



## Legal Recruiting Summit Addendum Survey

*Includes selective narrative responses*

### **What was your pet peeve from the most recent recruiting season?**

- The time compression of OCI and callbacks into a three-week period in August was BRUTAL! This goes beyond a pet peeve.
- It was even more compressed than usual. We had 25 schools in 1 week. I think the schools need to communicate better when it comes to selecting interview weeks/dates for each employer. There's no way firms can put their best foot forward if our resources are spread as thin as they have been. Also, and this is generational thing, but to the extent that students can stay off their smartphones during offer dinners, receptions, etc., I know it would be appreciated. If a partner can put down his/her iPhone/Blackberry during a dinner (though not all do!), so can the students.
- Students not responding to emails from attorneys and the recruiting department.
- Delay in students accepting offers (for no reason), students taking more than a few days to respond to callback invitation (or not responding at all).
- (1) A sense of entitlement by recruits; (2) "Demanding" second interview trips; (3) Recruits not getting back to us.
- Last-minute cancellations from students, or students not cancelling due to their school policies requiring them to complete all scheduled interviews even if they have made decisions about where they want to accept an offer.
- Above all else, the pressure to complete all callbacks in August. Also, student panic if they hadn't heard back within a few days of the callback — occasionally it takes up to a week (or longer) to render a decision, and that doesn't mean we are any less interested in them. I think schools need to better communicate to students that not all firms can give offers within 48 hours of the

callback, and the students should not write off those firms that take a few more days. They should also check in with us regarding their status instead of assuming that no news is bad news.

- OCI began way too early. There was not enough time in between the end of the summer program and the start of OCI. Also most of the OCIs were within a week of each, other making it hard to focus on a particular school.
- We noticed that more students were away during OCI and wanted to schedule a meeting at our office, trying to circumvent the entire OCI process.
- Firms interviewing students before OCI.
- Day-of-interview cancellations (particularly on super interview days, which are highly orchestrated); general lack of communication (unresponsiveness to communications, particularly post-offer).
- Students sitting on offers for the full 28 days — and then turning us down — or not responding at all!
- Some students who were extended offers did not acknowledge or respond to their offer until they made a decision, or, in one instance, until I had mentioned it to the school's career services office.
- Interviewing students while still in the current summer program.
- We found that many students were unresponsive to our outreach. We understand that they are inundated, but when the firmwide Hiring Partner leaves you a message, at least acknowledge receipt!
- (1) Compressed timing of the recruiting season; (2) Lack of pre-screening applicants; (3) Not receiving transcripts before date of OCI; (4) Final exam schedules conflicting with start date of Summer Program (for those schools on a semester system).
- (1) Schools moving OCI earlier than previous years and scheduling them at the same time as other schools; (2) Other firms interviewing students outside of the OCI process as early as July; (3) Having to schedule hundreds of callback interviews in August, when most attorneys are on vacation; (4) Having limited time to conduct callback interviews and offer dinners because of the 28-day deadline and numerous holidays that fall during that time period.
- While I appreciate that it's no longer a marathon, the sprint is grueling. I'm not sure we all, students and firms, have enough time to ensure we're always making the best decisions.
- Increased competition: As the market continues to recover, we've seen an increased number of firms hiring for larger markets. This has decreased the candidate pool for smaller markets.

