



Welcome!

Ms. JD is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization dedicated to supporting and improving the experiences of women law students and lawyers. Visit the Ms. JD website to learn more [about Ms. JD](#)—our online community, publications, mission statement, [leadership](#) and [programming](#).

Founded at Stanford Law School in 2006 by a group of female law students from law schools across the country, Ms. JD remains close to her law school roots as home to the [National Women Law Students' Organization](#) (NWLSO). Four years later, we discovered that there was a wealth of knowledge among law student organizations that should really be shared. So, in 2010, the research for this handbook began. We've interviewed dozens of women law student leaders to create this guide and come up with the very best practices in running (or starting!) a women's law organization. We invite you to continue the conversation on [our blog](#) and [Facebook page](#).

If you have any questions, comments, or suggestions regarding this handbook, please contact Ms. JD's NWLSO Liaison, Liz Hague, at [nwls@ms-jd.org](mailto:nwls@ms-jd.org).

We look forward to being in touch!

Warmly,

Ms. JD

# *Ms. JD National Women Law Students' Organization (NWLSO) Chapter Handbook*

## *Ms. JD & NWLSO*

Before Ms. JD's founding, women's law student organizations existed at law schools around the country, but no strong national network existed to bring them all together. For the purposes of this guide, Ms. JD and NWLSO will be used interchangeably, though NWLSO is technically Ms. JD's student arm. There are currently dozens of NWLSO chapters and affiliates across the country, as well as a [growing individual membership](#).

NWLSO's goal is to support female law students, in whatever capacity that may be, from brainstorming events to connecting chapters and affiliates with potential speakers to providing a blogging platform where your writing will be featured on a site that receives over 27,000 visitors per month. Quite simply, NWLSO exists to support all law students. Ms. JD is the premier national organization for women in the law, and, by joining NWLSO, you will gain access to the wide range of Ms. JD's resources for women.

## *Starting a NWLSO Chapter*

*Note: Many law schools may have specific guidelines regarding how to start student organizations on campus (for example, some schools require student organizations to have a faculty adviser, constitution, or by-laws). You should review the procedures and guidelines for your school prior to beginning the process of starting a Ms. JD chapter, but NWLSO is always here to help you work through this process or speak to administration about the benefits of having a NWLSO chapter on your campus.*

*There is no membership fee or other cost associated with forming an official Ms. JD presence on your campus. The only NWLSO membership requirements are that chapters be nonpolitical (they cannot participate in any political activities whatsoever) and that they be committed to diversity and inclusivity.*

- ✓ **Email Ms. JD Leadership:** To start the process of becoming a NWLSO chapter or affiliate, email Liz Hague, Ms. JD NWLSO liaison and member of the Ms. JD Board of Directors, at [nwls@ms-jd.org](mailto:nwls@ms-jd.org). Although this can happen at any point in the school year, we find it works particularly well to reach out in the spring or summer, as this will give you time to get your organization set up before the school year begins. Make sure to include a list of members and contact details, if you have them. (This doesn't need to be extensive, but if you have other interested students it'd be great to have their contact details as well.) Additionally, if you'd like to see if there already is a NWLSO chapter or affiliation at your law school, you can reach out as well.
  
- ✓ **Connect with the Ms. JD Network:** Once you've received a confirmation back from Ms. JD, you're affiliated and part of the Ms. JD network. We encourage all chapters and affiliates to then follow our [Facebook page](#), [Twitter](#), [blog](#), and [LinkedIn](#). Also be sure to add your organization's email address to the [Ms. JD NWLSO Newsletter list here](#). You can use these various platforms to connect with other law students and practitioners in your geographic area and beyond, update the community on events you've had, and invite nearby schools to attend your fundraisers, panels, and conferences.

