

Office of Judicial Careers (OJC)

Guide to Judicial Networking

OJC's mission is to connect Columbia Law School to our Courts and the Courts to Columbia Law School. But, OJC does not do this alone. Rather, OJC works with our students, faculty, alumni and administrative colleagues to ensure that these connections are professionally planned, executed, and provide real returns to Columbia Law's current and future relationships with the judiciary as employers, lecturers, alumni, and legal leaders.

This guide sets forth OJC's best practices and recommendations for organizations or individuals who seek to network with the judiciary (judges, law clerks or others at the courts or in Court-adjacent organizations) through on, or off, campus events. **It is our expectation that, prior to setting up any judicial networking event, you will have read this guide and, as necessary, reached out to Dianisbeth Acquie, Associate Director of the OJC, at da3o86@columbia.edu, with any questions or additional guidance on the planning and execution of your judicial networking event.** It is also best practice that, at all times, you keep OJC updated about judicial networking events or opportunities, whether on or off campus, so as to maximize Columbia Law's institutional touchpoints with the judge or Court. ***Remember: ultimately, this is about relationship building,*** and the more genuine, long-term contacts and relationships that a judge or our alumni law clerks have with our community, the more likely they are to return to campus for events; hire our students and alumni as law clerks; and engage with our faculty's important research and scholarship.

We look forward to working with you!

An Important Note on Judicial Limitations

State and federal judges are governed by the codes of ethics and judicial conduct that are put in place on a federal basis or by individual jurisdictions. As a result, judges are restricted on being able to accept any sort of gift, honorarium, or award. Please consult the applicable rules, and also the OJC, for any questions involving these financial restrictions. The Code of Conduct for United States Judges is available [here](#). State court judges have similar codes of compliance; for example, the New York State Code of Judicial Conduct is available [here](#).

Keep in mind that the judicial codes of ethics also restrict the ways in which judges can network with practicing attorneys, especially those who may appear before them or in their courts. Make sure to consult the appropriate rules to avoid any appearance of impropriety. If you have any questions that cannot be answered through the codes of judicial conduct, please contact OJC for assistance.

A Note for Judiciary Chairs

Although executive members for any organization, or individual students (such as former interns or externs), can take the lead on bringing a judge to campus, judiciary chairs (and their IL representatives, when applicable), usually work closely with OJC to plan these programs or events. OJC aims to meet with judiciary chairs before each semester of the Academic Year to get a sense of the organization's plans for the term, and to ensure coordination so that Columbia, as an institution, approaches the judges with a unified professional presence (rather than multiple invites from Columbia to the same Justices or Judges, which can reflect poorly on our institutional coordination). Be on the lookout for email

Current as of July 2023

invitations from OJC for these meetings, or feel free to reach out to Director Acquie if you'd like to have a 1:1 at any time.

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I. Step One: Selecting an Event Theme and Judges

- A. *What if we only have one specific judge in mind that we would like to invite?* If you already know which judge you would like to invite for a specific event, that's wonderful! You can move onto Step Two.
- B. *We would like to have students or other individuals on campus meet a judge, but we don't know how to pick one to invite.* If you know that you would like to invite a judge, but do not know where to start in terms of finding them, consider what your intended audience might be interested in learning from a judge and/or their clerks, and the larger theme around the event. Are there alumni/ae of CLS who were members of your organization who are now on the bench? Would your organization appreciate hearing from a judge who has a background in public defense? Would it be helpful to invite a judge or two from a specific geographic region? Would your members appreciate a lecture or lesson on intellectual property from a judge on the Federal Circuit, or learning about the jurisdiction of the Court of International Trade? Is there a larger theme, such as Women's History Month or AAPI Heritage Month, that you would like the event to reflect?

After determining the theme for your event with your executive board, brainstorm three to five judges that you would like to invite, prioritizing between one and three of them. You may rely on the [Almanac of the Federal Judiciary](#), the [CLS Library Guide to Researching Judges](#), the [OJC Courseworks](#)

[page alumni directory](#), [Leadership Connect](#), or Google to look into the backgrounds, biographies, and expertise of judges.

