

To: Jennifer Henfey, Board Liaison, NALP Board of Directors

Cc: Fred Thrasher, NALP Deputy Director

From: Michele Hoff, Chair, Judicial Clerkship Section

Date: February 6, 2020

Re: Judicial Clerkship Section Quarterly Report

Below please find a summary of the section's activities and concerns from this quarter.

I. Leadership Team

Section Chair	Michele Hoff, Georgetown University Law Center mh1845@georgetown.edu (202) 662-9612
Annual Education Conference, Bulletin Article and Webinar Planning Workgroup Co-Chairs	Jennifer Riedy Clark, University of Missouri School of Law riedyj@missouri.edu Alfred "AJ" Finch, University of Iowa School of Law alfred-finch@uiowa.edu
Federal Law Clerk Hiring Plan Workgroup Co-Chairs	Elizabeth Peck, Cornell School of Law ep83@cornell.edu Greta Trakul, University of Michigan School of Law gtrakul@umich.edu
OSCAR Workgroup Chair	Marilyn Drees, Yale marilyn.drees@yale.edu
State Court Workgroup Co-Chairs	Jennifer Pollard, University of Maryland School of Law jpollard@law.umaryland.edu Tamara Stephen, Brooklyn Law School tamara.stephen@brooklaw.edu
Strategic Planning Workgroup Co-Chairs	Kirsten Solberg, Harvard University School of Law ksolberg@law.harvard.edu Laura Woodson, University of Georgia School of Law lwoodson@uga.edu

II. Section Meeting

The section held a general call on January 15, 2020. The workgroups provided the following updates:

- Annual Education Conference/Bulletin Articles Workgroup
 - Thanked Amy Nixon (in advance) for her upcoming article in the Bulletin focusing on senior judges. Noted that we have a number of other articles slated in the coming months.
 - Encouraged section members to start thinking about 2021 RFP and Bulletin ideas. Will gladly collect them now.

- Federal Law Clerk Hiring Workgroup
 - Year two of the pilot hiring plan was modified. The key changes are (1) chambers will not accept (formally or informally) recommendations for candidates in class of 2021 until noon ET on Monday, June 15th and (2) there will now be a brief reading period and judges will not extend interview invitations until noon ET on Tuesday, June 16th.
 - There will be a survey of judges conducted at the conclusion of this hiring cycle (likely late summer 2020) to assess the plan and make recommendations for moving forward.

- OSCAR Workgroup
 - OSCAR will open to the class of 2021 on February 5, 2020.
 - The new OSCAR platform will not roll out by the February 5th opening date for the class of 2021. The final round of beta testing for the new platform is scheduled to take place over the next few months. Marilyn Drees will reach out to those who have expressed an interest in beta testing the new version to make sure that there are a sufficient number of volunteers available to assist.
 - Some section members requested that we ask the OSCAR team hold off on rolling out of the new OSCAR platform until after the June release date and initial hiring wave (so that we don't have to re-train class of 2021 users in mid-cycle). The workgroup will share that request with OSCAR.

- State Court Workgroup
 - The workgroup co-chairs did a considerable amount of outreach to fill in the gaps of the current Insights guide. Updates will be made to the guide during the spring so that an updated version of the guide can be shared in late April.
 - We still need information to fill in details about Alaska and volunteers to provide information about Arkansas, Idaho, Montana, New Hampshire and South Dakota.

- Strategic Planning Workgroup
 - No report or updates.

III. Environmental Scanning

During this quarter, the ad hoc committee of federal judges who have been advancing the pilot hiring plan announced some modifications to the second year of the plan. Workgroup co-chairs reviewed the NALP website (<https://www.nalp.org/judicialclerkshipinfoforcareerservices>) and updated the site to reflect these changes in December 2019.

Law school advisors continue to wrestle with questions around the federal court pilot hiring plan. There is still no clear guidance about when or how the class of 2022 will be able to access OSCAR and begin applying for clerkships. There is still no way to easily determine which courts or judges are following the hiring plan timelines this year. And, there continues to be a tension between state court hiring timelines in some areas and the federal court hiring timelines.

There was some recent media coverage on the open letter that a small group of Law School Deans sent to federal court judges expressing their continued support for a federal clerkship hiring plan (<https://www.law.com/2020/01/29/law-deans-implore-federal-judges-to-follow-law-clerk-hiring-plan/>).

Law schools are reporting mixed outcomes after year one of the hiring plan. Some schools are noting that their class of 2020 candidates secured a higher number of gap year clerkships in federal courts than they have in past years. This trend may impact the opportunities available to class of 2021 candidates. It may also result in a lower number of clerkships being reported as “first jobs” in ABA and ERSS data. It is something to watch in future data.

There was some interest among section members in learning more about the clerkship module offered by Symplicity. Symplicity offered to present a webinar for interested members. That webinar is likely to happen in late February or early March.

IV. Next Section Meeting

The section will meet at the 2020 Annual Education Conference in Montreal.