

JUDICIAL CLERKSHIP SECTION
Quarterly Report to the Board of Directors
July 6, 2007

Submitted by: Kirsten Solberg, Chair

Overview

Our section is comprised of approximately 60 self-identified members. We held a meeting by conference call on May 15 to discuss the most pressing issues in this first quarter: programs, articles, judges' hiring plans, our OSCAR/FLCIS work group, our state court work group, and a potential employer work group. I am pleased to report that we have had enthusiastic follow-up by a diverse group of volunteers in each of these areas. Details are below.

Programs

For the 2008 Annual Education Conference in Toronto, we submitted three proposals, which were all accepted:

- Building/Expanding a Judicial Clerkship Program
- OSCAR (Online System for Clerkship Applications): Season Review and Look Ahead
- Beyond Litigation: Judicial Clerkships as a Foundation for a Variety of Career Paths

Based on feedback from the conference planning committee, Gihan Fernando is speaking now with the presenters of the "Beyond Litigation" topic to see if they are willing to switch to an "Alternative Clerkships" topic instead.

Articles

For the NALP Bulletin, we submitted three proposals, which were all accepted with our preferred months for publication:

- Web Resources about Judicial Clerkships (September)
- Where Are They Now? Non-Law Firm Alternatives After a Federal Clerkship (December)
- Tool Kit for State Court Clerkships (February)

Judges' Hiring Plans

Many of us are interested in the hiring plans of federal judges who do not make their plans known through posting on the Federal Law Clerk Information System (FLCIS) or the Online System for Clerkship Application and Review (OSCAR). As a first step, we continued the NALP tradition of central outreach through a postcard reminding federal judges to update their online listings and abide by the national hiring plan dates. This mailing already had been budgeted through NALP; we just tweaked the wording from last year's postcard to reflect current dates and the new need for judges to post specific clerkship positions in OSCAR. A copy of this year's postcard is attached here. We thank Fred Thrasher and Janet Smith at NALP for masterful, quick processing of this mailing. (Fred tells us that another postcard mailing to federal judges already has been budgeted for August. Unless there is any objection by the Board, we will proceed with that mailing to remind judges again about the dates of the national hiring plan and the possibility of identifying law schools' unavailable applicants in a secure part of the FLCIS.)

Through discussion, we learned that some of us already were reaching out to judges individually and were willing to share our results within the section. By mid-June, we had three compilations of information that were offered through our listserv:

- Federal circuit and district judges not hiring for 2008
- When federal circuit judges will consider alumni applications
- Addresses of federal judges within the Third Circuit who are hiring through paper applications

I expect to distribute another round of information within the next week.

OSCAR/FLCIS Work Group

Again this year, the OSCAR/FLCIS work group continually tested the new version of OSCAR and suggested fixes for the various interfaces (applicant, recommender, and law school administrator) before those interfaces were launched publicly. The complexity of the system, level of detail in the feedback, and need for persistence in getting results are always astounding. Although OSCAR is owned and administered by the federal judiciary, the law school members of NALP have great impact through this work group. It helps that the lead judges and administrators are so receptive to our involvement.

Despite everyone's best efforts, however, judges still are using OSCAR in inconsistent ways. Many signed up to participate in OSCAR but did not post their specific clerkship positions, making it impossible for applicants to put in motion the steps needed to build their applications. We saw the postcard mentioned above have some positive effect, but the work group subsequently called the judges still in limbo, urging them to post their clerkship positions or make clear that they would not be hiring for 2008. Results from this outreach are being compiled now and should be available within the next week.

State Court Work Group

The state court work group met via teleconference on May 25, 2007, to discuss two proposed projects: (1) creating a "tool kit" for sharing state court clerkship information on a regional basis, and (2) developing a central chart listing states with available trial court clerkships and court contact information. With regard to the first project, two members already have developed an outline of the tool kit which will share how the NW Consortium of Law Schools has created a regional database of state clerkships. Before taking further steps regarding the second project, our work group chair contacted the coordinators of Vermont Law School's *Guide to State Judicial Clerkship Procedures* to obtain their feedback. They explained that trial court clerkship information varies tremendously, and they offered to address the need identified by the work group as follows. They will enhance the "State Judicial Clerkship Application Deadline Quick Reference Chart" at the beginning their online *Guide* by creating hyperlinks that take viewers directly to the page of the *Guide* containing each state's trial court information.

Potential Employer Work Group

Finally, we have discussed the idea of forming (subject to Board approval) an employer work group. Without concrete project plans to suggest at this point, however, we are tabling the idea until next year. We think having a subgroup for employers within the section would (a) serve as a nice complement to the two existing subgroups that are really for schools, and (b) hopefully encourage employers not currently represented in the section to join.