- C. ***What are some considerations that we should keep in mind when selecting our 3 to 5 judges?*** Consider whether the judge is close geographically or whether your organization may have to reimburse the cost of travel (or have a virtual event, which may have less robust turnout, but can bring a judge to campus whose schedule may not otherwise allow for travel). You may also consider whether there are current CLS alums who are clerking for the judge (the alumni directory is available through the OJC Courseworks page). Also note whether OJC or other student organizations have invited the judge for events that academic year already (or even the prior year); judges are unlikely to be able to attend multiple events at the same institution in the same year. If there are multiple organizations seeking to invite the same judge, consider reaching out to them to work together as co-sponsors.
- D. ***How many judges should we invite?*** If your plan is to invite more than one judge for a panel, we recommend inviting no more than three judges. Think strategically about how many judges it makes sense to invite. Would having a dialogue between judges from two different benches (state v. federal, district v. appellate) who otherwise share similar backgrounds be interesting? Consider also the value of having one judge joining at a time, which provides the judge and the students alike with ample learning opportunities. In OJC's experience, judges like all these formats, and some may even be open to being the single

judge in conversation with their current or former law clerks who are CLS alumni. Remember that law clerks also have input in judicial hiring decisions, so consider how networking with alumni law clerks may be of particular interest to your organization.

II. Step Two: Reaching Out to OJC

- A. Once you have either a shortlist of judges or a specific judge that you would like to invite, reach out to Director Acquie (da3o86@columbia.edu) as early as possible with the following information:
 - a. Organization or Office Name
 - b. Judge/Judges that you plan to invite
 - c. Whether you plan for the event to be a collaboration with OJC or whether you would prefer for your student organization to independently lead the event (see **Step Four** for additional details)
 - d. Two or three potential dates when you would like to invite the judge
 - e. Whether you would like for the judge to join for a Q&A or for a lecture
- B. OJC may want to discuss the potential event before you proceed if we identify any potential known conflicts. If the event is a potential collaboration with OJC, OJC will also want to discuss the division of responsibilities (see **Step Four**). OJC may also have insight into how best to invite the judge to campus (see **Step Three**).

III. Step Three: Inviting the Judge

A. Prepare a formal draft invitation for the judge (examples attached as **Appendix**

1). The invitation should include:

- a. The name of your organization and at least one point of contact
- b. The organization letterhead/logo
- c. Two to three potential dates and times
- d. The envisioned format for the event (moderated Q&A? lecture?)
- e. A request for a headshot and biography
 - i. Be prepared to follow up for this request after the judge emails to accept the invitation.
- f. If necessary, a note about reimbursing travel expenses (please discuss with your student executive board and with OJC)
- g. Whether you are also inviting any of the judge's clerks to join
- h. A wet signature
- i. cc Director Acquie

B. Submit the invitation to OJC for review. Decide whether you would prefer to send the invitation to the judge or whether you want OJC to send the invitation.

- a. If your student organization plans to send the invitation:* If you have invited this judge in the past and/or have up-to-date contact information, you may proceed to invite the judge; please, however, give OJC advance notice of your intent so as to ensure a representative or faculty member can also meet the judge while here.

b. If you would prefer for OJC to send the invitation: If you do not have access to the judge's contact information, please send the final, signed PDF to OJC. Unless OJC sends the invitations directly to judges' personal email addresses (as some prefer to receive invitations), OJC will cc you or otherwise let you know when the invitation has been sent and will then send an email connecting you or another representative from your organization with the judge. OJC will then hand over the reins of the event to you!

C. What should we do after the judge accepts our invitation? Let them know how excited you are for the judge to join you, ask for a headshot and biography, and let them know that you will follow up **at least 7 business days** prior to the event with a draft agenda (proposed questions/event details/flyers).

D. What if I'm planning a panel event with more than one judge? Say, for example, that you would like to invite two judges with public interests backgrounds. Start with the senior judge, letting them know the theme and that there will be another judge joining them for the panel, and once you have a date set with that judge, reach out to the next judge with that date. Let the second judge know that the first judge is already confirmed and the theme. So on and so forth.

