



# National Report:

Survey for Law Students  
Who Interviewed with Law Firms  
for Summer 2019





# Contents

- p. 4 — 1. What resources most influenced your decision about which employers to apply to for screening interviews?
- p. 6 — 2. What factors most influenced your decision about which employers to apply to for screening interviews for a 2L summer 2019 job during fall 2018 interviewing?
- p. 8 — 3. Screening Interviews — Aggregate  
Total # of Screening Interviews Reported.  
Number of Screening Interviews Per Student.
- p. 9 — 4. In general, at your screening interviews, which of the following employer representatives did you find most effective?
- p. 11 — 5. If you were offered one or more callback interviews, in general, how much did your interaction(s) with the screening interviewer(s) influence your decision to accept or decline the callback?
- p. 12 — 6. If you accepted more than one callback interview, what was the most important factor in deciding in which order to schedule the interviews?
- p. 13 — 7. In general, how did dinner events influence your opinion of the hosting firm?
- p. 14 — 8. If you declined one or more callback invitation(s), why did you decline it/them?
- p. 15 — 9. If you cancelled any callback interviews that you had previously scheduled, why did you cancel?
- p. 16 — 10. How many offers for summer associate employment did you receive?
- p. 17 — 11. How many offers, if any, were extended to you prior to the start of the On-Campus Interview/Recruitment program at your school?
- p. 18 — 12. In general, following an offer, what sort of additional communication and/or follow-up from the firm would be welcome or expected?
- p. 19 — 13. Did you follow any of the firms you were interested in on social media?  
If yes, which platforms did you use to follow these firms?
- p. 20 — 14. If you received multiple offers, what most influenced your decision on which offer to accept?
- p. 21 — 15. For the employer with which you ultimately accepted an offer, did you have any substantive communications or interactions prior to the screening interview?
- p. 22 — 16. For the employer with which you ultimately accepted an offer for summer associate employment, how did you previously perceive that employer?
- p. 23 — 17. On what date did you accept your offer?
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# Introduction

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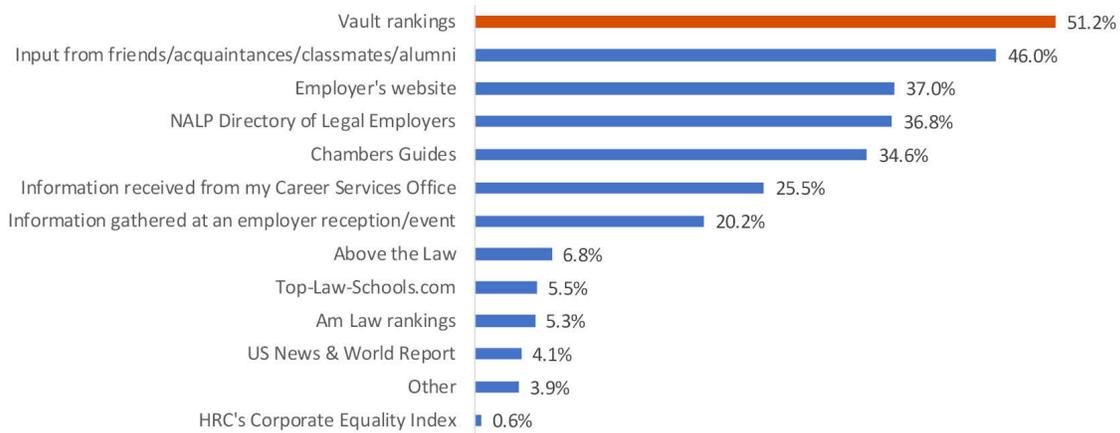
In the fall of 2018, schools were offered the opportunity to survey their second-year students who interviewed, or hoped to interview, for a summer 2019 law firm position. A total of 28 schools circulated the survey that NALP provided for this purpose, and collectively these schools received 926 responses to the survey.

The survey questions covered the scope of interviewing for a law firm summer associate position, starting with factors and resources influencing decision-making about which employers to apply to, considerations weighed in choosing between multiple offers, and when offers were accepted. Additional inquiries focused on screening and callback interview experiences, including pre-OCI interviewing, contact with firms during the process, and student use of social media to follow firms.

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**1. What resources most influenced your decision about which employers to apply to for screening interviews? Check the three resources that were most important to your decision-making. Up to three choices permitted. Based on 926 responses.**



Response	Frequency	Count
Vault rankings	51.2%	474
Input from friends/acquaintances/classmates/alumni	46.0%	426
Employer's website	37.0%	343
NALP Directory of Legal Employers	36.8%	341
Chambers Guides	34.6%	320
Information received from my Career Services Office	25.5%	236
Information gathered at an employer reception/event	20.2%	187
Above the Law	6.8%	63
Top-Law-Schools.com	5.5%	51
Am Law rankings	5.3%	49
US News & World Report	4.1%	38
Other	3.9%	36
HRC's Corporate Equality Index	0.6%	6



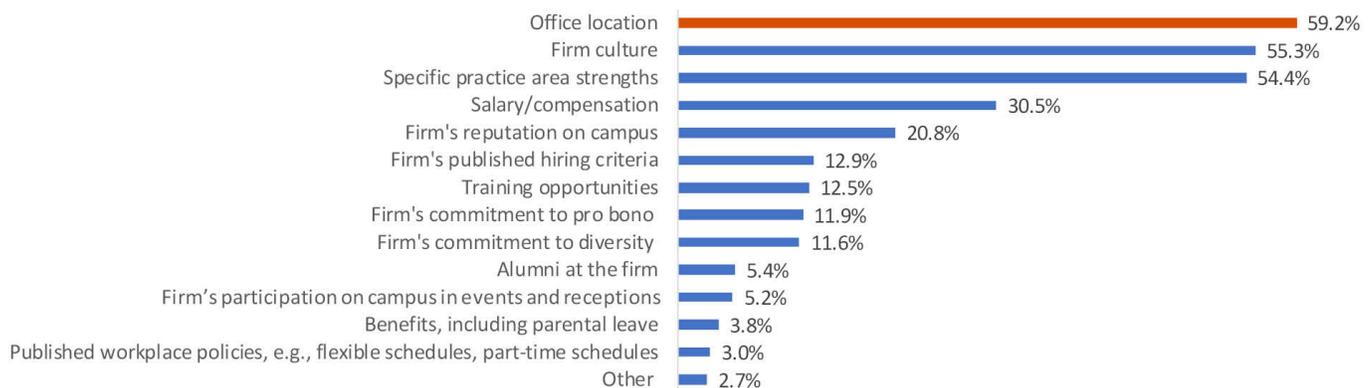
### Select Student Narrative Responses to Specify Other Resources

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- Glassdoor ([www.glassdoor.com](http://www.glassdoor.com))
- Reddit ([www.reddit.com](http://www.reddit.com))
- PAAM (Prosecuting Attorney’s Association of Michigan)
- Environmental and Natural Resource Law Center
- “I checked the rankings of best work-life balance”



