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Date: March 13, 2019

Entry-level Law Firm Recruiting Activity Remains Strong, Exceeding Some Pre-Recession Benchmarks

Washington (DC) — The **National Association for Law Placement (NALP)** today released its annual *Perspectives on 2018 Law Student Recruiting* report, showing that law firm recruiting activity in 2018 was brisk, with offer rates coming out of summer programs reaching an historic high. On many other metrics, Big Law Recruiting volume and practices resembled those measured before the recession. The full report is available [here](#).

NALP Executive Director James Leipold summarized the findings, saying, “After a period of great volatility following the recession marked first by a prolonged slowdown in law student recruiting and then a period of rapid escalation in recruiting, we have seen the recruiting market stabilize over the last four or five years. The recruiting climate is most accurately described as steady in 2018, though as with law firm profitability, there remain large differences between individual firms in terms of the number of offers being extended for summer programs and the size of the summer programs themselves. Meanwhile, offer rates coming out of summer programs are at historic highs, as are yield rates on those offers, and the 3L recruiting market remains quite anemic, findings that are closely linked.”

Significant Findings:

- While there are still some large summer programs, most notably in offices in New York, there are an increasing number of small programs, and the single most common summer program class size for a law office was a class of just one person in 2018. Fully one-quarter of summer programs reported for summer 2018 consisted of one or two summer associates. As a point of comparison, in 2008 only 16 percent of summer programs consisted of one or two associates.
- The aggregate offer rate coming out of summer programs had been flat for three years at just about 95 percent, but in 2018 jumped to nearly 97 percent, an historic high.
- The acceptance rate on these offers had hovered between 84 percent and 86 percent for seven years in a row, but in 2018 was measured at 88 percent, also an historic high, and significantly higher than the pre-recession norm of overall acceptance rates of about 73 to 77 percent.

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- Members of the Class of 2020 (who went through the OCI process in the summer and fall of 2018) experienced a robust market quite similar to that experienced by the previous three classes, and with significant competition for top talent. Across employers of all sizes, the median number of offers extended for summer associate positions has been 11 or 12 for the last four years.

In addition to surveying law schools and law firms about recruiting activities, NALP also surveyed 2L law students who interviewed with law firms for a summer 2019 position about their OCI experiences.

- Among the findings from the student survey are that office location is a major factor when students are deciding which firms to apply to summer positions. When making a final choice between competing offers, or even which callback invitations to accept, the people met during an interview are the primary factor in that decision-making.

“If there is a takeaway from the student surveys that were completed,” Leipold noted, “it is that who you send to campus really matters. At the end of the day, students report that the lawyers they met were extremely influential in students’ assessments of where to accept or reject offers of summer employment.”

The full *Perspectives on 2018 Law Student Recruiting* report details recruitment activity on campus and at job fairs in 2018; provides information on summer program characteristics; provides information on the outcomes of 2018 summer programs and of fall 2018 recruiting for both second-year summer associates and entry-level associates not previously employed by that employer; and provides selected findings from NALP’s student survey.

To read the full report, including its numerous data tables, go to <https://www.nalp.org/uploads/Perspectiveson2018LawStudentRecruiting.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 ethical principles 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, contact NALP at info@nalp.org or call (202) 835-1001.