IV. Step Four: Planning for the Event

Planning for the event and the responsibilities that this will entail varies slightly on whether the event is run entirely by the student organization or is being promoted in collaboration with OJC.

A. What are our responsibilities if we are leading the event? If the event is entirely run by your organization, rather than a collaboration with OJC, it is expected that you will follow the standard operating procedure and:

- a. Discuss budgeting with relevant stakeholders in the office or organization
- b. Apply for Student Senate funding in a timely manner, if applicable
- c. Book a room through the [EMS](#) system.
 - i. Make sure that there is A/V available. If your event requires technological and/or AV capabilities (including if a guest requires disability accommodations that would allow the guest to fully participate in an event), please contact AV Request (avrequest@law.columbia.edu).
 - ii. **Note:** Receiving confirmation of a room only permits access to the room. Any additional requests including but not limited to furniture configuration (including rental furniture, if necessary), table linens, catering, microphones, use of projector screen, and use of computers are considered auxiliary services. Please contact (buildingevents@law.columbia.edu).
 - iii. Auxiliary Services Contact Guide:

Type of Request	Department
Room Setup	Building Services
Custodial / Food Cleanup	Building Services

Audio Visual	AV Request
Computer & Other Technology	AV Request
Public Safety & Security	Jeffrey Bagares

- iv. For instructions on how to book rooms in EMS, please see the Room Reservations [Handbook](#), or contact room_reservations@law.columbia.edu.
- d. Create a flyer and RSVP form (examples available in **Appendix 2**) for the event at least ten business days prior to the event
 - i. Please also send a courtesy copy of the flyer to OJC
- e. Publicize within your student organization and to additional student organizations
- f. Add to the student organizations calendar
- g. Publicize on [LawCal](#) **no later than one week prior to the event, but preferably two weeks prior to.**
 - i. This is a requirement for any event that has funding from the Student Senate. For instructions on how to add events to LawCal, please see here:
<https://www.law.columbia.edu/about/departments/communications/web/guide/calendar>.
 - ii. All student events should submit your events using this [Google Form](#) and the Communications team will add them to the new Bedeworks calendar.

- h. Prepare Q&A (if relevant) and select a student moderator
 - i. You may use the template available in Appendix 3 for any Q&A.
 - ii. **Be prepared to send the Q&A to the judge at least seven business days prior to the event.**
- i. Select a food vendor and order food. Ensure you have adequate drinks & utensils/plates/napkins.
- j. Make sure that a member of your organization is prepared to take photographs of the event.
- k. Make sure that Public Safety knows that the judges will be on campus.
 - i. If your event will feature a government official who travels with a security detail (including judges and former officials), a prominent speaker, or if you have reason to believe that your event requires security, please contact Jeffrey Bagares (jb3861@columbia.edu).
 - ii. Carefully review the [University's Policy on Partisan Political Activity](#) before you plan any action or event with a political party or candidate.

B. ***What are our responsibilities if we are collaborating with OJC?*** If you are collaborating with OJC, it is expected that you will clarify the division of responsibilities listed in the previous subsection as soon as the judge has confirmed their attendance. Typically, student organization representatives are expected to issue the invite; prepare Q&A and select the moderator for the

event; and publicize the event to student groups. OJC can provide support as to food and room reservations on a case-by-case basis. Be prepared to send an email to OJC laying out the responsibilities and the division of work **four weeks prior to the event** to avoid any potential confusion.

- C. One week prior to the event, after the judge has accepted your invitation, send the judge or their Chambers' an email & calendar invite (sample available in **Appendix 4**):

- a. Providing the location and time of the event
- b. Sharing the flyer for the event
- c. Sharing the proposed Q&A and asking for any additional feedback
- d. Stating that a member of your organization will meet them in the lobby (and providing contact information of the member)
- e. Providing any additional health/safety protocol
- f. Asking for any dietary restrictions that they have

- i. **Please note: Many judges have pre-existing relationships with OJC. As a result, OJC sometimes separately hosts post-event lunches for the judges.** If your organization would like to have any coffee chats or lunch events prior to the event or directly after the event, let OJC know. Your organization will then take responsibility for paying and planning for those additional meetings and events.

