters, issuing ethical opinions, and offering information to lawyers and the public.

The State Bar investigates complaints of professional misconduct, then prosecutes cases before a statutorily created tribunal called the Disciplinary Hearing Commission. Twelve of the 20 members of this commission are lawyers appointed by the State Bar Council. The remaining eight are non-lawyer citizens of North Carolina who are appointed by the Governor and the General Assembly. Each panel of the Disciplinary Hearing Commission consists of two lawyers and a public member.

The courts also have inherent authority to regulate the conduct of lawyers who appear before them. This authority operates in parallel with the authority of the State Bar. In addition, the North Carolina courts play a role in shaping the law on professional conduct when they decide appeals from decisions of the Disciplinary Hearing Commission, as well as lawsuits filed in the state trial courts in the first instance.

The State Bar also adopts rules that govern the practice of law, including the Revised Rules of Professional Conduct. The North Carolina Supreme Court has the authority to approve, change, or reject those rules. The State Bar also administers certain programs that the North Carolina Supreme Court has created, such as the Interest on Lawyers' Trust Accounts program and the Client Security Fund

North Carolina's Criteria and Methods for Assessing Candidates for the Practice of Law

Another factor that affects the supply (and quality) of law-related services in North Carolina is the way that the state assesses new candidates for law practice.

The Board of Law Examiners administers a two-day written exam that seeks to ensure that a law graduate has a reasonable level of competence as a lawyer. One day of this exam consists of essays on selected aspects of North Carolina substantive law. The other day consists of the multiple-choice Multistate Bar Examination. Bar applicants must also pass the Multistate Professional Responsibility Examination. They must also undergo an extensive background check and demonstrate good character to the satisfaction of the Board of Law Examiners.

These methods of assessing candidates have remained essentially the same for decades. Over the last few years, however, the percentage of candidates who are failing the bar exam has been rising. There has also been a sharp increase in the share of candidates who exhibit serious problems with character and fitness.

North Carolina allows licensed lawyers from 36 states and the District of Columbia to apply for admission by comity — that is, without taking the North Carolina Bar Examination. These admissions require an extensive application process. Rulings on comity applications often take several months.

In contrast, under chapter 84A of the General Statutes, North Carolina allows lawyers whose only law license is from another country (or from Puerto Rico, Guam, or the U.S. Virgin Islands) to practice law independently in this state. To do so, these foreign legal consultants, as they are called, need not be admitted to the bar of any U.S. state. However, the statute limits them to a scope of practice narrower than the scope allowed for North Carolina-licensed lawyers.

With narrow exceptions, all candidates for law licensure in North Carolina must be graduates of law schools approved by the State Bar Council. This list of law schools is limited to ABA-accredited law schools.

Many other states have begun reassessing their methods for assessing candidates for the practice of law. Currently, 23 states have adopted the Uniform Bar Examination. Each state that adopts the Uniform Bar Examination has the option of adding a state-specific component to the exam. The Uniform Bar Examination is administered and graded according to uniform guidelines created by the National Conference of Bar Examiners. The exam results in a score that is portable among any of the participating states. The North Carolina Board of Law Examiners is currently assessing the Uniform Bar Examination.

In addition, some states are experimenting with performance-based methods of testing bar applicants. For example, a majority of states administer the Multistate Performance Test, an exam that requires an applicant to carry out simulated lawyering for a simulated client.

III. OUR INTERIM RECOMMENDATIONS AND SUPPORTING REASONS

The committee has heard from multiple speakers and has reviewed extensive written material on the issues discussed above. An attachment to this report lists the speakers who have appeared before the committee so far. The committee has now formed several interim recommendations. This section of the report states these recommendations and summarizes the reasons for them.

Recommendation 1

The committee endorses the work of the North Carolina Equal Access to Justice Commission and the related North Carolina Pro Bono Resource Center.

