JUDICIAL CLERKSHIP SECTION
Quarterly Report to the Board of Directors
March 31, 2008

Submitted by: Kirsten Solberg, Chair

We have had an active year in the section, with a variety of people participating in different ways. Special thanks go to all the volunteers named below, our Board Liaison Terry Galligan, and Fred Thrasher and Janet Smith at the NALP headquarters.

Articles and Programs

Articles and programs have proceeded as planned. Our third of three articles for the NALP Bulletin was published recently as scheduled. Our program speakers for the Annual Education Conference in April are finalizing their presentations.

Articles
- Web Resources for Judicial Clerkship Applicants (September) – *Rhonda Vickers Beassie, Houston*

- Federal Judicial Clerks: Where They Go and Why (December) – *Jessica Heywood, Catholic*

- Creating a State Court Judicial Clerkship Database (February) – *Beth Hansen, Brigham Young*

Programs
- Building a Judicial Clerkship Program – *Louie Thompson, Temple (Lead); Malini Nangia, UCLA; Liz Stack, Miami*

- OSCAR (Online System for Clerkship Applications): Season Review and Look Ahead – *Marilyn Drees, Yale (Lead); Kirsten Solberg, Harvard; Katie Wilkinson, Tulane; Mark Soltys, Third Circuit; Hon. Thomas Vanaskie, M.D. Pa.*

- Clerkships Are for Everyone!: Beyond the Article IIIs – *Allison Heverin, Northwestern (Lead); Elaine Bourne, Hofstra*

State Court Work Group

The state court work group finished its substantive work earlier in the year, as described in the last quarterly Board report. Our toolkit for sharing state court clerkship information on a regional basis and a Bulletin article summarizing the toolkit were published as planned in February. Members of the work group were *Ramona Sein, William & Mary (Chair); Beth Hansen, Brigham Young; Ellen Jones, Lewis & Clark; and Kirsten Solberg, Harvard.*

OSCAR/FLCIS Work Group

The OSCAR work group is now in its busiest season. We assisted with the judiciary's notice to judges and law schools about the upcoming incorporation of features from the Federal Law Clerk

Information System (FLCIS) into the new version of OSCAR. The scheduled launch date for "OSCAR Version 4.0" is May 5. Within the last few weeks, we gained access to a demonstration site with some of the new features incorporated, and we are testing those now. We are supposed to get access to all of the new features by early April for testing and revision as needed. Weekly conference calls among the school members on our own and every-other-week conference calls with the judiciary staff are helping us keep on track. Finally, the work group nominated the three lead judiciary staff members of OSCAR for a NALP Award of Distinction in the technology category, and we were excited to learn recently that the award will go to these nominees at the Annual Education Conference. A copy of the nomination form is attached here. Members of the work group are *Marilyn Drees, Yale (Chair); Rhonda Beassie, Houston; Elaine Bourne, Hofstra; LuEllen Conti, Howard; Terry Galligan, Berkeley; Allison Heverin, Northwestern; Kirsten Solberg, Harvard; Liz Stack, Miami; Louie Thompson, Temple; and Katie Wilkinson, Tulane.*

Federal Hiring Plan

We thank the Board for your recent consideration and adoption of our proposed endorsement statement about the federal hiring plan for the upcoming season.

NALP Award of Distinction Nomination
Submitted by the Members of the OSCAR Working Group,
NALP Judicial Clerkship Section

NOMINEES:

The OSCAR Development Staff:

Laura Simon
Management Analyst
U.S. District & Bankruptcy Courts for the District of Columbia
333 Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20001
(202) 354-3206
Laura_Simon@dcd.uscourts.gov

Christopher Warner
Assistant Director for Automation and Technology
U.S. District & Bankruptcy Courts for the District of Columbia
333 Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20001
(202) 354-3168
Christopher_Warner@dcd.uscourts.gov

Mark Soltys
Assistant Circuit Executive
U.S. Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit
22409 United States Courthouse
Independence Mall West
601 Market Street
Philadelphia, PA 19106
(215) 597-0718
Mark_Soltys@ca3d.uscourts.gov

Part I: A description of the project or program for which the candidate is nominated.

