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### President's Message

Hello everyone. Spring officially arrived on March 20, but Winter has not fully given up. I hope you all are able to get out and enjoy the outdoors regardless of what the day may bring.

Upcoming CLE Zoom meetings for the rest of the year are scheduled as follows:

May 6, 2026, at noon. We will present a recording from the Nevada Supreme Court's podcast library entitled From Classrooms to Courtrooms: The Story of Kid's Court.

July 1, 2026, at noon. Mary Baldecchi, Emeritus PP, PLS, will give a presentation on the history of the U.S. Constitution.

September 2, 2026, at noon. Topic to be announced.  
November 4, 2026, at noon. Topic to be announced.  
December 2, 2026, at noon. Topic to be announced.

We look forward to seeing all of you at the meetings. If you have any suggestions for speakers and or topics, please let us know.

[continued on page 3]

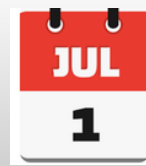


### DCLP LIVE !!-- No Reservation Needed

Via Zoom - **Wednesday, May 6** and  
**Wednesday, July 1**, 2026 at 12 p.m.

Meeting ID: 922 280 3023. Passcode: 412889

No charge for non-members



**ALL ATTENDEES ARE ELIGIBLE FOR THE GIFT CARD DRAWING AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE MEETING**

**Congratulations to Lisa Chang Li, our March winner!**



## Douglas-Carson Legal Professionals

Presents

### FROM CLASSROOMS TO COURTROOMS

The Story of Kids Court with Judge Danielle Johnson



**On May 6, 2026**

**What happens when a courtroom becomes a classroom?** In this episode of *I'll Allow It Nevada*, Judge Danielle Johnson shares the story of Kids Court, the program she launched to help students better understand the justice system and their rights within it. Through weekly lessons and visits from justice professionals, Kids Court gives young Nevadans a chance to see behind the scenes and even participate in their own mock trial. Tune in for a conversation about education, empowerment, and community connection.

**On July 1, 2026**

**Mary Baldecchi,  
Emeritus PP, PLS**



The U.S. Constitution was created during the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia between May and September 1787, where 55 delegates from 12 states met in secrecy to fix the weak Articles of Confederation adopted ten years earlier in November 1777.

**Mary Baldecchi, Emeritus PP, PLS**, will present on program on its origins which promises to be a fascinating and informative discussion of the facts we've most likely forgotten since our school days!

# Quiz on Latin Terminology

- |                        |                                 |
|------------------------|---------------------------------|
| _____ 1. ex parte      | A. a pending suit               |
| _____ 2. in limine     | B. a thing conclusively decided |
| _____ 3. lis pendens   | C. at the threshold             |
| _____ 4. res judicata  | D. one sided                    |
| _____ 5. stare decisis | E. to abide by decided cases    |

(Answers on page 15)

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## President's Message (cont'd)

Chapter elections were held at the February 25, 2026, Executive Board meeting and the following officers were elected:

President: Sharon Coates, PP, CLP  
Secretary: Vicki Van Pelt  
Treasurer: Mary Baldecchi, Emeritus PP, PLS

## SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

On April 30, 2026, at 1 p.m. Eastern time (10 a.m. Pacific time), all NALS members are invited to join the NALS National Board of Directors for an update on what happened in the past year and a look ahead at what's next for NALS. Board members and staff will share current initiatives and upcoming opportunities. You'll also hear highlights from key committees and take part in the installation of the 2026–2027 Board of Directors and officers.

During this interactive session, you can also share your ideas, ask questions, and connect with fellow NALS members as we continue shaping the future of our association together.

**Cost: This meeting is FREE and only open to NALS members.** Registrants will be provided access instructions a few days prior to the meeting. A link for registration is available at:

<https://www.nals.org/events/EventDetails.aspx?id=2046256&group=>

Please be sure to read the rest of the Tickler. Dee Beardsley does an amazing job putting it together.



Sharon Coates, PP, CLP  
President

## Tips for Successful Prompt Engineering

**Prompt Engineering** is the skill of writing prompts that will generate the required response from AI. The term “engineering” makes it sound complicated, but in practice it’s basically knowing how to write commands in plain English. To ensure maximum results, follow a few basic principles:

**Clarity** – Your prompts should be clear and unambiguous. Try to keep your prompts as short and to the point as possible. Avoid using slang or colloquial language that the AI may not understand.

**Context** – Give AI any necessary background information that could help it formulate the right answer. For example, if you asked AI to write 250 words on the difference between Newton’s laws of motion and Einstein’s theories of relativity the output would be very different if you were writing the material for a child’s textbook as opposed to a scientific journal. Giving AI the context in the initial prompt will save you time.