- Candidates holding offers too long; non-responsiveness to follow-up outreach (emails/phone calls); fickle.
- Students not acknowledging phone calls or emails to extend offers, to accept callback invitations, or schedule a return visit. There were a larger percentage of students who ignored contact.
- More so than in previous years, students ignored/did not acknowledge/were slow to respond to contact from law firm, including calls/emails extending offers, congratulating them on an offer, or arranging a callback interview.
- Non-responsiveness from students for full 28 days, then declining. Students were also pushy in scheduling callbacks — even if I gave them certain dates to work with, they would ask me to move things around to fit them in or move them up.
- The biggest obstacle was receiving the interview schedules so close to the interview date. It would have made our process much smoother if we had received the schedules earlier.
- How early interviewing begins; the advice that students get from career services (like finishing all interviews after an offer — including in cities they are not interested in working in; two-page resumes; etc.).
- Our biggest pet peeve was the pace — we don't see how the pace is sustainable for all parties involved: students, interviewers, recruitment staff, law school career services offices. The interview process for 2Ls no longer feels robust enough for students or employers to make an informed decision. Rather, everyone involved is trying to be the “first” — first to extend offers, first to accept an offer, first to hold on-campus interviews, first to fill their summer class. This is an important decision for all parties involved and should not revolve around being “first.” Students are not necessarily seeing all of their options because they are accepting the first offer received. Employers and students aren't testing the “fit” through second visits.
- Not being able to pre-select a portion of our schedule makes the process more challenging and less efficient for us and our attorneys. The compression of the program over the last couple of years has also proven to complicate the logistics for our offices.
- Students' lack of communication skills/professionalism.
- Starts too early and the schools are too compressed. Don't get a chance to really evaluate the right students.
- Students relying on gossip and hearsay to make decisions instead of quantifiable information.

**During the most recent recruiting cycle, did you observe any new trends or changes in student behavior? If so, please describe.**

- Students not communicating with attorneys or the recruiting department after receiving an offer.
- More declined callback invitations and cancellations than in the past. Also, students seemed to be accepting offers earlier.
- The continued shift away from phone calls toward email communication (several students even accepted their offers by email, which I find strange).
- Students seemed to be more relaxed and comfortable than in the past few years. More students came in for second visits with requests to meet with very specific types of attorneys.
- Taking longer to accept offers. Some entitlement is seeping back in.
- We noticed students were more willing to schedule their callback a couple of weeks out, but were quicker in accepting their offer if they received one. We believe this is a result of the 28-day rule and wanting to interview at firms closely together in order to have adequate time in deciding to accept an offer.
- The top students had offers before OCI began.
- Very indecisive; held offers too long, only to decline; on a positive note: students cancelled callback interviews in a more timely manner.
- Increase in sell visits.
- They were all nervous about getting offers. Even the superstars!
- Demographic shift — we saw a significantly higher percentage of men on our campus schedules than women, across a number of schools.
- Most candidates wanted to see where else they would get offers even if they told us we were their first choice and ultimately ended up joining us. They seemed to want to see how they did everywhere before making a final decision.
- We noticed that more students are mentioning their parents in the recruiting process.
- Schools are instructing students to tell firms if they would accept an offer if extended — this seems to be a way schools are encouraging students to help firms “manage their yield” as one student put it.
- Everyone who accepted our offer did so within the first two weeks. More than 50% of those who declined our offer did so between days 15-28.

- Less likely to return or acknowledge calls/emails. Less likely to say thank you or otherwise acknowledge an offer message.
- During this recruiting season, students seemed more unresponsive or slow to acknowledge calls/emails from recruiting staff, hiring partner or other lawyers. In some instances, students did not acknowledge (e.g., say thank you) when offers were given to them; responding only at the expiration date or several days later. Also, while they were mostly nominal expenses, some local students submitted expenses that were not first pre-approved/typically covered during local callback interviews.
- The majority of students accepted their callbacks with us and they scheduled very quickly. A few offerees did not respond by our offer deadline date and quite a few did callbacks with us but proved to be more interested in other geographic locations.
- We had more declined callbacks this year than last.
- We found students to be less professional and the thank you notes had more typos than usual.
- We noticed that students held on to their offers longer than previous years, especially when contemplating other offers from other cities.
- Students seem less socially polished and less likely to do things like promptly return phone calls (even students who wanted to work here).
- Students viewed their summer firm as a temporary, but not long-term home. This came up quite a bit and students informed us that they would start their long-term search after a clerkship. More interest in foreign offices.
- Increase in the number of student inquiries about splitting; increase in the number of students taking the full 28 days to make decisions; and students' lack of clarity about city choices resulting in callbacks and offers at the expense of their classmates.
- Candidates took a longer time to accept/decline offers compared to last year.
- Students seemed to be better organized in terms of making sure to inform employers if they weren't going to accept a callback invitation or if they weren't going to accept an offer. Students seemed to be very actively involved up until an offer was extended, and then they would disappear for a bit. We imagine this was because they had the weight of getting an offer off their shoulders, and then felt like they could focus on all of the other things going on in their life that they had neglected during the intense interview period. However, the attorneys viewed the student's non-responsiveness as a lack/ loss of interest, which wasn't always the case. Students also seemed to have more options and competing offers this year than in previous years.

