**Pepperdine University School of Law**

**Career Development Office**

**2019-2020**

**Judicial Clerkship Handbook**

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**Should I Apply for a Judicial Clerkship?**

A judicial clerkship is an excellent way to transition from law school to practicing law. In addition to providing a focused environment with a mentor heavily invested in your professional development, a clerkship affords many benefits that make it one of the most coveted job opportunities for graduates.

1. **What is a Judicial Clerkship?**

A judicial clerkship is a paid one- to two-year position working for a judge (or panel of judges), which starts after graduation from law school.

1. **What Judicial Clerks Do**

A judicial clerk’s job is to support the judge. Tasks can range from managing and organizing the docket; reviewing all filings; researching case issues; drafting bench memoranda summarizing the facts, issues, and arguments and recommending rulings to the judge; drafting orders and opinions; researching and drafting articles to be authored by the judge; and communicating with parties to cases. Judicial clerks spend most of their time reading the arguments of the parties and then researching and writing.

1. **Benefits of Judicial Clerkships**
   1. **Clerkships are highly valued by firms (especially larger law firms) and other employers,** including the United States Attorney’s Office, the Office of the Federal Public Defender, and other federal employers;
   2. **Clerkships are often unofficial prerequisites for some legal jobs** like law school teaching jobs and some highly competitive fellowships (e.g., fellowships in the Office of the Solicitor General);
   3. **Clerkships are invaluable opportunities to hone your research, writing, and analytical skills**;
   4. **Clerkships may help you decide what area of law and what organization or law firm is best for you**, because you can see the quality and style of their work;
   5. **Clerkships provide a high level of responsibility and autonomy early on in your legal career**;
   6. **Clerkships are great training for both litigators and transactional attorneys** because litigators learn what influences judges’ decisions, and transactional attorneys learn what happens when deals go bad and result in litigation, enabling them to better strategize and structure deals for their clients;
   7. **Clerkships provide an opportunity to develop a close relationship with a talented lifelong mentor** who can help open a variety of doors; and
   8. **Clerkships allow you to explore the legal markets in another part of the country without settling there permanently.**
2. **Assessing Your Qualifications: Should I Apply for a Clerkship?**
   1. **Class Ranking, Activities, Employment History & Courses Taken**

While most of Pepperdine’s students who secure a judicial clerkship place near the top 10% of their class, you do not necessarily need to be in the top 10% of your class to secure a clerkship. There are, however, several attributes that can greatly enhance your chances of obtaining a clerkship. The weight given to these attributes may differ between judges.

When evaluating candidates, judges consider:

* + - High academic performance in law school (a requisite for some judges, others view it as part of the package);
    - Law review or other journal experience (especially an editorial position);
    - Publishing an article or significant piece of student work;
    - Oral advocacy experience (e.g., moot court or trial team);
    - Community involvement (demonstrated commitment to public service);
    - Moot Court Board/Awards;
    - Research assistant to a law school professor or Legal Research and Writing TA;
    - Former judicial externship experience;
    - Strong writing sample;
    - Strong letters of recommendation;
    - High Legal Research and Writing grades;
    - Classes indicating interest in a judicial clerkship;
      1. General: both Constitutional Law classes and Criminal Procedure
      2. Trial level: the general classes plus Evidence
      3. Federal level: the general classes plus Federal Courts and Administrative Law (especially for D.C. courts)
      4. Tax courts: tax classes plus the general classes
      5. Specialty courts (i.e. Bankruptcy): general classes plus classes focused on that specialty
    - Local ties, alma mater, etc.

It is impossible to know which combination of attributes will impress each judge. Consequently, you should apply as broadly as possible. Honestly evaluate your clerkship goals and qualifications to make educated decisions when selecting the judges to whom you will apply.

* 1. **Geographic & Court Preferences**

Clerkships are very competitive. There are considerations that make one clerkship opportunity a more likely prospect than another. Among those considerations are (1) the type of court (state/federal, trial/appellate, limited jurisdiction/non-limited); (2) the location of the court (circuit, rural/major metropolitan, number of local law schools in the area); and (3) the type of judge (senior/magistrate/regular/chief). These considerations are explained in more detail later in this Handbook.

* 1. **Formal Requirements: Citizenship, Bar Passage & Experience**

The federal government and some state governments restrict the employment of non-citizens. Please refer to [http://www.opm.gov](http://www.opm.gov/) and <http://www.opm.gov/FAQs/QA.aspx?fid=de14aff4-4f77-4e17-afaa-fa109430fc7b&pid=acfb91ff-c4aa-4b34-b159-7d40c6b45c15&result=1> for federal restrictions, and consult with the individual state court websites for state restrictions.

Some courts require prior work experience and/or bar passage. The United States Supreme Court typically requires at least 1 year experience clerking at another court (preferably at the circuit level and often with a small number of judges commonly referred to as “feeder” judges). If that is your ultimate goal, you can speak with faculty members who have held a Supreme Court clerkship for more information.

**Where Should I Apply?**

When deciding where to apply for clerkships, consider, among other factors: the type of court, where you would be willing to live for 1-2 years, the type of judge, the type of clerkship, chances of employment (you should apply to some reaches, but do not restrict yourself only to judges who are unlikely to hire you), and the number of applications you want to send.

1. **Type of Court**

Do have a particular reason for wanting to clerk in a state or federal court, a trial or appellate court, or a court with special subject-matter jurisdiction? Your clerkship counselor and professors can help you decide.

The following is a brief overview of the different courts.

* 1. **State Court**

The court systems vary by state, but there are generally trial courts (first impression) and an appellate/supreme court (final impression). Most also have a court of intermediate appellate jurisdiction. Some states have specialized trial courts of limited jurisdiction, which hear only certain kinds of cases.

* + 1. **Value:** Most litigators practice in state courts, so clerking there can enable you to establish a strong network of contacts in a desired geographic area. Also, state courts have primary jurisdiction over common law and state constitutional law issues, so if you are interested in these areas, a state clerkship is valuable. State courts hear cases on a wide variety of civil and criminal matters unless they have specialized jurisdiction. Clerking with a state court can be a stepping stone to a federal court clerkship.
    2. **California:** The Superior Courts (trial level) hire term clerks on an as-needed basis. These are generally for two year terms and can turn into permanent research attorney positions. These postings generally come out during the late spring of 3L year or early summer after 3L year. There are also limited opportunities at the appellate and supreme court levels.
    3. **Other States:** There is no centralized information for how or when to apply for state clerkships. If you are interested in applying for a state court, (1) contact the particular courts for more information on how to apply and (2) review the *Vermont Law School Guide to State Judicial Clerkships*. See Appendix C.
  1. **Federal Court**

The Federal Judicial System offers clerkships in the following types of courts: (1) U.S. District Courts (includes district and magistrate judges), (2) U.S. Courts of Appeals, (3) U.S. specialty courts (e.g., International Court of Trade, Bankruptcy Court, Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims, Federal Claims, Tax, Armed Forces, etc.), (4) *pro se* clerk and staff attorney offices, and (5) U.S. Supreme Court.

* + 1. **U.S. District Courts** (94 district courts): District Judges are appointed by the President and approved by the Senate. These are the trial courts in the federal court system.

* + - 1. **Value:** Clerkships in federal district courts are well-regarded by the legal profession, and are generally fast-paced with a heavy case load. Some law firms will offer clerkship bonuses to those who obtain a clerkship in district court. Clerking in a district court allows you to see the litigation process from beginning to end. If you know you want to litigate, you may prefer a district court clerkship. While district courts have jurisdiction over a wide variety of issues (including civil cases arising under federal law, federal criminal prosecutions, admiralty and maritime cases, and diversity jurisdiction cases), some courts tend to hear cases of a particular type:
         1. **Southern District of New York:** cases involving federal securities laws
         2. **Delaware:** shareholder/corporate matters
         3. **District of D.C.:** cases involving federal administrative agencies
         4. **Any district with a port:** admiralty and drug importation cases
      2. **Clerk’s Duties:** Duties vary according to the judge, but typically clerks:
         1. Conduct legal research
         2. Prepare bench memoranda
         3. Attend settlement conferences and trials
         4. Assist the judge with pre-trial, trial, and post-trial motions
         5. Draft opinions for publication
      3. **Magistrate Clerkships:** Magistrate judges assist district judges with their judicial work. The breadth of work you will do as a clerk will depend on the particular district. Generally the court will be responsible for the following:
         1. Administering oaths on criminal complaints
         2. Issuing search and arrest warrants
         3. Conducting preliminary hearings in criminal cases
         4. Trying persons accused of misdemeanors (with district court authorization)
         5. Conducting civil trials with the parties’ consent
         6. Reviewing state habeas corpus actions and Social Security Administration decisions
         7. Hearing and making recommendations on civil pre-trial issues, especially discovery disputes

Some magistrate judges hire only full-time research attorneys. So you will want to research which judges hire term law clerks before applying. Finally, if you are planning to work in a large firm, your firm may not provide a bonus if you clerk for a magistrate.