It’s worth noting that ChatGPT can now remember facts about its users, so if it knows that you’re a doctor, then its explanations of medical conditions may use more medical terminology than if it were aware you’re an accountant.

**Instructions** – Give AI clear instructions on what you want to see. For example: “Create a table showing...”, “List five pros and cons of...” “In no more than 300 words, describe...”\_

### Examples:

– Adopt a persona. For example: “Pretend you’re a secondary school teacher teaching math to 13- and 14-year-olds. Explain standard deviation.

– Upload a file. For example, upload a tenancy agreement and ask AI to highlight any terms in the agreement that might give cause for concern. [Caveat: you should never rely on AI for legal advice but it could be useful in situations where you wouldn’t normally hire an attorney.]

– Prepare for an interview. Open the ChatGpt app on your phone. Press the icon that looks like four vertical lines which sits next to the mic, and say, e.g.: “I’m going for a job interview for a head marketing role with a pharmaceutical company. Pretend you’re the interviewer and ask me questions that I might face in the job interview.” When you’ve had enough of answering questions, say something like, “Stop asking me questions now and give me feedback on my answers.”

– Breakdown multi-step prompts. AI can increasingly handle multi-part requests but you are more likely to get the answers you’re looking for by breaking down prompts into bite-sized chunks. For example, let’s say you’ve uploaded a spreadsheet showing average rainfall and temperatures in 2025 for every city in Nevada. [continued on page 5]

# Prompt Engineering (Cont'd)

You might start with a scene-setting prompt such as:

*This is a spreadsheet showing the average temperatures and rainfall for every city in Nevada in 2025 with a population over 1,000. Can you read the spreadsheet?*

Assuming a readable format, ChatGPT will normally confirm it can understand the data and give a brief summary of what it sees. Now you can start asking for data you want to extract in successive prompts, rather than one at a time:

*List the 10 driest cities in 2025.*

*Which were the five cities with the coldest average temperatures in the first half of 2025?*

Let's say DCLP is bidding to host a national conference and you want AI to describe why legal professionals should attend. You've looked at other conference descriptions written by humans. You can attach them to the prompt and ask AI to adopt the same style.

*The uploaded file contains written conference promotional material. Write 500 words describing the DCLP conference in the same style.*

– Compare Options. AI can help you to provide clarity when weighing different choices, especially if there are two options on the table and you're not sure which to pick. In these situations, it is normally best to describe two options and the outcome you are seeking.

*Can you provide a comparison between a heat pump and combination boiler for heating my four-bedroom home. I predominantly want to save money on bills, but also help the environment.*

For this prompt, ChatGPT runs through six different factors, including upfront costs, running costs and environmental impact, assessing the strengths and weaknesses of heat pumps and combi boilers for each. It also provides a summary of the discussion at the end.

## Learning More

The more you use AI (whether it be ChatGPT, Gemini, or one of the many other AI models in development), you'll learn what works, what doesn't, and how to work around quirks. Here are a few free resources:

[tinyurl.com/googleaicourses](https://tinyurl.com/googleaicourses)  
[tinuryl.com/openaiprompts](https://tinuryl.com/openaiprompts)  
[reddit.com/r/ChatGPT](https://reddit.com/r/ChatGPT)  
[reddit.com/r/OpenAI](https://reddit.com/r/OpenAI)

The best way to hone your ChatGPT prompting skills is to keep prompting. The more you use ChatGPT, the more you'll learn what works, what doesn't, and how to work around the quirks.

The other thing to keep in mind is that you may need to adjust your prompting skills as new and improved language models are released.

# Writing and Summarizing Emails

ChatGPT is brilliant at taking a skimpy set of bullet points and turning it into a professional email that you can send to colleagues or clients. For example, you can give AI prompts such as:

*Draft email to Mrs. Smith, thanking her for coming in to the office to allow me to present our proposed legal strategy in the Thompson matter. Summarize the items discussed:*

*Attorney fees and costs  
Duration of matter barring any surprises  
Risks and range of possible outcomes*

*We can begin work immediately. Ask her to confirm by reply email.*

## Check the Tone of Your Email

Tone is very difficult to discern with email; it's easy for a message to be misinterpreted by a reader or even contain language that some people might find inappropriate.

If you are sending out an email to clients or messaging colleagues, you can run the message past AI first, asking whether it strikes the right tone, or to highlight any phrases that might cause offense.

You might not agree with every suggestion, but AI can prove a useful sense check to ensure nothing you communicate to customers or colleagues is "off."

