

Bill O'Neil Discusses How Winston Shifted its Hiring to Adjust to the Pandemic

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Now that most law schools have delayed their on-campus recruiting programs and gone virtual due to the pandemic, law firms are following suit, and adjusting their hiring timelines accordingly. *Business Insider* recently reported that firms are getting creative with how they help prospective candidates prepare for high-stakes job interviews.

Winston & Strawn's Hiring Chair Bill O'Neil spoke with the outlet about the updates Winston has made to its hiring process to adjust to the pandemic, the events the firm will participate in leading up to on-campus interviews (OCIs), and new and existing resources available to students.

Bill told *Business Insider* that Winston plans to hire the same number of summer associates that the firm has in the past—around 65 2Ls and eight to nine 1Ls. Everything will be done remotely and the firm is considering a suite of tech solutions to aid in the remote transition, from Flo Recruit to WebEx and Zoom. The firm typically attends 30 to 35 law schools OCIs and will be sticking to that number this year as well.

Bill explained that Winston previously conducted a regression analysis to best determine which schools to focus on given their resources, and found that top performers at the firm weren't necessarily from the traditionally top-ranked schools.

"The use of data has caused us to be really thoughtful," he said. "While we recruit the majority of our students from the top 15 law schools in the country, we do hire a significant number of law students from 15 or so other law schools which rank between numbers 16 and 126 in the *U.S. News* rankings."

The firm will also participate in seven job fairs that center around diversity or specific practice areas, opening up their applicant pool to students from more schools.

Winston typically hosts an evening interview program for candidates who proceed to the callback round from target schools in each area (University of Chicago, Michigan Law School, and Northwestern are feeder schools for the Chicago office, for example).

About a dozen candidates from each school are given a tour, information session, and rotate through four interviews with associates and partners. The firm then makes offers that same evening. Bill said they plan on doing the same this year, just virtually.

“The process has changed, but the substance, volume, and integration have not,” he told *Business Insider*.

Winston will be hosting its “home for the holidays” reception and cocktail events online, and is doubling down on other virtual social events, like a behind-the-scenes Zoom with the San Diego Zoo and a [TikTok video challenge](#) featuring some of the diverse hires in the 2020 summer associate class.

Read the full article [here](#) (subscription required).

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