* + - 1. **Bankruptcy Clerkships:** Each district has its own Bankruptcy Court, which is part of the District Court. Bankruptcy courts handle individual and business reorganization as well as insolvency matters. Even if you do not plan on practicing bankruptcy after your clerkship, a bankruptcy clerkship can be valuable. You will conduct research, draft opinions, and work on other issues related to the underlying case that are often unrelated to bankruptcy. For instance, you may help the judge make decisions about union-management disputes and the settlement of complex litigation claims. If you have an interest in complex commercial litigation or bankruptcy law, this would be a good clerkship for you to consider. If you are planning to work in a large firm, your firm may not provide a bonus if you clerk for a bankruptcy judge.
    1. **U.S. Courts of Appeals** (12 Regional Circuits and 1 National Circuit)
       1. **Value:** An appellate clerkship is one of the most prestigious clerkships. As with a district court clerkship, most firms offer clerkship bonuses to those pursuing an appellate clerkship. While you may not have the same exposure to the trial court advocacy process as you would in a district clerkship, you will gain exposure to the federal appellate process. One of the main benefits is that you will significantly hone your legal research and writing skills through in-depth analysis of the legal issues before the court. You will also regularly deal with theoretical aspects of law, making these clerkships extremely valuable if you are interested in teaching.
       2. **Clerk’s Duties:** Duties vary according to the judge, but typically you would:
          1. Conduct extensive legal research;
          2. Prepare bench memoranda;
          3. Assist the judge in preparing the written disposition of a case, often to be published in official and unofficial reporters; and
          4. Travel with the judge to locations where the court sits for oral argument periods
       3. **Geographic Nuances:** While the fundamental duties remain the same across circuits, some circuits tend to hear the majority of cases on certain issues.
          1. **D.C. Circuit:** appeals from administrative agency actions
          2. **2nd Circuit:** securities law and commercial litigation
          3. **5th & 11th Circuits:** civil rights and capital punishment cases
          4. **9th Circuit:** one of the most diverse courts of appeal
    2. **Specialized Courts:** In the federal court system, there are 4 principal specialized trial courts, 2 specialized appellate courts, and several administrative law judges in the different federal agencies.
       1. **U.S. Court of Federal Claims:** Located in Washington, D.C., this is an Article I court in which each judge is appointed for a 15-year term with jurisdiction over claims made against the United States. One-third of the cases involve tax refund suits with the other cases typically covering government contracts and inverse condemnation suits under the 5th Amendment. If you are interested in government contracts or tax law, you may want to consider clerking for this court.
       2. **U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit:** Also located in Washington, D.C., this specialized Article II appellate court has nationwide jurisdiction. It hears appeals in patent and trademark cases, and in other cases from the U.S. Court of Federal Claims, the U.S. Court of International Trade, the U.S. Court of Veterans Appeals, the International Trade Commission, and other Article I agencies. If you are particularly interested in intellectual property or patent law, you may want to consider this court.
       3. **U.S. Court of International Trade:** Located in New York, this court resolves disputes within the international trade community arising out of international import transactions and interprets federal statutes affecting international trade.
       4. **U.S. Tax Court:** Located in Washington, D.C., this Article I court tries and adjudicates controversies between taxpayers and the Commissioner of the Internal Revenue arising out of IRS determined tax deficiencies. To apply, apply in the early fall of your 3L year. The court expresses a preference for those who have taken federal tax law courses and plan on pursuing a career in tax law.
       5. **U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims:** Located in Washington, D.C., this court is the newest of the courts (established in 1988). It has exclusive jurisdiction over decisions of the Board of Veterans’ Appeals. These cases typically involve veterans’ and survivors’ benefits, loan eligibility and educational benefits. Its decisions are subject to limited review by the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit.
       6. **U.S. Court of Appeals for the Armed Forces:** This court consists of a panel of civilian judges who review court martial appeals as well as appeals in matters under the Uniform Code of Military Justice. Cases on its docket address a broad range of legal issues, including constitutional law, criminal law, evidence, administrative law, and national security law. Its decisions are subject to direct review by the Supreme Court of the United States.
       7. **Administrative Law Judges:** 28 governmental agencies employ judges to hear cases pertaining to their particular agency. Some of these judges hire law clerks. Please research the agencies of interest to you to determine whether they hire judicial law clerks. See <http://www.nalp.org/aljclerkshipinfo>.
       8. **Bankruptcy Appellate Panel:** Only a tiny fraction of the 1.2 million cases being filed in federal bankruptcy courts each year are appealed. In five judicial circuits, appeals may go to the BAP panel. The five circuits are the Ninth, First, Sixth, Eighth and Tenth. The parties in a bankruptcy case must agree to have an appeal heard by a BAP rather than a district judge. Appeals from both BAP and district judge rulings in bankruptcy cases may be further appealed to the circuit court of appeals.
    3. **U.S. Supreme Court:** Most Supreme Court clerks clerk for a federal appellate judge the year before clerking for the Supreme Court. Additionally, some appellate judges are known as “feeder” judges to the Supreme Court. Individuals may also apply to retired U.S. Supreme Court justices who each hire one clerk. The work will vary from judge to judge. Note that you should apply to retired justices at the same time that you apply to sitting judges as a matter of courtesy.

1. **Location**

Generally, it is best to be as geographically flexible as possible to increase your chances of securing a clerkship. If location is important, then you must consider not only where the court is located, but where the judge’s office is located. Additionally, some appellate judges hear oral arguments in one geographic location, but have their main offices in another area, and their clerks are expected to travel with them.

1. **Type of Judge**

**Active vs. Senior:** Applying for a senior judge may increase your chances of securing a clerkship because senior judges typically receive fewer applications than active judges. Senior judges often have a greater breadth of knowledge and depth of connections in the legal communities than their newer active counterparts. Senior judges also generally have a smaller caseload than active judges, meaning their clerks’ work is proportionately smaller. Senior judges also often have greater freedom to pick and choose the cases they hear.

**Pro Se, Death Penalty & Bankruptcy Appellate Panel**: OSCAR now supports the law clerk hiring of these positions.

1. **Term of Clerkship**

Typically clerkships last a 1-year term. However, some judges require 2-year commitments and other judges only hire permanent research attorneys or permanent law clerks. Evaluate how long you are willing to clerk and verify the length of the clerkship before applying.

1. **Specialized Clerkships**

Some courts draw on a pool of clerks who work for more than one judge while others have specialized clerks, in addition to the judge’s regular clerks who are responsible for specialized tasks. While these tend to be less competitive and can lead to future clerkships with courts for which you would not have qualified otherwise, find out what sort of role the specialized clerk plays so you can determine whether the experience will be interesting and rewarding.

1. **Number of Applications – Limit of 100**

The Administrative Office has now placed **a limit of 100 applications per applicant** on *electronic* applications. Applicants may send an unlimited number of paper applications, but are limited to 100 electronic applications.

Although the limit is 100, applicants regain slots for positions marked filled, expired, or from any position from which an applicant withdraws. The 100 application limit is on a rolling basis. For this reason, it is rare for a student to exceed this limit regularly.

**Application Timeline – Important Dates**

As mentioned earlier, applying for judicial clerkships is a structured, labor-intensive process. To reduce the demands on your time, the Career Development Office has centralized the letters of recommendation process and provides student applicants with envelopes, printing resources, and copy resources. Materials received will be processed on a first-come, first-served basis.

1. **Federal Court Clerkships**

### Starting with students who entered law school in 2017, the application and hiring process via OSCAR will not begin until after a law student’s second year.

### **Applications via OSCAR**

### ***Class of 2020***

**Students gained access to OSCAR on February 6, 2019 to register for an account, upload documents, search for clerkship positions, and build online applications.** The system stores these applications and released them to judges on **June 17, 2019**.

For those applying through OSCAR, judges will not seek or accept formal or informal clerkship applications, seek or accept formal or informal recommendations, conduct formal or informal interviews, or make formal or informal offers before June 17, 2019.

### ***Class of 2021***

**Students will gain access to OSCAR on February 5, 2020 to register for an account, upload documents, search for clerkship positions, and build online applications.** The system will store these applications and release them to judges on **June 15, 2020** at 12pm EDT.

For those applying through OSCAR, judges will not seek or accept formal or informal clerkship applications, seek or accept formal or informal recommendations, conduct formal or informal interviews, or make formal or informal offers before **June 15, 2020**. Judges also will not directly or indirectly contact applicants, or schedule or conduct formal or informal interviews, or make formal or informal offers, before 12pm EDT on **June 16, 2020**.

1. **Non-OSCAR Applications**

A number of judges do not use the OSCAR system for hiring. For these judges, there is no specific timeline or deadline for clerkship applications. Accordingly, we encourage you to submit your clerkship applications as soon as you are able after your 1L year, especially if you are aiming for a federal appellate court clerkship.

