A General Update on Private Sector Recruiting

1 message

Ramji Kaul <rkaul@umich.edu>
To: HILLJUST@umich.edu

Wed, Aug 12, 2020 at 1:07 PM

August 12, 2020

Dear Students:

I hope this note finds you healthy and well. With the start of the school year approaching, I’m writing to update you on where things are at regarding the private sector hiring process. We’ve tried to stay in close contact with as many firms as possible this summer and will keep up that process as we get into the fall semester. As I’ve said many times in prior updates, I’m operating with the assumption that imperfect or incomplete information is still better than no information, so please keep in mind that some things continue to be pretty fluid.

I know these market update emails are long. It’s hard to get out the information at the level you’re looking for in bullet points, so I’ll apologize in advance for the length.

**EIW – Where, When, How?**

At this point, it seems like a near certainty that EIW will be done via video conferences during the week starting January 11 (likely January 12-15).

The exact technical details of how the virtual interview process will work are still being ironed out, but the bottom line is that instead of getting information about what Lawyers Club room you need to be at for your 10:20 interview with firm ABC, you will be getting a link that you will use at 10:20 to launch a web-based interview. Think Zoom, but modified a bit. The link will take you into a virtual waiting room and you’ll be admitted when the attorney is ready to start the interview.

 callbacks (i.e., second round interviews) are also likely to happen via video conference. Most firms are in the very early stages of figuring out logistics on their end, but there is a pretty universal recognition that cycling hundreds of students through individual offices for back-to-back interview schedules is not a viable option. Now that summer programs are over, this is where they are turning their focus.

**Non-EIW Firms / Other Employment Sectors**

As I mentioned in last week’s update, not all recruiting has been postponed until January 2021. Plaintiffs’ firms, smaller or regional firms, public interest organizations, and government agencies may be recruiting this fall.

Many of these organizations may just post positions on Symplicity, but some may be participating in organized interviewing programs. Each fall we have employers on campus to interview for 2L summer opportunities (i.e., fall OCI). Usually fall OCI happens after EIW and the participating employers are primarily public interest organizations,
government agencies, and a handful of small or specialty law firms (e.g., usually this is firms with less than 50 attorneys total). We are anticipating a similar situation this fall, though obviously all of the interviews will be via video conference (likely Zoom).

In addition to fall OCI, there will also be the Equal Justice Works Conference (EJW) taking place in October. This is the largest public interest career fair and it will be happening virtually this year. If you are on the fence about whether to pursue a public interest path, please make an appointment to meet with a counselor. The bottom line is there will be great public interest jobs still available after EIW (if you didn’t want to decide yet), but come talk to us because I don’t want students to feel like they missed any opportunities that come up prior to EIW.

**Early Recruiting**

Over the past few years interviewing during the summer prior to EIW had become increasingly common, especially in the New York market (firms call this “pre-cruiting”). Prior to the pandemic taking hold, my expectation was that trend was set to accelerate even further this past summer. There were a handful of firms that were really pushing summer recruiting and many others, perhaps a majority, that were interviewing reluctantly over the summer to keep up with the market.

We have never had a policy restricting firms from interviewing students during the summer before EIW, but we have required that firms keep any offers made to students during the summer open until several weeks after EIW. Said differently, students were able to get an offer during the summer from a firm and then go through EIW and interview with other firms before making a fully informed choice.

So, what will happen this fall?

The big firms in major markets continue to reiterate to us that they will not be interviewing this fall. Firms pushed for the recruiting calendar to be moved to January 2021 because they wanted to see two semesters of grades and would not be in a strong position by the fall to make any projections on their needs in summer 2021. Nothing has changed in that regard.

Outside of the major markets, we are hearing that there may be a limited number of regional firms in western Michigan, Ohio, and Indiana that may be ready to interview earlier than January and go off-plan. There may also be some smaller Texas firms that are going to push to interview in the fall. As distinguished from those small firms that will come to fall OCI, these off-plan regional firms would usually come to EIW, but don’t want to wait until January. That may seem counterintuitive, but smaller and regional firms with lower billing rates sometimes outperform when clients are looking to cut costs, so these firms may feel very confident about their financials and are likely only looking for a handful of summer associates, or less.

We’ll keep you updated as we hear things, but if you are interested in smaller firms in secondary Midwestern markets, please make sure you connect with a counselor so we can keep you in mind if things develop. These interviews would happen outside of any Michigan Law OCI process (e.g., you wouldn’t be bidding on these interviews, it would be like applying to any other job). Again, we are talking about a very small number of firms and, as in the past, we will be asking any firms interviewing Michigan students to allow students to hold offers open until after EIW.

Finally, the other possible early recruiting issue is whether firms will open applications for 2L diversity scholarship/fellowship positions in advance of January. There have been a few postings here and there, but I have not seen any indication that the “market” is moving in that direction. It is something that we are watching though.

Again, we’ll keep you updated as we hear of them.

Ok, that was a lot of words. I hope this helps give a gauge of where things are at and, again, I will reiterate that there is some uncertainty in this email. Always happy to answer questions. Enjoy the last few weeks of summer.

Best,

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Pronouns: he, him, his
Workshops

UPCOMING WORKSHOPS:

Job Application Narratives (Part 1): Sharing Lived Experience
SESSION START: Aug 14, 2020, 3:00 PM
SESSION END: Aug 14, 2020, 4:00 PM
LOCATION: Via ZOOM video conference

Careers in the Office of the Legal Adviser at the Department of State: Insights from an Attorney Adviser
SESSION START: Aug 19, 2020, 2:00 PM
SESSION END: Aug 19, 2020, 3:00 PM
LOCATION: Via ZOOM video conference

Job Application Narratives (Part 2): Sharing Client Experience
SESSION START: Aug 21, 2020, 3:00 PM
SESSION END: Aug 21, 2020, 4:00 PM
LOCATION: Via ZOOM video conference

Info Sessions

UPCOMING INFORMATION SESSIONS:

Consumer Financial Protection Bureau
START DATE/TIME: Aug 12, 2020, 3:00 PM
END DATE/TIME: Sep 10, 2020, 1:00 PM
LOCATION: Off-Campus (see event description)

U.S. Department of Justice (Washington, DC)
START DATE/TIME: Aug 13, 2020, 1:00 PM
END DATE/TIME: Aug 13, 2020, 3:00 PM
LOCATION: Off-Campus (see event description)

Public Rights Project (Oakland, CA)
START DATE/TIME: Aug 14, 2020, 3:00 PM
END DATE/TIME: Aug 14, 2020, 5:00 PM
LOCATION: Off-Campus (see event description)

U.S. Department of Justice (Washington, DC)
START DATE/TIME: Sep 01, 2020, 12:00 PM
END DATE/TIME: Sep 01, 2020, 2:00 PM
LOCATION: Via ZOOM video conference

Federal Public Defender’s Office, Central District of California (Los Angeles, CA)
START DATE/TIME: Sep 03, 2020, 7:00 PM
END DATE/TIME: Sep 03, 2020, 9:00 PM
LOCATION: Off-Campus (see event description)