**2. What factors most influenced your decision about which employers to apply for screening interviews for a 2L summer 2019 job during fall 2018 interviewing? Check the three factors that were most important in your decision-making process. Up to three choices permitted. Based on 926 responses.**



Response	Frequency	Count
Office location	59.2%	548
Firm culture	55.3%	512
Specific practice area strengths	54.4%	504
Salary/compensation	30.5%	282
Firm's reputation on campus	20.8%	193
Firm's published hiring criteria	12.9%	119
Training opportunities	12.5%	116
Firm's commitment to pro bono	11.9%	110
Firm's commitment to diversity	11.6%	107
Alumni at the firm	5.4%	50
Firm's participation on campus in events and receptions	5.2%	48
Benefits, including parental leave	3.8%	35
Published workplace policies, e.g., flexible schedules, part-time schedules	3.0%	28
Other	2.7%	25



### Select Student Narrative Responses to Specify Other Factors

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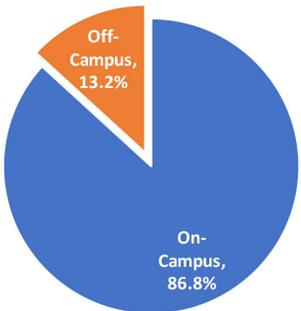
- Prestige
- Rankings
- Reputation
- Clerkship connections
- “Advancement opportunities — i.e. length of time to partner, ability to build own practice, etc.”
- “Firms that people whose opinion I valued said were good firms and who paid \$190,000.”
- “Political balance within the firm.”
- “I feel like all the firms were very similar which is why I wasn’t picky in my selection. Also the more I applied to the higher my chances were of getting hired.”



### 3. Screening Interviews – Aggregate

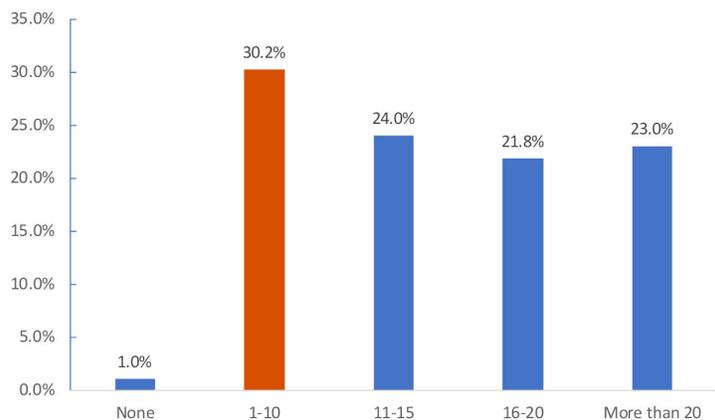
**Total # of Screening Interviews Reported. Based on 926 responses.**

Total # of Screening Interviews Reported	13,937
# of Screening Interviews Conducted On-Campus*	12,091
% of Screening Interviews On-Campus	86.8%



\*Includes any off-site space that may have been used for screening interviews.

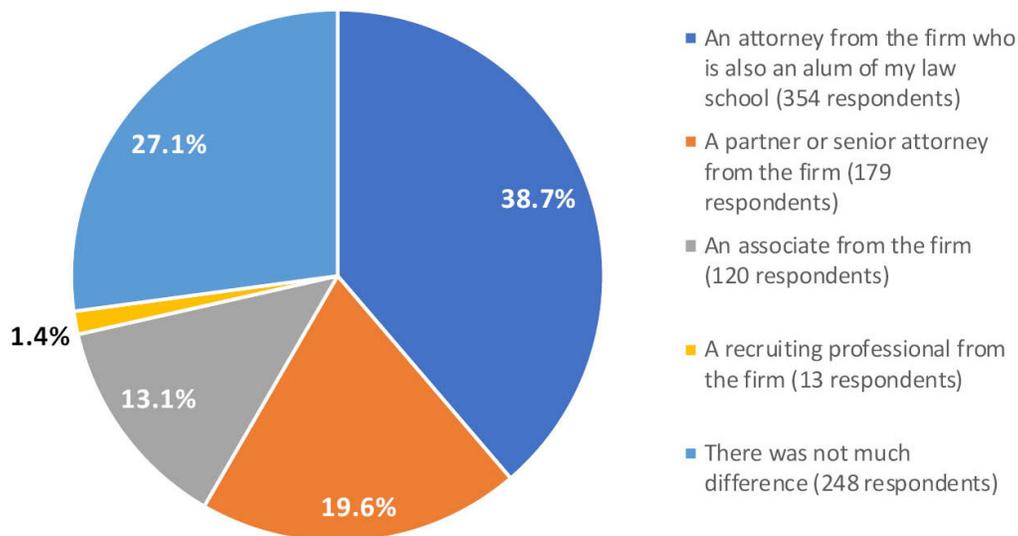
**Number of Screening Interviews Per Student. Based on 926 responses.**



# of Screening Interviews per Student	% of Students Reporting this Number of Screening Interviews
None	1.0%
1-10	30.2
11-15	24.0
16-20	21.8
More than 20	23.0
Median number per student	14
Average number per student	15.1
Modal number*	12

\*The modal number (the most frequently reported value) was reported by 5.6% of respondents.

**4. In general, at your screening interviews, which of the following employer representatives did you find most effective? Based on 914 responses.**



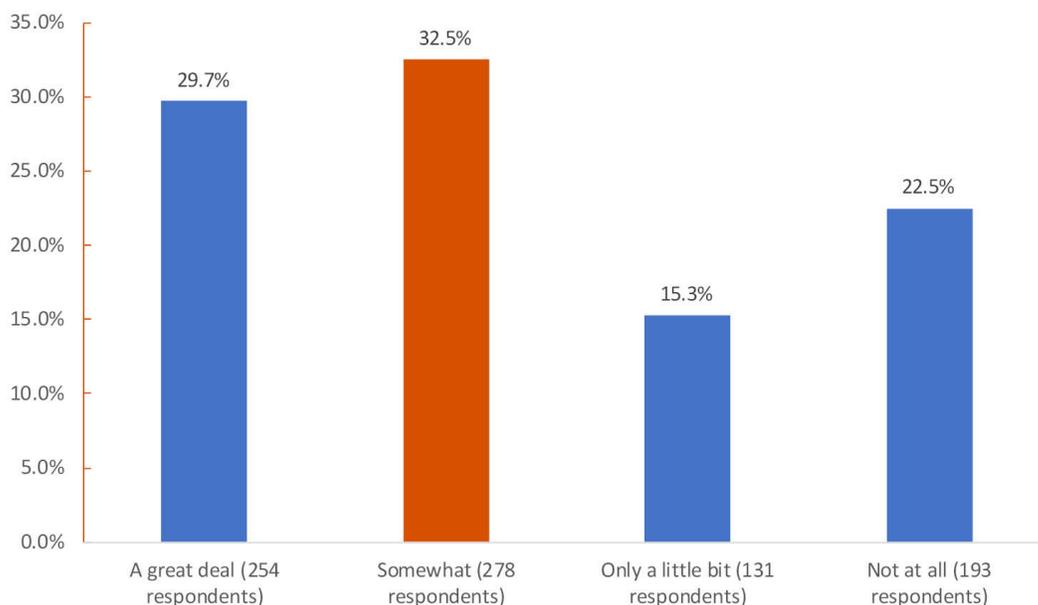
**Select Student Narrative Responses Concerning Interviewers**