## Summarize Long Emails

ChatGPT can help with emails you receive because your time is valuable. You can copy and paste the email--or save an attachment--and ask ChatGPT to do the grunt work.

*Give me a summary of this email in six bullet points.*

Or, if there is a particular area of interest, you can ask the AI to look for that specifically. For example:

*Give me a summary of this email, making sure to highlight any deadlines or potential costs.*

**Caution: Be careful about copying any sensitive data from emails into AI.**



# Tips for Great Image Prompts

## Be specific

Don't be afraid to detail exactly what you want--at length, if necessary. Describe objects you want in an image, the shape you want the image to be in (e.g., widescreen, portrait), what the background should look like, the lighting and so on. You might not get everything you want, but the more information you provide, the more likely you are to get a decent result.

## Keep iterating

If the initial image generated doesn't quite hit the mark, keep iterating. You can ask for changes in the same thread and ChatGPT will normally follow your instructions. Don't want text in the image or want a pencil drawing instead of a cartoon-like illustration? Just ask.

## Provide visual inspiration

Sometimes it's hard to describe the visual style you're looking for. If you have in mind a style of image you want the AI to adopt, you can upload it and ask the AI to use that as inspiration.

## Draw what you want

The visual inspiration for a prompt doesn't need to come from a photo or image you've found online. You can do a rough sketch to give AI a sense of what you're hoping to achieve.

*Create a picture based on the drawing you see here of a knight on horseback, at the bottom of a hill that has a castle on top. Make the image look like a color illustration.*



The example above is from Athem Tech Guides. It demonstrates what AI is capable of doing!

## Use other people's prompts

There is no copyright on prompts. And people will often share their prompts in online forums so that others can often get similar results (even entering the exact same prompt will generate a different image).

## Mimic famous artists

If you ask AI to ape the style of a famous artist, it will normally do a reasonable job of it. It may refuse to mimic living artists but the long dead are fair game.

### Edit images in ChatGPT

Often AI-generated images aren't perfect. However, ChatGPT now has a built-in editing tool for images which you can access by clicking on a generated image and then selecting the icon that looks like a paint brush with a circle.

Draw around the part of the image you want to change and tell the AI how you want it edited.

*Hand seems distorted. Try again.*

### Think different

Let your imagination run wild. AI might not pull off everything you ask for, but this is an opportunity to try stuff you can't do elsewhere. Free your mind and go for it!



Artificial Intelligence (AI) refers to current, specialized systems designed to perform specific tasks such as chatbots or image recognition using trained patterns.

Artificial Generative Intelligence (AGI) is a theoretical – future AI that can learn, understand, and apply intelligence to any task at a human-like level.

The differences between the two are in scope, adaptability, understanding, and the state of development.

**Scope:** AI is narrow, excelling at specific bounded tasks, e.g., chess, generative art. AGI is general, with the ability to manage diverse, complex tasks across many fields, similar to a human coworker.

**Adaptability:** Current AI requires retraining or fine-tuning for new, unexpected tasks. AGI would be able to learn, adapt, and apply knowledge to entirely new scenarios without specific training.

**Understanding:** AI mimics human intelligence using data, but lacks true comprehension. AGI would possess genuine understanding, reasoning, and consciousness, allowing it to understand context and nuance.

**State of Development:** AI is already in widespread use (ChatGPT). AGI is a theoretical concept not yet achieved, often termed “Strong AI” or “Human-level AI.”

# Retirement Strategies

**Thinking about or planning for retirement?** Retirement strategies for professional legal assistants should focus on maximizing retirement accounts, diversifying investments, and utilizing catch-up contributions for those over 50.

## Key Retirement Strategies

- **Maximize Contributions:** Utilize 401(k) or IRA plans, taking advantage of over-50 catch-up contributions or opening a Roth IRA.
- **Asset Allocation:** Create a diversified portfolio of stocks, bonds, and mutual funds, or consider alternative assets like real estate.
- **Financial Planning Tools:** Utilize tools like Mint, Personal Capital, or a retirement funds program for planning and management.
- **Review Employer Options:** Research if your firm provides a Cash Balance Pension Plan, which offers fixed monthly payments based on tenure and salary.

## Post-Retirement & Career Transition Strategies

- **Freelance/Consulting:** Use expertise to perform freelance paralegal work, legal writing, or consulting for former employers.
- **Pivot to Remote Work:** Explore part-time, remote options like online tutoring, blogging, or pet-sitting.

