

AMERICAN LAWYER 2009 SUMMER ASSOCIATE SURVEY RESULTS

Survey Shows Summertime Blues for Summer Associates

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Considering the way law firms have been shedding attorneys and staffers, it's hardly a surprise that being a summer clerk this year wasn't exactly the full five-star experience the summer class of 2009 may have dreamed about in law school.

Instead of being courted and catered to, this year's summer class came face to face with the rough realities of the continuing economic downturn.

"The economic times suck," one clerk at New York's [Skadden, Arps, Meagher, Slate & Flom](#) wrote bluntly in response to our most recent summer associates survey. "The firm can't change that. But the times have made for a difficult summer." A [Bryan Cave](#) intern put it this way: "It is a scary time to be a law student."

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One indication of just how scary: The number of summer clerks who said they expected to receive full-time job offers was down sharply, according to our survey, while anecdotal evidence culled from respondents' answers to open-ended questions suggested that stress and anxiety levels were up.

Almost half of this year's summer class said they weren't sure whether they would get full-time offers from their firms, compared to just 17 percent last year and 12 percent in 2007. Many of the rising 3Ls expressed deep frustration -- and in some cases outright panic -- over being kept in the dark about firms' hiring plans. "For the love of God," pleaded one [Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher](#) clerk in a typical comment, "please be more transparent about the offer process and outlook."

That said, Gibson and other firms still managed to provide their clerks with substantive assignments, along with free (if generally less lavish) meals and an assortment of summer outings. But the ongoing uncertainty over job prospects definitely distracted from the usual unabashed summer fun.

With the recession already in effect by mid-2008, last year's summers were more nervous than those in prior years. Summer supervisors say that worries were even more pronounced this year. That may have had the effect of making the 2009 summers a bit more competitive and less collegial, at least with their peers. "My impression was that they were trying harder to make more of an impression," says Sarah Davies, hiring partner at Philadelphia's [Cozen & O'Connor](#), this year's top-ranking firm.

This year's Cozen associates didn't just take more initiative in seeking out assignments. They also went out of their way to take more attorneys to lunch, including some senior partners. "They were definitely trying harder," says Cozen summer program director Scott Brucker. "They weren't taking anything for granted."

At third-ranking [Fox Rothschild](#), in Philadelphia, professional recruitment director Sarah Apelquist recalls that one summer go-getter looking to specialize in intellectual property drove out to the firm's Princeton office so he could personally introduce himself to the IP department chair. "Across the board, they were much more proactive in getting our attorneys to know them," says Apelquist.

For the past several years, firms with relatively small summer classes have tended to earn top scores in our survey. That trend held again this year. Top-ranking Cozen had 18 summer clerks; Boston's [Nutter McClennen & Fish](#), a perennial survey favorite and this year's second-place finisher, had ten; and Fox Rothschild had 11. (Nutter and Cozen swapped places this year, after [Nutter took the top honors in 2008](#) and Cozen finished second.) Our 2009 survey was sent to 7,169 summer clerks at 151 law firms; 4,971

responded. (Reflecting the more robust 2008 market, last year's survey went to nearly 11,000 summers at 190 firms, yielding some 7,600 responses.)

Even under the duress of the downturn, this year's summer hires were fairly forgiving graders. The average overall score this year was 4.518 (based on a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being the highest) -- virtually the same as last year's 4.541. Even our bottom-ranking firm -- Minneapolis' [Faegre & Benson](#) -- turned in a worthy-enough 4.031 score. (Faegre spokesman Tom Schierholz declined to comment on the firm's performance this year.)

As in previous years, this year's two top firms scored perfect or near-perfect scores in all key categories, including the level of training and guidance they offered summer hires and the number of substantive matters they meted out.

"The assignments were intellectually challenging, complex, and stimulating," wrote one Cozen summer clerk. "A great place to work," agreed another. "One of the rare things in life that are as good or better than expected."

Unlike many firms, Cozen has been in growth mode, and recently acquired 85 lawyers from Philadelphia's now-defunct Wolf Block. Thus, it not only bucked the industry trend and continued its full ten-week summer program, it also told clerks up front that they could all count on getting job offers as long as they performed well. (As of early September, Cozen was still finalizing its summer offers, according to summer program director Brucker.)

