

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

Cc: Fred Thrasher, NALP Deputy Director

From: Michele Hoff, Chair, Judicial Clerkship Section

Date: October 22, 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 Vice-Chairs	Elizabeth Crane, University of South Carolina School of Law ecrane@mailbox.sc.edu Blair Edwards, Boston University School of Law edwards2@bu.edu
Federal Law Clerk Hiring Plan Workgroup Vice-Chairs	Elizabeth Peck, Cornell School of Law ep83@cornell.edu Greta Trakul, University of Michigan School of Law gtrakul@umich.edu
OSCAR Workgroup Vice Chair	Marilyn Drees, Yale marilyn.drees@yale.edu
State Court Workgroup Vice-Chairs	Jennifer Pollard, University of Maryland School of Law jpollard@law.umaryland.edu Tamara Stephen, Brooklyn Law School tamara.stephen@brooklaw.edu
Member Relations Workgroup Vice-Chairs	Janet Siegel Brown, Northwestern University School of Law jbrown@law.northwestern.edu Andrea Saavedra, Columbia University School of Law acs2126@columbia.edu

Knowledge Management Workgroup Vice-Chair	Alfred “AJ” Finch, University of Iowa School of Law alfred-finch@uiowa.edu
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II. Section Meetings

The section held a Zoom meeting on Thursday, September 22, 2020. The following topics were covered:

- Board Report – Jen Henfey encouraged section members to update your demographic profile with NALP and to consider nominating yourself or your colleagues for leadership positions in NALP.
- Knowledge Management – AJ Finch is representing the section on the larger NALP task force. He is currently reviewing materials and website content, and will reach out when additional volunteers are needed to keep the project.
- Member Relations – Andrea Saavedra and Janet Brown will be reaching out to members to do some environmental scanning. Members who wanted to share issues or concerns are encouraged to contact them directly to set up a time to talk.
- State Court – Jen Pollard and Tamara Stephen invited anyone with updated information about their state court hiring cycles to pass along updates. They hope to have an updated version of the Insight Guide posted to NALP Connect by the end of the year.
- AEC Proposals & Bulletin Articles – Elizabeth Crane and Blair Edwards shared that RFP news should be coming out shortly and that they still needed volunteers to work on a few articles for the NALP Bulletin.
- Federal Law Clerk Hiring – Liz Peck and Greta Trakul shared that we are still waiting for the federal judges to make an announcement about the Class of 2022 and forward.
- OSCAR – Marilyn Drees noted that OSCAR NextGen is set to launch in early November 2020. The AO will be hosting a training (or intro) webinar on October 14th.
- Miscellaneous – The Newer Professionals Section is seeking mentors who are willing to be matched with section members. There was a discussion of cover letters for externships, focusing on how tailored they should be to a particular judge or court.

Throughout the quarter, the section’s workgroups were busy working on other projects, including:

- Joint Meeting with the Recruiting Section – On Thursday, September 17, 2020, members of the OSCAR and Federal Law Clerk Hiring Workgroups participated in a joint Zoom meeting with members of the Recruiting Section to discuss clerkship hiring and recruiting issues. Ideas raised in the meeting included:
 - Some firms have not seen much of an impact from the hiring plan. That is true especially for firms who hire a large number of state court clerks or who hire primarily lateral candidates after their clerkships.
 - Firms frequently question whether candidates with gap year clerkships will return to their associate positions after their clerkships. They find it difficult to track candidates with these clerkships and it creates an increased burden to properly manage their incoming associate numbers.

- Some firms have found summer clerkship interviews to be a bit disruptive. Missing work for interviews produces an increased level of stress for summer associates/clerkship applicants to get their assignments done as they attempt to be well prepared for clerkship interviews (which often happen on a very tight turnaround time).
- Video interviewing options have been helpful to firms as they have minimized the amount of time summer associates were "away" from work for their clerkship interviews.
- Firms liked having a somewhat predictable window of time when clerkship interviews were likely to happen. It allowed them to plan some of their key summer events (trainings, etc.) around the "peak" of interviewing season.
- Some firms liked having interviews in the summer as it allowed the firms to more fully support summer associates who had secured interviews. Some reported having associates and partners conduct mock interviews or to help facilitate connections for their candidates.
- OSCAR Feedback Survey – The OSCAR and Federal Law Clerk Hiring Workgroups collaborated to create and launch a brief survey designed to gather feedback from section members about OSCAR and the pilot hiring plan. The survey has received roughly 30 responses so far, and it will remain open until Tuesday, October 27, 2020. After the survey closes, the workgroups will review the data prepare a summary which can be shared with the federal judges OSCAR working group at the fall/winter 2020 meeting.
- Small Group Focal Meeting – An ad hoc group of section members held a small group conversation in order to brainstorm and share ideas about creating and working with faculty clerkship committees. There has been a suggestion to coordinate more of these kinds of micro-focused conversations in the months ahead.

Looking forward, the section will be working on:

- Accepted 2021 AEC Proposals
 - The section had a number of proposals accepted for the 2021 conference, including (1) Beyond Article III Clerkships, (2) When Clerkships are Not Your Only Job, (3) Clerkships on the Public Interest Path, (4) OSCAR Next Gen Presentation, and (5) Diversity and Clerkships: Update on the ABF Project.
 - A number of slated presenters have raised concerns about their ability to present their programs, as they anticipate that they will not be able to attend an in-person conference.
- Upcoming Bulletin Articles – The section will be submitting two articles for the NALP Bulletin in early 2021. The one will focus on corporate law careers and clerkships and another will focus on state court clerkships.

III. Environmental Scanning

Many of the concerns that came up within the section this quarter include:

- How will students manage clerkship applications and a later OCI period – This is a continued concern within the section. Many schools are still worried about how their students will be able to manage their OCI searches, their summer job searches more generally, and their clerkship application processes. This is of particular concern to those schools who have students who apply to “off-plan” federal court judges and state court judges who hire in the mid-January to early March timeframe.
- The impact of multiple virtual and/or hybrid semesters on applicants – Schools are hearing concerns from their potential applicants about their inability to, or difficulty with, building relationships with faculty members and legal supervisors. The concern is that these applicants will not be able to secure strong letters of recommendation, and that they will be disadvantaged in their clerkship searches as a result. This general concern seems to be magnified for applicants who identify as first-generation professionals and/or students of color.
- How to manage clerkship programming during the 2020-2021 academic year – This remains a continued, albeit evolving, concern within the section. Students seem to accept that Zoom programming is necessary given the current state of the pandemic, but they are reporting an increased level of Zoom fatigue. Schools are looking forward to their spring programming, and their networking style programs in particular, and trying to design them in order to make them attractive and engaging to students.
- How will counselors balance clerkship advising with all of their roles – Small and solo careers offices are concerned about how they will be able to effectively manage all of their counseling roles given the compression of so many hiring different hiring cycles this year. They are concerned that in addition to the hiring compression they will face reduced budgets and have fewer resources available to them.

IV. Upcoming Section Calls

The section is planning to hold its next general meeting for in January 2021. Additional small group meetings may also be scheduled to discuss focal topics in the coming months. (Some of the potential topics may include: (1) alumni clerkship databases, (2) tracking “off-plan” judges, (3) diversity clerkship initiatives, and (4) implementing and promoting clerkship-oriented coursework.)