- ✓ **Create a constitution and/or by-laws for your organization:** In order to become an official student organization, many law schools require the organization to have a constitution and/or by-laws. Even if your school doesn't require this, creating this document will help you articulate who you are, what your values are, and will guide your work and programming. A sample chapter constitution is [available here](#).
- ✓ **Hold a general interest/orientation event:** To educate your fellow students about your chapter and to attract new members, we suggest holding a NWLSO chapter orientation. This event should ideally take place at the beginning of the new school year, when 1Ls are enthusiastic about joining new student organizations, 2Ls are anxious about their job search, and 3Ls are wondering how to transition from law school to a legal career. To draw the biggest crowd to general interest event, we recommend using email (schools will often provide access to the student body email list to help you publicize events and organizations), flyer around campus, and student organization fairs to get the word out. Perhaps most importantly, share your enthusiasm for NWLSO through personal connections and emails. People respond well to passion and enthusiasm, and hearing you express why you're excited about the organization will definitely encourage people to take part in your chapter.
- ✓ **Create a flexible group structure:** Generally, chapters create an officer system for their board. Participation will vary from person to person, so try to gauge who would like to take on additional responsibilities, such as planning for an event, advertising, reaching out to other schools, acting as liaison with other campus organizations, etc. We suggest creating and assigning board positions based on time availability, skills, and interest level. For example, if a member is interested in growing her social media skills, you may consider creating a social media chair position. Remember: Board positions are what you make of them! Keep in mind that the biggest challenge student groups face is the annual turnover in board membership and lack of continuity in membership and planning this turnover creates. To mitigate this problem, try to set aside board positions for 1Ls every year so that they can learn how the organization operates.
- ✓ **Set good practices from the beginning:** Often, chapters are so excited to get off the ground that they do not take time to put in place good organizational practices. But setting these practices will allow you to remain organized throughout the year, and will put your chapter in a good place to transition from one board to the next. These practices may include creating a chapter email distribution list, a centralized system to store key documents, and memorializing the group structure and what officer roles entail.

*Note on financial support: Unfortunately, Ms. JD is not in a position to provide funding to chapters and affiliates. However, many schools offer financial support to student clubs and organizations, and we are always here as a resource to help you become officially recognized by your law school. Additionally, co-sponsoring events with other student organizations or partnering with a Ms. JD sponsor to put on an event are ways to potentially defray costs of events and programming. If you'd like to discuss this more, feel free to reach out. We have a lot of experience working through these issues, and we don't want you to be deterred because of financial limitations! [For more information check out these fundraising and financial tips from the Chapter at UC Hastings.](#)*

## *Affiliating Existing Women's Groups with Ms. JD & NWLSO*

**What does NWLSO affiliation mean?** Ms. JD's resources are designed to help you succeed in all aspects of your law school experience and professional development. As such, the structure is flexible to suit the specific needs of your school.

Some campuses have an official NWLSO chapter that's connected to Ms. JD on a national level. The best model for some schools might be to create a position for a NWLSO representative on the board of an existing group or even having the president of the existing group take this liaison role whose role is to communicate with Ms. JD and other similar organizations nationally and make their fellow students aware of resources and opportunities offered by Ms. JD. At other campuses, women's law school organizations affiliate with Ms. JD and NWLSO and otherwise maintain a relationship with Ms. JD by reaching out when they'd like support.

There are no rules about how a NWLSO chapter should relate to an existing student group. We encourage you to form the organizational structure that best suits your school and student body's needs.

**How Ms. JD Can Help Your Chapter Succeed.** Our support of chapters takes many forms. Ms. JD often provides programming support to chapters and affiliates. From brainstorming events and panels to [making connections between potential speakers and chapters](#), to providing you with a wider platform to publicize your events on our blog and social media platforms, we want to help you make your events a success.

Additionally, by creating formal ties to Ms. JD, you gain access to a national network of employers, mentors, and other students. Recently, Ms. JD has begun to connect students at different law schools in the same geographic area, with the goal of allowing students to make more connections and expanding the reach of Ms. JD within cities. In order to facilitate these connections, we have created NWLSO listservs in New York and the Bay Area. We hope these listservs are used to share events of interest, connect students with similar passions, and build an even stronger NWLSO community. If you're interested in joining either of these listservs, you can [click here for New York](#) and [here for the Bay Area](#).