The Online System for Clerkship Application and Review (OSCAR) enables federal judicial clerkship applicants to select the federal judges to whom they wish to apply and build and submit their applications online. Applicants can upload cover letters, resumes, grade sheets, and writing samples and submit electronic requests for recommendation letters to their recommenders. OSCAR then invites the recommenders to log onto the system and upload letters of recommendation on behalf of the applicants. Consistent with the federal law clerk hiring plan, alumni can release their applications to judges at any time; applications from graduating law students are released on the day after Labor Day. Judges can search available applications over a wide variety of parameters, organize applications in folders, and communicate with applicants via email.

OSCAR began as a pilot project, funded through a grant program for judiciary technology initiatives, and sponsored by the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia, U.S. District Court for the Middle District of Pennsylvania, U.S. Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit, and U.S. Court of Federal Claims. Members of each of those courts form an oversight committee for OSCAR, and NALP's OSCAR Working Group collaborates with that committee on policy and implementation issues. Participation in OSCAR has always been voluntary, and the first year, the committee hoped a hundred judges would sign up. OSCAR attracted not one, but over three hundred judges when it rolled out in 2005, and participation has increased by over fifty percent each year. Currently just over 800 judges of all types, from all circuits, participate in OSCAR. Confirmation of OSCAR's success came during the fall of 2007, when the Judicial Conference of the United States accepted OSCAR as the single online application system for the federal judiciary, assuring it permanent funding and oversight through the Administrative Office of the US Courts.

Part II: A description of how the nominee's work has advanced or promoted the Mission of NALP in one or more of the following areas.

◆Technology

The clerkship application process is an important component of any career services office. Clerkship programs may vary in size, but the significance of clerkships for faculty and students is a constant. The preparation and delivery of clerkship applications and recommendation letters is a labor-intensive, time-consuming, and expensive proposition. Tens of thousands of sheets of paper travel from law schools to deluge the mailrooms of courthouses around the country. Courts in larger cities such as New York, Philadelphia San Francisco, and Washington have routinely hired extra staff to handle the deliveries and notified the local postmasters to prepare for the upsurge.

OSCAR was developed to simplify and streamline the clerkship process for judges, applicants, and their recommenders. Its first three years have seen remarkable strides toward that goal. Each year, OSCAR has included more judges and information about clerkships, and that improvement will continue in 2008. OSCAR has saved time, saved money, and helped to level the field by lowering financial and information obstacles for applicants and schools. Statistics from 2007 illustrate the point: OSCAR served 800 judges and nearly 6,000 applicants, received over 180,000 applications and housed 2,700,000 documents. NALP, through the OSCAR Working Group, has been involved with the development of OSCAR since the initial grant was awarded in 2004. Judges and court staff recognized and valued the members' experience with the clerkship process and knowledge of recruitment technology. Though the OSCAR Working Group is grateful for the opportunity to contribute to this project, it is important to recognize the people who truly made it happen: Laura Simon, Chris Warner, and Mark Soltys.

The creation of OSCAR Version 1.0 in 2004—05 and its yearly upgrades and expansions since then have been – quite simply – a mammoth undertaking which would not have even gotten off the ground without the efforts of Laura Simon, Chris Warner, and Mark Soltys. Each of them filled a vital niche in the development team, and they collaborated seamlessly to meet the needs of the diverse constituencies involved in the project. Laura, as Project Manager, first successfully navigated the byzantine government contracting regulations to solicit and hire a software developer (Symplicity). She also works closely with the Administrative Office of the US Courts on funding,

licensing, confidentiality, and other issues. She is the principal liaison with the OSCAR Working Group and principal staffer for the judges oversight committee. Chris Warner brought his software design expertise and his knowledge of existing court databases to the team; he takes the lead with Symplicity's software designers to translate the needs and desires of the judges and applicants into a working system. Mark Soltys brought a wealth of experience in dealing with large-scale information technology projects for the courts. In addition to handling technology issues for the Third Circuit, he assisted the Judicial Conference Technology Committee on numerous national applications, such as the electronic case management system that is now available to litigants and judges in every federal court. He has played an important education and liaison role with judges, as well as offering additional technical expertise for the software team.