- Students are contacting our offices earlier (June and July) to try and set up callbacks before OCI. Students are also asking more meaningful questions about the firm and work.
- Students were more reluctant to share what other offers they were considering. Students wanted more follow-up calls/visits.

## **Do you have any suggestions to improve the recruiting process?**

- NALP and law schools MUST come up with a better plan for OCI and callback timing. Most attorneys take vacation in August, making it tougher to interview at our smaller offices.
- Move interviewing out of August.
- I know everyone probably has the same suggestions/complaint, but the timing of this process has gotten out of hand. We can't do as much outreach on certain campuses as we would like because we simply don't have the time or resources to have events at 15 schools during the 1-2 weeks of OCI. Also, callbacks are now compressed into around 3 weeks, during which most of our lawyers are on vacation. Something has to give eventually.
- Rather than have the schools collect resumes and send them to us in a batch, we are going to register with the schools and ask the students to apply with us directly using a link on our website. We hope this will cut down on our data entry and get the students into the process earlier in the season.
- Work together with the schools to come up with a viable option for moving callbacks out of August.
- The main improvement would be changing the time that OCI takes place. Perhaps have it in January or move it back to later in August — early September.
- Deadline: 28 days to 21 days; no more than 3 offers outstanding at any one time.
- Limit lottery selections for on-campus interviews.
- Shorten the 28-day window to 14 days.
- Allow firms more freedom to select the student for campus interviews.
- I am seeing an increasing need for students to know what type of law they hope to practice in an effort to better align firm needs with student recruitment — students need way more information to make an educated decision about this, which lends itself to recruiting later....

- On-campus recruiting dates are way too early in August. Most of our partners and associates are out on vacation, so it's hard to always find quality interviewers for on-campus interviews and callbacks.
- More law schools should let employers prescreen a portion of their on-campus interview schedules.
- (1) Institute a "Callback Kick-Off Date" after Labor Day, when attorneys come back from vacation; (2) Extend the 28-day deadline to give firms more time to conduct callbacks and offer dinners.
- Strongly recommend an earliest allowable OCI start date. It's very difficult to balance wrapping up a summer program with candidate pre-selection and on-campus visits. It's a disservice to the summer associates currently working with us, and it is a bit early to be hiring summer associates for the following summer in August.
- Students need to remember that the entire OCI process is an interview, including the hospitality suite non-lawyer host. What students say in the reception area and how they treat the person at the front desk is noted — good and bad.
- We need to reevaluate the timing of campus interviewing. The move to August OCI dates places extraordinary pressure on firms. There should be some cushion between the conclusion of summer associate programs and the start of campus interviews. It also would be helpful to make hiring decisions closer in time to actual start dates. So, for example, hiring in winter/spring for summer positions.
- Allow employers to pre-select a portion of their schedule and provide student transcripts prior to their interview.
- If students are truly not interested in pursuing employment at a firm, they should be strongly encouraged not to accept a callback interview invitation just to be nice or to appease a contact they made during the OCI process.
- Not anything that is really possible at this time. We are fine with doing on-campus interviews in August, but doing the callbacks in August is so difficult. In my opinion, it's not good for the students who really don't have time to assess whether going to one firm is better than another — we all become fungible.
- If the pace is going to continue this way, we recommend reconsidering moving the process to January/February. Employers will have an additional semester of grades and we will have the fall to get to know the students and for them to get to know us. The opportunity to get to know one

another ahead of the recruitment process allows both employers and students to make a more informed decision. Plus students might be able to better narrow down their lists of potential firms if they have this additional time to get to know firms and their practice areas. Alternatively, we could consider revisiting the 28-day open offer period to allow students to take time with the process. We recognize longer offer periods make it more complicated for employers to manage yield, but with a few years of stats available to firms in the “new normal” environment, this shouldn’t be as difficult as it was in 2009.