1. **State Court Clerkships**

Unlike federal clerkships, applications for state clerkships vary greatly. To research appropriate state deadlines, review the *Vermont Law School’s Guide to State Judicial Clerkship Procedures*, also available in the CDO (see Appendix C). If you know what states you are interested in, it is probably best to call the clerk’s office in that state and ask directly when applications are accepted.

**The Application Process**

1. **Registering with the Career Development Office (Judicial Clerkship Counselor)**

If you are interested in applying for judicial clerkships as a 2L and have not yet met with the Judicial Clerkship Counselor, make an appointment to meet with **Andrea Yang** in the fall semester.

The Career Development Office sometimes receives requests from judges and their clerks for the names of Pepperdine students who might be interested in clerking in a particular geographic area, who are interested in a particular area of law, or who have particular credentials. By registering with the CDO, we can easily identify you and provide you with information about specific available clerkships. This initial meeting will also enable you to talk about your qualifications and interests so that the Clerkship Counselor can help you develop a clerkship application strategy.

1. **Selecting and Contacting Recommenders**

Carefully consider who you would like to write your letters of recommendation. Typically, judges require between 2-3 letters of recommendation. The CDO encourages students to ask 4 or more recommenders to be safe. Some judges will state their letter of recommendation requirements in one of the online databases (see Appendix C); if they state any particular requirements, follow them. When selecting your recommenders, be aware that with many qualified applicants judges frequently use the letters of recommendation to distinguish between otherwise equal candidates. Make sure your letters come from professors and/or employers who think highly of your work and you as a person.

At least two of your letters of recommendation should come from a law school professor. Judges or former judicial law clerks who have evaluated your work can also serve as excellent recommenders and may often have suggestions about to which other judges you should apply. Whomever you choose, make sure you give him or her adequate time to write, process, and sign your letters. You can discuss the strategy of selection with your Clerkship Counselor.

Strong letters of recommendation contain detailed, enthusiastic descriptions of your legal skills and personal strengths, abilities, and character. Recommendation letters should describe the following: (1) your research and writing abilities, (2) your analytical skills, (3) your capacity for self-directed work, and (4) your ability to work well with others.

When requesting letters of recommendation, provide your recommenders with all of the following materials:

* 1. Updated resume;
  2. Unofficial transcript;
  3. Writing sample (or a strong example of what you prepared for them); and
  4. Completed Recommender Questionnaire (see Appendix B).

1. **Selecting Judges**

**Researching Judges**

This is perhaps the most difficult and time-consuming part of the clerkship aplication process. Unlike other legal jobs, you **must** accept the first offer for a clerkship that you receive. If you are offered an interview, you will likely be required to fly to that particular judge’s chambers, on your own dime. Consequently, **apply only to judges for whom you are certain you would like to work should you receive an offer**. This is why research is so important when deciding to which judges you will apply.

Start by assessing your qualifications and considering the factors listed in the section above entitled “Where Should I Apply?” Once you have narrowed the list by identifying the basic parameters, you can start researching specific judges. To research them, consult the resources listed in Appendix C. At a minimum, you should consult the following resources (to the extent applicable):

* + - **OSCAR:** An online searchable database that provides federal judges’ hiring status and application requirements. Not all federal judges post on this website, but to the extent they do, you are considered to have been provided notice.
    - **Almanac of the Federal Judiciary:** Resource with extensive biographical information on federal judges, including attorney comments, available in print at the CDO and library, and online through Westlaw, Lexis Nexis and Bloomberg.
    - **Judicial Profiles (Daily Journal):** Print resource that has detailed profiles of California state and federal court judges. These are available in the library from the reserve desk.

For a list of judges for whom Pepperdine graduates have clerked or will be clerking, please contact Andrea Yang at the CDO.

**Creating Judge Lists**

An updated spreadsheet should be available on TWEN. You can use the all-inclusive list to eliminate judges to create your master list. OSCAR also has a function that allows you to create a spreadsheet from the hiring information. **Please make sure that all spreadsheets conform to the CDO templates available on TWEN**. Once you have determined your target judges, submit spreadsheets to the CDO. The CDO asks that each spreadsheet contain no more than 20 judges, and that you allow at least 48 hours for the CDO to process each spreadsheet.

1. **Application Materials**

Each application should include each of the following, unless otherwise specified:

* Cover Letter
* Resume
* Transcript(s) – unofficial
* Writing Sample
* Reference List
* Letters of Recommendation (typically 2-3)
  + - 1. **OSCAR vs. U.S. Mail**

As previously mentioned, *some* federal judges allow you to submit applications via an online system, OSCAR. Find the judges’ preferences on OSCAR.

***You are responsible for uploading all of your OSCAR materials (except for letters of recommendation) and performing the OSCAR mail merge for all of your OSCAR applications.*** Please note this is more time consuming than it appears, so allow enough time to prepare each draft application on OSCAR.

* + - 1. **Cover Letter**

We recommend your cover letter be brief but substantive. As with any job application, the more personalized you can make your cover letter, the better your chances of landing an interview. To the extent you are familiar with the judge’s work, you may want to reference it in your cover letter. You may also want to indicate your interest in that particular court and/or the specific issue(s) the judge addresses. Other ways to personalize your cover letter include: (1) your geographic connection, (2) relevant coursework, and/or (3) any personal connection with the judge. Focus on your skills, journal work, academic performance, or anything else you feel makes you stand out as a candidate. It is important to be polished, concise, customized, and genuinely interested. Please see Appendix G for a sample cover letter framework.

* + - 1. **Resume**

After your initial resume review, do not forget to update it and work regularly with your assigned counselor to keep your resume in polished form.

* + - 1. **Transcript(s)**

Most judges do not require initial submission of your *official* law school transcript. Generally, an unofficial transcript printed off of Symplicity will suffice. You may be expected to provide an official transcript at the interview, so have one on hand during interviewing season.

Increasingly, some state and federal judges require copies of your undergraduate transcript. Check with the state judges’ chambers to determine the application requirements and check OSCAR for federal judge application requirements. Undergraduate transcript requests can take some time to be processed, so leave plenty of time to receive your transcript from your undergraduate institution.

* + - 1. **Writing Sample**

Your writing sample must be an accurate reflection of your best efforts. Ideally it should be between 7 and 15 pages in length. The best sample will show your ability to view a case from all perspectives and demonstrate your ability to apply the law to a set of facts. You should discuss your potential writing samples with the Clerkship Counselor or your LRW professor to select the one that best appeals to judges. A writing sample from a previous legal employment is often best but LRW assignments can also work. If you use a work product from previous employment, please confirm with the employer that you may use the product as a writing sample and redact any confidential information. Regardless of what sample you select, make sure to attach a cover page explaining the context. See Appendix H for sample cover page language.

The CDO can provide general comments about what writing sample would be best to use but will not make suggestions or revisions so you should consult with a professor, writing teaching assistant, or fellow student to help you edit your sample. Remember, your writing sample ***must be*** free of typographical, spelling, grammar, and formatting errors. Make sufficient copies of your writing sample on regular copy paper and upload it on OSCAR for your OSCAR applications. Make sure the cover page is part of the writing sample document so that you only need to upload one document for the writing sample.

* + - 1. **Letters of Recommendation (2-3)**

As discussed above, letters of recommendation can distinguish you from other otherwise equal candidates. It is therefore important that you select your recommenders carefully. It is better to select recommenders who know you personally than just high-profile or highly-connected recommenders. The better your recommender knows you, the more he or she can attest to in your letter. This is why providing recommenders with copies of your resume, transcript, Recommenders’ Questionnaire, writing sample and bulleted summary of your interactions with them/accomplishments/etc. is crucial.

In some cases, outside recommenders may ask you to draft your own letter of recommendation. We do not encourage this, but it is unavoidable at times. If you are asked to create your own letter of recommendation, please stop by the CDO to discuss protocol.

Be respectful when asking for letters of recommendation and let recommenders know when you will need your letters. They should email their letters to the CDO for processing. Please provide your recommenders with Andrea Yang’s email address (andrea.yang@pepperdine.edu), and inform them that all letters will be kept confidential.

1. **Applying for Judicial Clerkships with the Los Angeles Superior Court (LASC)**

The LASC will typically post clerkship opportunities on the employment section of their website: <https://www.governmentjobs.com/careers/lasc>.

1. **Positions Available & Terms**

Term Law Clerk Positions:

* + 1. The position **3Ls** would be applying for is referred to as a “fall” law clerk position. For this position, there is a 6 month probationary period after which your clerkship may be extended for an additional year. Depending on the needs of the court and your performance you may then have an opportunity to extend your clerkship for another year.
    2. The position **alumni/graduates** would be applying for is referred to as a “regular” law clerk position. It operates the same as the fall law clerk position, but it is typically easier to obtain a regular law clerk position as only six to eight judges like having fall law clerks. The others prefer applicants with more experience.