IV. Step Five: The Event and Following Steps

Congratulations! You have done a lot of incredible work in preparing for the networking event. Hopefully, this will be an enriching experience for you and for your members. On the day of the event, be sure to print out a copy of the Q&A. If you are moderating the event, try to wear either business casual or business formal. Otherwise, remember that these conversations are off-the-record and that video recording may not take place unless the judge specifically permits it. Also, remember to have a member of your organization take pictures of the event!

Following the event, please send out a handwritten thank-you note to the judge. OJC has notecards available in the office and can assist with mailing them.

Appendix 1: Sample Invitations



Empowering Women of Color at Columbia Law Presents Navigating the Judiciary as a Woman of Color Panel

5 December 2022

The Honorable Valerie Figueredo
United States Magistrate Judge
Southern District of New York
United States Courthouse
500 Pearl St. New York, NY 10007

Dear Judge Figueredo:

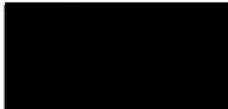
On behalf of the Empowering Women of Color (EWOC) student members of Columbia Law School, we warmly invite you to be a panelist for our Navigating the Judiciary as a Woman of Color Panel, to be held on Tuesday, March 7th, 2023 from 12:00 pm to 1:15 pm on the Columbia Law School campus.

Founded in 2010, EWOC is dedicated to advancing the needs of women of color in our law school, a community often underserved in traditional affinity groups. Since our founding, our mission has centered on creating safe spaces for dialogue and providing support and opportunities for women of color. This panel event would center discussions on your experience as a woman of color in the federal judiciary and advice you may have to share with those who aspire to follow your path to the bench. This event would pay homage to EWOC's legacy by celebrating leaders who are shaping the future and paving the way for women of color to succeed, and to lead, in positions of public authority. In addition to your Honor, we are inviting the Honorable Eunice Lee of the Second Circuit, Honorable Diane Gujarati of the Eastern District of New York, and the Honorable Jennifer Willis of the Southern District of New York.

We believe that your career is emblematic of the mission and goals of Empowering Women of Color, and we would be honored if you would accept the invitation to join our panel. Please let us know if you would like to accept my invitation by emailing me at [REDACTED] at your earliest convenience, and we will provide additional details.

We look forward to hearing from you, and hope that you will join us for this special occasion!

Kind regards,



Academics and Judicial Clerkships Chair, *Empowering Women of Color*

cc: Andrea C. Saavedra, Assistant Dean of Judicial Clerkships
Dianisbeth M. Acquie, Associate Director of Judicial Clerkships



The Honorable Beryl A. Howell
Chief Judge
United States District Court for the District of Columbia
333 Constitution Avenue N.W.
Washington D.C. 20001

February 16, 2023

Dear Chief Judge Howell:

My name is [REDACTED] and I am the Judiciary Chair of Columbia Law Women's Association (CLWA). On behalf of CLWA, I am writing to invite you to speak with our members on either March 22, 2023, or March 28, 2023 during the lunch hour, from 12:10 to 1:10 pm EST. Our members would welcome a discussion with you about your path to the bench and past experiences. Many of our members are also interested in clerkships after graduation, and they would enjoy hearing about your process for choosing clerks, your approach to ensuring diversity and equity in chambers, and the qualities you look for in an applicant. If the foregoing dates present a conflict for your Honor, we would be glad to find an alternative date.

Since COVID-19 restrictions have been relaxed, we are delighted to extend an invitation for you to join us in person. However, if that is not a possibility for you, we would be equally delighted for you to join us for a virtual presentation on Zoom. Please let us know your preferred format for the event. For prior events, judges have joined us for either lecture-style events followed by a Q&A portion, or for moderated events with questions submitted and reviewed in advance.

It would be our pleasure to have you join us and share your wisdom with us. We would be happy to reimburse any of your travel costs, such as transportation tickets. Please let me know if you have any questions or thoughts about the event. The best ways to reach me are by email at [REDACTED] or by phone at [REDACTED]. I hope to speak to you soon!

