



FILLING THE GAPS IN CLERKSHIP RECRUITING

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 19, 2017

Below are the scenarios we will be discussing during the program. Based on the in-program discussion, we will prepare and make available a companion “take away” sheet which can be used as a reference sheet after the conference.

Scenario One

Parker is a third year student who has been working closely with you, his Career Advisor, and a Faculty member who is on the Law School's Clerkship Committee throughout his clerkship search process. Parker has successfully secured a state Supreme Court clerkship, which will begin immediately following graduation, and has accepted an offer to return to his summer law firm, a mid-sized, well-respected regional law firm, after that clerkship.

At the beginning of his final semester of law school, Parker makes an appointment with you to discuss applying for a second clerkship – and, in fact, he is focused on applying for one particular federal court clerkship. This particular federal court clerkship would begin six months after his first clerkship concludes.

Parker begins his conversation with you by telling you that his Faculty advisor has already given him advice about how to proceed. He does not readily disclose what specific advice the Faculty member gave him, but his speech pattern and body language suggest that he may not entirely like the advice he has received.

Now, Parker is seeking your advice on the following questions:

1. Does he have to tell his summer law firm that he intends to apply for a second clerkship opportunity? And, if he does, when does he need to disclose?
2. If he is successful in securing this clerkship, will he be able to join the firm for the six month period between the two clerkships? And, if he does, how does he approach this topic with the firm?
3. Is it true that securing a second prestigious federal court clerkship will make him a more attractive candidate to Big Law employers in the New York market?



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Scenario Two

As a second year student, Raquel applied for federal court clerkships, but she did not secure one for immediately following graduation. At the end of her summer, she was offered – and accepted – an Associate position from her summer law firm. Raquel enjoyed her time with the firm, and is happy to be returning after graduation. She is not, however, ready to give up on the idea of working as a federal judicial clerk.

Raquel comes in to talk to you, her Career Advisor, about her next steps. Raquel tells you she would like to work at the firm for a short period of time to enhance her resume before applying for additional clerkships. Raquel is now seeking your advice on the following questions:

1. If she wants return to the law firm after a clerkship, what is the “right” amount of time to work as an Associate before clerking?
2. If she wants transition into another position, potentially a federal government or public interest opportunity, after a clerkship, is there a different “right” amount of time to work for the firm before clerking?
3. Does she have to let the law firm know that she is going to apply for federal clerkships? If so, when is the best time to do that?

While discussing these questions with Raquel, you mention that not all law firm employers are in a position to hold an Associate spot open for someone who leaves for a federal court clerkship. Raquel seems a bit surprised that the firm may not welcome her back after a clerkship, and asks:

4. How can she figure out if returning to the firm would be an option for her?

Raquel comes back to you as a third year student. She was able to secure a federal district court clerkship that will begin a year after she starts at the firm. She is now interested in pursuing a federal appellate clerkship as well. She wants your advice on:

5. When and how does she disclose this clerkship to the firm?
6. Is pursuing a second clerkship a good idea? And, how could securing a second clerkship affect her career at the firm?



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Scenario Three

Anderson, who will graduate in May 2017, has secured a two year clerkship in a federal District Court outside of a major metropolitan area. That clerkship will begin in August 2018. He volunteered for a public interest organization focused on Veteran's Rights work during his first year summer and worked in the Legal Department of a major corporation during his second year summer. As a result, Anderson has some great legal experience on his resume, but does not yet have pre- or post-clerkship employment lined up. Anderson reaches out to you, his Career Advisor, seeking your advice on the following questions:

1. What types of opportunities can he pursue to fill the gap between graduation and his clerkship? And, how should he address his clerkship commitment during the interview process with potential employers?
2. When should he begin to actively search for post-clerkship positions? And, does that timeline change based on his geographic and employer type preferences?
3. Are there particular tools or resources that he should be utilizing as he starts his search? For example, should he be contacting a headhunter to help him connect with potential employers? And, is there a recommended way to tap into the network of former clerks who have worked for his particular judge?

Scenario Four

Samantha is a third year associate at the large international law firm where you are the Manager of Recruiting and Professional Development. Samantha's practice has focused on corporate transactional work, and she has earned very good reviews each year she has been with the firm. Samantha has been open about her desire to have a more litigation based practice, which your firm has, and regularly sought out opportunities to build her litigation skills, including through the firm's pro bono program.

Samantha has come to you seeking your advice on her professional development. She shares with you, in confidence, that she intends to pursue a clerkship as she thinks it would help her advance in her career. She would specifically like your advice on the following topics:

1. Should she tell the firm that she intends to pursue a clerkship?



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2. How can the firm support her as she applies for clerkship opportunities?
3. What obstacles can she expect to face as members of her practice group and/or the firm generally find out about her intentions, particularly if she is successful and has a set transition date?
4. Assuming she secures a federal court clerkship, will she be able to return to the firm? And, will she be able to transition into the litigation department at the firm?

Scenario Five

The hiring committee at MSB Law Group, a mid-sized litigation boutique law firm focused on intellectual property law, has recently decided it would like to do more to attract judicial law clerks to the firm. The firm generally hires two or three summer associates each year with the hope of those individuals becoming Associates with the firm following graduation. The firm is enjoying a fair bit of success, and could be in a position to grow, but not in any dramatic fashion.

Elliot, the firm's hiring partner, comes to you, as the firm's recruiting coordinator and professional development manager, to get your input on the following questions:

1. Is there an effective way to market clerkships to the summer associates to encourage them to pursue clerkships, in particular clerkships with specialty courts, once they have started to work for the firm? If there is, how could the firm ensure that it was still fully staffed while that person was clerking?
2. Is there an effective way to identify former summer associates who are currently clerking at specific courts and to market the firm to them? How does integrating those candidates impact the firm? How would this affect the firm's budget? Would the firm need to pay a clerkship bonus to be competitive?
3. Is there an effective way to encourage the junior associates to seek out a clerkship experience and return to the firm?
4. How should the firm handle summer associates who already have a clerkship lined up for a year following graduation? Does the firm keep them for a "gap year"? If so, how does the firm build their loyalty and enthusiasm such that they will return to the firm after clerking (as opposed to looking for a different opportunity)?