

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

FROM: Melissa Lennon, Chair, Judicial Clerkship Section

DATE: June 28, 2011

RE: **Judicial Clerkship Section Quarterly Report**

The Judicial Clerkship Section is off to a good start. Set forth below is a summary of our activity since our initial meeting at the Annual Conference.

Proposals for the 2012 Annual Conference

Our group submitted four proposals, as follows:

1. “Rocket Docketeers” – Judicial Clerkships for the IP Student. This program will discuss clerking in jurisdictions with active patent dockets, known for their accelerated pace of litigation. One such court is the Eastern District of Texas – perfectly suited for the conference. (Julie Doss, Texas Tech and Cara Mitnick, UCSD)
2. Building Connections Between Law Schools and the Judiciary. This program will highlight innovative ideas to bring judges and law school faculty and staff together in ways to create relationships and improve opportunities for our clerkship applicants. (Hanna Stotland, Northwestern, Emmy Berning, Georgetown, Priscilla Owen, Dale Wainwright, Emily Kadens)
3. Launching an Immigration Career at the Courthouse. Program will provide an overview of immigration court system, immigration law and clerkships available. The program is also a natural for our conference location. (Lorri Olan, Washington & Lee, Susan Schell, University of Arkansas, Maria Estela Garcia Yzaguirre)
4. Using Judicial Clerkships to Launch and Accelerate a Public Interest or Government Career. Many government honors programs and other public interest employers favor a clerkship on an applicant’s resume. The program will contradict the traditional wisdom that clerkships are reserved for those going on to Big Law careers. (Eric Stern, Berkeley, Jamila Frone, Department of Justice)

Bulletin Article Proposals

Our group submitted the following topics for articles:

1. Update on Citizenship Requirements for Clerkships in Federal and State Courts. (Chris Fritton, Penn, Beth Wickwire, Michigan)

2. Alternative Careers In and Around the Courthouse. (Amanda DiPolvere, Penn State, Lorri Olan, W&L, Cara Mitnick, UCSD)

Work Group Status Reports

OSCAR (Chair, Marilyn Drees, Yale): The OSCAR work group was busy in early May with the OSCAR 6.1 beta testing of the upgraded Law School Administrator, Applicant, and Recommender interfaces. The group provided extensive written comments, supplemented with a conference call, and almost all of the group's recommendations were accepted. OSCAR 6.1 was successfully launched on May 23. Shortly after the OSCAR 6.1 launch, the section and the work group chair collaborated with NALP staff to send the annual postcard mailing to the federal judges, which reminds them to post their information in OSCAR as promptly as possible and reinforces the hiring plan dates. Members of the group participated in a webinar/Q&A session hosted by the OSCAR staff in June. The work group plans to host a conference call for section members in July, to talk through issues that have arisen with OSCAR 6.1, offer some tips, and respond to questions about the system.

State Courts (Chair, Lorri Olan, Washington & Lee): The Insider Guide on State Court Clerkships includes reports on CO, CT, GA, IL, IA, MD, NJ, OR, PA, RI, TX, VA and D.C. New additions since the annual meeting include California and New York. The group is awaiting a couple more jurisdiction reports and then will repost the updated Guide on the NALP website.

Bibliography/Track Programming (Susan Schell, University of Arkansas and Samantha Norris, University of Iowa). This work group was recently formed to update the content of the Judicial Clerkship Biography document now on the NALP website. It appears that the last update of this document was in 2004. I understand that the Member Services Task Group might be providing some guidance on the track programming efforts undertaken by many sections, in the form of a template. We will review the template and the existing document to get started with our work. At the end, we hope the document will be a collection of links to the most up-to-date information relevant to obtaining a clerkship, reviewing sources such as NALP Bulletin articles, Conference presentations, press articles, law review articles, ABA publications, OSCAR articles, etc.

Section Communication

Since the Annual Conference, we held one conference call on May 12, 2011. I also sent a follow up email to the group re-capping the conference call, and following up on a request for bulletin articles.

The section also engaged in a lively email exchange regarding judges who indicate their deadline for applications is before the deadline set forth by the Federal Law Clerk Hiring Plan (this year, September 6). Some suggested this implied the judge only wanted applications from law school graduates, not students. Others worried that the judge would be open to student applications but did not want to follow the Plan guidelines. This is a common concern, as a limited number of judges will hire students in contravention to the Plan guidelines. Various senior members of the Section indicated that career planning offices should not be facilitating student applications in violation of the Plan.

Environmental Scanning & Miscellaneous

Speaking of the Hiring Plan, the schedule this year is as follows: applications may be submitted September 6, interviews may be scheduled beginning on September 9, and interviews may be conducted starting September 15, all 10 am EST.

Tamara Stephens sent a fascinating, in depth handout from a New York City Bar Association presentation on how to become a judge. I will work on a way to send it to the group.

I worked with Fred Thrasher and Marilyn Drees to update the postcard that goes to federal judges reminding them to update their clerkship postings on OSCAR. Temple also provided an excel spreadsheet listing names and addresses of federal judges.