

To: Fred Thrasher, NALP Deputy Director  
Melissa Lennon, Board Liaison  
NALP Board of Directors  
From: Amy Killoran, Chair, Judicial Clerkship Section  
Date: January 22, 2015  
Re: Judicial Clerkship Section Quarterly Report

Below, please find information about the Judicial Clerkship Section's activities since our last report, including section communication and updates from work groups.

### **Section Communication**

On January 14, 2015, the Judicial Clerkship Section held a conference call to discuss section updates, feedback about the 100-application limit in OSCAR, and potential RFPs for the 2016 Boston Annual Education Conference. Approximately 32 section members joined the call.

### **Work Group Status Reports**

#### **OSCAR (Susan Staab, Chicago):**

The meeting of the Judges' OSCAR Working Group initially scheduled for November 20, 2014 in Washington, DC, was postponed. The new meeting date is February 25, 2015 in Washington, DC. In advance of this meeting, the OSCAR Working Group collaborated with the Federal Law Clerk Hiring Working Group to solicit feedback from Section members and prepare a report for the judges attending the meeting. The topic discussed most during the past quarter was the 100-application limit instituted within OSCAR during the past year.

At the new year, OSCAR began its annual archiving process. The Administrative Office of the US Courts sent announcements via email were sent to law school administrators, recommenders, and applicants notifying them that accounts that have not registered any activity for a set period of time (one year for recommenders and school administrators; six months for applicants) will be archived beginning on January 29, 2015. Law school administrators received advance notification of these emails and the scheduled archiving in December, and the Work Group posted these announcements to NALP connect so that Section members had sufficient time to save necessary documents and run additional reports before January 9, 2015, the deadline for running reports on the 2014 season.

#### **State Courts (Molly Stafford, McGeorge):**

The Section posted a request for additions to The *Insight and Inside Information for Select State Court Clerkships* for particular states on NALP connect during the third quarter of this term. We followed up on existing commitments for Washington, North Carolina and Arkansas. Currently, this resource includes the following 27 states: AZ, CA, CO, CT, DC, DE, FL, GA, IL, IN, IA, MA, MD, MN, MO, MS, NE, NJ, NV, NY, OH, OR, PA, RI, TN, TX, and VA. The Guide was edited and re-posted on the NALP website, under Professional Resources>Career Services>Resources for Judicial Clerkships. Additional volunteers to update or add the remaining states are welcome, and were solicited during the January conference call.

### **Federal Clerkship Hiring Timeline (Greta Trakul, Michigan, and Michele Hoff, Connecticut):**

This quarter, the Work Group completed its review of the results of last quarter's solicitation of feedback regarding hiring over the past clerkship term and worked on finalizing a report summarizing those results. The report was prepared to provide feedback to the OSCAR Working Group at its annual meeting scheduled for November 20, 2014. After the meeting was postponed, the Group has sought additional feedback through NALP Connect on the Section's reaction to the 100 application limit on OSCAR. We intend to incorporate that feedback into the report before providing it to the OSCAR Working Group and Section members.

Federal law clerk hiring is now a year-round process requiring diligence on the part of applicants to constantly monitor postings. There are still judges looking for 2015 clerks, and also judges who have already filled their clerkship spots for 2017. 2016 is still the most active hiring term, with a large number of circuit and district judges posting positions and indicating they are waiting for fall semester grades before moving forward with selecting second-year law students to interview.

### **Programming and Resources (Shannon Schaab, John Marshall, and Sheila Driscoll, George Washington):**

The first of the Judicial Clerkship Section's four articles slated for publication this year was published in the September 2014 NALP Bulletin. The article was entitled *Writing One's Own Letter of Recommendation for Judicial Clerkships: An Opportunity or Obstacle?*

During the January conference call, the Section solicited additional volunteers to help update the *Guide to Administrative Law Judge Hiring*.

Also during the January conference call, the Section began the brainstorming process to develop RFPs for the 2016 Annual Education Conference in Boston. Although it is early in the RFP process, beginning now will allow members more time to fully develop ideas and line up potential speakers, and will also allow newer members to solicit feedback on proposals from more senior section members. Currently, a list of ideas discussed during the call are posted in the Section's NALP connect discussions, with five ideas having one or more volunteers working on them.

### **Long Range Strategic Planning (Kirsten Solberg, Harvard):**

The Judicial Clerkship Section submitted the final version of our strategic planning report to the Long Range Strategic Planning Committee on November 14 and posted a copy on NALP connect for members' reference. We developed the content through section-wide discussions beginning at the Annual Education Conference, continuing through NALP connect, in several conference calls during the summer and fall, and through various email exchanges. Our report first summarized how fortunate we are to enjoy diversity and cooperation within the Section. We all face a big challenge with the discontinuance of a central law clerk hiring plan among federal judges and related uncertainty in the clerkship hiring timelines of state judges. We also have seen a growing trend of judges preferring clerkship applicants with some post-law school experience, which impacts not only the applicants and law schools, but legal employers as well. With that backdrop, we proposed to direct our energies over the next five years not only to maintaining our active projects but also toward three larger objectives:

1. Expand Data on "Later" Clerkships – including the gap year(s) scenario when students secure clerkships during law school but not for their first jobs following graduation, alumni securing clerkships, and pre- and post-clerkship jobs.

2. Continue Active Involvement in the Federal Application Process – at the very least, continue improving OSCAR to move the federal clerkship application process online as much as possible, but also participate in any discussions about a new hiring plan in the future.
3. Streamline the State Application Process – by exploring the creation of an online advertising and submission system similar to OSCAR for state court judges.

Generally, we strive for improved transparency in the judicial clerkship process, for the benefit of all applicants, and especially those historically underrepresented as law clerks in the judicial system.

### **Environmental Scanning and Miscellaneous**

For additional information about the current state of the clerkship market, please see the Federal Clerkship Hiring Timeline work group update, above. State courts continue to proceed along their own timelines, with hiring for the 2015 term continuing into the spring semester in a few markets and with an increasing number of judges and courts in some states accepting applications for the 2016 term.