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## **INSIGHT: Five Ways Law Firms Can Remotely Engage Diverse Law Students**

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Covid-19 has required law firms to pivot to remote recruiting, and the shift means being even more intentional about recruiting ethnically diverse and LGBTQ+ law students. Jennifer Carriòn, a member of Morgan, Lewis & Bockius LLP's lawyer recruiting team, suggests engaging former summer associates, creating on-demand programs to reduce Zoom fatigue, and working with career services offices to host events.

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From here on out, legal recruiting will be viewed through the lens of two periods in time—“Before Coronavirus” and “After Coronavirus.”

We've shifted from visiting with students on law school campuses to visiting with students remotely from the comfort of our homes. This shift illuminates the fact that we must be even more intentional about recruiting ethnically diverse and LGBTQ+ students, as our traditional methods simply will not cut it.

Law firms have made great strides over the last several years to diversify their summer associate programs, and it is essential that we keep up the momentum. The Covid-19 pandemic and a remote environment requires firms to think strategically about how they will engage with, and ultimately recruit, law students.

Below are five things all firms should be doing to not only continue, but also sustain, their diversity recruiting efforts.

### **1. Engage Former Summer Associates**

Your prior summer associates are your best ambassadors and recruiters. Leverage and empower them. Ask them to share invitations with their friends and affinity groups. Ask them to introduce you to other students who they think may be good candidates for your firm. Ask them what students want to hear from firms, and tailor your programming to their interests—not just to what you want to share or advertise about your firm.

Invite former summer associates to participate in internal remote firm events when appropriate. This is especially relevant for your 1L summer associates, whose classmates make up the target

on-campus interview pool. Many of us will undoubtedly be hosting several remote panels and events—invite your former summer associates to help plan and speak at some of those events.

## **2. Leverage the Remote Environment**

One of the benefits of being remote is that virtual platforms offer broader reach than in-person programming. Since we will not be able to physically visit law school campuses, firms should leverage the unique circumstances and invite more than one school to their remote events whenever possible. This maximizes attorney and recruiting staff time, broadens your reach, and allows you to host more events.

Hosting an event with Michigan BLSA? Invite Howard BLSA, too! The students get to know people from other schools and geographical locations while you are simultaneously being more efficient with your time.

Other considerations are partnering with and sponsoring national student organizations with broader reach, including, but not limited to, the National Latina/o Law Student Association (NLLSA), the National Black Law Students Association (NBLSA), and the National Asian Pacific American Law Student Association (NAPALSA).

## **3. Be Mindful of Zoom/Screen Fatigue**

Let's face it—we've all had those days that were filled with back-to-back mandatory virtual meetings and the last thing we wanted to do was add one more "optional" one.

Students will be spending large parts of their days on Zoom, so make sure your events are interactive to keep students engaged; use polls, encourage the use of the chat feature, and use breakout rooms to allow for small group networking.

Also, consider creating and providing on-demand content that students can listen to and/or watch at their convenience by using your firm's social media accounts or website. Share short prerecorded clips of your former summer associates discussing their experiences as diverse summer associates, as well as diverse attorneys sharing why they chose your firm and why they have stayed, as a few examples.

## **4. Follow-Up and Continue Engagement**

Follow-up after events has always been critical—but even more so now when we can't always see who's in the "room." In the times of Covid-19, the follow-up email is the new firm marketing material (you know, those handouts we would have on display at career fair tables and no one would take?), so it's important that firms follow up soon after the event and provide content that students can reference.

Follow-up emails should be sent within 24 to 48 hours of an event and should contain contact information for firm representatives who were in attendance, as well as firm information that you want to share with students in a concise and not-too-text-heavy format.

## 5. Partner With Career Services

Working with career services will be key in navigating remote recruitment on law school campuses. Career services staff have been working diligently with students and faculty in navigating the remote environment and can share best practices for hosting events with their students.

They can also help you determine the best timing for events, determine how best to engage with student affinity groups, share topics that students are most interested in learning about, and help you identify students who might be interested in your firm.

Is recruiting diverse students rocket science? No. And, to be honest, it's not all that different from recruiting other groups of students. What makes the recruitment of diverse students different is that it requires intention.

Firms are all competing for the same limited pools of diverse students, so it is essential that we differentiate ourselves by being intentional with our remote programming and effective in sharing with students the reasons that our firms are good places for them to start their careers.

*This column does not necessarily reflect the opinion of The Bureau of National Affairs, Inc. or its owners.*

### Author Information

*[Jennifer Carriòn](#), a member of Morgan, Lewis & Bockius LLP's lawyer recruiting team, is responsible for the overall planning, management, and administration of diverse law student and lateral non-partner lawyer recruiting, integration, and development.*

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