

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

Cc: Fred Thrasher, NALP Deputy Director

From: Michele Hoff, Chair, Judicial Clerkship Section

Date: April 8, 2021

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
---	---

II. Section Meetings

The section held a section call on March 18, 2021. In addition to a board report, the meeting included reports from all of the workgroups. They included:

- OSCAR Workgroup – The workgroup reported that OSCAR was working on fixing many of the issues that have been reported thus far. In mid-April, fixes to the auto-attach feature, the application download capabilities and access to the position listings in LSA view are expected to be rolled out to users. Please keep reporting issues that arise. There was also discussion about the 100 application limit in OSCAR, clarifying that applicants are able to submit more than 100 total applications over their lifetime of use but that they are limited to 100 active applications at any one time.
- Federal Law Clerk Hiring Workgroup – The workgroup reported that judges seem to be posting their future clerkship opportunities a bit more slowly than they did last year. It was unclear if that was really the case or if it was more of a perception. Either way, the expectation is that more judges will post their clerkship openings on OSCAR in the coming weeks (and hopefully well in advance of the June 14th release date!).
- AEC/RFP/Bulletin Workgroup – The workgroup reminded members that there will be five clerkship focused programs offered during the 2020 virtual conference. The programs include: (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. The workgroup also reported that there is one clerkship article, which will address clerking for federal magistrate judges, slated for the August 2021 NALP Bulletin. Anyone with conference program, webinar or articles ideas are welcome to pass those ideas along to the workgroup now for consideration as part of next year’s programming.
- Knowledge Management Workgroup – The workgroup reported that they are still in the process of reviewing materials. The workgroup will continue into next year when the work will focus on repackaging and/or relaunching content online for members.
- Member Relations Workgroup – The workgroup reported that many of its initiatives have been delayed given the winter OCI period and overall Zoom fatigue. The workgroup is hoping to do more proactive programming and outreach next year.
- State Court Workgroup – The workgroup encouraged members to share updates on any new practices they are seeing in their local state courts. They also shared information about some programs being offered by state courts to help encourage students to apply.

III. Environmental Scanning

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

- Whether the problems with the new OSCAR platform will impact the hiring season – This remains a concern for many law schools as LSAs and applicants continue to discover technical issues with the new platform. An update to the site will be implemented in mid-April, and will hopefully ease many of these concerns.
- The impact of multiple virtual and/or hybrid semesters on applicants – This also continues to be a concern for many students and clerkship advisors. Letters of recommendation submitted this hiring cycle may not be as personalized or as in-depth, which may impact the success of applicants in the hiring process. This concern seems to be magnified for applicants who identify as first-generation professionals and/or students of color.
- How to plan clerkship programming during the 2021-2022 academic year – As campuses start to return to in-person learning this fall, many schools are considering retaining some elements of their virtual clerkship programming and are starting to think about when it makes sense to do so.

IV. Suggestions for the Year Ahead

A number of suggestions came out of this year's activities. Some of the items that are worth reviewing for next year include:

- Focal events – Rather than only holding large section meetings, there is a suggestion to incorporate some focused conversations into the section's activities. The idea is that these events would be smaller in nature and would be designed to engage more section members in interactive discussions. Some of the potential topics could include: (1) alumni clerkship databases, (2) tracking "off-plan" judges, (3) diversity clerkship initiatives, and (4) implementing and promoting clerkship-oriented coursework. One such event (focused on working with clerkship committees) was held this year. With about 10 attendees it gave everyone a chance to ask questions and exchange ideas. These events could be coordinated by the Member Relations Workgroup Vice-Chairs.
- Social opportunities – There was a suggestion to think about hosting "happy hours" for the section. The idea was inspired by an interest in creating an opportunity for members to connect and chat (perhaps complain?) about shared stress points in a less structured fashion. A mid-summer "the OSCAR rush is over" get-together was suggested for this year, as well as potentially a similar event over the winter break. These events could be coordinated by one of the related workgroup vice-chairs (i.e., the mid-summer event could potentially be hosted by the Federal Law Clerk Hiring Workgroup Vice-Chairs).

- Workplace Relations Webinar – The federal courts have done a fair amount of work to respond to diversity and harassment concerns over the past few years. The section has suggested hosting a webinar where some of the court’s workplace conduct officers come to speak with law school representatives about what has been done, what resources are available to clerks (and law school representatives who are supporting their clerks), and how law schools can build stronger relationships with these court officers. Marilyn Drees has offered to coordinate the webinar (as it is a modified version of a cancelled 2020 conference program). A date has not yet been set for the webinar.