- “Though firms often send associates to make students more “at ease,” I actually found it really uncomfortable to be interviewed by an almost-peer. Partners are also better positioned to answer questions related to long-term career planning.”
- “I appreciated having partners who could speak to longer term trends in the firm or who may know the firm better, but speaking with associates generally gave me a better impression of what the firm looked for in new hires and how their new hires were feeling about their choice.”
- “All of them seemed uninterested in the actual interview.”
- “The person didn’t matter but, good or bad, a majority came into the room with an insurmountable notion of how qualified the students were.”
- “I think the attitude of the interviewer matters more than the prestige of position at the firm. My best interviews were with partners and associates who were truly proud of where they worked and were enthusiastic about the opportunities available to budding lawyers.”
- “The partners were my best interviewers, by far. Recruiting professionals were my worst interviewers, by far. I feel very strongly that the University should be trying to bring in partners to interview as much as possible.”

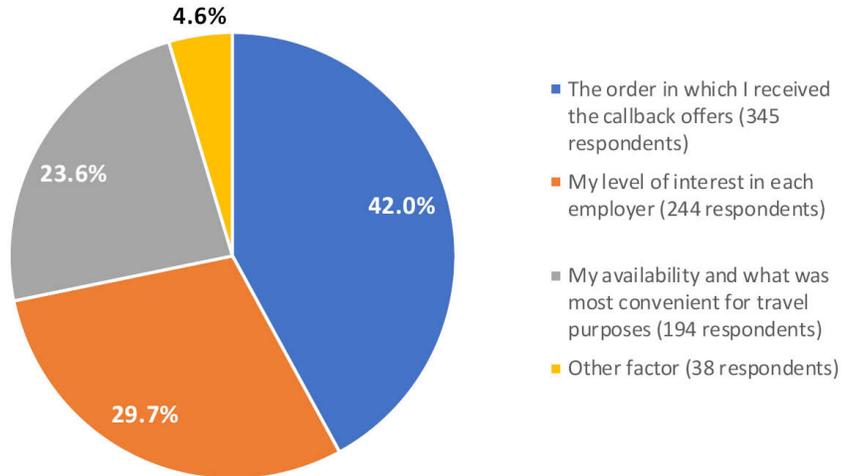


- “The tone/substance of my interviews wildly varied and I didn’t notice a pattern between seniority or alumni status between them. In general though I had better experiences with woman interviewers than men (I am a woman).”
- “It’s generally very difficult to get information in just 12 or so minutes — some of the firms had their attorney recruitment chair do the interviews, which I think is generally an effective way to do things.”
- “Depends on how you view ‘effective.’ I felt as though alums from my law school had the best understanding of the accomplishments, and what they mean, so I felt as though those interviews were more conversational and required less explaining.”
- “Was most helpful if the representative was actually from the office that I was applying to. Was frustrating to be applying to a California office but interviewing with someone from their NYC office.”
- “I find interviews with a partner and a newer associate to be the most effective.”
- “I found the recruiting professionals to be the most effective representatives because they struck a nice balance between asking useful questions and creating a more relaxed atmosphere. These recruiting professionals were attorneys at the firm who worked in a recruiting capacity, so they were also able to answer questions about what it is like to work as an attorney at their respective firms.”
- “I found talking with newer associates gave me the best sense of the life and work of a summer associate (and beyond), as many associates were, themselves, summer associates, and are living the experience of an early-career associate. Hearing about those experiences helped me understand what my experience might be like, giving me an idea of whether the firm would be a good fit.”
- “The most effective attorneys were those who not only could answer my questions about the firm, but also demonstrated a sincere interest in my responses during the interview. These qualities are not exclusive to associates, partners, and/or recruiters.”

5. If you were offered one or more callback interviews, in general, how much did your interaction(s) with the screening interviewer(s) influence your decision to accept or decline the callback? *Based on 856 responses.*



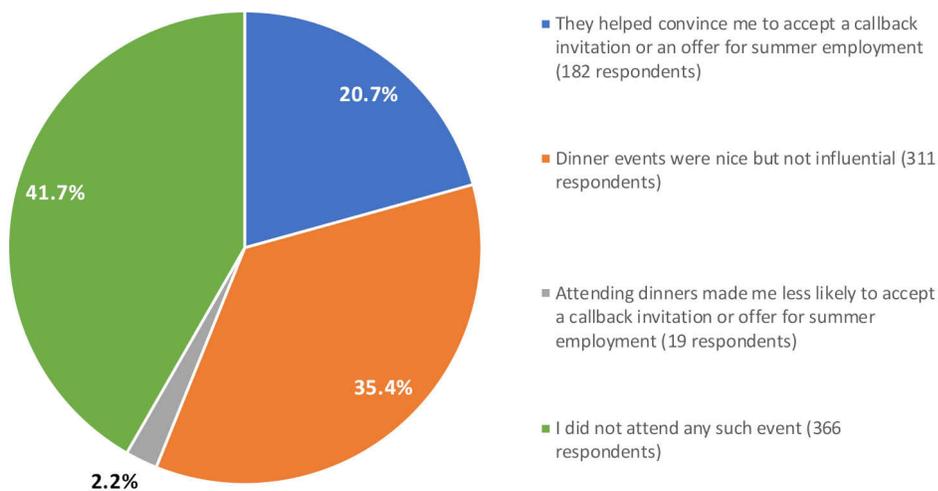
**6. If you accepted more than one callback interview, what was the most important factor in deciding in which order to schedule the interviews? *Based on 821 responses.***