Furthermore, we are always happy to make connections between chapters and affiliates and local law firms and lawyers, either informally or to plan an event or panel. Ms. JD believes in the importance of getting outside of your law school bubble, both to expand your network and to put your law school experience in perspective with regard to professional and personal development.

NWLSO affiliation provides access to Ms. JD's wide range of social media platforms (including [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [LinkedIn](#)) and [our blog](#), which is widely circulated and receives over 27,000 page views per month. Chapters and affiliates have used our blogging platform and social media platforms to promote events (for example, the Harvard Women's Law Association used our blog [to promote their annual conference](#)), provide a platform for their members to develop a personal brand, and start important discussions.

More broadly, by affiliating with Ms. JD you will get first access to Ms. JD's [scholarships](#), [fellowships](#), [conferences](#), and more. Ms. JD has recently introduced [advice columns from Ms. JD board members](#), and has started utilizing Google Hangouts to provide information on a broad range of topics. Upcoming discussions will include: the clerkship process and public interest law. You will also get access to our resources. For example, our Ms. JD Fellows have created a [handbook on succeeding in law school](#). As affiliates, you'll have access to all these resources.

In sum: NWLSO membership or affiliation is what you make of it. Ms. JD is here to support women law students, which means that our support is tailored to you and your community's needs, but we believe that our broad network and experience working with affiliates and chapters will help your organization succeed at connecting and supporting women law students on your campus, and that affiliation with Ms. JD is beneficial to every student body.

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## **To affiliate with Ms. JD & NWLSO:**

*Note: There is no membership fee or other cost associated with forming an official Ms. JD presence on your campus. We do, however, have membership requirements. Chapters must be nonpolitical (they cannot participate in any political activities whatsoever), and they must also be committed to diversity and inclusivity.*

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## *Running a Ms. JD Chapter*

When it comes to running a Ms. JD chapter, the necessary procedures and organization of your chapter may differ depending on available campus resources and the logistical requirements at your law school. Use this chapter as a guide, keeping in mind that the suggested structure and organizational tips are flexible.

- ✓ **Organizing Programs & Events:** In organizing programs and events for your chapter, on- or off-campus, the first step is to determine the type of event you want to have. Depending on the goals of an event, you may want to organize a speaker event, a professional event, a mentorship event, or an event that is designed to support women law students. We encourage you to think big: What events do you want to see at your school? Is there a practice area you want to know more about? And issue you want to explore? Now's the chance to pursue it!

*Remember: No matter what form your programming and events take, make sure to have a sign-up sheet at every event for names and contact details. This will allow you to track attendance, and to get a better sense of the community you serve.*

*Additionally, we encourage you to self-evaluate after every event and program so you can have a sense of what's working for you, and what isn't. Get in the habit of doing this right after an event is over, when it's all still fresh in your mind.*

- o **Supporting Women Law Students:** Some students may want academic resources, such as a panel on becoming comfortable with the Socratic Method or Exam Taking in Law School. Students may also want social activities because meeting new people and fostering friendships is an important aspect of getting through law school successfully. Some ideas to build these relationships include happy hours, or a service project that gives back to the community. For example, Ms. JD has a **Global Education Fund (GEF)** that provides financial support to women law students in developing countries who otherwise could not afford to pursue higher education. Hosting an event to support the GEF is a great way to unite your organization around a common goal and contribute to a worthwhile cause.
  
- o **Speaker Events:** Speaker events are a great way to bring new ideas and perspectives to campus. They are a particularly effective method of exposing students to discourse to which they otherwise might not have exposure in typical law school curriculum, like pros and cons of different professional paths, finding and benefiting from a career mentor, or balancing work and family commitments. A well-known speaker, or even a speaker who is less well-known but has legal experience or expertise in a specific area, can attract a large audience and expose students to new and challenging ideas.
  - **Shaping the Event:** In shaping an event, you should focus on determining what information is most pertinent for the largest group of people. For example, if your membership is particularly interested in a current legal issue that has been in the news, try and research who might be available to speak on the topic. You can put together informal surveys using free online tools like SurveyMonkey to poll your membership about events they would most like to attend. The more you can involve members in the planning process for your events, the more likely your event will succeed!
  