Permanent/Research Attorney Positions:

If you are interested in a permanent law clerk/research attorney position, it is unusual for the LASC to hire students fresh out of law school to fill these positions. Instead, the LASC typically pulls from its regular or fall law clerks by offering the positions to them first. In this case, to successfully attain the position, you would have to either be working or have worked as a “fall” or “regular” law clerk at the time a permanent research attorney position comes available.

1. **Timing**

The LASC fills positions on an as-needed basis. Please check the website frequently for opportunities.

1. **Applications**

Your application packet should consist of the following:

* + Cover Letter;
  + Resume;
  + Law school transcript;
  + Writing sample with cover page (explaining context);
  + List of references with contact information and explanation of relevance (i.e., title, former position/title, etc.) (can be a combination of professors and legal employers); and
  + Completed application (available on-line) including the Law Clerk Supplemental Information Sheet (make sure you answer all questions including those relating to the Bar).

**PLEASE NOTE:** You are not guaranteed to receive an opportunity from the judge/court in whom/which you are particularly interested. If you do not want to work for the court unless it is for a particular court (i.e., Family Court), note this on your application under the “Comments” section of the Law Clerk Supplemental Information Sheet.

Do NOT send applications directly to specific judges. In an effort to eliminate nepotism and other such hiring practices, judges are prohibited from interviewing applicants not pre-approved by the Research Law Clerk Committee.

1. **Hiring Process**
   * + - 1. Step 1: Pre-approval

Unlike other clerkship applications, you do not apply for a specific judge. You just apply to the LASC in general. Once you mail in your application materials, your application will be reviewed and go through a pre-approval process. During this process, you may be called in for an interview by the Managing Research Attorney and the Research Law Clerk Committee. If the Committee approves you, you and your application will be placed on a waiting list.

* + - * 1. Step 2: Selection by a judge

When a judge has a need, the judge will request the list of the pre-approved applicants and your application will be forwarded to that judge. At that time you may be called in for another interview with that particular judge. You must be prepared at that time to accept/reject the position should it be offered to you.

1. **Applying To Federal Judges As A Rising 3L Or Later**

If you are applying as a rising 3L or later, many of the application procedures remain the same. However, because many of the positions will be filled within two weeks of the federal reviewing period, you will need to research carefully those judges who still have vacancies.

1. **Remaining Open Clerkships**

Using OSCAR, you can search for new vacancies and judges with “available” rather than “filled” positions by using a filter on your search. You can also sign up to receive email notifications of new vacancies through OSCAR.

1. **New Appointments**

New judges are routinely appointed, and they often need clerks immediately. To find out new nominations and confirmations, you should frequently monitor the “nomination and confirmation” websites listed in Appendix C.

1. **Late-Hiring Courts**

Some courts traditionally hire late in the season. To find these, you should monitor OSCAR as well as the relevant state court websites. Also check the Symplicity job postings, as the CDO often receives notification of clerkship opportunities and posts them on the Symplicity site.

1. **Staff Attorneys**

Check the websites of each U.S. Court of Appeals for staff attorney positions. Unlike traditional law clerks, staff attorneys work for the court as a whole. Some courts hire staff attorneys for one-year terms and others hire them indefinitely.

**The Interview Process**

1. **Scheduling the Interview**

Some judges will meet with 10 to 25 applicants before they decide whom to hire. By the time the judge decides to interview you, he/she already thinks you are qualified to perform the work of a clerk. It becomes your job to convince the judge that you are intelligent, competent, mature, and a team player.

When scheduling interviews be mindful that you will probably have to finance the expense of these interviews. The cost of travel, lodging, and meals will usually not be reimbursed by the judge. Try to coordinate your trips so that you can meet with more than one judge (or law firm) each time you visit an area.

Each judge traditionally reviews several clerkship applications at the same time. Therefore, an aggressive approach may help you get your foot in the door. If you are seriously interested in a particular clerkship, contact the judge's chambers and let them know that you will be in town at a particular time. Ask if it is possible to have an interview with the judge. Many judges will be accessible.

When you receive an invitation to interview with a judge, respond promptly and schedule your interview as early as possible. Some judges make clerkship offers on the spot or very soon after their first interview, so the earlier you get in for an interview, the better your chances. **Some judges will even extend an offer to someone who was scheduled for an interview an hour earlier than you, thus precluding you from even interviewing on your scheduled interview date and time – this is why time is of the essence.**

If you receive an invitation to interview from a judge who is high on your list, you are best served to schedule an interview ASAP. If the judge is not so high on your list, you may want to schedule it in the less-near future. Make sure, however, to sound enthusiastic. If you do try to strategically schedule an interview in the less-near future, know that the judge may make an offer to someone else before your scheduled interview.

At the time you schedule your interview, ask with whom you will be meeting – the judge, the judge’s current clerks, the judge’s assistant? Also ask how long the interview is expected to last. Ask for the room number and any special parking instructions if you do not already know.

1. **Notification of Clerkship Counselor**

Upon scheduling an interview with a judge, immediately notify the Clerkship Counselor. She may have some valuable knowledge about your judge or contacts with the judge’s former clerks that could help you prepare for the interview. If you have not already done so, you should also schedule a mock interview.

1. **Preparing for the Interview**

It is highly advisable that you research the judge thoroughly, prepare with a mock interview, and review *Behind the Bench: the Guide to Judicial Clerkships* before your interview. Also look over the Code of Conduct for Judicial Law Clerks; it outlines the conduct to be observed by a law clerk during his or her tenure as a clerk. In addition:

* 1. **Talk to people who know about the judge** (former clerks, including Pepperdine alumni; law professors; the CDO);
  2. **Research the judge and the court** (read the judge’s published opinions; if it is a panel decision, make sure it was your judge who actually wrote the opinion) (See Appendix C for more resources on researching judges);
  3. **Know yourself and your application materials** (be prepared to discuss them in detail, why you did what you did, what you have learned from it, what you did and did not like about it, and how the experience will translate to your work as a clerk; be prepared to talk about your writing sample in detail, including defending your arguments);
  4. **Read the newspaper from the area you will be interviewing in for at least 1 week before an interview, keeping your eye out for legal topics** (they may become a topic of conversation and you should be prepared to talk about them); and
  5. **Prepare for possible questions or topics of discussion** (See Appendix I for sample questions).

1. **Description of Judicial Clerkship Interviews**
   1. **Dress and Behavior**

Arrive early for the interview. Dress as though you were appearing in court with a dark suit, pantyhose (if wearing a skirt), neutral nail polish (if any), etc. Be prepared to remove your shoes when going through security (some shoes have metal inserts that set off the metal detectors).

Be courteous with everyone you encounter, even on the way to the courtroom. Act as though **everyone** you meet in the judge’s chambers is interviewing you, because they may all have a say in the decision.

* 1. **Materials to Bring with You**

Bring directions and the judge’s telephone number, in case anything happens on the way. Bring an extra copy of your application materials and provide the judge with any updated information (i.e., revised contact information, upcoming publications, etc.). Carry your materials in a leather portfolio.

* 1. **Content of the Interview**

Because a judge’s chambers is an intimate work environment, you are being assessed on whether you are a person s/he would like to work with and whether you will interact well with the judge’s chambers. Also, the judge may ask questions to understand your interests, sense of humor, work style, personality, ability to work independently and as part of a team, and time and project management skills. Typically, the judge will question you about your law school classes, any articles or papers you have written, and your prior work experience.

Some judges will want to know what it is like to discuss legal issues with you and how you react when challenged on your opinions. Do not be surprised if the judge asks you to defend your writing sample, note topic, or a current legal issue. The judge may also challenge something on your resume. Be confident in your response, but remain respectful (sometimes the challenge may sound like an insult, but it is not meant to be so – the judge wants to see how you can argue a case).

Please refer to Appendix I of this handbook for a list of potential interview questions. This list is not exhaustive, but prepare to answer each question on it.

After the judge and/or law clerk finishes asking you questions, they will ask you whether you have any questions. You should have at least 3 for each, and you should have thought about them in advance. Please refer to Appendix I for some sample questions.

1. **Thank-you Letters**

After the interview, write a letter to the judge thanking him/her for the opportunity to talk with him/her, and tying up any loose ends. Send this letter within 24 hours of the interview. If you have the judge’s email address, send a thank-you note via email and follow up with a written thank you note sent at the same time. Also write thank you emails to any of the judge’s current clerks with whom you met.

**Offers and Acceptances**

1. **Receiving and Responding to Offers**

Please note that unlike with firms, ***you must be prepared to accept your first offer from a judge on the spot.*** Asking for additional time (1-2 days) to consider the offer is an option; however, **be aware that this may cause the judge to revoke the offer**. If a judge does give you time to consider the offer, make every effort to respond within 24 hours.

If, after the interview (before receiving an offer), you determine that you cannot work for the judge, immediately contact the judge's chambers and withdraw your name from consideration. Be prepared to offer a solid explanation about why you have changed your mind (i.e., because of a change in personal or family circumstances you have determined that you cannot live in the location where the judge sits, etc.). Turning down a judge may result in you being passed over by other chambers and may negatively affect other Pepperdine students interested in applying to that judge in the future.