## Preparation and Planning

- **Define Goals:** Determine your lifestyle goals (travel, part-time work, volunteering) to calculate necessary funds.
- **Long-Term Planning:** Build in contingency for potential caretaking of family members

## Core Financial Strategies

- **Leverage the ABA Retirement Fund Program:** Legal professionals, including paralegals at participating firms, can access the ABA Retirement Funds Program. This program often features higher average account balances due to the legal community's specific saving patterns.
- **Maximize Employer-Sponsored Plans:** If your firm offers a 401(k), contribute at least enough to secure the full employer match.
- **Utilize Individual Savings Vehicles:**
  - **Traditional or Roth IRAs:** Ideal for those without firm-wide plans.
  - **Health Savings Accounts (HSAs):** These offer triple tax advantages and can serve as a supplemental retirement fund for healthcare costs.
  - **Catch-Up Contributions:** If you are 50 or older, take advantage of increased contribution limits for both 401(k) and IRAs.

[Continued on next page]

# Retirement Strategies (cont'd)

- **Maintain an Emergency Fund:** Aim for three to six months of living expenses in a high-yield account to avoid premature withdrawals from retirement funds during unexpected gaps in work.

## Professional & Career Transitions

- **Explore Flexible Work Models:** High-level legal assistants are increasingly utilizing remote or flexible hours to delay full retirement while maintaining income.
- **Monetize Legal Expertise:** Post-retirement income streams can include:
  - **Consulting:** Offering expertise to former employers or non-profits.
  - **Freelance Support:** Providing project-based assistance or virtual paralegal services.
  - **Teaching/Mentoring:** Teaching paralegal courses or mentoring junior staff.
- **Strategic Career Shifts:** Some professionals transition into specialized roles like, mediation, bookkeeping, or administrative leadership within the legal field later in their careers.

Despite planning, what if your retirement income (current or anticipated) is coming up short?

Perhaps you are stretched in the current economy to meet your bills or you'd like extra income to travel. You may be thinking about part-time work to make money in retirement.

There are many options to consider to supplement your income:

- Become a traveling Notary Public.
- Renting out a room in your home or vacation property when you're not using it.
- Turning your hobby into profit.
- Working as a childcare or eldercare provider or as a personal assistant.
- Pet-sitting or dog-walking.
- Creating an on-line course in your area of expertise.
- Become a freelance writer, blogger, or tutor (via video) from your own home.
- 



# INTERVIEW STRATEGIES

## Interview Questions

Weak	Question	Strong
I am a hard worker.	What are your key strengths?	I consistently deliver results and meet deadlines.
I really need this job.	Why should we hire you for this role?	My skills and experience align well with this role.
I've done a little bit of everything.	Can you walk me through your experience?	I've handled end-to-end project responsibilities.
I don't really have any weaknesses	What is one weakness you're working on?	I'm improving my public speaking through regular practice.
I just try my best.	How do you handle pressure and deadlines?	I prioritize tasks and stay calm under tight deadlines.
I can work alone or in a team.	How do you work within a team?	I collaborate well and take ownership of outcomes.
I just want growth.	Where do you see yourself in 5 years?	I aim to grow into a larger role while delivering strong results.
I avoid conflict.	How do you handle conflict at work?	I address issues respectfully and focus on solutions.
I didn't like my boss.	Why are you leaving your current job?	I am looking for new challenges and growth opportunities.
Anything is fine.	What are your salary expectations?	I'm open to a competitive offer aligned with the role and market.

# INTERVIEW STRATEGIES

## TOP JOB INTERVIEW TIPS



- Be Prepared
- Practice Makes Perfect
- Remain professional from the very beginning
- Dress up professionally
- Bring copies of your resume
- Be on time
- Carry a small notepad and pen
- Please the interviewer with a handshake and smile
- Spend some time building rapport
- Be honest
- Be ready for personal questions
- Close on a positive note
- Remember to follow up



# Lexicon

**Recalcitrant** – [ruh-kal-suh-truhnt] – stubbornly defiant

**Impecunious** – [uhm-puh-kyoo-nee-uhs] – lacking money

**Agathokakological** – [a-gatha-ka-kuh-lah-jikuhl] – both good and evil

**Vituperate** – [vuh-too-pr-ayt] – harshly scold

**Ephemeral** – [i-fem-er-al] – very short-lived

**Verisimilitude** – [veh-ruh-suh-mi-luh-tood] – appearance of truth

**Maudlin** – [maad-luhn] – overly sentimental

**Tantamount** – [tan-tuh-mownt] – appearance of truth

**Insalubrious** – [in-suh-loo-bree-uhs] – unhealthy

**Banauisic** – [be-now-zik] – purely practical

**Corybant** – [kaur-uh-bant] frenzied, wild

**Sibilant** – [sib-i-lant] – hissing

**Ineluctable** – [in-e-luc-ta-ble] – unavoidable

**Tenebrous** – [ten-e-brous] – dark and shadowy

**Cacography** – [ca-cog-ra-phy] – bad handwriting

**Lugubrious** – [lu-gu-bri-ous] – mournfully gloomy



**Answer these riddles..**

1. What begins with an E but has only one letter?
2. What can fly without wings?
3. What is so fragile that saying its name breaks it?
4. What has a tail but no body?
5. What comes at the end of everything?
6. What has many needles but doesn't sew?