The same was true at second-ranking Nutter McClennen, which also stuck to its traditional ten-week program. And, according to managing partner Michael Mooney, the firm expects to hire eight of ten clerks from its 2009 summer class -- nearly the same percentage as last year. While Nutter's transactions group has been slow, other practice areas have helped pick up the slack. "Litigation, IP, and trusts and estates have been perking along," Mooney says.

By contrast, many firms haven't managed to keep busy. Hence, the dramatic rise since last year in the percentage of summer clerks not counting on receiving job offers. Many clerks seem to be coping with the current job market by trying to figure out the most marketable career paths: Roughly 53 percent of respondents said they hoped to be litigators, up from 45 percent last year. The number of would-be bankruptcy specialists was double that of last year -- rising to 8 percent.

But even those soon-to-be grads who are sharpening their focus will face a fiercely competitive market. And with nearly three-quarters of survey respondents saying that they're counting on big-firm salaries to pay off law school debts, it's no wonder that many clerks spent much of the summer obsessing over firms' hiring plans.

Many expressed frustration about not getting what they considered to be straight answers about what was going on. "We are all incredibly worried about offers, and they have made no effort whatsoever to even inform us that they are aware how worried we are, let alone tell us what the plan is (even if they were just to say, 'We haven't figured it out')," wrote one clerk at New York's [Schulte Roth & Zabel](#). "Essentially, it's a giant elephant in the room that the powers-that-be simply refuse to acknowledge." (Schulte Roth declined to comment on this year's survey results.)

A [Shearman & Sterling](#) intern echoed that thought. "Give us some hint about whether or not offers will be made," this associate wrote. "It's deeply frustrating and very distracting to be left in the dark, and we spend a great deal of time discussing any hints we can pick up on." (A Shearman spokeswoman said the firm wound up making offers to nearly all of its 61 summers.)

The 2009 summer experience wasn't all darkness and despair. For many clerks, the chance to tackle such challenging projects as preparing asylum petitions for immigrants or an amicus brief for the U.S. Supreme Court provided a highly positive distraction from job offer-related angst.

And firms also did their best to keep summer hires diverted with a healthy mix of social activities that included river-rafting, race-car driving, mechanical bull-riding, moonlight kayaking, target-shooting, bowling, and even polka-dancing.

Still, compared to years past, the summer class of 2009 generally had to settle for a more limited and far less over-the-top range of outings, meals, and firm functions -- and some clerks resented the economizing.

"There's no need to have a social event if the firm doesn't want to pay for all costs associated with it or wants to cut costs in indiscreet ways," griped an intern at Chicago's [Mayer Brown](#).

"If necessary, lower the cap on per-lunch spending," wrote a clerk at New York's [Cravath, Swaine & Moore](#), referring to a one-associate-lunch-per-week rule. "This rule has severely limited associate/summer interaction."

Not all firms scrimped. In fact, at some, summer hires found the meals far too rich and the number of firm functions overwhelming.

"Please don't take us out for any more New American cuisine," wrote a clerk at New York's [Paul, Weiss, Rifkind, Wharton & Garrison](#). "Just because it's expensive and drenched in butter doesn't make it taste good."

"Less fancy lunches!" wrote a [Steptoe & Johnson](#) intern. "I loved getting to know the other attorneys, but I hated eating that much at noon every day! Pizza or Chinese food would have been fine with me!"

A few of this year's summer hires simply couldn't fathom why firms would even bother bankrolling sumptuous meals and affairs. At least one guilt-ridden [Ropes & Gray](#) clerk actually worried that she and her peers were helping to waste money that should have been better spent. "We really don't need BlackBerrys, free lunches every day, or an event every week," she wrote. "If cutting back on these perks would help one more associate get hired or decrease the need for [deferrals], I would rather have our class start bringing peanut butter and jelly sandwiches."

The way things are going these days, getting in the habit of brown-bagging it may not be a bad idea.

RESULTS BY CITY

Wisconsin			
Milwaukee			
CITY AVERAGE		4.422	
Michael Best	1	4.601	12
Quarles & Brady	2	4.500	6
Foley & Lardner	3	4.166	12

RANKING BY FIRM

Quarles & Brady Milwaukee

Participating Offices: Chicago; Madison, WI; Milwaukee; Naples, FL; Phoenix

Number of Respondents: 14 (67% response rate)

Firmwide Score: 4.651 (rank: 27)

Scores are based on a 1-to-5 scale, with 1 being the lowest, and 5 the highest. Rank is based on 124 firms.

