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# Attorney Satisfaction Remains High 3 Years After Graduation

By **Dave Simpson**

Law360 (June 27, 2022, 9:26 PM EDT) -- About 82% of attorneys reported that they are satisfied with their overall legal careers three years after they graduated from law school, a tick down from last year's finding of 85%, according to a report released Monday from the National Association for Law Placement.

While the percentage of attorneys who reported they were "somewhat satisfied" with their careers remained at 40%, those who reported that they were "extremely satisfied" fell to 42% from last year's 45%, according to the NALP's ninth annual Law School Alumni Employment and Satisfaction report. This year's report covers the class of 2018.

In a reversal of last year's findings, law school graduates working solely from home reported lower overall job satisfaction than those working either full-time in the office or on a hybrid schedule, the NALP said.

Attorneys of color were found to have average college debt levels of more than \$123,000, significantly higher than their white peers, who reported an average of about \$85,000 in educational debt, according to the report.

NALP's Executive Director James Leipold called the differential in debt levels "particularly troubling."

"Nevertheless it is encouraging to see overall career satisfaction ratings remaining so high despite the additional challenges faced during the pandemic era," he said in a release.

About 46% of women reported negative mental health results from the pandemic and the economic crisis, a substantially higher rate than their male counterparts, of whom 31% reported such harm, according to the report.

"While the good news is that employment satisfaction remains high overall for these recent law school graduates, the ongoing impact of the pandemic and the differentiated experiences of graduates of color and women both in law school and as they launch their careers merit specific attention as the legal ecosystem grapples with the future of work and the profession's diversity," NALP Foundation President and CEO Fiona Trevelyan Hornblower said in a release.

More than half of the survey's respondents reported making at least six figures, while 46% reported making between \$51,000 and \$100,000, according to the report. More than a quarter of respondents reported making more than \$150,000, while 4% reported making more than \$300,000 per year.

According to this year's study, overall alumni professional mobility remained consistent with last year's finding, as more than two-thirds reported having already held two or more sequential positions since graduating.

The study is based on data provided by 1,477 class of 2018 alumni from 30 U.S. law schools between September and December, according to the NALP.

The executive summary of this year's report did not include dissatisfaction statistics. In **last year's study**, 10% of class of 2017 graduates reported they were dissatisfied with their current positions.

Attorneys' satisfaction with their jobs was down 53% for that cohort compared to the previous year's survey.

--Editing by Adam LoBelia.

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