The answers appear  
on page 16.

**March 2026 Word Solution**



Unscramble the below words related  
to the legal profession.

BYRRIAL \_\_\_\_\_

OFICERNATIIT \_\_\_\_\_

YLBOACRUAV \_\_\_\_\_

IITNLIOTGA \_\_\_\_\_

AOFTRCEOR \_\_\_\_\_

BLORA \_\_\_\_\_

EOBARFT \_\_\_\_\_

TAERNNEOILLNMV \_\_\_\_\_

MUOORROTC \_\_\_\_\_

ERECHSAR \_\_\_\_\_

REBIF \_\_\_\_\_

TTIAERSE \_\_\_\_\_

PPASIZREDHE \_\_\_\_\_



# Lateral Thinking

**Legal support professionals are often called upon to come up with solutions to problems that elude others. One way to think “out of the box” is to skip convention and think laterally instead of vertically. To that end, we provide the following lateral thinking puzzles and riddles to solve:**

You are standing in a room in front of three light switches in the off position. They are connected to three lightbulbs behind a door in another room. You can do anything you want with the switches, but only one can remain on at a time. When you walk into the next room, you need to know which switch is connected to which bulb. How can you do that?

The answer appears on page 16.

## Answers to Quiz on Latin Terminology

5. E
4. B
3. A
2. C
1. D



# Solutions

## Answer to Lateral Thinking Puzzle

*Answer:* Turn on the first switch and leave it on for five minutes. Then turn it off and turn on the next switch and go into the other room. You now know that the second switch turned on the light that is currently on. The first switch you flipped turns on the bulb that is still warm. The switch you never flipped is connected to the bulb that is still cold.

## Answers to Riddles

1. What begins with an E but has only one letter? An envelope.
2. What can fly without wings? Time.
3. What is so fragile that saying its name breaks it? Silence.
4. What has a tail but no body? A coin.
5. What comes at the end of everything? G.
6. What has many needles but doesn't sew? A pine tree.

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**DCLP  
NETWORKING  
LUNCH**



The next monthly networking lunches will be held at noon on May 21 at Juan's, 318 N Carson Street and at noon on June 18 at Great Basin Brewing, 302 N Carson Street. Guests are welcome. RSVP to [marnelson03@gmail.com](mailto:marnelson03@gmail.com) so we make sure we have a big enough table.

# NALS Certification Update

NALS is pleased to announce an important change to our ALP credential. Beginning January 1, 2026, the **Accredited Legal Professional (ALP) certification will transition to the Certified Legal Support Professional (LSP).**

The ALP has served as a trusted entry-level credential for those starting their careers in legal support. As the legal support profession evolves, NALS is rebranding this certification title to better reflect the skills, competencies and professionalism the credential represents. The new LSP name offers clearer recognition across law firms, legal departments and the broader legal community.

Current ALP holders may continue using the ALP designation if they choose. All new credentials and recertifications issued on or after January 1, 2026, will carry the LSP title.

NALS will begin updating its website and digital materials in the coming weeks, so LSP references will appear ahead of the official transition.

To learn more about NALS certifications and upcoming updates, visit our website at [NALS.org](https://www.nals.org).

## NALS 2026 National Legal Education Conference!



Get ready to learn and network at the 2026 National Legal Education Conference taking place October 5-7, 2026, at the Hilton Jacksonville at Mayo Clinic in Jacksonville, Florida.

Join legal support professionals from across the country for three days of high-quality education, inspiring speakers and the invaluable networking opportunities.

Exhibitor and sponsorship opportunities are already open and registration will open in May.

# Continuing Education

As a legal support professional, you can earn CLE credits in a variety of ways in addition to attendance at chapter or national educational sessions regardless of your location. Check at NALS.org for opportunities from other local and state associations.

Appropriate educational topics range from law office procedures, technology, ethics and judgment, grammar, and more.