  - **Finding Speakers:** Finding speakers takes time and organization. The first step is to ask if any of your board members or membership has a connection or personal relationship with a speaker. That contact may be the best person to invite the speaker to your event. Alternatively, you may seek to contact and invite a speaker on behalf of your organization. Reach out to Ms. JD leadership to help brainstorm possible speakers and connections. [You can use this link to request help finding a speaker.](#)
  
  - **Format:** Always be mindful of your audience when you select an event format. A panel discussion, or a speech by the speaker followed by a question and answer portion, may be appropriate. Or, the speaker may prefer to simply do a Powerpoint presentation and do a lecture-type presentation. Alternatively, you may want to leave the format up to the speaker, depending on the topic.
  
  - **Invitation:** If someone in your chapter has a connection to the potential speaker, you might invite the speaker through phone or social media. Otherwise, we suggest reaching out to the potential speaker's work email address. Remember: It always helps to personalize an invitation by highlighting why you're inviting him or her and the aspects of their work that you'd like them to speak about. It's also good to keep in mind that many in-demand speakers receive lots of email, so follow-up appropriately and also consider alternative ways to contact him or her (for example, through his or her assistant).
  
- o **Professional Events:** Professional events can offer students a great opportunity to network with law school alumni, professors, or attorneys and judges within your local community. Some ideas for

organizing these events include a wine and cheese event, an auction to raise money for a philanthropic cause (like the GEF!), a happy hour event off-campus, or a reception. These events serve as a way for women to meet and establish professional connections with others in your local legal community, and can lead to future internship and career opportunities. Therefore, your board may want to consider making these events a high priority. Be sure to encourage sign-ups at professional events and mentorship events to ensure accountability and an accurate number.

- o **Participation & Attendance:** Securing participation and attendance at events may be a challenge due to the busy and hectic lives of law students. A few suggestions to maximize attendance:
  - o In the brainstorming phase, gauge what types of events your membership and law students are interested in attending. What issues are topics? What are students excited about? Is there a professor who students would like to hear speak?
  - o Consider the law student calendar, avoiding times where there are already events that may be popular, times of day that work well (for example, some schools block off 12-1 for lunch), and times of year that work well (an event the week before finals likely won't be well attended).
  - o Publicize, publicize, publicize. Use every form of publicity available to you, and make multiple attempts- The more personal, the better! Get the event on the school calendar early so that other organizations plan around your event (and not the other way around). Make a Facebook invitation. Ask other organizations to send your event details around on their listserv. Ask your friends to come, and share with them why you're excited for this to take place. You can also blog about your event on the [Ms. JD blog](#), and put it on the [Ms. JD events calendar](#) to reach a wider audience.
  - o If possible, serve food and drinks at events, and publicize it if you do.
  - o Send a reminder email the morning of the event.
  - o Remember that attendance is not a reflection on the quality of the event: Your hard work and passion will not be diminished if there's a low turnout. Use low turnout events as an opportunity to brainstorm how you could raise the turnout next time.
- ✓ **Mentorship:** Ms. JD helped the University of Texas' Women's Law Association create their mentorship program and would be happy to help you create yours! You can access Ms. JD's Mentorship Program Guide [here](#).
- o **Student Mentorship:** Some chapters have mentorship programs, where newer students (typically 1Ls) are matched with upper-division students. The advantage of this program is that it allows new students on campus to learn the tricks of the trade and feel more comfortable in an otherwise daunting environment. When organizing the program, try to have a roughly even number of upper- and lower-division students. It is important that the upper-division students understand the time commitment involved so that each mentee is afforded the opportunity to meet with their mentor and receive guidance and information on the law school experience. You should consider pairing students based on their professional interests, backgrounds, or other criteria that makes sense to you.
- o **Professional Mentorship:** Professional mentorship programs offer a resource for students to learn about navigating the legal field and the particular challenges that women may face in their legal careers. A faculty mentorship program or mentorship program with lawyers within your local community is a great way for students to foster professional relationships and learn more about a particular field of law. Mentorship programming for professors and students may be more informal, and entail office hours appointments or meeting for coffee or lunch. Be sure to allow the professors

