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**Recent Recruiting Cycle Yields Highest Offer Rate**  
*Trend Outlook Points to More Robust Recruiting*

Washington (DC) — The **National Association for Law Placement (NALP)** today released its annual *Perspectives on 2015 Law Student Recruiting* report, painting an encouraging view of law firm recruiting trends this cycle and pointing to signs of recovery in recruiting following the 2008-2009 recession and its aftermath. The data, which were initially presented by NALP Executive Director James Leipold during the **NALP 2016 Legal Recruiting Summit** at New York University School of Law on January 28, 2016, reveal this recent recruiting cycle to be the most robust summer associate recruiting and new associate hiring cycle since the recession.

In the last six years following the economic recession, law firms have slowly continued to increase their entry-level recruiting activity. While the size of the graduating class has gotten smaller, the average size of law firm programs has nearly recovered to pre-recession levels. Smaller graduating classes may be one factor driving law firm competition in on-campus recruiting, and new pre-OCI trends are emerging. With vigorous competition for top candidates, law firms reported an increase in the number of summer associate offers made this year, compared to last year. They also reported a staggering 95.3% offer rate from summer programs for entry-level associate positions — the highest NALP has recorded in over two decades. These findings, among other data described in the report, offer evidence that legal recruiting and hiring activity over the last two years has intensified, offering a bright outlook for 2016.

**Significant Findings:**

- 95.3% of 2015 summer associates, students who will graduate in 2016, received an entry-level associate position offer, up from 93.4% last year, and in stark contrast to 2009 when only 69% of summer associates received offers.
- The number of offers for summer program spots has increased measurably as the competition for top law school graduates heats up, and for members of the Class of 2017, nearly all of the recruiting markers ticked upwards for the third year in a row.
- 59% of law firms reported making more offers for summer 2016 associate positions than they had for summer 2015 positions.
- For the fourth year in a row, a higher percentage of callback interviews resulted in offers compared to the previous year, and the percent of callback interviews resulting in offers for summer positions rose from 52.1% to 53.8%, the highest figure recorded since 2007.
- The overall acceptance rate dipped slightly from 33.8% last year to 32.7% this cycle as law firms had to make more offers to yield the same number of acceptances.

- 26% of law firms reported making at least one pre-OCI offer.
- More than half of law schools in all regions reported an increase in the number of law firms visiting campus during spring OCI.

“After a period of considerable and prolonged slowdown in law student recruiting volumes, for the last two years we have seen strong markers of recovery,” said Leipold. “There is a scramble for top talent that we have not seen since before the recession. The increase in spring on-campus recruiting and the seemingly new trend toward some pre-OCI offers for perceived top talent and diverse candidates are indicative of this increased competition. This hiring may be driven in part by the fact that some law firms have been spooked by not having enough mid-level associates to do the work coming in, in large measure because law firms hired so few entry-level associates in the immediate aftermath of the recession. Nonetheless, demand for legal services remains mostly flat and some analysts suggest lawyer headcount at some law firms is still too high. Even so, as law school graduating class size continues to come down for the foreseeable future and some law firms excel in a difficult market, it is likely that in the short term law firm recruiting activity for summer programs will remain brisk. Absent another macro-economic disruption of some sort, it is likely that we will see increased intensity in the recruiting arena throughout 2016.”

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The full *Perspectives on 2015 Law Student Recruiting* report details recruitment activity on campus and at job fairs in 2015; provides information on summer program characteristics and start dates for the most recent incoming associate class; and also provides information on the outcomes of 2015 summer programs and of fall 2015 recruiting for both second-year summer associates and entry-level associates not previously employed by that employer. To read the full report, including its numerous data tables, go to <http://www.nalp.org/uploads/Perspectiveson2015RecruitingFinal.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](http://www.nalp.org/pressreleases). For additional information about NALP research, contact Judith Collins ([jcollins@nalp.org](mailto:jcollins@nalp.org)), Director of Research, or James G. Leipold ([jleipold@nalp.org](mailto:jleipold@nalp.org)), Executive Director, at 202-835-1001.

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