How the firm rated on key scoring questions:

- How interesting the work was: 4.43 (4.51)
- How much "real" work was assigned: 4.36 (4.39)
- Training and guidance: 4.57 (4.37)
- Partner-summer associate interactions: 4.64 (4.41)

- Full-time associate-summer associate interactions: 4.64 (4.73)
- How well firm communicates its goal and expectations: 4.57 (4.30)
- How accurately firm portrayed itself during interviews: 4.79 (4.59)
- Inclination to accept a full-time associateship: 4.86 (4.77)
- Overall rating as a place to work: 5.00 (4.67)

More about the work:

- Amount of work: 4.50 (4.49)
- Level of responsibility: 4.64 (4.44)
- Amount of client contact: 3.64 (3.59)
- Amount of feedback: 4.50 (3.98)
- Opportunities for mentoring: 4.64 (4.35)
- Opportunities for pro bono work: 4.77 (4.54)

What the firm's culture is like:

(Respondents were asked to indicate if the following traits described their firms or their experiences, on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being "strongly disagree" and 5 being "strongly agree.")

- Family-friendly: 4.71 (4.31)
- Makes efforts toward diversity: 4.86 (4.43)
- Attorneys would be enjoyable to work with: 4.71 (4.73)
- Attorneys seem to enjoy working with each other: 4.86 (4.72)
- Financial information is made available: 3.71 (3.77)
- Felt comfortable asking in-depth financial questions: 3.79 (3.55)
- Got a sense of the firm's mission: 4.64 (4.40)
- Firm seemed the right size: 4.71 (4.56)
- Humane approach to billable hours: 4.86 (4.35)
- Firm did a good job of communicating about job prospects: 4.00 (3.82)
- Dress code (1=formal; 5=informal): 3.43 (3.44)
- Pleasant space and décor: 4.71 (4.58)

NATIONAL RANKINGS

National Rankings: Season of Uncertainty

It was a challenging year for law school students as firms cut back on programs because of the recession, but interns who grabbed a spot ranked their summer jobs highly. The rankings below are based on feedback from 4,804 law students at 124 law firms. Scores are based on responses in nine key subject areas, including the interest level of the work, how much of it was "real," training and guidance, interactions with partners and with full-time associates, how well the firm communicated its goals, how accurately the firm portrayed itself in interviews, how it rated overall as a place to work, and the respondents' inclination to accept a job if one were offered. All responses were scored on a 5-point scale, with 5 being the highest score. For more information, see ["How We Rank the Firms."](#)

2009 Rank	2008 Rank	Long Name	Location	Average Score	Total Respondents	Total Responses	Response Rate
1	2	Cozen O'Connor	Philadelphia	4.993	18	18	100%
2	1	Nutter McClennen & Fish	Boston	4.967	10	10	100%
3	25	Fox Rothschild	Philadelphia	4.910	11	11	100%
4	29	Kasowitz, Benson, Torres & Friedman	New York	4.903	15	15	100%
5	10	Bingham McCutchen	National	4.901	69	58	84%