Sincerely,



Judiciary Chair, Columbia Law Women's Association

cc: Andrea C. Saavedra, Assistant Dean of Judicial Clerkships

Appendix 2: Flyers and RSVP Forms

**A FIRESIDE CHAT:
JUDGE NELSON
STEPHEN ROMÁN**

**OF THE U.S.D.C. FOR THE SOUTHERN
DISTRICT OF NEW YORK**



**FEB 21 | 12:10 PM | BW 208
PLEASE JOIN LALSA IN
WELCOMING JUDGE ROMÁN**

- Assistant District Attorney, Kings County DA
- Special Narcotics Prosecutor, New York County DA
- Chief Administrative Judge, Housing Court Bench
- Judge, New York City Civil Bench
- Trial Judge, Bronx County Supreme Court
- Judge, Appellate Division, First Department
- Former President, Puerto Rican Bar Association

Columbia Law School Black Law Students Association and the
Office of Judicial Clerkships Welcome

Judge Marcia M. Henry

Magistrate Judge, Eastern District of New York

Thursday, February 2 at 12:10pm, JGH 102(B)

RSVP by January 31 [here](#).



The Honorable Marcia M. Henry — a native of Brooklyn, New York, and the daughter of immigrants from Trinidad and Tobago — is the first Black woman to serve as a Magistrate Judge for the Eastern District of New York.

Prior to her judicial appointment in May of 2021, Judge Henry spent nearly a decade in state and local government, working with the New York State Department of Financial Services in the Cybersecurity Division and as an Assistant U.S. Attorney in the E.D.N.Y. Before her government service, she practiced labor and employment law. Judge Henry also clerked for Honorable Carl E. Stewart of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit and the Honorable Sterling Johnson, Jr. of the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of New York.

Judge Henry earned her B.A. in Psychology and Afro-American Studies, *cum laude*, from the University of Pennsylvania and her J.D. from New York University School of Law.

Current as of July 2023

Name *

Your answer

Will you be joining us for the event with Judge Henry? *

☐ Yes

☐ No

Do you have any dietary restrictions?

Your answer

Do you have any questions for Judge Henry?

Your answer

Submit

Clear form

Appendix 3: Q&A Template



OFFICE OF JUDICIAL
CLERKSHIPS

[Insert Student Logo here, if applicable.]

[Name of Panel] — [Date]

[Location Here]

Student Contact Information

[Please include information here for the judge to contact you, if necessary.]

Panelists

[Include full names and positions of the panelists.]

Agenda

[Please include the planned agenda here.]

Biographies

[Please include the biographies as they will be announced at the event here.]

Proposed Q&A

[Please include Q&A here.]

After the last question, I will open the floor for student questions. Thank you so much for joining us.

Appendix 4: Sample 1-Week-Before Email to the Judge

Judge Román, Stephanie:

Thank you very much once again for the time and consideration reflected in your willingness to join our community on campus this Tuesday. On behalf of LaLSA, please allow me to express how excited we are to welcome you to Columbia! This note confirms your participation in the event, and also provides a few final logistical details for your review.

Event Details

Health & Safety: As you may already be aware, Columbia University has amended its policies to make masks optional in all indoor settings. Accordingly, we will be serving lunch to students in attendance at the event. Should you have any concerns surrounding audience mask-usage, please let me know, and we will prepare accordingly.

Timing & Location: The event will take place in William & June Warren Hall (1125 Amsterdam Avenue, New York, NY 10025). I or a member of our team will meet you outside at 11:45 AM to escort you through security. Please have your government issued ID on-hand. We expect to begin between 12 and 12:10 PM, and will conclude our panel and audience Q&A by 1:10 PM.

Action Items

Questions: Attached please find a list of questions that LaLSA would like to discuss with you during the panel. We are happy to discuss the attached, and/or amend these at your request.

Bios: As referenced above, please let us know if you have any questions or concerns with the attached. **Stephanie**, can you please share a bio for the event at your convenience?

Many thanks once again, and I look forward to hearing from you soon.