If a judge with whom you previously interviewed told you to notify him or her if you received an offer from someone else before accepting the offer and you prefer to work for that previous judge:

* Respectfully thank judge #2 for the offer. Politely inform the judge that the other judges with whom you have interviewed asked you to notify them of any offers you received, and that you feel obligated to honor their requests before accepting an offer. Commit to responding to judge #2 within a short time period and honor that commitment.
* If you receive an offer from a judge (judge #2), but would rather clerk for another judge (judge #1) with whom you interviewed but from whom you have not yet heard back, it is safest to accept the offer from judge #2. You can ask judge #2 for more time to consider the offer, but you risk the judge revoking your offer and alienating the judge and other members of the bench. Doing so may also harm the reputation of the Law School. Accordingly, you must handle this with great care. If you decide to ask for more time, respectfully thank the judge for the offer and ask the judge if you may have additional time to consider the offer. If the judge permits it, then try to respond to the judge within 24 hours. In the meantime, you can call Judge #1’s chambers, notify him or her of the offer you have received, and ask if the judge has made a decision. This approach, however, may backfire by alienating the judge who made the offer and angering judge #1 by pressuring him/her.

1. **Things to do After You Accept an Offer**
   * + Immediately withdraw your applications on OSCAR and withdraw from all other chambers who have contacted you for an interview.
     + Notify the CDO that you have accepted an offer (with details about which judge, term of clerkship, etc.).
     + Ask the judge and/or the current clerks if there is anything you should do to prepare for your clerkship.
     + Celebrate!

**Appendix A: Suggested Application Timeline and Checklist**

**Spring 1L and June 1 – July 1 1L Suggested Tasks**

* + - * Meet with Andrea Yang for initial consultation and preview of OSCAR.
      * Meet with Professor Mark Kubisch for initial consultation and application strategy.
      * Complete the Judicial Clerkship Applicant Agreement and submit it to the CDO.
      * Begin assessing geographic limitations, desired type of court, and likely chances.
      * Begin selecting potential recommenders.
      * Procure a writing sample from your summer employment and obtain the required sign-offs.
      * Check the Vermont Law School Guide to research state clerkships and begin reviewing the Federal Judge List prepared by the CDO.
      * Review the CDO’s list of former law clerks who are Pepperdine Law alumni (available upon request to Andrea Yang). Reach out to any alumni to gain insight into their clerkship experiences, especially if you are interested in clerking for their judges.

**July 1 – December 31 2L Suggested Tasks**

**(Earlier is better, especially if applying to non-OSCAR judges)**

* Request recommendation letters and submit Recommender Questionnaires to faculty and non-faculty recommenders.
* Submit drafts of your resume, cover letter, and other materials to Andrea Yang for review and approval. Include your summer and fall employment.
* Research judges and begin to create judge lists, noting which judges will likely post available spots on OSCAR and which are not active on OSCAR.
* For non-OSCAR judges, submit Excel spreadsheets of Judge Lists to the CDO for printing of letters of recommendation (in batches of 20 judges or less).
* For non-OSCAR judges and especially for circuit court clerkships, apply as soon as you have assembled your documents.

**Spring Semester 2L Suggested Tasks**

* Meet with Andrea Yang to discuss final steps of application process and ensure all materials are ready to be finalized.
* Create OSCAR profile (available **February 5, 2020** for Class of 2021), upload documents, search for clerkship positions, and build online applications.
* For judges not active on OSCAR, submit Excel spreadsheets of Judge Lists to the CDO for printing of letters of recommendation (in batches of 20 judges or less).
* For judges likely to post available spots on OSCAR, apply to any with a position posted.
* The sooner you apply during this period, the greater your chances of securing an interview.

**Summer and Fall 3L Suggested Tasks**

* Continue to monitor OSCAR for new positions available and apply as soon as possible to new positions posted.
* Monitor new appointments and apply immediately upon confirmation.
* Schedule a meeting with Andrea Yang to discuss whether to send updated application materials to those judges you applied to at the end of last semester and from whom you have not heard.

**Appendix B: Recommender Questionnaire**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Your Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  Graduation Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | Recommender’s Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  Recommender’s Title: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ |
| Your Summer Address: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | Your Summer Phone: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ |
| \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | Your Summer e-mail: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ |
| \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ |  |

1. Why do you want to clerk?

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1. I will be applying to (check all that apply):

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| \_\_\_\_ Federal Circuit Court Judges | \_\_\_\_ State Supreme Court Judges  (or Court of Appeals in New York) |
| \_\_\_\_ Federal District Court Judges | \_\_\_\_ State Appellate Court Judges |
| \_\_\_\_ Federal Magistrate Judges | \_\_\_\_ State Trial Court Judges |
| \_\_\_\_ Federal Bankruptcy Court  Judges | \_\_\_\_ Other State Court Judges (please  specify): |
| \_\_\_\_ Other Federal Court Judges  (please specify): |  |

1. What are your goals for your legal career?

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. Where, geographically, are you willing to clerk and briefly explain your connection to and/or interest in that area.

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1. List any connections you have with specific judges and any networking possibilities you may have with judges through family/friends (i.e., same school(s)? same birthplace? Etc.): \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
2. For Professor Recommenders:
   1. List classes you took with recommender and exam ID’s: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
   2. List any papers you wrote in recommender’s class: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
   3. List any research you did for recommender: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
   4. Describe your interactions with recommender: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
3. For Non- Professor Recommenders:
   1. List your title & dates when working for recommender: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
   2. List any noteworthy assignments you prepared for recommender: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
   3. List any research you did for recommender: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
   4. Describe your interactions with recommender: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
4. Please describe any unique achievements or anything unique about your background that you would want a judge to know.

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1. On what particular academic or professional areas, if any, have you focused in law school? Please list any relevant courses or activities that demonstrate your focus in that area.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. Please describe any outside interests or hobbies, or unique talents or skills.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. Any additional thoughts/information?

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Please attach the following materials and give your filled-out questionnaire to each of your recommenders:

🞎 Resume

🞎 Transcript

🞎 Writing Sample (or relevant writing you did for recommender)

**Appendix C: Resources for Researching Judges and Courts**

**PRINT RESOURCES**

**The Almanac of the Federal Judiciary** is a two-volume resource that contains brief biographies of federal judges nationwide, including attorney evaluations of the judges. This resource is available online through Westlaw, in the library, and in the CDO.

**The American Bench** contains biographical information on both federal and state courts, including addresses and telephone/fax numbers of the judges.

**Want’s Federal-State Court Directory** provides the names addresses and telephone numbers of all federal court judges and court clerks. It also provides the names of the justices and court clerks of each state’s highest court and the respective telephone.

**Judicial Profiles** (Daily Journal Corporation) contains detailed profiles of state and federal judges in California. They are located in the library in the *Daily Journal* newspapers. This is particularly useful for state trial court judges.

**LIST OF WEBSITES**

The **American Judicature Society** Homepage publishes articles about federal court decisions, appointments and other related issues. You may be able to get some interesting information about some federal court judges on this site: <http://www.ajs.org>.

The **U.S. Federal Judiciary** has a site that contains a lot of information about the U.S. court system (<http://www.uscourts.gov>), as well as **job announcements and a federal judicial law clerk database** (https://oscar.uscourts.gov/)

The **U.S. Court of Appeals for Armed Forces has a** web site containing useful information about the Court, including recent decisions, clerkship vacancy status, and application procedures at <http://www.armfor.uscourts.gov/newcaaf/home.htm>

For general information about applying for clerkships and the clerkship experience, explore the <http://www.judicialclerkships.com> website.

The **Vermont Law School’s Guide to State Judicial Clerkship Procedures** is a resource that summarizes each state court’s clerkship hiring procedures and provides links to each court’s website. It is not always 100% accurate, so you should check the courts’ websites before sending materials. This resource is available online at: <http://forms.vermontlaw.edu/career/guides/>. Please contact Andrea for the updated password.

To find out new **nominations and confirmations**, check out the following sites:

<http://www.uscourts.gov/JudgesAndJudgeships/JudicialVacancies.aspx>

<http://www.senate.gov/legislative/legis_act_nominations.html>

<http://judges.law.yale.edu/>

For federal court employment opportunities (including some clerkship opportunities): <http://www.uscourts.gov/employment/vacancies.html>

**INFORMATION BY STATE**

For information about **California** state court openings, try <http://www.courts.ca.gov/careers.htm>

For information about **Arizona** state court judges check out the judicial performance review at <http://www.supreme.state.az.us>.

**Arkansas** Supreme Court and Court of Appeals judges are listed at <http://courts.state.ar.us> & <https://courts.arkansas.gov/sites/default/files/Judicial%20Directory.pdf>.

An index of the judges on the bench of the Supreme Court, Court of Appeals, Trial Courts and Probate Courts of **Colorado** is at <http://www.courts.state.co.us> & <http://www.courts.state.co.us/Careers/Index.cfm>.