6	3	Crowell & Moring	Washington, D.C.	4.891	42	41	98%
7	5	Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher	National	4.872	150	122	81%
8	17	Chapman and Cutler	Chicago	4.867	10	10	100%
9	95	Duane Morris	National	4.827	14	14	100%
10	63	Drinker Biddle & Reath	Philadelphia	4.820	37	33	89%
11	8	Morgan, Lewis & Bockius	National	4.819	105	99	94%
12	71	Paul, Hastings, Janofsky & Walker	National	4.814	111	99	89%
13	14	Ropes & Gray	Boston	4.810	215	176	82%
14	83	Patterson Belknap Webb & Tyler	New York	4.789	15	10	67%
14	54	Vorys, Sater, Seymour and Pease	Columbus	4.789	13	11	85%
16	18	King & Spalding	Atlanta	4.750	56	34	61%
17	6	Willkie Farr & Gallagher	New York	4.726	55	41	75%
18	106	Robins, Kaplan, Miller & Ciresi	Minneapolis	4.722	14	14	100%
19	140	Dorsey & Whitney	Minneapolis	4.704	55	50	91%
19	41	Sheppard, Mullin, Richter & Hampton	Los Angeles	4.704	38	33	87%
21	65	Carlton Fields, P.A.	Tampa	4.701	23	23	100%
22	26	Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld	National	4.681	66	61	92%
23	11	Holland & Hart	Denver	4.672	16	16	100%
24	50	Covington & Burling	Washington, D.C.	4.664	77	67	87%
25	152	Dewey & LeBoeuf	New York	4.663	84	65	77%
26	31	Alston & Bird	Atlanta	4.654	82	59	72%
27	91	Quarles & Brady	Milwaukee	4.651	21	14	67%
28	42	Foley Hoag	Boston	4.649	18	12	67%
29	120	K&L Gates	National	4.638	58	41	71%
30	84	Michael Best & Friedrich	Milwaukee	4.633	21	20	95%
31	60	Orrick, Herrington & Sutcliffe	National	4.632	67	63	94%
32	101	Wilson Sonsini Goodrich & Rosati	Palo Alto	4.628	57	44	77%
33	154	Patton Boggs	Washington, D.C.	4.616	26	15	58%
34	111	McKenna Long & Aldridge	National	4.612	25	22	88%
34	106	Troutman Sanders	Atlanta	4.612	49	16	33%
36	-	Lewis and Roca	Phoenix	4.609	11	10	91%
37	85	DLA Piper US	National	4.602	67	66	99%
38	117	Morrison & Foerster	San Francisco	4.601	90	60	67%
39	21	Ballard Spahr Andrews & Ingersoll	Philadelphia	4.599	35	23	66%
40	69	Bryan Cave	St. Louis	4.598	62	50	81%
41	35	Dickstein Shapiro	Washington, D.C.	4.596	29	22	76%
42	112	Holland & Knight	National	4.590	46	35	76%

42	9	Mintz, Levin, Cohn, Ferris, Glovsky and Popeo	Boston	4.590	27	19	70%
44	77	Howrey	National	4.589	25	22	88%
45	104	Schiff Hardin	Chicago	4.587	23	11	48%
46	153	Baker & Hostetler	National	4.582	42	35	83%
47	87	Shook, Hardy & Bacon	Kansas City, Missouri	4.581	27	21	78%
48	45	Finnegan, Henderson, Farabow, Garrett & Dunner	Washington, D.C.	4.577	32	21	66%
49	51	Pepper Hamilton	Philadelphia	4.568	17	17	100%
50	-	Sedgwick, Detert, Moran & Arnold	San Francisco	4.567	10	10	100%
51	32	Kirkland & Ellis	National	4.566	181	120	66%
52	89	Wachtell, Lipton, Rosen & Katz	New York	4.563	30	17	57%
53	145	Wiley Rein	Washington, D.C.	4.561	20	16	80%
54	70	Schulte Roth & Zabel	New York	4.559	46	34	74%
55	130	Sutherland Asbill & Brennan	Atlanta	4.546	29	13	45%
56	90	Irell & Manella	Los Angeles	4.543	33	18	55%
57	86	Greenberg Traurig	National	4.541	42	38	90%
58	138	Snell & Wilmer	Phoenix	4.536	30	22	73%
59	52	Goodwin Procter	Boston	4.531	59	43	73%
60	33	Proskauer Rose	New York	4.529	115	75	65%
60	114	Weil, Gotshal & Manges	New York	4.529	165	44	27%
62	-	Arnall Golden Gregory	Atlanta	4.522	10	10	100%
63	97	Jones Day	National	4.521	189	117	62%
64	43	Baker & McKenzie	International	4.513	48	36	75%
65	142	Haynes and Boone	Dallas	4.510	62	51	82%
66	44	Milbank, Tweed, Hadley & McCloy	New York	4.503	72	56	78%
67	16	Reed Smith	National	4.502	44	29	66%
68	105	Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom	National	4.497	222	92	41%
69	102	Perkins Coie	Seattle	4.488	45	40	89%
70	127	Kramer Levin Naftalis & Frankel	New York	4.483	22	20	91%
71	133	Cleary Gottlieb Steen & Hamilton	International	4.482	120	64	53%
72	23	Kelley Drye & Warren	New York	4.473	20	15	75%
72	123	Nixon Peabody	National	4.473	53	22	42%
72	136	Wilmer Cutler Pickering Hale and Dorr	National	4.473	103	90	87%
75	80	Cooley Godward Kronish	Palo Alto	4.471	47	45	96%
76	158	Bracewell & Giuliani	Houston	4.470	55	31	56%
77	92	Mayer Brown	International	4.467	116	84	72%
77	82	Townsend and Townsend and Crew	San Francisco	4.467	21	10	48%

