

US News & World Report: Post-Law School Career Challenges

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Tough Job Market for Law School Students

by Jessica Calefati

The recession might be easing, but that doesn't mean law students will have an easier time finding jobs at top firms this fall, the New York Times reports.

Law students are competing for about half as many openings at the country's most prominent firms as their classmates were last year. For the first time in decades, the promise of a lucrative corporate law career for top students is uncertain, and in response, growing numbers of students are considering firms in smaller markets, opportunities in government, and jobs with public interest groups.

How bad is it?

Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom, the juggernaut of New York, has slashed its hiring by more than half. For the first time in 136 years, Morgan, Lewis & Bockius, a respected Philadelphia firm, has canceled its recruiting entirely. Global firms like DLA Piper and Orrick, Herrington & Sutcliffe have postponed recruiting for several months to see if the market improves.

At Yale, students accustomed to being wooed by Big Law's glittering names—like Baker & McKenzie; Milbank, Tweed, Hadley, & McCloy; and White & Case—were stunned when those firms canceled interviews in New Haven this month.

New York, Georgetown, and Northwestern universities all confirm that the number of interviews they are hosting on campus has dropped by one third to one half compared with a year ago, and less prestigious law schools are suffering even more.