

# MEMORANDUM

**To:** Alisa N. Benedict O'Brien, Board Liaison

**Cc:** Fred Thrasher, Deputy Director

**From:** Shawn Beem & Lauren Jackson, Co-Chairs, Law School CSO Chief Officers Interest Group

**Date:** January 2025

**Re:** Third Quarter Board Report, NALP Law School CSO Chief Officers Interest Group

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## JANUARY INTEREST GROUP MEETING

Approximately 30 people attended our one-hour meeting on January 29, 2024. The NALP Legal Career Chiefs convened to discuss the impact of the federal hiring freeze on legal employment, student opportunities, and recruitment trends. The conversation covered concerns about job rescissions, externship cancellations, policy updates, and proactive measures being taken by law schools and career services offices. Furthermore, the Group shared practices and initiatives we are taking at our respective schools to keep our students prepared for changing recruiting trends.

## IMPACT OF EXECUTIVE ORDERS & FEDERAL HIRING FREEZE

The federal hiring freeze and executive orders have raised concerns about potential long-term effects on ABA outcomes and legal employment statistics. CSO officers shared some of the following trends at their schools:

- Postgraduate honors program offers, and summer internship offers are being rescinded
- Concerns were raised about the shrinking private and public sector job markets, with increased competition for limited public sector roles
- Reports of rescinded externships further exacerbated these concerns
- Employer visits and networking opportunities have been canceled
- Concerns regarding the presence of certain enforcement agencies on campus in light of the current climate
  - Law schools are also updating policies in response to ICE raids
  - Schools have revised its policies to comply with state laws, including requiring warrants for sensitive areas, training security staff, and working with social workers
  - Virtual classes will be offered if a raid occurs, and schools will follow up to check on affected students.
- Request for feedback on whether to create a form to collect data on impacted students and alumni, disseminating information and providing alumni support
- Sharing creative ways to source opportunities for students such as using a local bar association/lawyer Meta group to track opportunities
- Members shared the creation of pipeline honors programs for municipal and state agencies

- Schools have organization a student fireside chat on executive orders, which was well-attended and helped alleviate student concerns
- Regarding federal work-study and public interest funding, concerns persist about whether schools have the resources to support public interest funding in the absence of federal aid, though some schools have reported their positions have not been affected.
- JAG opportunities appear to be stable despite the hiring freeze. Law schools are actively tracking the impact, primarily through Career Services, with some involvement from deans and admissions staff

Members were encouraged to continue attending the weekly huddles hosted by the Public Interest/Section.

## **RECRUITMENT TRENDS**

There is hope that firms will revert to previous hiring patterns. Some schools sought guidance on the following:

- Changes to law review processes are shifting, with most schools delaying reviews until late May.
  - Some schools conduct reviews over spring break
- Suggestions to form a subcommittee to address well-being in the hiring process, noting that the last documentation update was in 2020.
  - An announcement regarding this initiative is forthcoming.
  - Interested members can reach out to Tara Rhoades
- Changes in 1L hiring trends indicate an increase in interviews, though offer rates remain uncertain.
- Large and mid-sized firms are engaging in early recruitment but are primarily targeting 2L hiring.
- Some firms are offering combined 1L/2L "jumbo offers" with complex clauses, prompting career services to provide guidance.
- Schools have introduced provisional class rankings to assist employers in evaluating 1L candidates.

## **OUTCOMES REPORTING**

The ABA has introduced new resources to address common reporting errors, with Molly serving as the primary contact. NALP leadership, including Danielle, continues to collaborate with the ABA on employment matters. An ABA workgroup within NALP is also available for support.

## **FUTURE INTEREST GROUP MEETINGS**

- March 6, 2025