

Northwestern Law Dean Advises: Take The Long View

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William A. Chamberlain, assistant dean of law career strategy and advancement at Northwestern University School of Law, offers some solid insights and advice on the tough job market facing new law grads.

Some other advice he offers may be less helpful – like ‘accept your offer quickly.’ I frankly think it’s wisest to not accept job offers quickly and be in a position to evaluate numerous offers. Think things through, don’t ‘accept your offer quickly.’

Be sure to read the entire article at [Law.com](#)...

Commentary: Law Students Should Take Long View

by William A. Chamberlain

This is indeed a tough time to be a 2L. One has to keep reminding one’s self that this down economy, like all others, will pass. Despite all of the uncertainty, today’s law students can be certain that in the long run, they can have long and happy legal careers.

In the meanwhile, this on-campus interview (OCI) season has been far different than any other in recent memory. The current OCI season now seems like the culmination of a process that began with layoffs in late 2008 and early 2009, deferrals for the Class of 2009 until sometime in 2010, and greater competition among summer associates this summer for permanent offers.

The students in the Class of 2011 were able to have a relatively relaxed and educational, if not particularly remunerative, summer, gaining legal experience with judges, professors, public interest agencies and small firms. Meanwhile, we in career offices watched with increasing unease as several firms cancelled their OCI visits, their visits for 3L students, and, in some cases, their 2010 summer programs altogether. Other firms decided to postpone hiring decisions for next summer until later in the fall or the spring.

While we at Northwestern are firm believers in the free market, we also reached out to each firm that cancelled to try to persuade them to attend or to at least do a request for resumes. We hope that an upturn in the economy by the end of the year will encourage some firms to explore Spring hiring for second-years.

Still, this initial phase of the hiring season brings a hopefulness, not unlike the first semester of law school before grades come out. But as word of callbacks spreads, student unease is likely to grow — as will the uncertainty. While we all know that summer associate classes for 2010 will be much smaller, by and large, than this past summer, we do not know how small nor do we know when firms will start limiting the process — with the number of callback offers or with the number of summer offers.

Our message to students about how to handle offers has been straightforward — accept your offer quickly. The key is to get a job for next summer. Smart students will not rely on NALP’s 45-day guideline but rather accept their offers as soon as humanly possible. From the school side, we have dealt with all sorts of reactions by firms to the economy and are urging our students to be risk-averse. Any sense of entitlement will be fatal this fall.