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What Skills Do New Lawyers Need?

Survey Finds Consensus in What Skills New Lawyers Need, Less in Where Those Skills Should Be Taught

A recent survey of practicing attorneys, law school students, faculty and librarians found overwhelming agreement regarding the areas in which new lawyers need to be better prepared than they are now—but far less agreement regarding where these skills should be taught. Among the practicing attorneys who responded to the Bloomberg Law survey, 80 percent said new lawyers should be better prepared to handle client communications and interactions, and 79 percent said additional training was needed in professional writing. However, among the different categories of respondents, there was little consensus in terms of where soft skills and management skills should be taught. In general, practicing attorneys were more in favor of on-the-job training in these areas, while law students said they wished they had more of this instruction either in law school or at the undergraduate level. [Bloomberg Law](#) shares more details about these and other findings.

National Center for State Courts Rural Justice Collaborative: Research a Top Priority for 2022

Among its other achievements in 2021, the National Center for State Courts Rural Justice Collaborative identified nine innovation sites, spanning from South Carolina to Montana, that serve as models for how to recruit lawyers to practice in rural areas. In 2022, the RJC plans to build on that work while also developing a research agenda that RJC Co-Director Kristina Bryant says is "unprecedented," aimed at helping stakeholders better understand barriers to fair and equitable justice in rural communities. Other priorities include establishing a network of leaders who are passionate about rural justice and finding opportunities for RJC staff and advisory board members to join likeminded regional and national work groups. A [news item from NCSC](#) highlights additional achievements and priorities, as well as a link to a recently released report that covers both.

Canadian Joint Venture Aims to Apply Artificial Intelligence to Legal Research

Two Canadian legal tech companies—Alta ML and Compass Law—have launched a joint venture called Jurisage AI, which combines the companies' expertise in legal publishing and artificial intelligence. Jurisage's first retail product, called MyJr, is still in development; it's a browser extension and Microsoft Word add-in that automatically identifies case citations in any website, Word document, or PDF and gives the user insights and details that can help determine whether the cited case (from the U.S. or Canada) is relevant to their current research. Jurisage's longer term vision is to use AI to deliver precise answers to legal questions. Learn more at [LawSites Blog](#).

State Legislature Considers Bill to Reinstate Diploma Privilege in South Dakota

From 1903 to 1957 and again from 1973 to 1983, graduates of the University of South Dakota School of Law had diploma privilege, meaning they didn't need to pass a bar exam to practice law in that state. Now, the state legislature is considering a bill that would reinstate diploma privilege. State Rep. Mary Fitzgerald says she introduced the bill at the

urging of law students who have missed passing the bar exam by one or two points. South Dakota is the only state with a non-compensatory bar exam, meaning that the multiple choice and written portions are scored separately and both must be passed; Fitzgerald believes this has led many students to leave South Dakota before taking the bar exam or to attend law school in other states instead. Two lawyer-legislators have said they hesitate to support HB 1073 because, while the current bar exam might have some problems, eliminating it completely is not the answer. Have representatives from the State Bar of South Dakota said they support or oppose this bill? Find out at [Black Hills Pioneer](#).

ABA Presidential Appointment Nominations for 2022-2023 Due February 18

Do you or another ABA member want to serve on a standing committee, special committee, commission, or other ABA entity or initiative? The presidential appointment process for the 2022-2023 bar year (which begins in September) is open until February 18, 2022. The [ABA Office of the President website](#) has all the information you'll need to nominate yourself or another member, as well as an invitation letter and video from President-Elect Deborah Enix-Ross.

See You Soon at the 2022 ABA Bar Leadership Institute!

The ABA Division for Bar Services and ABA Standing Committee on Bar Activities and Services look forward to seeing you in person at the [2022 ABA Bar Leadership Institute](#), March 16-18 at the Chicago Marriott Downtown. If you haven't already, make sure to register today—and don't miss the February 18 deadline to book your room under the ABA block at the Marriott!



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