


FOCUS ON FIRST YEAR: BEST PRACTICES FOR BUILDING A STRONG CLERKSHIP PROGRAM

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Agenda

- Introduction
- Naming the Myths
- What Should 1Ls Do
- Engaging Diverse Candidates
- Other Considerations
- Questions

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Introductions

- About Us
- About Our Schools
- About Our 1L Approaches

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Naming the Myths

- **Grades are all that matters.**
 - ✓ Many judges look holistically at applicants.
 - ✓ Legal skills and professional traits are valuable.
- **The most prestigious clerkship is the “best” clerkship.**
 - ✓ Federal options are not necessarily the right choice.
 - ✓ Clerkship goals should align with larger career goals.

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Naming the Myths

- **Only litigators benefit from clerking.**
 - ✓ Transactional and regulatory attorneys gain essential skills too.
 - ✓ Specialized clerkships may be “best” for non-litigators.
- **Clerkships are not for public interest attorneys.**
 - ✓ Government and public sector organizations value clerkships.
 - ✓ Clerking after a few years of post-law school experience and/or in state level courts may make sense in a public sector career path.

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Naming the Myths

- **Clerkships don't pay enough to be “worth it.”**
 - ✓ Median clerkship salary immediately post-grad is \$61,000. Some clerkship salaries increase based on legal experience.
 - ✓ Some employers pay large bonuses. Others will adjust salaries, particularly for more senior level positions, for clerkship experience.
- **You need to apply in 1L year to get a “good” clerkship.**
 - ✓ Most clerkships are not secured during 1L year or 1L summer.
 - ✓ Applications can be submitted even after law school graduation.

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What Should 1Ls Do

Application Builders	Key Considerations
Make smart course selections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take doctrinal and clerkship focused courses • Take courses which offer writing opportunities
Create a writing portfolio	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Join a law journal or prepare a publication • Participate in moot court or mock trial • Take seminar style courses with writing opportunities
Gain practical legal experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Select 1L summer jobs where you can write • Engage in internships, externships, legal clinics, practicums, and/or pro bono work as a 2L/3L • Secure a substantive 2L summer job
Develop professional relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stay in touch with faculty and legal supervisors • Network with former clerks, attorneys, etc.
Attend relevant programming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in law school programming • Engage in events offered by the bar association, professional organizations and/or the courts

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Engaging Diverse Candidates

- Teach clerkship vocabulary early
- Develop a personalized encouragement plan
- Promote judicial internship opportunities
 - ABA Judicial Internship Opportunity Program
 - USAO & JTB Summer Judicial Internship Diversity Program
- Advertise external clerkship programs and activities
 - The Appellate Project
 - Bar Associations, including affinity bar organizations

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Other Considerations

- Need to address well-being concerns with candidates and clerks
 - Help to develop an authentic narrative and search goals
 - Discuss employee and mentoring relationship
 - Be familiar with and promote key support resources
- Need to contextualize the experience and its overall importance
 - Note that clerkships can happen later in their careers
 - Underscore that clerkships are only a small part of their careers

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Questions?

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THANK YOU