Additional sources you may not have considered include:

- Local bar seminars or educational sessions
- Legal Talk Network (\$)
- Lorman Training Products (\$\$\$\$)
- Westlaw Seminars (\$\$\$)
- American Bar Association (\$\$\$)
- Lexis-Nexis (\$\$\$)
- Internal Revenue Service (Free-\$)
- TED (Free)
- NALS @Law Magazine Quizzes (Free-\$)
- 123ce.com

And did you know that you can also obtain CLE credit for volunteering on a National Task Force, e.g., Board of Directors, Leadership Identification Committee (LIC), National Certifying Board, Manuals Task Force, etc. If you are claiming CLE credit for volunteering, you must provide proof of your involvement and your task force leader must confirm same.

You can also earn CLE for volunteering your time and skills as a paralegal or legal support professional to legal organizations or nonprofit organizations (e.g., Legal Aid Services) in a *pro bono* capacity. A maximum of five (5) hours can be earned for *pro bono* legal support services and you must provide confirmation of your time/services dedicated. Examples of these organizations:

- Wounded Warrior Project
- Wills for Heroes
- Folds of Honor
- Justice for Children
- The National Domestic Violence Hotline
- NAACP
- ACLU
- The Legal Aid Society
- SPCA
- The Human Rights Campaign



## Membership Renewals

Renewal notices were sent to members, reminding them that their memberships with both NALS and their state or local chapters expire on April 30. Have you renewed?

# Why Legal AI Needs Mentors not Models

Source: NALS Legal Brief (Above the Law March 16, 2026 by Olga V. Mack)

Legal AI is usually framed as a model problem. Better models. Larger models. More capable models. The assumption is that if the technology is powerful enough, usefulness will follow.

The empirical evidence suggests a different conclusion. Legal AI does not fail because models are insufficiently advanced. It fails because the dominant metaphor is wrong.

The most effective legal AI behaves less like an automated system and more like a mentor.

This insight emerged during a series of empirical classroom pilots run through [Product Law Hub](#) using an AI-based legal coach called Frankie. The pilots were designed to observe how users develop judgment-based legal skills when working alongside AI. The findings draw on quantitative engagement data and qualitative interviews conducted throughout the course.

What consistently produced better learning outcomes was not authority, speed, or completeness. It was collaboration.

Much of legal AI development is oriented around automation. Reduce effort. Eliminate steps. Deliver answers faster. That framing works for clerical or repetitive tasks. It breaks down when the task is judgment.

Judgment cannot be automated without being diminished. It requires context, prioritization, and explanation. When AI systems attempt to replace those processes with outputs, they strip away the very work that produces expertise.

In the classroom pilot, authority-driven interactions exposed this limitation quickly. When the AI behaved like a tool that delivered conclusions, engagement dropped. Users deferred rather than reasoned. Learning slowed.

The model was capable. The interaction was wrong.

## **Mentorship Is How Lawyers Actually Learn**

Lawyers do not develop judgment by being handed answers. They develop it through guided struggle. A senior lawyer asks questions, challenges assumptions, and explains why something matters. They do not solve the problem for you unless it is necessary.

The most effective AI interactions in the pilot mirrored that dynamic. When the system asked clarifying questions, surfaced tradeoffs, and prompted users to articulate reasoning before responding, engagement increased. Quantitative data showed longer sessions and more iterative exchanges. Interviews revealed greater confidence and stronger retention.

The AI did not become smarter. It became more mentor-like.

## **Authority Shuts Learning Down**

One of the clearest contrasts in the data was between collaborative and authoritative modes. When the AI asserted answers early or framed guidance as definitive, users disengaged. They moved faster but learned less.

(Continued on next page)

# Mentors not Models (cont'd)

This is not surprising. Authority short-circuits curiosity. Once an answer is presented as final, there is little incentive to explore alternatives or test assumptions.

In contrast, when the AI withheld judgment and instead invited reasoning, users stayed cognitively involved. They treated the interaction as a conversation rather than a transaction.

Legal AI that defaults to authority undermines its own value.

## **Collaboration Scales Better Than Control**

There is a temptation to believe that authoritative AI is safer. Clear answers feel controllable. Collaborative systems feel messy.

The pilot suggests the opposite. Collaborative AI produced more durable learning and more trust. Users were better able to explain their reasoning and adapt it across scenarios.

Control may reduce short-term risk. It increases long-term dependence. Mentorship builds capability.

This distinction matters as AI becomes embedded in training and workflows. Systems that act as authorities create passive users. Systems that act as mentors create better lawyers.

Mentorship does not fit neatly into benchmark metrics. It is harder to demo. It takes longer to show value. But it aligns far more closely with how legal expertise actually develops.

