MEMORANDUM

TO: All Law Students

FROM: Molly T. Wescott, Assistant Dean, Career and Professional Development

DATE: April 17, 2020

SUBJECT: Update from OCPD

It was good to connect with many of you during this week’s Student Town Hall Zoom Meeting. As a follow up to that meeting, this memo provides the latest updates on employment matters for all students.

Update on Law Firm Summer Associate/Law Clerk Programs and Post-Bar Positions:

We have communicated with many of the law firms who recruit USD Law students. In addition to providing our office with updates, many summer associates, summer interns and post-bar law clerks have received information about their positions as firms of all sizes begin to finalize decisions about summer employment and beyond. Several firms released email statements, and we anticipate additional announcements will follow in the next several weeks.

OCPD has observed the following trends:

- The majority of summer programs have been shortened, which includes delayed start dates
- Several summer associate programs may switch to virtual/remote work only and be reduced to approximately 5 or 6 weeks
- Some national firms have cancelled summer programs and a few that have cancelled have also extended post-graduate offers in lieu of summer program participation
- A few smaller firms in San Diego have cancelled summer law clerk positions while others hope to retain summer clerks as planned.
- The start dates of some post-bar law clerk positions have been delayed to January 2021
Update on Nonprofit and Government Agency Summer Internships:

While some nonprofit and government summer internships have been cancelled, it currently appears that most employers are hoping to modify their summer programs to accommodate remote work or otherwise engage students.

Of the nonprofit and government employers OCPD surveyed:

- A small number indicated that their summer programs would continue as originally planned.
- The majority of organizations indicated that they are planning to continue their program but are considering offering a revised summer program with reduced hours, remote work, or a delayed start date.
- Several organizations continue to evaluate the situation and remain undecided at this time.

Unfortunately, the San Diego County District Attorney’s Office was forced to cancel their summer program as well their 1L DA Academy.

We continue to communicate with employers to determine their plans and help to facilitate remote work opportunities. We also hope to identify more remote summer research opportunities such as one with the Public Rights Project which is now posted on #HireUSDLaw.

Listing a Cancelled Summer Position on Your Resume:

If your summer position with a firm, court, nonprofit or government agency has been cancelled due to COVID-19, you may still list it on your resume. Here is an example of how you can describe the position:

**EXPERIENCE**
San Diego County District Attorney’s Office  
Legal Intern  
Selected to participate as a Legal Intern in the District Attorney's office for the summer 2020 season. The program was cancelled in its entirety due to COVID-19 restrictions.

Please reach out to OCPD if you are concerned about your employment plans, have questions about how to contact an employer to request a status update or want to discuss how to respond to newly announced changes to your summer or post-bar position.
Non-Graduating Students: Report your Summer Plans to OCPD:

To update OCPD on the status of your summer plans, please report those plans in #HireUSDLaw. Log into your account, find the “Profile” tab, and choose “Report Experience” for the summer. You will have various options to report a summer position, summer classes, volunteering, seeking an internship, etc. This information will allow OCPD to better serve you.

Changes to the USD Law Fall Recruiting Program (OCI)

In response to concerns from national law firms, many law schools in Southern California as well as nationwide are moving their On-Campus Interview Programs to early 2021. To accommodate the large law firms that regularly recruit at USD and facilitate their access to our law students, Round 1 of our Fall Recruiting Program will be moved to late January or February of 2021. Most firms that recruit in Round 1 of our OCI program are large, national firms.

Round 2 of our OCI program typically includes smaller local firms, government agencies, public service organizations and courts that are seeking students for fall 2020 and spring 2021 internships as well as summer 2021 positions. Our office is currently in contact with these Round 2 employers to explore options for holding Round 2 on-campus interviews in the fall, either on campus or remotely.

OCPD will keep students apprised of developments in our recruiting programs, and students will be notified when the dates are finalized for the various rounds of recruiting.

Upcoming Career and Professional Development Programs:

OCPD will begin offering virtual programs starting after final exams and throughout the summer. Currently, we are contemplating programs on summer job success; recruiting programs; virtual interviewing; mastering #HireUSDLaw; conducting a post-bar job search; and growing practice areas in the emerging economy. Our first program will hopefully occur in mid-May with a presentation by the Navy Office of General Counsel on post-graduate, civilian legal opportunities with the Navy OGC. Watch for an announcement of that program date and time.

New OCPD Guides:

To address recurring student questions and concerns, OCPD developed two brief handouts which are included with this memo: Law Student’s Career Guide Amid COVID-19 and Virtual Interviewing During the Pandemic. These guides can also be found in the Resource Library in #HireUSDLaw.
Welcome OCPD’s Newest Career Advisor:

OCPD is pleased to introduce Caliph Assagai, our new Assistant Director for Public Service. Caliph comes to us after a career in nonprofit legislative advocacy and motivational speaking. He earned his law degree from UCLA School of Law, where he completed specializations in Public Interest Law & Policy and Critical Race Studies. He’s thrilled to be with USD Law and looks forward to meeting you. Feel free to email him at cassagai@sandiego.edu to welcome him and introduce yourself.