a lot of flexibility in choosing the type of mentorship they want to participate in, including the amount of time that a student may expect from them. Philanthropic service projects or a networking mixer are also great events for incorporating professors and lawyers into your community.

- ✓ **Securing Funding:** Securing funding for your organization may require membership dues, money from your Student Body Association, and/or funds from your Student Affairs Office. For more advice on how to request funding from your school check out one of these three articles: [one](#), [two](#), [three](#). Some chapters do not charge dues and simply hold events to raise money for their chapters. However, a minimal dues requirement is helpful to establish a base from which you can implement your programming ideas. A few ideas for raising money for your chapter include t-shirt sales, student planner sales, a charity drive, or a barbecue or bake sale. Some chapters also charge per event, so that those who want to participate in the individual event contribute to its overall cost.

Importantly, we also recommend seeking co-sponsorship from other organizations, both on- and off-campus, for events. Doing so serves a number of purposes: It offers the chance to build connections, broaden your member base and event attendance, and may provide a way to increase funding by asking for financial co-sponsorship. Even if an organization isn't in a position to give, co-sponsorship in name only can be a great way to spread the word about your event and build connections with supportive organizations.

In addition to on-campus revenue sources, there may also be opportunities to raise money for programs from local or national law firms. Ms. JD's leadership can help you make these connections and strategize how to seek funds. Keep in mind that these firms are primarily interested in recruiting and will be motivated to support your organization in order to gain access to promising student candidates. But remember – if you're seeking sponsorship from a firm, then your event must abide by NALP's recruiting rules.

We recommend that you fundraise under the auspices of your NWLSO chapter, rather than as Ms. JD to avoid confusion among funders. Also, if using funds granted by your school, keep in mind any alcohol restrictions that may accompany those funds.

- ✓ **Communicating with Membership:** Communicating with membership and securing attendance at your event may be a challenge because law students are generally on very tight schedules. Organizing a listserv or e-mail distribution list is key. Other chapters have found that setting up a Facebook group and organizing events via Facebook are effective ways to help spread the word. Flyering on campus right before the actual event is a great way for those who are not members to hear about the events your chapter is hosting on campus. Lastly, posting on your own chapter website, Ms. JD's website (share on our [calendar](#) and [blog](#)), or your school's website is a great opportunity to communicate with your membership and other law school students. Remember, students respond well to numerous contact attempts- One form of publicity is generally not enough!
  - o **Creating a Website:** Setting up a website is an effective medium to present a calendar of events, allow access to outlines and other materials, and post information relevant to your chapter. However, this capability depends on your school's policy regarding websites. The best way for students to find your website is to link to your chapter's website from your law school's website. A person with very basic technological abilities should be in charge of maintenance to ensure links and the site itself remain up to date and useful to your membership.

- ✓ **Finding Faculty & Administrative Support:** Having faculty and administrative support on your campus is crucial to your success. Depending on your school's policy, you may need a faculty advisor. Establishing a good relationship with your faculty advisor or administrator will be beneficial, particularly when it comes to securing funding, booking a room, identifying speakers, or having access to the resources needed to implement quality programming on-campus. *Note: there is no reason you should only consider female advisors! Instead identify faculty who are both committed to your cause and connected to the resources you need – this may well be a male faculty member.*

## *Event & Programming Ideas*

Below is a list of events from the student leaders we interviewed. They give a glimpse into the range of NWLSO events taking place across the country, but student leaders were quick to stress that quality was much more important than quantity for events programs:

- **Networking & Relationship Building**
  - Welcome reception for new women students or new women transfer students
  - Mentoring programs for 1Ls
  - Small group dinners of 6-8 women law students with faculty members
  - Alumnae networking events during the summer
- **Academic, Career, and Personal Development**
  - [Screening](#) of the documentary [Miss Representation](#), a film about the portrayal of women in American media and public life, with a discussion or reception afterwards to unpack the contents of the film. [Check out Ms. JD's guide for hosting a screening of this or other films!](#)
  - Additional ideas for film screenings related to gender and the law include "Taking the Heat: Fighting to Join the NYFD" and "Courting Justice: A Documentary about Women Judges, the Courts, and Human Rights in South Africa"
  - Host a [GRIT Project Program](#): The ABA's Commission on Women in the Profession has a prepackaged program designed to help women gain the critical skills needed to excel in law school and the profession
  - Sessions advising students on how to choose classes, prepare for exams, and apply for clerkships
  - "A Day in the Life" sessions to discuss their career paths and daily work with practitioners from varied practice areas
  - Outline exchanges
  - Commentary on the experience of legal education with events like "Feminist Perspectives on the 1L Curriculum" and "How Rape Is Taught in the Classroom: Improving the Student Experience"
  - Publishing an annual list of the "Top Ten Family-Friendly Firms" based on NALP data and reflections by alumnae
  - Self-defense workshop
- **Giving Back**
  - Participate in a charity run or walk as a group
  - Conduct a clothing drive and food drive around Thanksgiving
  - Fundraising for Global Girls (helps at-risk girls), Bottomless Closet (clothing drives for professional interviews), or [Ms. JD's Global Education Fund](#)

With all of the above, Ms. JD is here to support you in any and all aspects of planning and implementing, from brainstorming to determining event logistics to helping you publicize the event to providing you with a platform

to blog about your reflections about your organization's work. And we always encourage chapters and affiliates to take pictures and notes during events so that events can be blogged about afterwards to keep the momentum going; this is a great way to celebrate your successes and make your events the best they can be going forward.

## *Common Problems & Solutions*

Over the past several years, we've interviewed dozens of women law student leaders from across the country. In this section, we discuss the most common problems identified by the students we spoke to, and we attempt to discuss potential solutions we well.

- **Who's invited to participate?** One issue brought up by student leaders was "who is invited to participate in women's law student programming and events?" Is participation just limited to women, or are men and others invited as well? You are likely best positioned to make these decisions about what works for your group at your law school, but be aware that questions about this may arise and you may need to be prepared to discuss your thoughts on the issue. Generally, we advise organizers to be as inclusive as possible.
- **Diversity & the history of women's law organizations:** Over the years, we have heard many students complain about a lack of inclusivity among women's organizations. Ms. JD and our NWLSO affiliates must be wholly inclusive organizations dedicated to true diversity, including all races and sexual orientations.
- **Issues Related to Turnover:** Since most NWLSO board members only spend one year leading their organizations, there's a very serious possibility that institutional knowledge, alumni relationships, faculty connections, partnerships, and other valuable information can be lost from year-to-year. There are several things you can do to help mitigate the costs of turnover:
  - Keep records in a single, universally accessible location. Depending on your resources, this might be a file cabinet in an office or an account on Google Docs. The point is to create an archive of contacts, events, budgets, and other organizational materials. Records to consider keeping in a central archive:
    - Names and email addresses for active students, involved faculty, past speakers, and generous donors
    - Schedule not only of past events but past event planning deadlines
    - Examples of letters of invitation and event flyers
    - Examples of organizational budgets, event budgets, and to-do lists
    - Past applications for funding from school administration and other sources
  - Allow ample time for leadership transition. It might be better to have elections/board selection in the early spring, as opposed to the end of the spring term, so there's some overlap and the new board can mentor the old board (or even work side-by-side) for a month or perhaps longer. A best practice is inducting the new board in time for them to facilitate at least one event before the old board graduates.
  - Try to keep an ongoing list of reflections during the course of the year. Student leaders often do this at the end of the year, when it's time to transition to new leadership, but by waiting, valuable