The committee recommends that the Equal Access to Justice Commission explore ways to increase the help offered to self-represented litigants throughout North Carolina. For example, the Equal Access Commission might consider the following projects:

- Analyzing whether the North Carolina court system is accessible to and usable by self-represented litigants. This analysis should consider whether the current level of access raises any due process issues.
- Creating a statewide action plan for self-represented litigants.
- Identifying ways to streamline commonly encountered court processes to make them easier for self-represented litigants to handle.
- Standardizing forms and templates for pro se litigants across North Carolina.
- Studying trial courts' local rules and identifying ways to standardize or consolidate these rules as much as is reasonable.
- Creating websites with user-friendly court information and online forms, with links to live assistance from court personnel.
- Providing online triage services that give self-represented litigants routes for pursuing their cases and, at the same time, help the courts process and track cases.
- Offering standard training to help judges and court personnel work with self-represented litigants.
- Forging agreements with law schools' clinical programs, in an effort to involve law students (under supervision) in client service.
- Developing court assistance offices, self-help centers, and courtroom-based resources to help self-represented litigants.
- Collaborating with public libraries and law libraries to help self-represented litigants.
- Collecting and analyzing data on the barriers facing unrepresented litigants, how unrepresented litigants fare in court, and the impact of efforts to help them.

The committee also recommends that the North Carolina Pro Bono Resource Center consider the following initiatives:

- Developing a statewide campaign to educate North Carolina lawyers about their responsibility to provide pro bono legal services under Rule 6.1 of North Carolina's Revised Rules of Professional Conduct.
- Working with local bar organizations to develop pro bono projects throughout North Carolina.

- Expanding training opportunities for lawyers who volunteer to provide pro bono legal services.
- Supporting efforts to track and recognize North Carolina lawyers' pro bono service.

Summary of Reasons for Recommendation 1:

As an unfortunate side effect of North Carolina's current system for delivery of legal services, many North Carolinians have law-related needs, but cannot afford lawyers. The committee discussed a wide range of possible direct initiatives to fill the justice gap in North Carolina.

The committee received especially valuable information from the North Carolina Equal Access to Justice Commission. For several years, the Equal Access Commission has been studying the causes of the justice gap and possible solutions. Our committee considers it important for North Carolina to speak with one voice on these issues. Thus, we endorse the work and recommendations of the Equal Access Commission.

Although all of the Equal Access Commission's work is important, the committee would like to highlight and endorse the Equal Access Commission's initiatives in two areas:

Finding Ways to Accommodate Self-Represented Litigants

Across the United States, the abundance of self-represented litigants is among the biggest challenges facing the courts. Most aspects of the court system are not designed for use by people who litigate without the help of a lawyer. Most self-represented litigants have only a limited understanding of the substantive law involved in their cases, the meaning of legal terms, the rules of evidence and procedure, and filing deadlines. They face challenges at every step, including filing a lawsuit, serving process, conducting and responding to discovery, and more. In sum, the absence of a lawyer makes it unlikely that unrepresented parties can achieve their objectives in court.

As another concern, when unrepresented parties try to file papers, interact with court officials and opposing counsel, and appear in court, their efforts often strain the resources of the court system and cause difficulties in the litigation process. Judges and court officials often face difficult choices over how much they can help unrepresented parties.

To ease these challenges, courts in some states have started efforts to make the court system more user-friendly for self-represented litigants.³

One opportunity for improvement in North Carolina involves the substantial county-to-county variation in trial courts' forms and local practices. These variations make it especially difficult for self-represented parties to identify which forms they might need to use, and to understand those forms. The variations even make it difficult for pro bono lawyers to represent litigants across county lines.

³ For example, the state courts of Utah and California have launched self-help websites that provide standardized forms, explanations of basic procedural steps, and links to the substantive law that most self-represented people encounter. See *Utah Courts, Self-Help Resources / Self-Represented Parties*, <https://www.utcourts.gov/selfhelp/> (last visited June 30, 2016); *The California Courts Self-Help Center*, <http://www.courts.ca.gov/selfhelp.htm> (last visited June 30, 2016).

The committee encourages the Equal Access Commission to recommend measures that will reduce the burdens faced by self-represented parties and volunteer lawyers. Although the committee defers to the Equal Access Commission on the best choice of measures, worthwhile efforts might include those listed in the body of Recommendation 1.

None of these measures, however, should be viewed as a substitute for trained, competent counsel in appropriate cases. Through technology-enhanced tools and case management orders, the court system should notify self-represented litigants, as early as is practical in a given case, what free or low-cost legal services might be available and how to obtain them. These systems should be designed to match legal-aid resources and volunteer lawyers' services with the litigants who need them the most and would benefit from them the most.