**Select Student Narrative Responses Concerning Scheduling Multiple Callback Interviews**

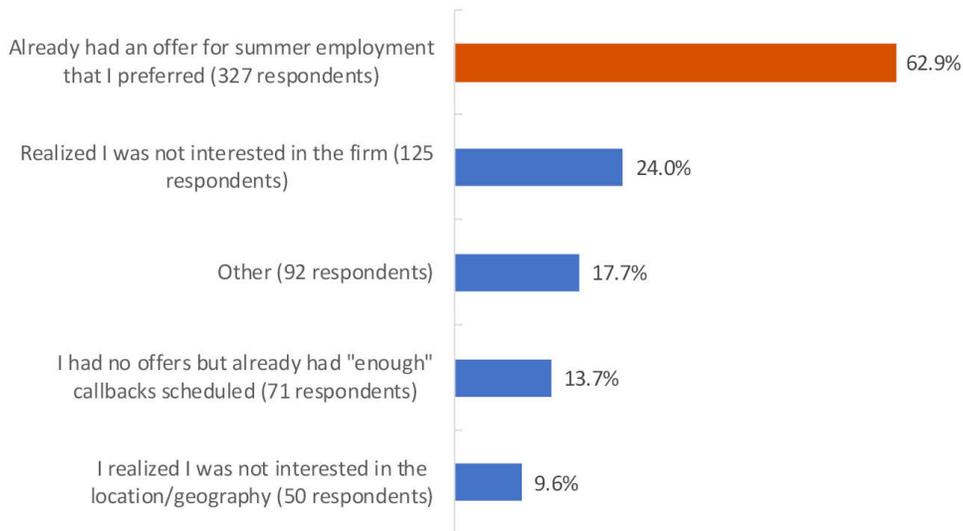
- “As quickly as possible because I knew that offers were rolling.”
- “As soon as possible.”
- “Earliest date they had available.”
- “I tried to schedule them all immediately.”
- “I scheduled at the convenience of the firm, and would accept any callback interview. Order of the interviews was of little concern.”
- “The employer’s availability. I had little control over when the interviews were scheduled for.”
- “Most firms expect candidates to schedule interviews as soon as possible. I found that I didn’t have much choice in which order.”

**7. In general, how did dinner events influence your opinion of the hosting firm? Based on 878 responses.**





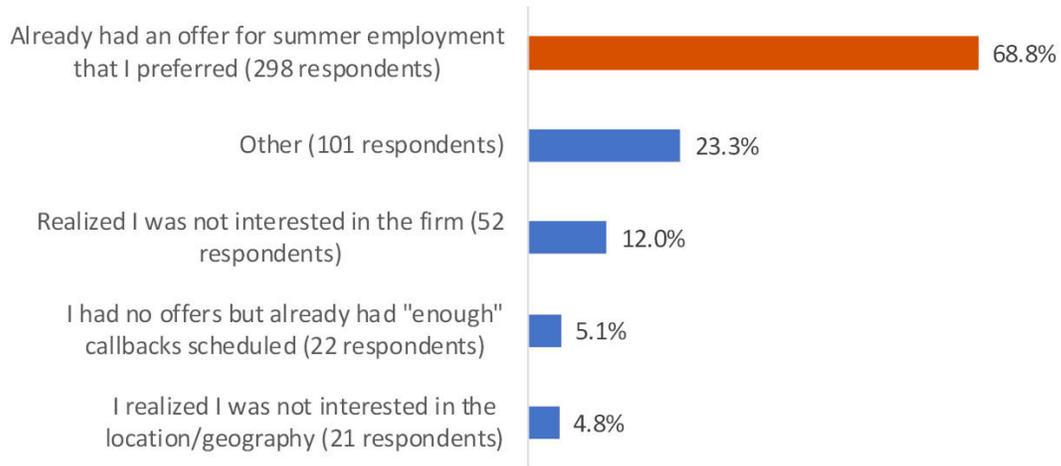
**8. If you declined one or more callback invitation(s), why did you decline it/them? Respondents were allowed to choose multiple reasons. Based on 520 responses.**



**Select Student Narrative Responses Concerning Reasons for Declining Callback Invitations**

- “I realized they weren’t hiring for a certain practice group.”
- “I confirmed that I did not want this type of job at all.”
- “The callback offer came so late (after I had already completed 6 callback interviews) that I had no interest in traveling again. Had the callback invitation been offered more promptly (e.g. within a week of the screener), I would have been very interested.”
- “I had a negative screening interview with the firm.”
- “The attorney representatives were unprofessional or reflected a firm culture I was not interested in.”
- “I got bad vibes from the interviewers at the screening interview.”
- “Behavior of the firm at the OCI screening interview precluded them from getting me for a callback.”

**9. If you cancelled any callback interviews that you had previously scheduled, why did you cancel? Respondents were allowed to choose multiple reasons. *Based on 433 responses.***

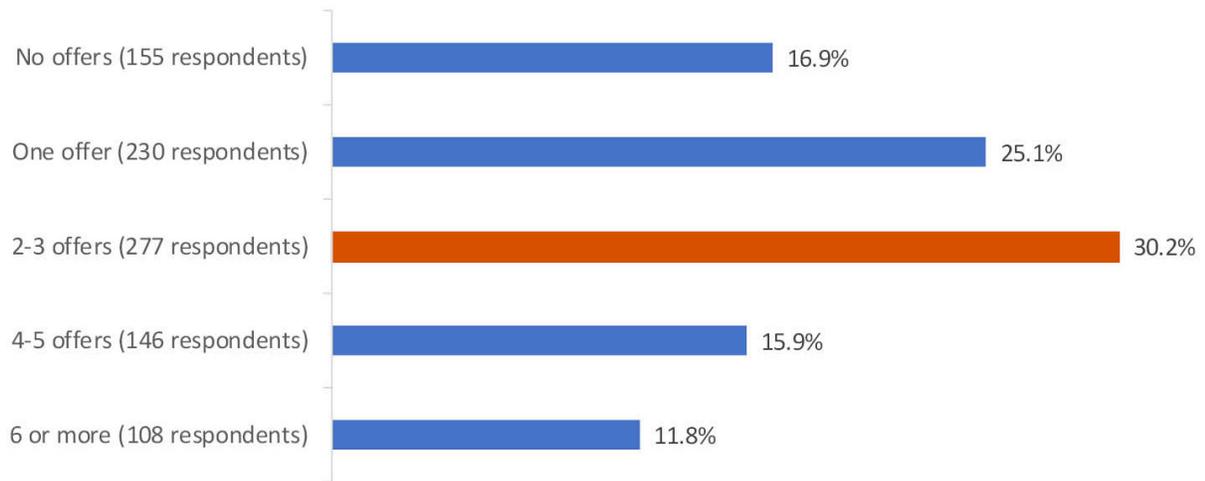


**Select Student Narrative Responses Concerning Reasons for Cancelling Previously Scheduled Callback Interviews**

- “I did not want to over-saturate my schedule with interviews and was confident I would get an offer with what I had on the table.”
- “The firm scheduled a callback with me for after my fall classes began, and gave me no earlier options. Since I had other offers, I didn’t want to drag the process into the semester.”
- “I had already traveled to that city and it would be hard to go back for this callback (school was back in session).”
- “The firm was very slow with the scheduling process and by the time they were able to schedule the interview I had already made up my mind about the firm that I wanted to choose.”
- “2 days before the callback, the firm sent 45 page employment application which involved authorizing a background check, listing jobs over the last 10 years, addresses over the last 10 years, etc. It was too much paperwork for an interview.”
- “To make scheduling room for other callbacks.”