The Product Law Hub pilot made this visible by stripping away performance theater. Students did not care how fast the AI responded. They cared whether it engaged with their thinking.

## **Mentors Adapt. Models Repeat.**

Another insight from the pilot was how quickly trust eroded when the AI repeated itself or applied the same framework regardless of context. Repetition signaled inattention. Users disengaged.

Mentors do not repeat scripts. They adapt. They notice what the learner already understands and adjust accordingly.

When the AI adapted its approach based on prior exchanges, users attributed greater intelligence to it, even when its substantive guidance was constrained. Trust followed attentiveness, not sophistication.

## **The Cost Of Choosing The Wrong Metaphor**

Choosing automation as the dominant metaphor for legal AI carries a cost. It encourages tools that optimize for speed over understanding and authority over engagement. Those tools may look impressive but fail quietly in practice.

Choosing mentorship as the metaphor changes design priorities. It emphasizes questioning over answering, adaptation over uniformity, and explanation over assertion.

[Continued on next page]

## Mentors not Models (cont'd)

The classroom data suggests that this shift is not philosophical. It is practical.

### What This Means For Builders And Buyers

For builders, the takeaway is clear. Stop asking how much the model can do. Start asking how it behaves when a user is uncertain, wrong, or exploring.

For buyers, the question is not how many tasks a system can automate. It is whether the system helps lawyers think better over time.

Legal AI will be judged not by its outputs, but by its influence on judgment.

### The Future Of Legal AI Is Relational

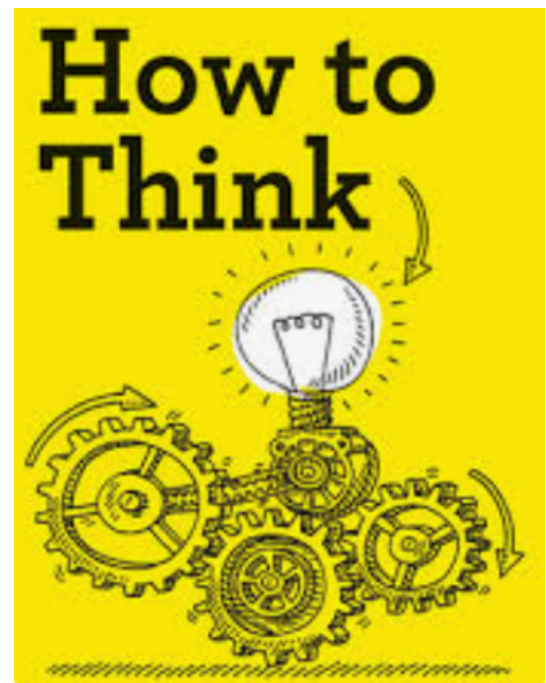
The most important lesson from the empirical classroom work is that legal AI succeeds when it respects how lawyers learn. That learning is relational. It is iterative. It depends on challenge and explanation.

Models will continue to improve. That What is not inevitable is how we choose to deploy them.

If legal AI continues to chase automation, it will keep disappointing. If it embraces mentorship, it has a chance to become something far more valuable.

Legal AI does not need to replace lawyers. It needs to teach them how to think.

Olga V. Mack is the CEO of TermScout, where she builds legal systems that make contracts faster to understand, easier to operate, and more trustworthy in real business conditions. Her work focuses on how legal rules allocate power, manage risk, and shape decisions under uncertainty. A serial CEO and former General Counsel, Olga previously led a legal technology company through acquisition by LexisNexis. She teaches at Berkeley Law and is a Fellow at CodeX, the Stanford Center for Legal Informatics. She has authored several books on legal innovation and technology, delivered six TEDx talks, and her insights regularly appear in Forbes, Bloomberg Law, VentureBeat, TechCrunch, and Above the Law. Her work treats law as essential infrastructure, designed for how organizations actually operate.



## ELECTION RESULTS



### **CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR ELECTED LEADERS!**

#### **President:**

Tara Jean Brown, PP, CLP, SCCP

#### **Treasurer:**

Emily Walterscheid, PP, CLP

# CLE Clarification for Certification Recertification Extension

NALS has transitioned to a single annual recertification period, meaning all certifications will renew in January of their applicable year. To support this change, certification expiration dates have been extended for certifications earned or renewed prior to this alignment.

## Important CLE Clarification

Your CLEs will not expire or be rejected due to this extension. For active certifications, all CLEs earned since your previous renewal or earned date will continue to count, even if that window extends beyond five years. The January expiration date simply gives you additional time to complete the CLE requirements.