Laura, Chris and Mark have worked intensively with the OSCAR Working Group to ensure that the system is an effective tool for applicants, faculty recommenders, and law school administrators. Their efforts to provide the OSCAR Working Group and NALP members with input into all aspects of OSCAR's development have included:

1) Sponsoring yearly in-person meetings at the District Court for the District of Columbia between members of the OSCAR Working Group, judges from the sponsoring courts, and representatives from the AO's office to collaborate on all aspects of the system's development
2) Participating in untold numbers of conference calls with the entire OSCAR working Group or its individual members over the past three years
3) Providing advance roll-out of the system each year to the OSCAR Working Group for testing to provide the opportunity for detailed feedback on all aspects of the system
4) Attending each of NALP's Annual Conferences since 2005, renting a booth at each conference to be on-hand to demonstrate OSCAR's features and answer questions, and providing separate training sessions at the conference
5) Creating an informational website that includes user guides, FAQs, and a running list of OSCAR participating judges
6) Maintaining a blog on the OSCAR site to address issues and questions that users of the system are having
7) Inviting feedback from law schools, through both surveying and an open invitation on the blog
8) Manning a Help Desk each fall to address questions and problems from law school career services personnel, recommenders, judges, and applicants
9) Developing and updating detailed user guides for law school administrators, applicants, and recommenders

Laura, Chris, and Mark have worked equally hard with federal judges and courts to make OSCAR succeed. They have developed video training courses for clerks and assistants, along with written user guides. They attend numerous court meetings during the summers to conduct on-site training sessions and to see judges individually to introduce them to OSCAR's many useful features. They survey the participating judges annually to learn more about what works well and what needs improvement.

As impressive as this list might be, it only scratches the surface. There is much more that goes on behind the scenes to move OSCAR forward: countless conversations and emails, negotiations with administrative staff in Washington and around the country, troubleshooting glitches before they affect performance, myriad activities about which

the OSCAR Working Group has only peripheral knowledge. Laura, Chris and Mark, tackle it all cheerfully, professionally, and remarkably effectively—and they do it **on top of** their other job responsibilities within their respective courts.

Thanks to Laura, Chris, and Mark, OSCAR has firm foundation for future development. Their willingness to work so closely with the law schools in so many ways has been essential to OSCAR's current success. The NALP Award of Distinction in Technology would offer fitting recognition and appreciation of their years of hard work in creating and developing OSCAR and the goodwill they have shown through their generous collaboration with NALP through the OSCAR Working Group.

Respectfully submitted,

OSCAR Working Group, Judicial Clerkship Section

Rhonda Beassie (Houston)
Elaine Bourne (Hofstra)
LuEllen Conti (Howard)
Marilyn Drees (Yale), Working Group Chair
Terry Galligan (Berkeley)
Allison Heverin (Northwestern)
Kirsten Solberg (Harvard), Judicial Clerkship Section Chair
Liz Stack (Miami)
Louie Thompson (Temple)
Katie Wilkinson (Tulane)

Contact Information:

Marilyn F. Drees (Working Group Chair)
Director, Judicial Clerkships & Fellowships
Yale Law School Career Development Office
203.432.1691 (direct)
203.432.1676 (main)
203.432.8426 (fax)
www.law.yale.edu/cdo

Allison Heverin
Associate Director
Center for Career Strategy and Advancement
Northwestern University School of Law
357 E. Chicago Avenue
Chicago, IL 60611
(312) 503-1282
a-heverin@law.northwestern.edu