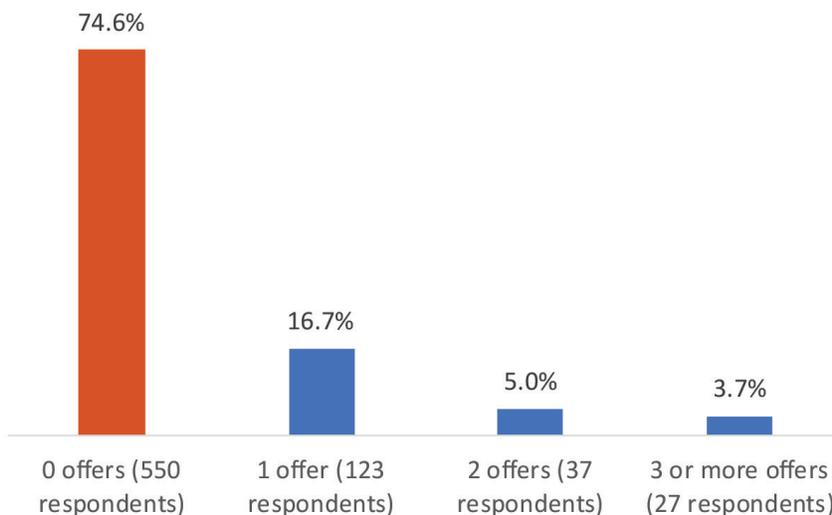


10. How many offers for summer associate employment did you receive? *Based on 916 responses.*

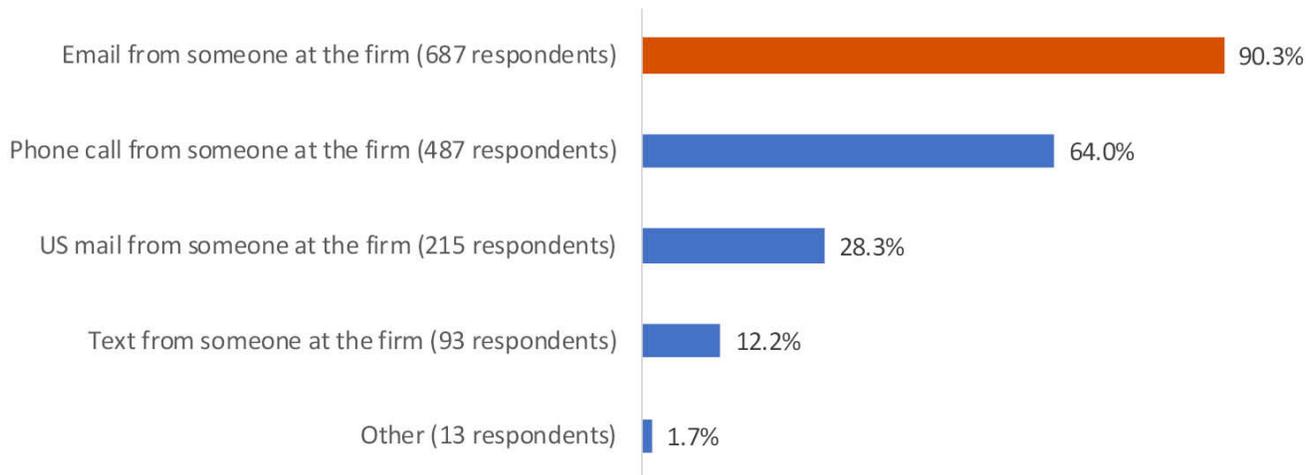




**11. How many offers, if any, were extended to you prior to the start of the On-Campus Interview/ Recruitment program at your school?** *Figures are based on 737 students who reported receiving one or more offers and who also reported the number of offers received before OCI.*



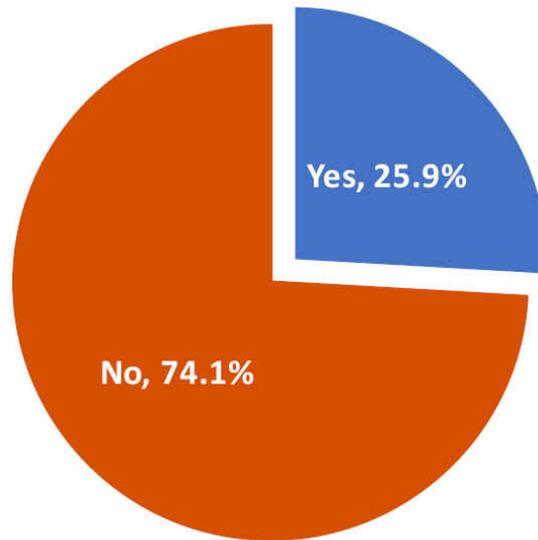
**12. In general, following an offer, what sort of additional communication and/or follow-up from the firm would be welcome or expected? Respondents were allowed to choose multiple items. Based on 761 responses.**



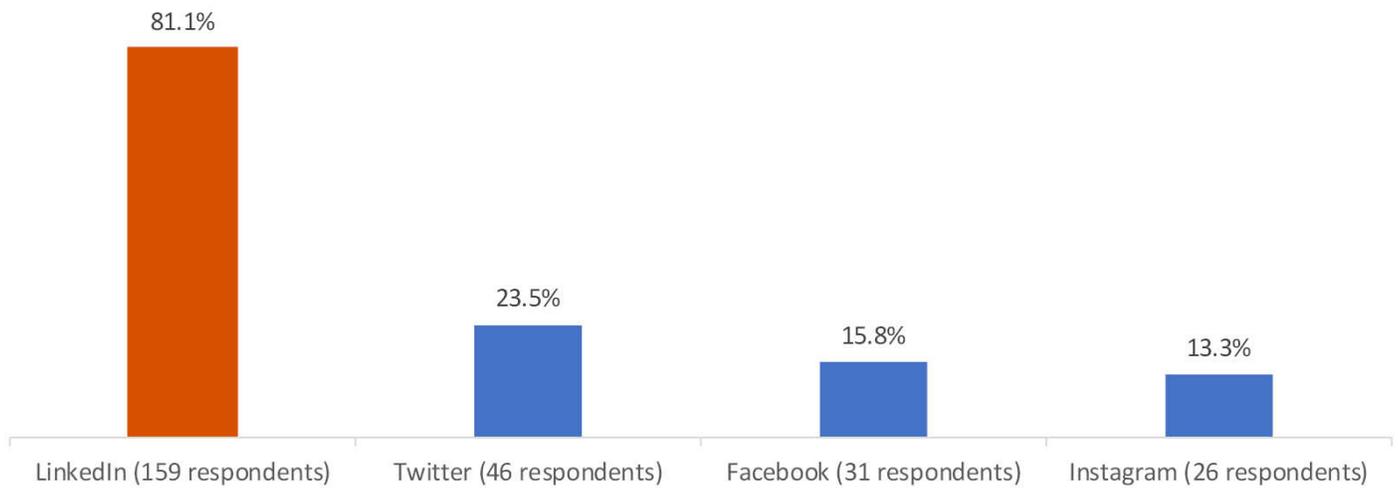
### Select Student Narrative Responses Concerning Follow-up After an Offer

- “After my 1L offer, and following receiving an offer to return, many members of the firm reached out to me to congratulate me. It didn’t take them a lot of time, but it meant a lot to me.”
- “Little, at best. I understand that there is a lot of pressure on firms to snag the top candidates before another one does, but it was annoying.”
- “Contacts were appropriate in any form if I had previous interaction with person that was more than fleeting. Did not appreciate getting bombarded by (near) strangers.”
- “My friends and I were all impressed by firms that sent offer gifts (even small things like cookies).”
- “Packages/Gifts”
- “Sweets/cookies”
- “Mailing a welcome package”
- “Follow up dinners were nice and showed interest and enthusiasm.”