Advancing Pro Bono Efforts

Rule 6.1 of North Carolina's Revised Rules of Professional Conduct confirms that each lawyer has a professional obligation to provide legal services to those who are unable to pay. The rule urges all lawyers, regardless of their professional roles, "to render at least (50) hours of pro bono publico legal services per year."

Since the adoption of Rule 6.1 in 2010, however, there have been only limited efforts to educate North Carolina lawyers on their ethical duty to provide pro bono legal services. Although pro bono lawyers alone cannot serve the needs of all clients who seek help, pro bono programs and dedicated pro bono volunteer lawyers can play a crucial role in bridging the justice gap and helping legal-aid organizations to serve those most in need.

In 2014, the Equal Access Commission surveyed lawyers across the state to identify current pro bono activities and barriers to increasing pro bono service. According to the survey, the resources that would be most likely to encourage pro bono service include (1) an online portal to review and select pro bono opportunities, (2) manuals on skills and best practices, and (3) a statewide agency to connect lawyers with organizations that administer pro bono activities.

In 2016, the Equal Access Commission established the North Carolina Pro Bono Resource Center with the goal of increasing pro bono participation statewide. The initial activities of the Pro Bono Resource Center include these:

- Providing support for existing pro bono activities through recruitment, training, and opportunities for collaboration.
- Communicating to lawyers statewide about pro bono projects.
- Developing pro bono projects, with an initial focus on projects to deploy recent law school graduates to meet unmet legal needs in Wake and Mecklenburg counties.
- Implementing voluntary pro bono reporting.
- Recognizing lawyers' pro bono service statewide.

The committee endorses these efforts.

Recommendation 2

The Legal Professionalism Committee should continue to study (and, if appropriate, propose changes to) the definition of the practice of law in North Carolina, as well as the entities with the authority to adjust that definition. Any proposals should account for the evolving needs and expectations of clients, as well as the impact of technology on law-related services. The committee should also study whether North Carolina should license or certify any other providers of law-related services — and, if so, what categories of providers should be licensed or certified, and how these providers should be regulated.

Summary of Reasons for Recommendation 2:

Chapter 84 of the North Carolina General Statutes defines the practice of law in North Carolina, limits the entities and persons who can provide services within that definition, and provides for the regulation of those persons and entities. With the exception of a recent enactment that is currently before the Governor, these statutes have not been updated since the internet age began.

Over the last 15 years, new modes of providing law-related services have emerged. The emergence of these services has generated uncertainty and intense litigation over unauthorized-practice issues.

Some states, moreover, have begun to experiment with limited-license providers of law-related services: persons with some legal training, but less training than a lawyer has, who are allowed to provide a strictly defined set of law-related services.

Currently, large numbers of North Carolinians with law-related needs are not having those needs met by lawyers. The demand for law-related services in North Carolina and the available supply of those services are not matching.

The definition of the practice of law, as well as the statutes that decide who can provide services that fall within that definition, limit the quantity and types of law-related services that are available in this state. Statutes of this type, however, exist for good reasons — most notably, to prevent incompetent or unfit practitioners from harming consumers.

In an effort to improve the matching of supply and demand, the committee plans to study possible updates to chapter 84. The committee will continue to review the effects of technological change on law-related services, the many types of possible providers of law-related services, and the great variation of possible law-related services. Any recommended updates will address the need to protect consumers from incompetent or unfit practitioners, deceptive practices, and other forms of exploitation.

Recommendation 3

The Legal Professionalism Committee should continue to study (and, if appropriate, propose changes to) the choice of the organization(s) with the authority to regulate entry into the practice of law, as well as entry into any other regulated tiers of law-related services. Likewise, the Legal Professionalism Committee should continue to study (and, if appropriate, propose changes to) the choice of the organization(s) with the authority to regulate the professional conduct of lawyers and any other providers of law-related services.

Summary of Reasons for Recommendation 3:

As noted above, chapter 84 of the North Carolina General Statutes limits the practice of law to licensed lawyers and creates the framework for the regulation of law-related services in North Carolina. Of course, the precise effects of chapter 84 depend on more than the text of the statutes. Those effects also depend on the choice of the institutions that implement chapter 84, as well as the decisions and conduct of those institutions.

