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No Need to Feel Alone

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The University of Dayton School of Law has launched the UDSL Small Practice Network, a new online forum for alumni working in small or solo practices and for students interested in going into that kind of practice.

The Small Practice Network is a social website where graduates and students can connect with and seek advice from others working in small or solo practice. The Small Practice Network includes forums in which members can discuss practice management issues, business and corporate practice issues, litigation practice issues and career-related matters, among others. The Small Practice Network is private and password protected, and is hosted on Ning.com, a social network.

Interested alumni and students may sign up and begin participating in the network by visiting the related link.

The School of Law launched the new network in response to consistent feedback it has received from both students and alumni, said Tim Swensen, assistant dean and director of the Career Services Office.

"The number of alums currently practicing in small and solo practices, and the volume of students leaning in this direction, is growing. A lot of our graduates focus on this area and it's where there appears to be some steady growth," Swensen said. "And both constituencies have expressed a need for greater networking interactions as well as opportunities to share questions and information. This network is one tool we hope will address some of those needs."

Nearly 40 percent of University of Dayton law graduates in the past three years reported working in solo practice or in small firms. The increase in the number of graduates going into small and solo practice is consistent with national trends, according to Swensen.

"At UDSL, our work is not over when a student graduates," said Dean Paul E. McGreal. "Consistent with our emphasis on law and technology, and our commitment to community, we have leveraged social media to bring our students and alumni together to support one another. And this is just a first step in providing greater training and support to prepare our students and graduates for careers in legal practice."

The School of Law is also exploring the possibility of creating a solo practice incubator in Dayton to provide space, resources and mentoring for alumni beginning their legal careers.

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