13. Did you follow any of the firms you were interested in on social media? *Based on 757 responses.*

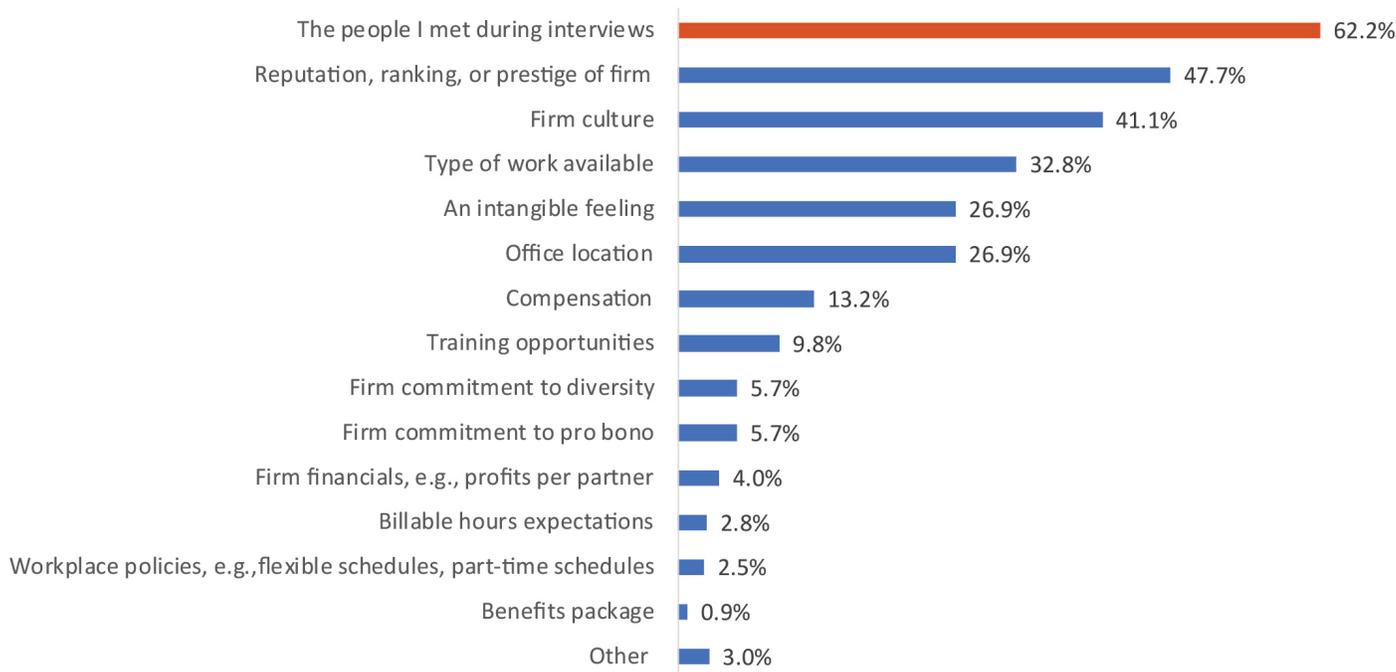


If yes, which platforms did you use to follow these firms? Respondents were allowed to choose multiple items. *Based on 196 responses.*



Note: No respondents chose Snapchat or other platforms.

**14. If you received multiple offers, what most influenced your decision on which offer to accept? Respondents were allowed to choose up to three factors. Based on 531 responses.**

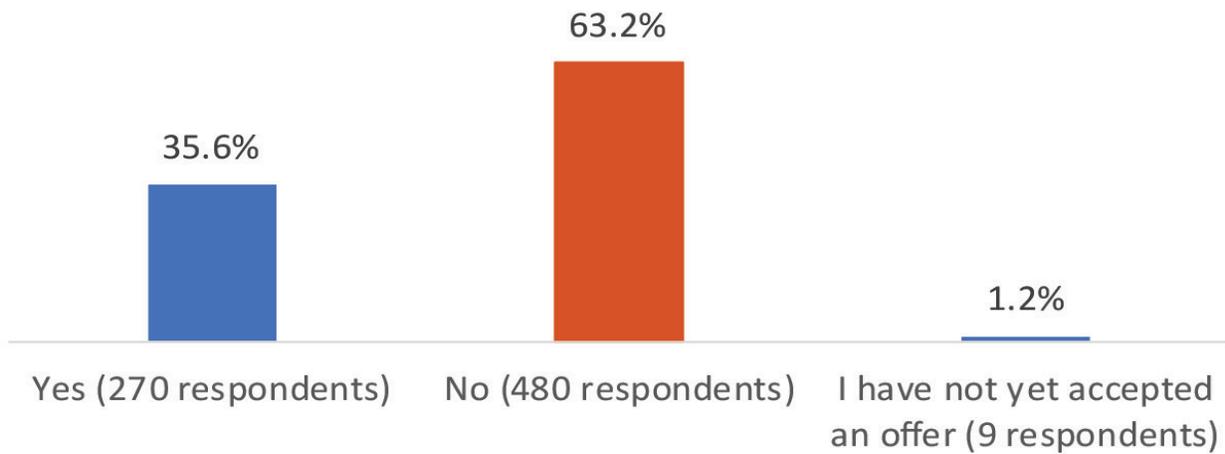


**Select Student Narrative Responses Concerning Decision on Which Offer to Accept**

- Ability to split summer. (Multiple responses)
- International presence and involvement. (Multiple responses)
- “Focus on a specific practice area (emerging life sciences).”
- “I accepted the first offer I received.”
- “Clients and industries represented.”
- “Whether the office was the HQ/other factors that would help avoid layoffs should another 2009 pop up.”
- “I particularly enjoyed one of the clients the firm I chose works with frequently. I had previously worked for this client.”
- “I declined both offers because I realized Big Law was not for me.”
- “My second look was also very influential for my decision to accept my offer.”
- “The biggest factor in my decision-making was pre-OCI interaction with the firms.”