- (1) Shorten response time for offers. (2) Schools need to move OCI start dates back to a date that falls after firms’ summer programs (and offer meetings) are completed. (3) Further limiting the number of offers students can hold/consider at one time.
- The recruiting process should be scheduled in two parts: (1) The on-campus process in mid to late August. (2) Callback interviews beginning after Labor Day. This will allow both students and firms more time for a thorough vetting process. This season, as well as the last, those interviewing missed opportunities to connect with third-year students who completed summer programs, as the third-year students were off on summer vacations during the interview process.
- Start it later. Also, when it comes to 1L hiring, it is ridiculous to begin the process on Dec. 1. Students hate it (they need to be focusing on exams) and so do I (I don’t know what to make of a resume until grades arrive). Hands down, the worst NALP rule of all.

### **What additional information would be helpful to know from law schools in order to make your recruiting more successful or more efficient?**

- When firms are planning receptions (particularly 1L receptions), it would be helpful to know if there are certain things on the 1L calendar that we should avoid (e.g., hosting a reception the night before a big brief is due). That way we can pick another date — or manage expectations with regard to student turnout. Also, it’s helpful for Career Services to continue to tell students that if they are not going to accept a callback invitation — or an offer — it’s best to communicate that to the firm(s) as quickly as possible. It truly could result in an opportunity for another student.
- It would be greatly appreciated if the law schools would coach their students on proper etiquette in dealing with callback interviews and dinner invitations!
- Eliminate policies requiring students to complete all scheduled interviews even if they have already made a decision. This is a waste of everyone’s time.

- It would be helpful to have the interview schedules out at least a month in advance of our OCI date so we can have more time to prepare. Also, it would be very helpful if every law school provided a facebook to those firms interviewing.
- How to reach and educate the students better.
- What number, or percentage, of students come to our city after graduation (not necessarily the region, since there are other big markets in our region).
- What's most important to students in any given season.
- Provide more information about the grading system and how it applies to the most recent class of law student graduates. Let grades be transparent to the potential employers.
- For law schools that are 100% lottery it would be helpful to know how students ranked our firm, or have GPA information so we can better navigate the wait lists which often include a hundred or more students.
- Student class ranks.
- Better grade explanations.
- More transparency regarding grades/class standing.
- It would be helpful to have students' transcripts prior to OCI.
- The earlier we can receive information from the law schools about the students on our interview schedules, the better, so we can have enough time to prepare for on-campus interviews. If there are any new tips and features with Symplicity that will be helpful for law firms, we would like to know about them. Law firms are busy dealing with summer programs and fall interview season simultaneously, so we are always looking for ways to streamline the process. It is helpful to know what the law schools are messaging to students and what resources they are providing to them as they consider firms. We also appreciate receiving information and statistics about their student classes.
- (1) Being able to pre-select all or a portion of candidates on our OCI schedules would make our process more efficient. UVA's current process works well, although schools could further reduce the number of on-campus interviews that a student is allowed to take to make the process even more efficient. (2) If pre-selection is an option, then it would be helpful if the school could provide employers with the previous year's hiring outcomes. For example, if schools could gather for employers information such as "the top 10% of the class went to the following firms" or "the top 20% of the class went to the following firms," that would be helpful data for employers. This information would be helpful in hiring committee meetings when trying to determine the

likelihood of a candidate's acceptance of a callback or an offer. It might help employers decide to extend even more callbacks and offers to students outside that range. (3) If particular law schools were more forthcoming with their students' transcripts, that would also make the process much more efficient. The reality is, whether right or wrong, that attorneys and recruitment staff will want to see a student's transcript and will base hiring decisions on multiple factors. Those factors will always include academic performance.

- It is always helpful to be able to pre-select at least a portion of our interview schedule. It makes for a much more viable use of everyone's time during the OCI process.
- Reestablish "Flyback Weeks" so students aren't trying to interview during the same time.
- What career services is telling students about the recruiting process and proper behavior during the process. Law schools should encourage students to be more open-minded about voicing practice area/practice group preferences during the interview process.