The state of **Georgia** has a few web sites such as <http://www.gasupreme.us/index.php> which contain biographical information on each of the Supreme Court judges, and <http://www.cobbcounty.org/judicial/superior_admin/sca_index.htm>, which lists the judges in the Cobb County Superior Court.

An explanation of the court system in **Hawaii**, as well as the judges in the state Supreme Court, Intermediary Court of Appeals, Circuit Courts and District Courts are listed at <http://www.courts.state.hi.us/>.

**Idaho** provides directories of its state court judges at <http://www.isc.idaho.gov/>.

The state of **Iowa** has a very detailed web site focusing on the judiciary. At <http://www.iowacourts.gov/> you can find information about circuit (trial) court judges, as well as the judges who sit on the bench of the Iowa Supreme Court and Court of Appeals.

The site, <http://www.kscourts.org/>, for the state courts of **Kansas,** provides a great deal of information about each of the supreme and appellate court judges, including links to many of the opinions decided by these judges.

The state of **Kentucky** has a directory of judges who sit on the Supreme Court, Court of Appeals, and the Circuit and District Courts at <http://courts.ky.gov/>.

**Louisiana** Supreme Court information can be found at <http://www.lasc.org/>.

**Maine** maintains a website at <http://www.courts.state.me.us/> which provides a listing of state court judges presiding on the Supreme Court as well as the Superior Courts of Maine.

A directory for the judges working in the Circuit Courts, Court of Special Appeals and Supreme Court of **Maryland**, can be located at <http://www.courts.state.md.us/>.

Commonwealth of **Massachusetts** maintains a link, <http://www.state.ma.us/courts>, which has a list of the Supreme Court judges, the Appeals Court judges and the various Trial Court judges (i.e., Boston Municipal Court, District Court, Housing Court, Juvenile Court, Land Court, Probate and Family Court, and Superior Court). The directories are:  Supreme Judicial Court: <http://www.mass.gov/courts/sjc/justices/index.html>; Appeals Court: <http://www.mass.gov/courts/appealscourt/justices/index.html>; Trial Courts <http://www.mass.gov/courts/courtsandjudges/courts/trialcourt.html>; and for a list of the courts <http://www.mass.gov/courts/courtsandjudges/courts/index.html>

A detailed listing of each state court judge in **Michigan** (Supreme, Court of Appeals, and Trial) is at <http://courts.michigan.gov/> & <http://courts.mi.gov/Courts/Pages/default.aspx>.

The **Minnesota** sites of http://www.mncourts.gov/State-Court-Administrators-Office/careers.aspx & <http://agency.governmentjobs.com/mncourts/default.cfm> actually posts law clerk openings.

<Http://www.mssc.state.ms.us/> provides a comprehensive directory of each Supreme Court and Court of Appeals judge for the state of **Mississippi**, as well as a list of the trial court judges.

The state of **Missouri** has a web page, <http://www.courts.mo.gov/> that provides you with all kinds of details about the judges who sit on the Supreme Court, the Court of Appeals and the trial courts of this state.

A variety of information about the **Montana** courts can be found on the state bar website at <http://www.montanabar.org/>.

Find job postings and a directory of Supreme Court and Court of Appeals judges from the state of **Nebraska** at <http://www.supremecourt.ne.gov/employment>.

At <http://www.courts.state.nh.us/>, you will find information on the **New Hampshire** judicial branch.

The state of **New Jersey** maintains a site at <http://www.judiciary.state.nj.us/>, which describes the court system and lists the judges who are currently sitting on the Supreme Court of this state.

Check out the **New Mexico** state roster, which lists the Supreme Court judges, the Court of Appeals judges and the District Court judges at <http://www.nmcourts.gov/index.php> & <http://www.nmcourts.gov/othercourts.php>.

Information on the **New York** Court of Appeals (the highest court in New York) is located at <http://www.courts.state.ny.us/CTAPPS/>.

The state of **North Carolina** offers a site, which provides information about its Supreme Court and Court of Appeals judges at <http://www.nccourts.org/>.

**North Dakota** has biographies on each Supreme Court justice and each District Court judge at <http://www.court.state.nd.us/Court/COURTS.HTM> & <http://www.ndcourts.gov/Court/Districts/Judges.htm>.

Locate biographical information about judges who preside on the Supreme Court and Court of Appeals in **Ohio**, as well as the addresses and names of trial court judges, at <http://www.sconet.state.oh.us/Web_Sites/courts/>.

Find descriptions of the **Oklahoma** courts, as well as biographical summaries on each of the Supreme and Court of Appeals judges at <http://www.oscn.net/applications/oscn/start.asp?viewType=COURTS.>

The state of **Oregon** maintains a site which provides general information about all the state court judges. See <https://www.courts.oregon.gov/courts/Pages/judges.aspx>.

View the list of judges on the bench of the **Pennsylvania** Supreme Court, Superior Court (Court of Appeals) and Courts of the Commonwealth (trial courts) at <http://www.pacourts.us/>.

**Rhode Island** has detailed biographical information about each of its Supreme Court and lower court (Superior, Family and District) judges, at <http://www.courts.ri.gov/>.

Circuit court judges for **South Dakota** are listed at <http://ujs.sd.gov/Seventh_Circuit/Links/judges.aspx>.

Biographical information on each of the **Tennessee** Supreme Court justices can be found at <http://www.tsc.state.tn.us/>, <http://www.tsc.state.tn.us/courts>, & Supreme Court roster: <http://www.tsc.state.tn.us/courts/supreme-court/justices>

**Texas** has a very thorough site which provides a detailed list and general information about each of its judges. See, <http://www.courts.state.tx.us/>.

The State of **Utah** has a directory of all its lower court judges (District Court) as well as biographical profiles for each of its Supreme Court and Court of Appeals judges. See <http://www.utcourts.gov/> and <http://www.utcourts.gov/admin/jobs/>.

A list of the judges in **Vermont** can be found at <http://www.vermontjudiciary.org/default.aspx>.

**Virginia** has information on its state judges at <http://www.courts.state.va.us/>.

The state court directory for **Washington** judges is available at <https://www.courts.wa.gov/court_dir/>.

The state of **Wisconsin** maintains a site that contains information on all of its judges. See <https://wicourts.gov/courts/supreme/justices/index.htm>.

**Wyoming**, at <https://www.courts.state.wy.us/>, offers judicial information about Wyoming state courts.

**Appendix D: List of Current Law Faculty Who Are Former Clerks**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Faculty Member | Judge | Court |
| Babette E. Boliek | Michael B. Mukasey | U.S. District Court for the Southern District of NY |
| Paul Caron | William J. Holloway, Jr. | U.S. Court of Appeals for the Tenth Circuit |
| Donald E. Childress III | Paul V. Niemeyer | U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit |
| Robert F. Cochran, Jr. | John A. Field, Jr. | U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit |
| Jack J. Coe, Jr. | Richard C. Allison | Iran/United States Claims Tribunal at The Hague |
| Naomi Goodno | Arthur L. Alarcon | U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit |
| David Han | Michael Boudin | U.S. Court of Appeals for the First Circuit |
| David Han | David Souter | U.S. Supreme Court |
| Michael A. Helfand | Julia Smith Gibbons | U.S. Court of appeals for the Sixth Circuit |
| Nancy Hunt  Bernard James | Jonathan Steinberg  Myron Wails | US. Court of Appeals for Veteran Claims  Michigan Court of Appeals |
| Mark Kubisch | Steven Colloton | U.S. Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit |
| Khrista McCarden | Barrington D. Parker | U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit |
| Barry P. McDonald | James K. Logan | U.S. Court of Appeals for the Tenth Circuit |
| Barry P. McDonald | William H. Rehnquist | U.S. Supreme Court |
| Derek T. Muller | Raymond W. Gruender | U.S. Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit |
| Robert J. Pushaw | James L. Buckley | U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia |
| Shelley Ross Saxer | Matthew Byrne, Jr. | U.S. District Court for the Central District of California |
| Steven M. Schultz | Stephen V. Wilson | U.S. District Court for the Central District of California |
| Victoria Schwartz | Jay Bybee | U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit |
| Sukhsimranjit Singh | R.C. Lahoti | Supreme Court of India |
| Stephanie Williams | Ferdinand Fernandez | U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit |
|  |  | United States District Court for the District of Connecticut |
|  |  | Illinois Appellate Court |
| Tiffany Williams |  | Massachusetts Court of Appeals |
|  |  |  |