information is lost. Set aside time to share this advice with your successors. This list could include debriefing about events and programs immediately after they are held; indeed, we'd recommend asking event organizers to memorialize thoughts shortly after the event. (Think: "This Professor showed up late to event—if invited in future, make sure to send him a reminder" or "the quesadillas from the dining hall were a hit" or "this was a great topic and students had a lot to say, make sure there's enough time for questions in the future.")

- **Participation and Attendance Issues:** Many women's law student leaders expressed exasperation at issues related to attendance. They have found it difficult to accurately predict and attract students to their events. NWLSO leaders can spend a lot of time organizing events, so low turnout can be especially disappointing. But this is something all student organizations struggle with—law students are busy and it's tough to make time for things outside of class. Student leaders identified several things you can do to make sure you have good attendance. While some may seem obvious, it's surprising what a difference they make:
  - Plan events well in advance and check the law school calendar for conflicts. Post your events and advertise first, so others will plan around you (and not the other way around). Keep checking the calendar to make sure no major events are scheduled to conflict with your event.
  - Enthusiasm matters—for some student leaders, this has meant using every means available to them to reach out, including Facebook (the official page and the statuses of the board members), Twitter, flyers posted on campus, flyers on the video screens around campus, the campus daily calendar of events (that's emailed to students each day) and most importantly, word of mouth. Tell everyone that you want to see them at your event because a sincere face-to-face invitation is so much more powerful than 1000 Facebook invites.
  - Make numerous contact attempts. One just isn't enough to make an impression on a busy law student.
  - If possible, find some way to serve food and/or snacks! Be sure to advertise these treats in your event marketing.
  - Strategically align your organization with other student groups to co-sponsor events. The more organizations that host an event, the more members you can reach out to, and the wider your voice will be.
  - Avoid planning events when students are most likely to be off campus. For some schools, this has meant minimizing the number of events held on Mondays and Fridays.
  - Some student groups have either instituted dues or charged a minimal amount for some events. Students are much less likely to blow something off when this is the case, even if they've paid as little as \$5 to attend.
  - 1L Representatives can help get the word out about the organization and specific events and programs. Using 1Ls in this capacity can also serve as a helpful breeding ground for future board members.
- **Faculty Support:** Women law student leaders often mentioned that faculty support has meant a lot to the success of their organizations. Sometimes by accepting the way things have always been

(“Professor XX has always been our go-to...”), we might be missing out on others who have an interest in supporting women in the law. You may find some unexpected allies by casting a wide net and not relying on the same people for support. Remember—not all of your faculty supporters have to be women law professors. Through these faculty supporters, you can have a greater impact on advocating for women at your school (think: classroom participation initiatives, pushing for the hiring of more women faculty members, and mentoring women law students interested in legal academia). In addition, they may have connections for speakers and ideas for events. Make the effort to reach out to new professors every semester—you may be surprised by what you get out of it. At the very least, you, yourself will have another personal contact on the faculty.

- **Fundraising Issues:** Fundraising was a source of stress for several women law student leaders who had some funding from their schools, but not enough. Some schools charge membership dues while others have relied on connections to law firms, alumni, and other relationships to help raise money. Make the most of your contacts. Co-sponsoring or partnering with other student groups can also help dilute the cost of events and programs. This is another area where Ms. JD may be able to help. Be sure to reach out to Ms. JD leadership with questions about fundraising.
- **Time Constraints:** Some student leaders mentioned that though they had big ambitions at the beginning of their tenure, they always seemed to run out of time by the end of the year. It’s important to start planning events over the summer, so you can make sure to have events spaced throughout the year. What student leaders have pointed out is that if they don’t start planning events until the fall semester, the spring semester ends up being overloaded. And this often means there are a lot of events crunched into the time right before exams at the end of the semester, which is stressful for the organizers and has a negative impact on attendance. Finally, if you plan in advance, you can likely secure more well-known speakers, who often plan their commitments months in advance.

