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Entry-level Law Firm Recruiting Activity Remains Fairly Robust, Steady, Even as Firms in Some Markets Pull Back Slightly

Washington (DC) — The **National Association for Law Placement (NALP)** released its annual *Perspectives on 2017 Law Student Recruiting* report, showing that entry-level law firm recruiting remained robust, although mostly flat compared to last year. The lack of additional growth after consistent increases over the last several years suggest that recruiting volumes may have peaked after a marked post-recession recovery. The full report is available [here](#).

NALP Executive Director James Leipold summarized the findings, saying, “After a period of considerable volatility marked first by a prolonged slowdown in law student recruiting volumes following the recession and then a rapid escalation in recruiting volumes for two years running, we have seen the recruiting market stabilize over the last two years. Recruiting numbers were mostly flat compared to last year, and in some cases we saw some pulling back, particularly at the largest firms, suggesting that the most recent period of growth has ended.”

Significant Findings:

- For the second year in a row, aggregate summer offer volume decreased compared with the year before, and 43 percent of the firms responding to NALP’s surveys reported that they made fewer offers for summer programs than they did in the previous year. Notably, offices in New York City as a whole made fewer offers for summer programs, while the volume was almost flat in the Silicon Valley.
- The median number of law schools visits by offices in New York, Boston, and Silicon Valley all declined compared with 2016. This is likewise notable in that New York and Silicon Valley law firm offices led the recovery following the recession.
- The offer rate coming out of 2017 summer programs was unchanged from 2016, at a very high 95 percent, but offer rates varied considerably by region and city.
- The acceptance rate to offers from summer programs as a whole has hovered between 84 percent and 86 percent for seven years in a row now and is significantly higher than the pre-recession norm of overall acceptance rates in the 73-77 percent range.
- Members of the Class of 2019, those who went through the OCI process in the summer and fall of 2017, experienced a market quite similar to that experienced by the previous two classes, and with significant competition for top talent.
- Across employers of all sizes, the median number of offers extended for second-year summer programs has been at or about 12 for the last three years, still well-below the high of 15 measured in 2007, but well above the low of 7 measured in 2009.

- The percent of callback interviews resulting in offers for summer positions has been in the 52 percent to 54 percent range for the past four years, and though the percentage fell slightly from 53.3 percent down to 51.9 percent, it is still well below the figures of 62.7 percent and 60 percent measured in 2006 and 2007, and well above the low figure of 36.4 percent measured in 2009.

“Law schools, for their part, having endured a period of dramatic decline in enrollment, now face several years of stable enrollment, at least through the Class of 2020,” continued Leipold. “Absent a dramatic economic interruption of some sort, the picture for law firm recruiting is not likely to change dramatically in the short term.”

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The full *Perspectives on 2017 Law Student Recruiting* report details recruitment activity on campus and at job fairs in 2017; provides information on summer program characteristics; and also provides information on the outcomes of 2017 summer programs and of fall 2017 recruiting for both second-year summer associates and entry-level associates not previously employed by that employer.

The findings in this report are based on law school responses to NALP’s “Survey of Law Schools on 2017 Recruiting” and on legal employer responses to the “Survey of Legal Employers on 2017 Recruiting.” To read the full report, including its numerous data tables, go to <https://www.nalp.org/uploads/Perspectiveson2017LawStudentRecruiting.pdf>.

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About NALP: NALP is an association of over 2,500 legal career professionals who advise law students, lawyers, law offices, and law schools in North America and beyond. What brings NALP members together is a common belief in three fundamental things. First, all law students and lawyers should benefit from a fair and ethical hiring process. Second, law students and lawyers are more successful when supported by professional development and legal career professionals. Third, a diverse and inclusive legal profession best serves clients and our communities. That’s why NALP members work together every day to collect and publish accurate legal employment data and information, and champion education and standards for recruiting, professional and career development, and diversity and inclusion. For more than 40 years, NALP has played an essential role in the success of our members and the lawyers and law students they serve.

NALP maintains an online archive of press releases at www.nalp.org/pressreleases. For additional information about NALP research, contact Judith Collins (jcollins@nalp.org), Director of Research, or James G. Leipold (jleipold@nalp.org), Executive Director, at 202-835-1001.

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