Reminders:

Career Advising Appointments. Advising and document review continue to occur remotely. You may still book appointments in #HireUSDLaw. There is now a required Location field when booking appointments, and you may select either “Teleconference” or “Document Review (via email).”

Graduating Students. Email our graduate career advisor Emily Hirsekorn at ehirsekorn@sandiego.edu if the information you provided when completing the Post-Grad Employment survey in #HireUSDLaw changes. Once we know more about the status of the California bar exam, Emily will prepare a guide to help graduates navigate their job search for both the short term and long term.

Stay Connected: Please email OCPD at lawcareers@sandiego.edu, me at mwescott@sandiego.edu, or your advisor directly to stay in touch. We are here to help and support you during these uncertain times.
Law Student’s Career Guide Amid COVID-19

1. **Keep Up the Momentum (and Your Resume).** Start thinking about your current efforts as a collective investment in your long-term career. Apply to work with USD’s Legal Clinics. Volunteer remotely. Explore research opportunities. Launch a virtual program through a student association. Take courses over the summer. Take experiential courses in the fall. Join mock trial or moot court. Write onto a journal. *Bottom Line: Show future employers that you’ve been working hard, even outside of traditional work!*

2. **Shift Your Focus from the “Perfect Job” to a “Stepping Stone in the Right Direction.”** With limited opportunities, now is the time to be open. If you are contemplating any offer, we encourage you to take it. And if you are currently working or volunteering in a legal or law-related job, talk to your employer about keeping your position through the summer and/or fall. Keep in mind anything law-related will offer transferrable skills.

3. **If You Recently Lost a Job or Had an Offer Rescinded, Stay in Touch.** Let the employer know you are flexible, open to project-based work, and are prepared to work remotely in case anything changes.

4. **Update Application Materials and LinkedIn.** If you are applying for new types of jobs, remember to submit your materials to OCPD for review. Also be sure to update your LinkedIn profile and get active by posting and commenting on relevant posts.

5. **Network.** To secure summer jobs, make sure everyone you know is aware that you are looking for work. To secure future jobs, take this time to build up your network. Once the economy starts shifting back, following up with established contacts will be key.

6. **Prepare for Virtual Interviewing.** **Logistics:** Test your internet connection and the interview platform in advance. Prepare a professional interview space with appropriate lighting and camera positioning. Maintain interview attire (matching top and bottom) and avoid bright clothing, large jewelry and heavy makeup. **Practice:** Practice a video call to ensure good posture, eye contact, and general comfort with the new format. If you want extra practice, you can always schedule virtual interview preparation with OCPD!

7. **Educate Yourself:** Check reliable news sources so that you are conversant in current events and can ask the right questions of employers. Also check out the wealth of resources available to help with remote work and staying motivated right now, such as [Time Management: Working from Home](#) | [Productivity Tips: Finding Your Productive Mindset](#) | [Managing Stress for Positive Change](#).
VIRTUAL INTERVIEWING
DURING THE PANDEMIC

STAY INFORMED
Check reliable news sources so that you are conversant in current events (expect more small chat than usual), can show respect for existing rules related to the pandemic, and can ask the right questions regarding start date and remote work.

SETUP IN ADVANCE
Test the internet connection. Make sure the interviewer has your cell in case connection fails. Download, set up, and test the chosen platform (e.g., Zoom). Prepare your interview space: quiet | well-lit | neutral background | proper camera placement | turn off computer & cell phone sound.

MAINTAIN INTERVIEW ATTIRE
Virtual interview attire should be the exact same as in-person interview attire. Match your top and bottom in case you must stand up—no pajama pants! Avoid bright clothing, large jewelry, and heavy makeup, which can be even more distracting via video.

SHOW EMPATHY
Where resume review assesses hard skills, the interview assesses soft skills and personality. As the pandemic has affected everyone in some way, go beyond the basics to show a very important soft skill: empathy.

- Acknowledge these are difficult times
- Ask how the interviewer is doing
- Be open to flexible work arrangement

PRACTICE
Most of us are just getting used to professional video conferencing, making it even more important than ever to practice for your interview. Focus on both content and also the manner of delivery. E.g., Posture | Eye Contact | Camera Placement

PRACTICE A VIRTUAL INTERVIEW WITH OCPD
Scheduling interview prep with your career advisor has never been so important.

- Work out the virtual interview kinks
- Run through practice questions
- Discuss concerns

After booking your appointment in #HireUSDLaw, email your advisor to coordinate a Zoom meeting.