79	144	Allen & Overy	International	4.464	32	17	53%
79	68	Cravath, Swaine & Moore	New York	4.464	119	52	44%
81	139	Foley & Lardner	Milwaukee	4.449	77	46	60%
82	127	Arent Fox	Washington, D.C.	4.444	15	10	67%
83	113	Hogan & Hartson	National	4.434	88	55	63%
84	77	Hughes Hubbard & Reed	New York	4.432	44	40	91%
84	129	Munger, Tolles & Olson	Los Angeles	4.432	24	15	63%
86	146	Andrews Kurth	Houston	4.424	33	26	79%
86	55	Thompson & Knight	Dallas	4.424	22	18	82%
88	122	Davis Polk & Wardwell	New York	4.423	116	77	66%
88	66	O'Melveny & Myers	Los Angeles	4.423	108	70	65%
90	39	Blank Rome	Philadelphia	4.416	27	26	96%
91	116	Curtis, Mallet-Prevost, Colt & Mosle	New York	4.412	16	13	81%
92	45	Pillsbury Winthrop Shaw Pittman	National	4.407	52	36	69%
93	115	Jenner & Block	Chicago	4.399	60	35	58%
94	149	Chadbourne & Parke	New York	4.397	37	26	70%
95	57	Brown Rudnick	Boston	4.390	19	10	53%
96	150	Morris, Nichols, Arsht & Tunnell	Wilmington	4.387	11	11	100%
97	100	Fried, Frank, Harris, Shriver & Jacobson	New York	4.379	42	34	81%
98	108	Locke Lord Bissell & Liddell	Dallas	4.349	44	32	73%
99	125	Fenwick & West	Mountain View, California	4.348	39	20	51%
100	131	Debevoise & Plimpton	New York	4.338	106	58	55%
101	-	Sonnenschein Nath & Rosenthal	National	4.333	14	10	71%
102	134	Baker Botts	Houston	4.310	108	56	52%
102	99	Winston & Strawn	National	4.310	120	60	50%
104	98	Cahill Gordon & Reindel	New York	4.308	38	26	68%
105	96	Latham & Watkins	National	4.306	156	78	50%
106	71	Sidley Austin	National	4.303	132	84	64%
107	160	Williams Mullen	Richmond	4.302	26	21	81%
108	131	Paul, Weiss, Rifkind, Wharton & Garrison	New York	4.294	110	87	79%
109	118	Sullivan & Cromwell	New York	4.292	107	67	63%
110	27	McDermott Will & Emery	National	4.290	76	66	87%
111	57	Katten Muchin Rosenman	Chicago	4.273	38	36	95%
112	156	White & Case	International	4.266	91	69	76%
113	146	Arnold & Porter	Washington, D.C.	4.257	45	30	67%
114	88	Kaye Scholer	New York	4.256	24	22	92%
115	108	Clifford Chance	International	4.251	30	27	90%

116	123	Linklaters	International	4.247	38	26	68%
117	93	Fitzpatrick, Cella, Harper & Scinto	New York	4.243	23	11	48%
118	22	Dechert	National	4.197	65	33	51%
119	161	Stroock & Stroock & Lavan	New York	4.186	30	18	60%
120	140	Simpson Thacher & Bartlett	New York	4.163	77	49	64%
121	137	Cadwalader, Wickersham & Taft	New York	4.144	48	19	40%
122	148	Shearman & Sterling	International	4.132	63	41	65%
123	162	Bass, Berry & Sims	Nashville	4.073	20	12	60%
124	59	Faegre & Benson	Minneapolis	4.031	40	18	45%