**Appendix E: List of Judges with Pepperdine Affiliations**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Adams | John | 1988 | JD | The Superior Court of California, Orange County |
| Andress-Tobiasson | Melanie | 1992 | JD | Las Vegas Township Justice Court |
| Belz | David | 1975 | JD | The Superior Court of California, Orange County |
| Birotte | Andre | 1991 | JD | U.S. District Court for the Central District of California |
| Bigelow | Patricia Ann | 1986 | JD | The Superior Court of California, Los Angeles County |
| Bonner | Kimberly | 1990 | JD | 12th Judicial Circuit Court of Florida |
| Bork | Terry | 1985 | JD | The Superior Court of California, Los Angeles County |
| Bourne | Beverly | 1991 | JD | The Superior Court of California, Los Angeles County |
| Boyd | Jeffrey | 1991 | JD | Texas Supreme Court |
| Brougham | David | 1987 | JD | The Superior Court of California, Los Angeles County |
| Bustamante | Lori Horn | 1996 | JD | The Superior Court of Arizona, Maricopa County |
| Cabaniss | Katherine | 1992 | JD | Harris County (Texas) Criminal Court Judge |
| Corsones | Nancy | 1984 | JD | The Superior Court of Vermont |
| Dellostritto | Michael | 1978 | JD | The Superior Court of California, Kern County |
| DeNoce | Kevin | 1987 | JD | The Superior Court of California, Ventura County |
| DiCesare | James | 1973 | JD | The Superior Court of California, Orange County |
| DiReda | Michael | 1993 | JD | Utah Second Judicial District Court |
| Dorsey | Jennifer | 1997 | JD | U.S. District Court for the District of Nevada |
| Gelfound | David | 1995 | JD | The Superior Court of California, Los Angeles County |
| Estes | Christopher | 1991 | JD | The Superior Court of California, Los Angeles County |
| Franchi | Don Randal | 1993 | JD | The Superior Court of California, San Mateo County |
| Givens | Debra | 1991 | JD | The Superior Court of California, Yuba County |
| Gray | Jane Shuler | 1977 | JD | Fifth Judicial District of New Mexico |
| Hahn | James | 1975 | JD | The Superior Court of California, Los Angeles County |
| Hanisee | J. Miles | 1993 | JD | New Mexico Court of Appeals |
| Hoven | David | 1977 | JD | 20th Judicial Circuit of Missouri |
| Hutchens | Pamela | 1983 | JD | 2nd Judicial District of Virginia |
| Jesic | Michael | 1995 | JD | The Superior Court of California, Los Angeles County (Van Nuys) |
| Judge | Millie | 1990 | JD | The Superior Court of Washington, Snohomish County |
| Knill | Kate | 1988 | JD | The Superior Court of California, Orange County |
| Knox | Robert | 1983 | JD | The Superior Court of California, Orange County |
| Kumar | Sanjay | 1990 | JD | The Superior Court of California, Los Angeles County |
| Lief | Michael | 1995 | JD | The Superior Court of California, Ventura County |
| Lindley | Wendy S. | 1978 | JD | The Superior Court of California, Orange County |
| Lund | Roger | 1995 | JD | The Superior Court of California, Ventura County |
| Marshall | Consuelo | 1957 | Seaver | U.S. District Court for the Central District of California |
| McCartin | Michael S. 1974 | | JD | The Superior Court of California, Orange County |
| McGregor | John | 1980 | JD | The Superior Court of California, Santa Barbara County |
| Meyer | Judith | 1993 | JD | The Superior Court of California, Los Angeles County |
| Miller | Douglas | 1978 | JD | California Court of Appeal |
| Molloy | John | 1996 | JD | The Superior Court of California, Riverside County |
| Moore | Eileen C. | 1978 | JD | California Court of Appeal |
| Morgando | Michelle | 1984 | JD | State of Nevada, Administrative Law Judge |
| Newmeister | Michael J. | 1976 | JD | The Superior Court of Iowa |
| Oakley | James | 1976 | JD | The Superior Court of California, Madera County |
| Palafox | Julie | 1983 | JD | The Superior Court of California, Orange County |
| Pasewark | Judith | 1978 | JD | Special Education at Office of Administrative Hearings, Administrative Law Judge |
| Peron | Gayle | 1979 | JD | The Superior Court of California, San Obispo County |
| Pineschi | Alan V. | 1977 | JD | The Superior Court of California, Plumas County |
| Platts | Todd | 1991 | JD | Pennsylvania Court of Common Pleas, York County |
| Purcell | Catherine | 1985 | JD | California State Bar Court |
| Reavley | Thomas M. | 1993 | LL.D. | U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit |
| Reilly | Tara | 1989 | JD | The Superior Court of California, San Bernardino County |
| Rogers | Joshua | 2001 | JD | The Superior Court of Arizona, Maricopa County |
| Saleson | Stephan | 1976 | JD | The Superior Court of California, San Bernardino County |
| Strong | Susan | 1985 | JD | 3rd District Court of Nebraska |
| Sukenic | Howard | 1987 | JD | The Superior Court of Arizona, Maricopa County |
| Tomberlin | John | 1977 | JD | The Superior Court of California, San Bernardino County |
| Weinstein | Stewart H. | 1976 | JD | The State of New York Family Court |
| Wright | Ryan | 1997 | JD | The Superior Court of California, Ventura County |
| Young | Bruce | 1977 | JD | The Superior Court of California, Ventura County |

**Appendix F: Addressing Judges**

##### FEDERAL COURTS

##### U.S. Supreme Court

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| *Addressee* | *Envelope and Cover Letter Address* | *Salutation* |
|  |  |  |
| The Chief Justice | The Honorable (Full name)  Chief Justice of the United States  The Supreme Court  1 First Street, N.E.  Washington, DC 20543 | Dear Chief Justice (last name): |
|  |  |  |
| Associate Justice | The Honorable (Full name)  Associate Justice  The Supreme Court  1 First Street, N.E.  Washington, DC 20543 | Dear Justice (last name): |

##### U.S. Court of Appeals

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| *Addressee* | *Envelope and Cover Letter Address* | *Salutation* |
| Chief Judge | The Honorable (Full name)  Chief Judge  United States Court of Appeals for the (number-th) Circuit  Address | Dear Judge (last name): |
| Senior Judge | The Honorable (Full name)  Senior Judge  United States Court of Appeals for the (number-th) Circuit  Address | Dear Judge (last name): |
| Judge | The Honorable (Full name)  United States Court of Appeals for the (number-th) Circuit  Address | Dear Judge (last name): |

##### U.S. District Court

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| *Addressee* | *Envelope and Cover Letter Address* | *Salutation* |
| Chief Judge | The Honorable (Full name)  Chief Judge  United States District Court for the (District Name)  Address | Dear Judge (last name): |
| Senior Judge | The Honorable (Full name)  Senior Judge  United States District Court for the (District Name)  Address | Dear Judge (last name): |
| Judge | The Honorable (Full name)  United States District Court for the (District Name)  Address | Dear Judge (last name): |
|  |  |  |
|  | ***U.S. Magistrate*** |  |
| Judge | The Honorable (Full name)  United States Magistrate Judge  United States District Court for the (District Name)  Address | Dear Judge (last name): |
| Presiding Judge | The Honorable (Full name)  Presiding Judge  (Name of Court)  Address | Dear Judge (last name): |
| Chief Judge | *U.S. Bankruptcy*  The Honorable (Full name)  Chief Judge  United States Bankruptcy Court for the (District Name)  Address | Dear Judge (last name): |
| Judge | The Honorable (Full name)  Chief Judge  United States Bankruptcy Court for the (District Name)  Address | Dear Judge (last name): |

##### Other Federal Courts

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| *Addressee* | *Envelope and Cover Letter Address* | *Salutation* |
| Chief Judge | The Honorable (Full name)  Chief Judge  (Name of Court)  Address | Dear Judge (last name): |
| Senior Judge | The Honorable (Full name)  Senior Judge  (Name of Court)  Address | Dear Judge (last name): |
| Judge | The Honorable (Full name)  (Name of Court)  Address | Dear Judge (last name): |

##### STATE COURTS

##### State Supreme Court

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| *Addressee* | *Envelope and Cover Letter Address* | *Salutation* |
| Chief Justice | The Honorable (Full name)  Chief Justice  (Name of State Supreme Court)  Address | Dear Chief Justice (last name): |
| Justice | The Honorable (Full name)  (Name of State Supreme Court)  Address | Dear Justice (last name): |

##### Other State Courts

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| *Addressee* | *Envelope and Cover Letter Address* | *Salutation* |
| Chief Judge | The Honorable (Full name)  (Title of Judge)  (Name of Court)  Address | Dear Judge (last name): |
| Presiding Judge  Judge | The Honorable (Full name)  Presiding Judge  (Name of Court)  Address  The Honorable (Full name)  (Name of Court)  Address | Dear Judge (last name):  Dear Judge (last name): |

**Appendix G: Framework for a Judicial Clerkship Cover Letter**

Date

The Honorable [first] [middle] [last], [suffix]

Title [only if it is a special title]

Court

Address

Dear Judge [last name]:

**Paragraph 1:** Identify who you are and clearly state that you wish to apply for a clerkship for a particular year or years. If you heard about the judge from someone potentially influential, you should indicate that here. If it is out of state and you ultimately wish to relocate there, this is where you should indicate your geographic connection/intention. State your credentials.

