



MAXIMIZING YOUR SUMMER ASSOCIATE EXPERIENCE: INSIGHTS FROM PAUL, WEISS CORPORATE ATTORNEYS

By: Paul, Weiss, Rifkind, Wharton & Garrison LLP

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As featured in *Vault's Guide to Summer Associate Interviewing & Top-Ranked Programs*

Curious how you can make the most of your time as a summer associate? From hands-on training to the chance to work with industry leaders, a typical day in the Paul, Weiss summer program is packed with opportunities. In this piece, corporate associate Kori Cooper, who spent two summers at the firm, and her mentor, M&A partner Laura Turano, offer tips for maximizing your time as a summer associate and speak about the unique experience of being a Paul, Weiss summer associate in the firm's New York office.

Summer associate programs provide a unique opportunity to glimpse inside a law firm and understand whether the work and culture are in line with your goals.

"Working as a summer associate was my first introduction to law firm life," says Paul, Weiss associate Kori Cooper. "Having the chance to work for world-class clients on their most important transactions, learn about the firm's award-winning practice areas, and network with firm attorneys and fellow summers confirmed for me that Paul, Weiss was the right place to start my legal career. With that in mind, after spending the summer after my first year of law school with the firm, I chose to come back after my second year of law school as well. I'm now in my second year at Paul, Weiss, and absolutely love it."

The key is finding out what makes your firm stand out so you can determine if it is the best fit for your career.

"In my mind, what sets the summer associate experience at Paul, Weiss apart is the opportunity to work on the most important matters for some of the largest public companies and private equity firms in the world," says partner Laura Turano. "Lawyers at Paul, Weiss, across all seniority levels, are committed to training and mentorship. This means when you get an assignment, you'll get the full context on why the assignment matters and advice on how to approach it. And you'll get real-time feedback on how to make your work shine. We do all these things because we're committed to delivering the very best work to our clients, which means developing and training future stars."

Read on for advice on how to get the most out of your summer experience and to get an inside look at the transactional summer associate experience at Paul, Weiss.

Choose a Firm That Aligns with Your Practice Goals

A successful summer associate experience begins when you research firms. Among the areas to consider are a firm's practice strengths, the types of matters they handle, and the firm's growth trajectory. Ideally, you will return to your summer firm as an associate, so it is important to find a firm that aligns with your goals and interests and also provides opportunities to learn and develop.

"Many firms handle transactional work, but I wanted to join a firm that tackled novel, complex deals—a place that valued creativity and cutting-edge thinking," says Cooper. "After researching Paul, Weiss, I was struck by the high-profile deals the firm handled, and the enthusiasm lawyers I met with had for what they do. I knew I would gain tremendous experience here."

It's also important to understand how involved associates at all levels will be in the work.

"Paul, Weiss leads pivotal matters, advising blue chip companies, such as Amazon, General Electric, General Motors, IBM, McDonald's, Merck, and Qualcomm, on their most important deals and activist defense matters. We advised Nuance Communications in its \$19.7 billion sale to Microsoft, MGM in its \$8.45 billion sale to Amazon, and Apollo Global Management, Inc. in its \$43 billion merger with Athene. The firm also recently counseled The Estée Lauder Companies Inc. in its \$2.8 billion acquisition of luxury brand Tom Ford, and Amazon in both its \$3.9 billion acquisition of One Medical and its \$1.7 billion acquisition of iRobot. Paul, Weiss handles major, cutting-edge deals," says Turano. "High-profile transactions like these are team efforts, from the most junior lawyers to the senior partners. Go to a firm that offers you opportunities from the start."

Immerse Yourself in Learning Opportunities

Summer associate programs offer myriad ways to learn about the greater industry and the firm specifically; take advantage of these opportunities. Whether during a training session led by a veteran private equity lawyer, time spent working on a multibillion-dollar fundraise or an after-hours social, there are daily opportunities for Paul, Weiss summer associates to meet and learn from associates and partners who have worked at the highest levels of industry and government.

"Some of the most meaningful experiences of my two summers at the firm were opportunities to hear directly and candidly from seasoned practitioners," says Cooper. "I absolutely loved 'The Big Deal,' a lunch talk with Corporate Department Chair Scott Barshay and M&A partner Steve Williams, where they regaled us with war stories about major deals they have done for Fortune 100 companies. It was exciting hearing how junior associates played instrumental roles at key moments in important deals."

At Paul, Weiss, summer associates also gain insights directly from clients through the firm's Fireside Chat series. For example, one past chat featured Francesca Campbell, who shared her perspective about moving in-house as vice president and chief M&A counsel for Carrier Global, a Fortune 500 company. During the presentation, she stressed the key role young associates can play on a transaction and how, through excellent work, the Paul, Weiss associates on the deal team advising Carrier in the \$3.1 billion sale of its Chubb business did exactly that. In further partnership with Carrier, the firm has coordinated a secondment program in which summer associates have had the opportunity to work directly on Carrier's legal team in two-week rotations.

Shadowing is another invaluable learning opportunity. Paul, Weiss summer associates have the chance to shadow partners for an inside view into what goes into a negotiation, deal

signing, client meeting, or pitch. Turano encourages summer associates to seek out these opportunities.

