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The Hidden Gem: Mining the Value of State Court Clerkships

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Meet the Panel

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Let's Take a Survey!



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Surveying Career Development Offices

We asked folks responsible for advising law students on judicial clerkships about their experiences vis-à-vis state court clerkships...

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Survey Says...

61% of respondents specifically offer programming about state court clerkships.

- 94% believe their programming has been successful.
- 19% were frustrated by the low attendance.

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Survey Says...

Respondents felt that the following contributed to their programming's success:

- Offering food or lunch.
- School culture of clerking, including faculty promotion of state court clerkships.
- Titling the programming as "Should I Clerk?" rather than "Clerkships 101."

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Survey Says...

Common frustrations for less successful programming stemmed from:

- Scheduling against conflicting programs, assignment due dates, faculty-added review sessions.
- Lack of faculty support for the value of state court clerkships.
- Apparent unequal value from employers in awarding bonuses.
- Convincing students that they don't need to be in the top 20% of their class to consider these opportunities.

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DISCLAIMER:
THIS IS NOT AN ATTACK ON
FEDERAL CLERKSHIPS!

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**The Perspective of a
Recent State Court Clerk**

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How to Overcome Misconceptions

Traditional Approach

- Emphasis on *professional* growth
- Breaking into a market, gaining writing experience, building a relationship with a Judge
- Programming described as “general information” sessions
- Advertising over email

Alternative Approach

- Emphasis on *personal* growth
- Empowering experience, connection point with other lawyers, irreplicable perspective and community, fostering anti-practicing-anxiety
- Programming described as inquiries about state court clerkships
- Advertising on school’s social media platforms and/or in-person before class starts – a captive audience!

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Building Awareness of State Court Clerkships

Substance

- Include former state court clerks in programming so that students continue to hear about the experiences (including programming about specific practice areas)
- Partner with journals and present at regularly scheduled journal meetings with a professor
- Work on ways to get faculty buy-in

Form

- Post on school’s digital boards and post physical flyers around the building
- Send class-specific emails (for example, to 1Ls about judicial internship opportunities)
- Create listservs for students interested in clerkship opportunities
- Social media
- Announcements at beginning or end of classes (captive audience!)

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Back to Survey Says...

Examples of Successful Programs:

- Judicial *Lunch & Learn* at a state courthouse – students observe court and then have lunch with the presiding judge
- Annual luncheon for 2Ls with alumni clerks and judges discussing the benefits of state court clerkships
- Panels with active state Supreme Court Justice including 3-5 alumni state Supreme Court clerks
- Panel of alumni judges moderated by popular professor
- Program for 1Ls featuring alumni clerks for judges who hire 1L summer interns

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Main Resources

- **CORA** (Court Opportunity Recruitment for All) – <https://www.ncsc.org/consulting-and-research/areas-of-expertise/racial-justice/resources/workforce/cora>
- **NALP** State Judicial Clerkship Section State Court Work Group – *Insight and Inside Information for Select State Court Clerkships* (updated Oct. 2021): <https://connect.nalp.org/viewdocument/state-court-clerkships-insight-an?CommunityKey=5ebf387e-534f-4556-92a4-dad5f219e5ad&tab=librarydocuments>
- **Vermont Guide to State Court Judicial Clerkship Procedures** (subscription service) – <https://www.vermontlaw.edu/careers/judicial-clerkship-guide>
- **PSJD** – <https://www.psjd.org/advice/state-court-judicial-clerkships>
- **Leadership Connect** – <https://www.leadershipconnect.io/products/print-leadership-directories/>

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THANK YOU!



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