

TO: Fred Thrasher, NALP Deputy Director
Diane Downs, Board Liaison
NALP Board of Directors

FROM: Melissa Lennon, Chair, Judicial Clerkship Section

DATE: October 18, 2011

RE: **Judicial Clerkship Section Quarterly Report**

The Judicial Clerkship Section has survived and thrived in another clerkship application season. We held a conference call in late September to discuss all of our activities. Here is what we have been up to in the time since our last report.

Application Season Re-Cap

This application season seemed to feature a similar range of issues as in the past couple of cycles. Some select federal judges and some select jurisdictions appear to have opted out of the deadlines set forth by the Federal Law Clerk Hiring Plan. (This year the Plan called for student applications to be delivered no sooner than September 6th, for interviews to be scheduled no sooner than 10 am September 9th and for interviews to be conducted no sooner than 10 am on September 15th.) Some judges opt out of the constraints of these deadlines by simply hiring law school graduates instead of students, as the Plan does not apply to alumni. Some judges have ignored the Plan by accepting and reviewing student applications early.

On the good news front, the group's impression is that more federal judges are moving to OSCAR applications and away from paper.

Work Group Status Reports

OSCAR (Chair, Marilyn Drees, Yale): Overall, the OSCAR system worked beautifully this year, and the feedback on our conference call was limited. As in years past, one of the points of concern surrounded judges who have either a non-existent or confusing OSCAR profile. This, of course, is not an OSCAR system function, rather, a function of the judges using it. The group inquired about a large, simple "I am not hiring" check box, and the work group members replied that particular request is made annually, but is not accepted or implemented. Our best option is to keep encouraging judges to update their profiles every year in an accurate, clear way that communicates their preferences. The OSCAR work group is now actively soliciting suggestions for updates to OSCAR in anticipation of the Judges Work Group meeting in December. One such suggestion was to include more biographical information about the judges on the site.

State Courts (Chair, Lorri Olan, Washington & Lee): The Insider Guide on State Court Clerkships includes reports on CA, CO, CT, GA, IL, IA, MD, NJ, NY OR, PA, RI, TX, VA and D.C. The group awaits write-ups on Delaware, Florida, Michigan and Missouri. We also discussed the addition of some information regarding the New York State Fellows Program. The resource is posted on the NALP website, under Professional Resources.

Bibliography/Track Programming: Now that the bulk of the clerkship application season has come and gone, the group will turn its attention to updating the clerkship bibliography so that it contains the most up-to-date information.

Section Communication

A conference call was held on September 27, 2011. A re-cap of the conference call will be sent out shortly, along with a reminder about outstanding tasks.

Programs for the 2012 Annual Conference

Our group submitted four proposals, as follows, and it is my understanding that all four were selected by the Annual Conference Planning Team.

1. “Rocket Docketeers” – Judicial Clerkships for the IP Student.
2. Building Connections Between Law Schools and the Judiciary.
3. Launching an Immigration Career at the Courthouse.
4. Using Judicial Clerkships to Launch and Accelerate a Public Interest or Government Career.

Environmental Scanning & Miscellaneous

We reminded the group on the call that the Administrative Law Judicial Clerkship resource was updated last year and is posted on the NALP website.

There was much discussion of a September 23, 2011 New York Times article about clerkship hiring “Judge Compete for Law Clerks on a Lawless Terrain.” Some agreed that the competitiveness of the process (and disregard for the Hiring Plan rules) was accurately reflected in this article. Some did not see that kind of activity in their jurisdiction. Regardless, it made for a lively discussion point!

Finally, the group discussed the clerkship module of Symplicity, which is used by many schools. Many in the group felt they might be underutilizing the module, or have suggestions for alterations that need to be implemented by the vendor. Ideas for changes will be collected and presented to Symplicity, along with a request for some additional training.