“Shadowing gives summer associates direct exposure to the legal world. Be ready to hear a lot of things you don’t understand—remember you are there to see and learn,” Turano says. “Law is an apprenticeship. You learn from people—which is why you want to be at a firm with the very best people to learn from, and you want to take every opportunity you can to see and hear them in action.”

At Paul, Weiss, our top-ranked partners are committed to associate learning and development, including helping associates develop relationships with clients so they can rise to the top of their fields. It’s important that the firm you choose offers these types of learning opportunities and the chance to engage with clients.

Take on Substantive Work

As a summer associate, raise your hand for substantive work; there is no better way to understand associate life than working alongside a team on a significant assignment. Paul, Weiss transactional summer associates don’t just work on discrete assignments—they join the deal teams.

“As a summer associate, I worked on a complicated spin-off transaction where we represented a well-known automotive company, and I was able to learn all about how the company ran its business as we prepared the legal due diligence reports,” says Cooper. “I was invited to join team calls and meetings, so I gained a broader understanding of the deal and how it fit into the client’s business strategy.”

If you are still exploring which practice area or group you want to pursue, find a firm that allows you to gain exposure to a wide variety of areas. Summer associates at Paul, Weiss can work simultaneously on deals in different transactional practice groups; sample work from Litigation and other practice areas; and have the opportunity to consult subject matter experts in such areas as cryptocurrency, executive compensation, tax, tech transactions, and more.

“Paul, Weiss lawyers always work as a team, across practice areas, to develop the best advice for the client. For instance, if a summer associate is researching MAE provisions in merger agreements, I will have them join me for a discussion with the litigators who worked on *Fresenius*, the only Delaware case to have found a Material Adverse Effect,” Turano says.

Join Inclusive Teams

Seek out opportunities to work with diverse teams and learn from the unique contributions of each team member. Inclusion is at the forefront of the Paul, Weiss experience, and our teams are stronger because of their diversity in perspectives and talents. Summer associates will be on diverse deal teams from day one.

“It’s been inspiring to see teams led by attorneys of diverse backgrounds and identities. It has been pivotal in my growth and confidence to watch a woman lawyer masterfully command the room and negotiate great outcomes for our client,” Cooper says.

Summer associates are also encouraged to join one of the firm’s six affinity Networks. “Through participation in the firm’s Black Lawyer’s Network, as well as other network and engagement events over the summers, I have been able to connect with Paul, Weiss lawyers at the top of their fields who have become powerful mentors to me,” Cooper says. “Jeh Johnson, former United States Secretary of Homeland Security and a litigation partner at the firm, and Amran Hussein, a corporate partner and member of the firm’s Private Funds Group, are among those people whom I was able to get to know better through the Black Lawyer’s Network. Both

of them took time to meet with me outside of network events and have encouraged my growth as a legal professional at Paul, Weiss. You'll find that your network will really want to see you learn and succeed at the firm."

Develop Your Network

A critical part of the summer program is learning about the firm's culture and getting to know the lawyers. Determine what type of environment is best for your personality, and explore whether the firm is a fit. Summer associates at Paul, Weiss will find a firm where lawyers enjoy spending time together and are supportive of each other's work and accomplishments. The firm encourages summer associates to meet as many lawyers as they can and experience the culture for themselves.

During the summer program, summer associates have the opportunity to socialize and network while enjoying the best of New York City. Receptions at iconic New York City spaces, Jazz at Lincoln Center, and partners' homes are cornerstones of the summer program, alongside sunset sails around the Statue of Liberty, a luxury suite experience at Yankee Stadium, and the opportunity to see Shakespeare in the Park. Other summer associate favorites also include morning exercise classes, lunch at Marea, and coffee breaks at Blue Bottle. And, in a tradition going back generations, Paul, Weiss hosts after-hours refreshments in the cafeteria, known as the "Jury Room."

"One of the firm's guiding principles is that no matter how busy we get, it's important to always take a break to celebrate the wins and to get to know your colleagues on a personal level," Turano says.

Turano also encourages summer associates to bring their personalities to work.

"We don't want our associates to be carbon copies. We want them to have their own unique personalities and to develop their own styles," she says. "Remember, this experience is as much about developing your network as it is about the work. You'll find the associates and partners approachable and eager to get to know you."

Paul, Weiss, Rifkind, Wharton & Garrison LLP is a firm of about 1,000 lawyers with diverse backgrounds, personalities, ideas, and interests who provide innovative and effective solutions to our clients' most complex legal and business challenges. The firm represents many of the world's largest and most important public and private corporations, asset managers and financial institutions, and clients in need of pro bono assistance.

Paul, Weiss is widely recognized as having market-leading practices in public M&A, private equity, litigation, white-collar and regulatory defense, and restructuring, along with equally strong practices in executive compensation, intellectual property, personal representation, real estate, and tax law.

Paul, Weiss recently won seven Law360 "Practice Group of the Year" recognitions for its achievements in 2022, including in the Banking, Fintech, M&A, and Sports categories. The firm has also been recognized by The American Lawyer, awarding multiple corporate partners "Dealmakers of the Year" awards in recent years, including Laura Turano in 2021 for advising Teladoc Health in its \$18.5 billion acquisition of Livongo Health.

If you are interested in being considered for a position in our 2024 Summer Program, we encourage you to sign up to interview with us during on-campus interviews at your law school. If you are unable to meet with us during on-campus interviews, please visit our website for details on our application process.