Currently, chapter 84 is implemented in part by the Council of the North Carolina State Bar — a Council elected by practicing lawyers — and its appointees and staff. Those who enforce chapter 84 also include the Disciplinary Hearing Commission, a majority of the members of which are lawyers appointed by the State Bar Council.

The North Carolina courts also play a role in regulating the practice of law in this state. The North Carolina Supreme Court reviews and approves rules proposed by the State Bar Council. Lawsuits alleging unauthorized practice are generally filed in the North Carolina trial courts. Decisions in those cases, as well as decisions of the Disciplinary Hearing Commission, are appealable to the North Carolina appellate courts.

In the wake of *North Carolina State Board of Dental Examiners v. FTC*, 135 S. Ct. 1101 (2015), courts and federal antitrust agencies are scrutinizing the makeup, authority, and actions of organizations that regulate licensed professionals. This committee expresses no opinion on how North Carolina's institutions that regulate entry into the practice of law would fare under a *Dental Board* analysis.

The prospect of a *Dental Board* analysis, however, makes it appropriate to study the makeup, roles, and histories of the institutions involved and what steps they can take to manage and avoid potential antitrust risks. This study will consider whether there is a policy basis for recommending any change in the interaction of these institutions. In addition, the committee's study will complement possible changes to chapter 84 that might result from the committee's further work.

Recommendation 4

An appropriate organization should study the standards and methods that North Carolina should use in the future to assess candidates for the practice of law, as well as candidates to provide any other licensed or certified categories of law-related services. The standards and methods should consider the evolving scope of the practice of law, the scope of practice of any other regulated type of law-related services, recent and future changes in the dynamics of law-related services, and the needs of clients.

Summary of Reasons for Recommendation 4:

North Carolina has used essentially the same methods to assess candidates for the practice of law for many years. Several developments suggest a need to study, and possibly update, those methods:

- Clients are seeking a wider range of services from lawyers. In some cases, they are seeking new or more limited services, such as “unbundled” strategic and technical advice, document review, or form completion.
- More candidates present serious issues with character and fitness than in earlier eras.

- Many states are considering alternatives to the traditional bar exam, including performance-based exams and apprenticeship-like systems.

If the definition of the practice of law in North Carolina changes, this change will call for further adaptation of the skills and other characteristics required of lawyers. Moreover, if North Carolina decides to license or certify any non-lawyer providers of law-related services, the state will need to find ways to assess candidates for those roles.

The committee believes that these questions deserve sustained review that will extend beyond the tenure of this committee. Bar examiners and lawyer regulators nationwide are currently studying the policy issues in this area. In addition, the issues involve matters of test methodology that lie beyond the expertise of this committee. Finally, some decisions in this area will be possible only *after* this committee's other recommendations — for example, its recommendations on who can provide law-related services — are implemented or rejected.

For these reasons, the committee recommends that the standards and methods for assessing candidates be referred to another appropriate group.

IV. OUR INVITATION TO READERS

Thank you for reading this interim report. If you have questions or comments on our recommendations or any aspect of the committee's work, please feel free to share them with us. You can get in touch with us through the NCCALJ website or in any of the public meetings that the NCCALJ will be holding throughout the state.

/s/ Matt Sawchak
Reporter

July 2016

V. ATTACHMENT

Speakers Who Have So Far Appeared Before the Legal Professionalism Committee

North Carolina has used essentially the same methods to assess candidates for the practice of law for many years. Several developments suggest a need to study, and possibly update, those methods:

- Professor William Henderson, Indiana University Maurer School of Law (videotaped)
- Alice Mine, North Carolina State Bar
- Peter Bolac, North Carolina State Bar
- Dan Lear, Director of Industry Relations, Avvo
- Chas Rampenthal, General Counsel, LegalZoom
- Dean Andrew Perlman, Suffolk University School of Law
- Jaye Meyer, Chair, North Carolina Board of Law Examiners
- Lee Vlahos, Executive Director, North Carolina Board of Law Examiners
- Jim Leipold, Executive Director, National Association for Law Placement
- Paul Carr, President, Axiom
- Kelly Zitzmann, General Counsel, Axiom
- Reid Phillips, outside counsel for Capital Associated Industries
- Jennifer Lechner, Executive Director, North Carolina Equal Access to Justice Commission
- Sylvia Novinsky, Director, North Carolina Pro Bono Resource Center