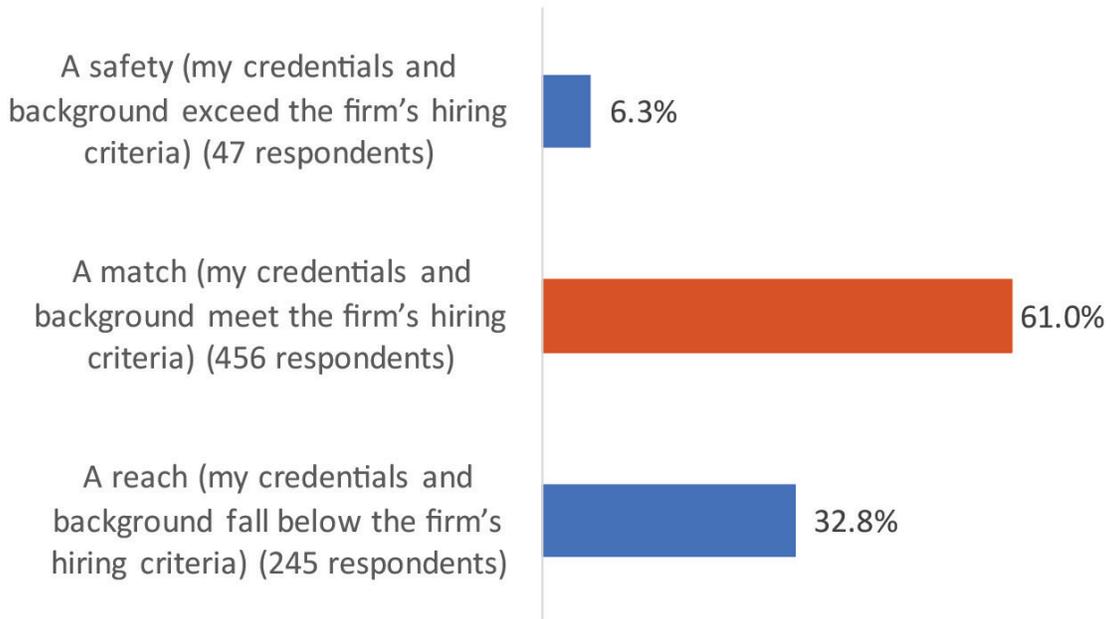


15. For the employer with which you ultimately accepted an offer, did you have any substantive communications or interactions prior to the screening interview? *Based on 759 responses.*



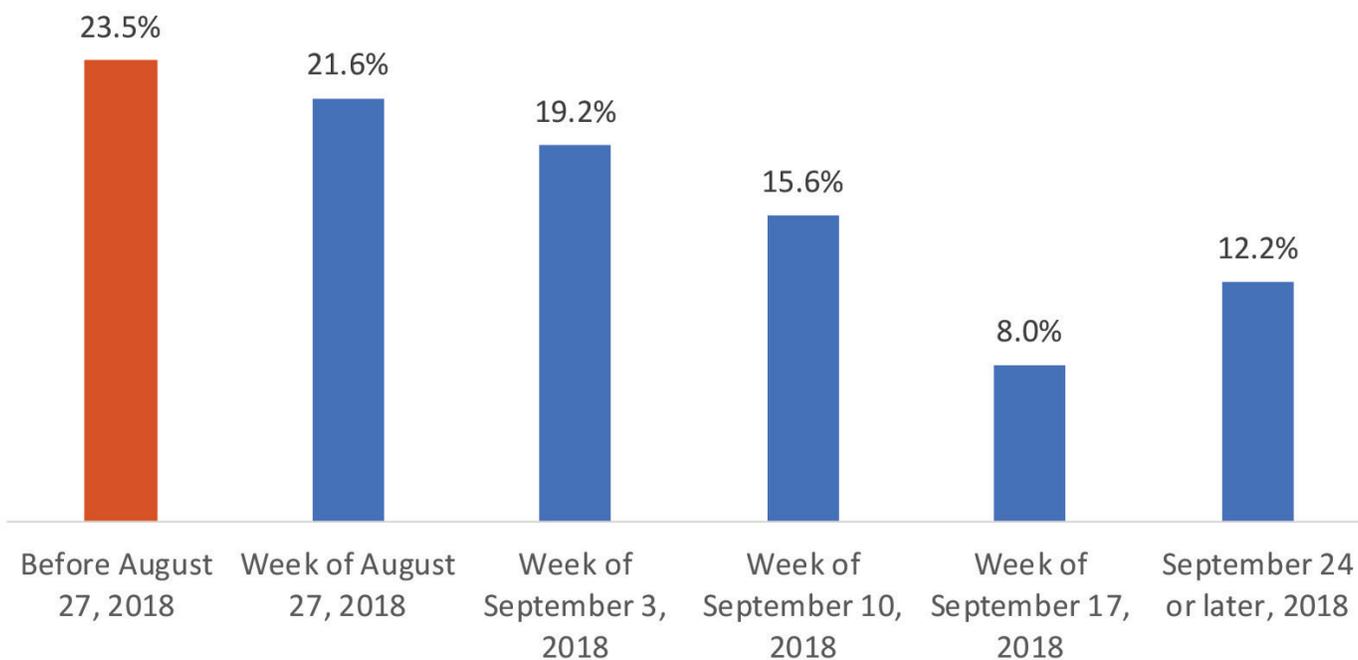


16. For the employer with which you ultimately accepted an offer for summer associate employment, did you previously perceive that employer to be: *Based on 748 responses.*





17. On what date did you accept your offer? *Figures are based on 584 students reporting the day on which they accepted their offer.*



### Selected Closing Comments from Students

- I thought the dinners/happy hours were unnecessary and stressful. Getting rid of them would help freshmen students up. Students felt like we had to attend them and it just extended the process, made it more anxiety-inducing.
- OCI is an invasive, excessive process that overvalues students' 1L work and undervalues the work they put in during the next two years of law school. It infringes on summer between the end of a summer job and start of the new school year which is the only time when students truly stop working. It unnecessarily privileges firm jobs over public interest jobs by allowing firms to come first. I do not think it builds the most successful workforce possible.
- I was very turned off during callbacks when I was not interviewed by female or minority partners, especially when firms touted their commitment to diversity.
- Many firms fell far behind on the whole idea of diversity and inclusion. There was even an instance of outright racism when a partner told me that I was not fit for big law solely because of my background and where I was from.
- In Chicago I found that a lot of top law firms were doing screener interviews way ahead of OCI (3-4 weeks out) and trying to get offers out the last two weeks of July.
- Law firms are driving associates to depression and this is a frank conversation that we need to have and are not and we need to cut through the facade about these firms that we see on websites or through screening interviews. It is an injustice to current and future lawyers in this field.
- OCI was great for letting me know I didn't want to work at a firm.
- Interviews in hotel rooms are very uncomfortable, and I don't think that expresses an appropriate message in an employment situation, especially in today's environment.
- Thank you for getting rid of the beds for OCI. I would have been extremely uncomfortable if there was a bed that I or the interviewer had to sit on.
- The entire OCI process was antiquated, stressful, and ultimately almost made me drop out of law school. I firmly consider it to be one of the lowest points of my life and wish that no other person has to suffer through it. The screener interviews are a complete joke that does very little in gleaning any substantive information about the firm. Every response is a stock answer that makes the interviewer look like nothing more than an automaton. In fact, there were multiple points where I wasn't sure if I was actually being subjected to a Turing Test. Not only that, but I had numerous interviewers outright insult me. One called me a liar when I told him what practice area I was interested in, "You're lying, you're a liar, I don't believe you." Another mocked me for not being very good at hockey, "You were probably terrible . . . My son could skate circles around you." My OCI experience was so negative that I rejected both offers from Vault 100 firms and decided to go into Public Interest where I might be treated with at least a semblance of respect. I hope the day comes soon where law students aren't put up for auction in front of cruel people in nice suits.