Making time to meet as a board can also be a challenge. While feeling like things wouldn’t get done unless you meet, it can also feel as though the more meetings you hold, the less time you actually have to move forward on projects. One solution to this would be to have working meetings. Half the meeting could be spent meeting together as a group, tossing around ideas, and collaborating, while the other half of the meeting could simply be board members taking time to write the emails or do the work necessary to move forward on their projects.

## Connecting With Ms. JD

Ms. JD has incredible resources for you to take advantage of as an individual:

- ✓ **[Our Blog](#)**: Ms. JD attracts over 27,000 visitors each month with content ranging from “Advice on Taking the Bar Exam” and “How to Get a Clerkship” to “What to Wear to an Interview” and “Networking Advice for Women Law Students.” Students can join the ranks of contributors (including Justices [Sandra Day O'Connor](#) and [Elena Kagan](#) and Slate.com's [Dahlia Lithwick](#)) through either the [Writers in Residence Program](#) or by registering on the blog and posting their own work.
- ✓ **[Our Fellowship](#)**: Each spring, in conjunction with the ABA's Commission on Women in the Profession's Margaret Brent Award, Ms. JD selects 10-20 second year law students as Fellowship Winners. In addition to receiving financial support and invitation to ABA and Ms. JD events, Ms. JD matches the law students with mentors from among the Commission's alumnae of commissioners and [Brent Award Winners](#). The one-year program is designed to foster a commitment to excellence in a new generation of women attorneys, inspired by the generation of trailblazers who paved the way for their success.
- ✓ **[Our Scholarship](#)**: Each spring Ms. JD awards summer stipends to law students committed to working in the public interest. Past recipients have used their stipends to intern at the ICC in the Hague, the JAG Corps, the ACLU Voting Rights Project, and the Equal Justice Foundation.
- ✓ **[Our Library](#)**: Ms. JD 's Library is the most comprehensive collection of resources on women in the law. Two years after Ms. JD launched the Library, the **Center for Women in Law** at the University of Texas School of Law partnered with Ms. JD to expand the database. The Library holds hundreds of articles, reports, and best practice recommendations on all topics relevant to women in the legal profession. Use these resources for your own research or pass them along to classmates who might be interested.
- ✓ **[Our Global Education Fund](#)**: This program enables women in developing countries to pursue legal educations who otherwise would not have access to further education. This year, the Global Education Fund made it possible for two local women to pursue legal education at Makerere University in Uganda. You and your women's law student organization can host a fundraiser to help even more women worldwide access legal education.
- ✓ **[Our Research](#)**: Ms. JD has collected data and published several reports on the representation of women on law reviews at the nation's top law schools. This data is key to tracking when and where women falter on the path to leadership. [Our first report](#) was published in August 2010, and was subsequently published in . Ms. JD is always looking for more ways to collaborate with researchers. If you or someone you know is working on a project related to women and the law, please contact us to see how we can help you and promote your research across the legal profession.
- ✓ **[Our Conference](#)**: Each year Ms. JD gathers women from law schools and legal markets around the country for a summit on the progress made by and remaining challenges for women in the profession. Past speakers include former New York Court of Appeals Chief Judge Judith Kaye, Allstate General Counsel Michele Mayes, Shell Oil General Counsel Catherine Lamboley, and District Judge Joan Lefkow. We would love to include you and your organization in organizing these conferences. Planning for upcoming conferences starts almost immediately after past conferences, so it's never too early to jump in.

- ✓ **Our Board:** If you have any questions or comments, we are always here to work with you! Email us at [nwls@ms-jd.org](mailto:nwls@ms-jd.org), and always feel free to connect on social media: [LinkedIn](#), [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), [Google+](#), [Pinterest](#).