

Recent Changes to Law Clerk Hiring Plan Could Affect Your Summer

On behalf of NALP's Judicial Clerkship Section a message to organizations with second-year students working this summer:

On April 10, the federal judges' committee overseeing the federal law clerk hiring plan announced a modification to the 2013 schedule. The new application submission date is Friday, June 28. Beginning June 28, judges can review applications from rising third-year students, schedule and conduct interviews, and extend offers.

The judges' committee has consistently noted that compliance with the hiring plan is voluntary, and events of the past several months have underscored that notion. This official date change is just the latest of many shifts clerkship applicants have confronted in recent months, beginning with the DC Circuit's notice in late January that those judges would no longer uniformly follow the federal law clerk hiring plan schedule. Throughout the spring, additional judges across the country have announced they were following alternative schedules, including interviewing and hiring second-year students in the spring.

Those of you who will be welcoming second-year students into your summer programs in a few short weeks may well be confronted with issues not faced since the late 1990s. Some students will be coming to their summer jobs already committed to a judicial clerkship commencing in 2014, or perhaps 2015. Some students will have applications pending with judges or will be submitting applications to judges in June, in accordance with the new hiring plan date. Judges reviewing applications during the summer are likely to schedule interviews in June or July as well, which may present scheduling challenges for students.

We hope this notice will offer a starting point to frame the issues and develop responses attuned to your individual programs. Many of your law school colleagues have begun to deal with these issues and would be eager to continue a discussion with you. We would encourage you to be in touch with colleagues at schools from which you hire interns, to benefit from their insights and share your perspectives with them as you both seek to provide students the best advice and opportunities. If you will be at the NALP conference in Tampa, there will be no shortage of opportunities to initiate this dialogue. Shortly after the conference the Judicial Clerkship Section and the Recruiting Section will host a conference call to permit a broader group of members to share ideas and information.

The Judicial Clerkship Section leaders and members look forward to the opportunity to talk through these issues with our employer colleagues. We are confident that with open communication and strong collaboration, we can once again meet these challenges.

Judicial Clerkship Section Chairs: Melissa Lennon (Temple), 2012-13; Amy Perez (Miami), 2013-14

Judicial Clerkship Section, OSCAR Work Group: Susan Staab (Chicago), Chair; Marilyn Drees (Yale); Sheila Driscoll (George Washington); Eric Stern (Berkeley)