## What this means for you:

- All certification expiration dates have been extended to January 31 of the following year.
- For example:
  - All certifications originally expiring in 2026 now expire January 31, 2027.
  - All certifications originally expiring in 2027 now expire January 31, 2028.

This is a **one-time extension** to align all recertifications to the same expiration date. Certifications earned or renewed from this year onward will already be set to expire on January 31 and will not require an extension.

## Recertification Processing

Recertifications may be submitted early but will be processed in January as part of NALS annual recertification cycle.

If you have questions about this recertification process, **please reach out to our Certification and Events Manager, Kelsey.**

# NALS Foundation

## Events + Fundraisers

- [NALS National Conference Events](#)
- [Foundation Grants](#)

## Quick Links

- [Ways to Give](#)
- [Donor Recognition](#)
- [Sweepstakes Item Donation](#)



## Building Your Career & Future

The NALS Foundation was established in 1989 and is dedicated to ensuring a rewarding future for you and all legal support professionals. It is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit educational foundation working hand in hand with the National Association for Legal Support Professionals to enhance educational opportunities. Since its inception, the NALS Foundation has awarded grants and contributions of over \$200,000 for the benefit of chapters and states.

## Purpose

The NALS Foundation strives to ensure top-notch legal services are the norm. It funds quality education programs for legal professionals working with attorneys and the public to enhance their skills and provide them with the latest information on their profession. The NALS Foundation also keeps the good of the legal profession in the public eye, emphasizing a positive image of the profession and the importance of qualified, competent legal professionals.

The NALS Foundation is governed by a volunteer board of trustees. The board has designated the following as funding priorities:

- Educational/Research Opportunities
- Grants Keynote Speakers/Workshops
- Recognition

Please direct any questions you may have to the NALS Foundation Chair at [foundation@nals.org](mailto:foundation@nals.org).

## Get Involved

Serving on the NALS Foundation Board of Trustees is a simple, fun, and rewarding way to give back to the legal support profession. [Click here](#) and select NALS Foundation Board of Trustees on your volunteer interest form. Contact any current Trustee if you'd like to discuss the possibilities!

### NALS Foundation Board of Trustees

- Tina Hurley, PP, PLS (chair)
- Kathy Hilgendorf (secretary/treasurer)
- Julie Abernathy, PP, PLS
- Stephanie Johnson  
Amylyn Riedling, PP, PLS-SC
- Judy D. Whigham, PP, PLS

# Wishing you all the best!



## { Three simple rules in life }

1. If you do not GO after what you want, you'll never have it.
2. If you do not ASK, the answer will always be NO.
3. If you do not step forward, you'll always be in the same place.

*May your birthday be the  
start of a year filled with new  
opportunities,  
accomplishments, and  
endless joy.*

*Happy Birthday!*

# NALS Code of Ethics & Professional Responsibility

Members of NALS are bound by the objectives of this association and the standards of conduct required of the legal profession. Every member shall:

- Encourage respect for the law and administration of justice
- Observe rules governing privileged communications and confidential information
- Promote and exemplify high standards of loyalty, cooperation, and courtesy
- Perform all duties of the profession with integrity and competence
- Pursue a high order of professional attainment

Integrity and high standards of conduct are fundamental to the success of our professional association. This Code is promulgated by NALS and accepted by its members to accomplish these ends.

**Canon 1.** Members of this association shall maintain a high degree of competency and integrity through continuing education to better assist the legal profession in fulfilling its duty to provide quality legal services to the public.

**Canon 2.** Members of this association shall maintain a high standard of ethical conduct and shall contribute to the integrity of the association and the legal profession.

**Canon 3.** Members of this association shall avoid a conflict of interest pertaining to a client matter.

**Canon 4.** Members of this association shall preserve and protect confidences and privileged communications of a client.

**Canon 5.** Members of this association shall exercise care in using independent professional judgment and in determining the extent to which a client may be assisted without the presence of a lawyer and shall not act in matters involving professional legal judgment.

**Canon 6.** Members of this association shall not solicit legal business on behalf of a lawyer.

**Canon 7.** Members of this association, unless permitted by law, shall not perform legal functions except under the direct supervision of a lawyer and shall not advertise or contract with members of the general public for the performance of paralegal functions.

**Canon 8.** Members of this association, unless permitted by law, shall not perform any of the duties restricted to lawyers or do things which lawyers themselves may not do and shall assist in preventing the unauthorized practice of law.

**Canon 9.** Members of this association not licensed to practice law shall not engage in the practice of law as defined by statutes or court decisions.

**Canon 10.** Members of this association shall do all other things incidental, necessary, or expedient to enhance professional responsibility and participation in the administration of justice and public service in cooperation with the legal profession.