- Overall I think that this is pretty terrible and archaic process that is: (1) extremely inefficient — firms have to interview tons of candidates who frankly have no idea what the hell they are doing for jobs that aren't even going to be a thing until ~maybe~ 2 years down the line. (2) terror-inducing for many law students — and for essentially very little gain.
- One employer spent an interview trying to convince me that I should work in private equity, not litigation, because “we need more women in private equity.” When asked why he thought there weren't more women in PE, he said “it requires 100% commitment.” When asked whether he thought women didn't want that, he said “yes.” I declined a callback with that firm, and assumed that a firm that chose such an individual to represent it in a recruiting scenario would be a bad place to work.
- The timing of OCI makes it impossible for a student interested in both public interest and big law to make a meaningful and informed choice. OCI is a terrible process which exacerbates the divide between those with resources and those without. OCI ends up placing those who are white and wealthy at an advantage. It furthers the status quo and ensures that wealth stays in the hands of those who already control it.
- It was an amazing process and my career service office was phenomenal! Thanks so much!
- Very positive experience on behalf of CDO and most of the firms/employers I spoke with.
- It is a crazy and unique process but worth it.
- Our career services did a good job. They were great.
- The biggest factor in my decision making was pre-OCI interaction with the firms.
- Just wanted to say thank you for making so much information available on the NALP website. The information about salaries, benefit packages, and diversity at different levels of the firm (on both the firm-wide and office-specific levels) really helped me compare and rank firms when I received offers.
- Salary above all else is greatest factor. Difficult to envision a scenario where I would accept less money. Firms should continue to understand this basic fact.
- I think CDO can be much better, location-specific firm information to help students incorporate more informed strategy into their rankings. It would EXTREMELY be helpful to know: what were the mean/median grades for each student that got a callback for each office at a firm? Average years of work experience? Maybe even quotes from anonymous students about what they thought each office at each firm was looking for? I think a lot of students were surprised with the work experience required to get a job in DC. I also think a lot of students were surprised with NY and how most of those firms valued work experience over grades.
- I don't think I participated in OCIs the way everyone else did. I already have a job I like, so I only applied to firms that would be really great, but were a bit of a stretch for my GPA. Because I didn't apply for much, had zero expectations, and already had a good job, I actually enjoyed OCIs for the opportunity to speak with attorneys from different firms.
- It was very stressful. I could have used more guidance on my chances of getting into certain firms and how to pick firms that want me.



- I had five callbacks and no offers. I'm disappointed that I wasn't guided on the bidding process or how to actually land a job.
- I found the experience valuable, although I received no offers from any of the firms I interviewed with. However, I am incredibly disappointed and surprised at the number of firms with whom I interviewed who never contacted me after meeting with me. Of the 10 firms I interviewed with, I received 2 callbacks. Of the 8 who did not offer me a callback, 3 of the firms never contacted me at all to decline to give me a callback. In addition, of the 2 callbacks I attended, 1 of the firms never contacted me to decline to give me an offer. I found this incredibly unprofessional and disrespectful. Given the amount of time, energy, and money that I put into the process, I feel that I should have received a simple email declining to give me a callback or offer. Should the opportunity to interview with these firms arise again, I will remember this experience and think long and hard before accepting an interview, and I will be sharing this experience with other students at my school.
- It is a process that disproportionately disfavors students with economic constraints and who are first generation students.
- I felt that the OCI process was overly pushed on students, such as myself, who didn't actually want to work for a firm. I ended up declining a callback and withdrawing from consideration immediately following my interviews, as those weren't the jobs I had wanted in the first place. I ended up with the impression that my law school had prioritized putting a top-ranked student in front of employers over guiding me towards things I actually wanted in my career.
- OCIs were/are a complete waste of time. I don't know anybody that had a pleasurable experience. It seems employers know who they're hiring before you even arrive for your interview. If you're a "minority" you're already at a higher level regardless of grades, or experience level. Some of our top students did not even get offers from firms. This is a total waste of time and should not be how the "Career Services" office should be spending their time. Try actually helping us get jobs! I have received no assistance from them despite the numerous attempts I have made to reach out for help. OCIs are just a cheap and easy way for them to pawn their job off to law firms.
- I am generally frustrated about the lack of communication and support I got from OCS throughout the OCI process. To have 11 screening interviews and not receive a single callback is disappointing, but compounding the disappointment is the fact that I have no idea what I could have done to better my chances. I don't know whether it was purely statistics that led to my rejections or my performance in my interviews, so now I have no clue what I need to do differently moving forward, if anything at all.
- I think it would be helpful if NALP and/or career services publicized information about how many offers students typically receive. I was surprised and upset that I did not receive more offers, but I later learned that my experience was not unusual. It might be helpful to destigmatize the OCI experience if people are aware that the number of offers you receive can vary dramatically.
- Besides fit (type of work, firm culture, employee personalities, etc.), one of the most important factors in making a decision for me was the level of interest the firm showed in me (after the offer had been made). The firm from which I ultimately accepted an offer sent very kind, genuine emails (from both partners and associates) to reach out and congratulate me, and to let me know that they were available to help in any way during the



decision-making process. Two firms I had strongly been considering but ultimately declined either did very little to follow up with me or went to the other extreme and aggressively pursued me, which felt uncomfortable to me. The firm I accepted was in the sweet spot in the middle — genuine interest and excitement for me to join them (and helpfulness in reaching a decision), without being pushy or negative about other firms.

- Having a diverse voice / perspective / decision-maker in the screener stage is crucial.
- Honestly, I think what would make the biggest difference is if an employer is not going to take you seriously because of your GPA, then once employers get their final list they should be able to say who they won't take seriously. There was honestly nothing worse than having to interview with people that just socialized with you and did not ask any serious questions because they knew you wouldn't receive a callback anyways. It creates a sense of false hope in the student and then it was a waste a time slot in which the student could have picked up another firm that would have taken them seriously.
- Firms have a serious problem with interview consistency. The questions they ask are often based off their assumptions about you and your resume. There is substantial research that question/interview inconsistency perpetuates discrimination against underrepresented groups and can result in bias.