**Paragraph 2:** Expand on how your credentials make you a particularly qualified candidate for a clerkship. Emphasize relevant research and writing experience. Discuss past experiences in judicial chambers. Acknowledge your ability to work under deadlines and juggle multiple assignments at once.

**Paragraph 3:** The closing paragraph is where you reiterate your interest in the position and ask for an interview. Indicate what application materials you are including (resume, law school transcript, brief writing sample, and letters of recommendation). You should also thank the judge for his/her time and consideration (i.e. I am very enthusiastic about the opportunity to clerk in your chambers and would welcome the opportunity to discuss my candidacy with you in person. Should you require additional information, please do not hesitate to let me know. I look forward to hearing from you soon.)

Respectfully,

John Smith

Enclosure

**Appendix H: Sample Language for Writing Sample Cover Page**

**JANE DOE**

**Street ● City, State Zip ● Phone ● E-mail**

**WRITING SAMPLE**

**(Example of a work assignment as a writing sample)**

The attached writing sample is a [memorandum/brief/draft order/etc.] that I drafted as an assignment when I was [a summer associate/a summer law clerk/an extern/an intern/law clerk] [at NAME OF FIRM/ORGANIZATION ***or*** to THE HONORABLE LAST NAME OF JUDGE]. The assignment was [explain what you were asked to do & any limitations]. I performed all of the research and [this work is entirely my own ***or*** this work has been edited by a partner/associate or the judge/clerk]. [All identifying facts and names have been redacted for confidentiality purposes.] I am submitting the attached writing sample with the permission of [FIRM NAME/ORGANIZATION/JUDGE NAME].

**Or …. (LRW assignment)**

I drafted the attached writing sample as an assignment in my [first *or* second] semester Legal Research and Writing course. The assignment required drafting [insert type of writing (i.e. an office memorandum, brief, etc.)] analyzing [explain what you were asked to do]. [I conducted all of the research necessary for the assignment ***or*** I was limited to the research provided by my professor].

**Or …. (LRW appellate brief – could be revised to use for Moot Court brief)**

I drafted the attached writing sample as an assignment in my second semester Legal Research and Writing course. The assignment required drafting an appellate brief with a partner analyzing [explain what you were asked to do]. I independently conducted all of the research pertaining to my section of the brief. I have included [only those sections of the brief that I drafted exclusively ***or*** all sections of the brief. I exclusively drafted parts \_\_, \_\_, and \_\_ of the attached brief].

**Or …. (Journal note/comment)**

The attached writing sample is an excerpt from my Law Review note. For my note, I [explain what you addressed/analyzed]. [This work is entirely my own ***or*** This work has been edited by a member of the faculty/Law Review staff]. I have included sections \_\_, \_\_, and \_\_ of my note, which address [insert what they address (i.e. the analytical portion of my note, etc.)]. In sections \_\_\_, \_\_, and \_\_, I [insert what you addressed in the sections that have been omitted]. [The full note has been selected for publication in [insert journal name and volume number].

**Appendix I: Sample Interview Questions**

**Sample List of Interview Questions the Judge or Clerk(s) May Ask:**

***Reminder:*** *Be aware of any current events -- particularly news events with legal significance or an effect on the judiciary (i.e., the recent Supreme Court appointments, major cases in the relevant circuit) and be prepared to discuss them. Be familiar with your writing sample.*

*Questions to get to know you:*

1. What are your outside interests? What do you like to do for fun?
2. Why did you go to law school?
3. Why did you go to Pepperdine? How do you like it? What do you like about it?
4. What is your favorite class in law school? What do you think of [a specific class] or [a specific professor]?
5. How would you describe yourself? What are your strengths/weaknesses? Be prepared with 3 examples for each. Weaknesses should be true but not fatal (i.e., do not say “I am very disorganized.” However, “I am not comfortable with public speaking” may be acceptable) and it is often good to follow them up with the steps you have taken to overcome such weaknesses.
6. What are your career goals? Where do you see yourself in [5, 10, 20] years?
7. Where do you want to practice after the clerkship? What sort of practice area?

*Questions gauging your interest:*

1. Tell me about yourself and about why you’re interested in this clerkship.
2. Why do you think you would thrive in this job?
3. General questions about your personal history/resume.
4. What are the particular aspects of a clerkship that you would value?
5. Why federal district court? Why state superior court? Etc.
6. Why me? What do you know about me?
7. To which judges have you applied?
8. How would you feel about clerking for two years? Do you think a one-year term is long enough to make the job worthwhile?
9. Why do you want to clerk in this city? [for non-local jurisdictions]
10. Do you plan to practice in this region after you clerk? [for non-local jurisdictions]

*Questions gauging your knowledge of & interest in the law/judicial system:*

1. What do you know about this court/job?
2. What recent decision of the Supreme Court [or this court] did you find most interesting? [Be prepared to talk in depth about this one].

*Questions gauging your ability to do the job and your work style:*

*Research Skills:*

1. What do you like most about legal research? Least?
2. How would you go about conducting wide-ranging legal research in an area that was unfamiliar to you? *or* How would you research an issue that was unfamiliar to you? [Walk the judge through the process].
3. Tell me about your research and writing proficiency. What types of electronic research have you worked with? How did you do in your LRW class?

*Writing/Analytical Skills:*

1. Describe your writing style.
2. Why do you think you would be able to write well about the subjects before this court?
3. What useful writing experience do you have? Do you like to write?
4. What do you think would be the characteristics of a good bench memo? A good decision?
5. From your past experiences, describe your thinking in analyzing a case. For example, how would you go about applying the law to the facts of a case in a judicious way? How would you weigh the competing arguments?
6. Why did you pick your particular note or paper/dissertation topic?
7. What is the topic of your note or paper/dissertation? Outline the argument for me. Defend it.
8. What do you think of [hypothetical]?

*Work style & ability to interact with others:*

1. How would you go about learning about the court/how to do the job?
2. Why do you think you would be a good clerk? Why should I hire you?
3. How did your education and/or work experience prepare you for this clerkship?
4. If I asked you to tell me the law, how confident would you be in your answer?
5. What do you believe is a clerk’s role?
6. Do you prefer to work with others or independently?
7. How would you build good working relationships with other people here?
8. Describe a project or task you worked on as part of a team. What was your role? What challenges did you face? What successes or failures were important to you in working with the other members of the team?
9. Describe how you handle projects or tasks requiring a high degree of accuracy and attention to detail. Describe a project or task that required organizational skills. How did you proceed?
10. Do you make decisions quickly or need time to research and reflect before coming to a conclusion?
11. Can you be objective about the law?
12. How would you handle a situation in which you and I disagreed about the proper resolution of an issue/case?
13. If we disagree about an issue, can you draft an opinion consistent with my view rather than your own?
14. What circumstances bring out the best in you? The worst? [Provide a few examples].

*More challenging questions:*

1. What judges have you particularly admired because of style, substance, or ideology?
2. How can we improve the administration of justice?
3. How conversant are you with the significant current decisions of the Supreme Court of the United States? Do you read *U.S. Law Week*?
4. How important are the political views of a judge to you?
5. What do you think is the purpose of the federal judiciary?
6. What is your judicial philosophy?

**Questions you may want to ask the judge:**

Do not ask anything about the judge’s personal background or something you should already know or could have found out through research. Beware of asking substantive legal questions – they may make the judge uncomfortable and may require you to know a lot about the issue.

1. Which of your recent opinions did you find most interesting? Most challenging?
2. What aspect of judging do you like most?
3. How are assignments distributed to your clerks? (if more than one clerk)
4. How do clerks most often communicate with you? In writing, in person, or by e-mail?
5. Do you discuss cases and the law with your clerks?
6. Do you keep in touch with your former clerks?
7. Do you give speeches and write articles? If yes, do your clerks work on these tasks as well as their ordinary judicial clerkship duties?
8. If the judge is chief judge or has senior status, how does this affect the caseload and other responsibilities?
9. What is the most important quality you look for when selecting a clerk?

**Questions you may want to ask the law clerk:**

1. How is a typical case handled from start to finish?
2. What is the best part of working for this judge?
3. What is your working style? The judge’s? With what type of person do you/the Judge work best?
4. How extensively does the judge read/edit/rewrite externs’ opinions?
5. What is the judge’s style with respect to opinions (long, short, straightforward, etc.)?
6. Do the clerks attend oral argument?
7. Does the judge hold hearings on motions? If so, does he/she want clerks to write a bench memo or just prepare him/her for motions informally?
8. How quickly does the judge want motions ruled upon?
9. How often does the clerk write bench memos? Draft opinions?
10. Does the judge require clerks to write in the judge’s style? If so, how strictly? What is that style?

When interviewed by clerks, do not ask questions that show a lack of interest in working (i.e. “Do you usually have weekends or evenings free?”). If that impacts your decision, you may ask the following questions after you have received an offer (It is best not to ask them before you get an offer and you should be prepared to be gracious if they say late days and/or weekends): (1) What are normal work days/hours? *and/or* (2) What is the judge’s policy concerning holidays and/or time off?