

# Business & Transactional Law Center



Professor Steve Ramirez



## 2005 WASHBURN LAW BUSINESS CAMP: PARTNERSHIP WITH THE BUSINESS AND LEGAL COMMUNITY ENHANCES LEGAL EDUCATION

The Business and Transactional Law Center (BTLC) is a partnership of the law school, alumni, and the business and legal communities. The 2005 Washburn Law Business Camp is an example of the potential this partnership creates. In this inaugural event, 19 law students and 24 business and legal professionals participated in a week-long intensive program. The students visited the business offices of several local businesses, received instruction from numerous community legal and business professionals, worked in groups on a sophisticated business acquisition problem and presented the results of their efforts to corporate officers of AmerUs Annuities Group.

### THE BUSINESS CAMP CONCEPT

It is sometimes difficult to pinpoint the source of an idea. Business Camp is no exception. Those who direct in the BTLC are constantly looking for ways to improve its program offerings. One place the Center looks for ideas is other centers at the law school. The Center for Excellence in Advocacy is a pioneer in offering programs to law students. Multiple times each year, it offers a week-long intensive trial program (appropriately called Intensive Trial Advocacy Program or ITAP). Recognizing ITAP's success, the BTLC began thinking of possible week-long business and transactional law programs, hatching the idea of Business Camp. The goal of Business Camp was to offer an intensive week-long program immediately prior to the fall semester that focused on the business and accounting concepts, instead of legal issues. To make Business Camp successful the Center need-

ed help from partners outside of the law school. In considering possible partners, Chris Conroy '98, Assistant Counsel at AmerUs Annuity Group and someone who had participated in other BTLC events in prior years, seemed to be a perfect fit. With a law degree, MBA, extensive corporate experience and proximity to the law school, Conroy was an ideal choice to help brainstorm about Business Camp and help get the program off the ground.

During the initial meeting, Conroy indicated that other alumni at AmerUs Annuity Group, Mark Heitz '77, CEO, and Mike Miller '91, General Counsel, also wanted to help make Business Camp a success. Conroy offered to prepare a case study of an acquisition, make available the corporate headquarters of AmerUs Annuities for an entire day and organize a mock board of directors to listen to the student presentations of the case. With this support, Business Camp had a foundation to build upon. From the foundation provided by Conroy and AmerUs Annuities, the Center began to contact other business and legal professionals to help complete an impressive roster of instructors.

Incidentally, Conroy announced on the first day of Business Camp that AmerUs Annuities Group would present a plaque and a \$1,000 cash prize to the team that did the best job of analyzing and presenting the case study.



Chris Conroy '98, Mark Hammond, Mark Heitz '77 and Janet Sipes

### THE BUSINESS CAMP STUDENTS

Some of Washburn Law's most talented students participated in Business Camp. Most of the Business Camp students intend to become business and transactional lawyers. Some, however, realized the benefit business knowledge would provide in a litigation practice and attended Business Camp to obtain that extra knowledge. Because this was the inaugural Business Camp enrollment was limited to 20 students. That number allowed the program to

have four teams of five, allowing each team member to make significant contributions to the team project and allowing the teams adequate time to present to the mock board of directors. It so happened that 20 students applied, and after one had to forgo Business Camp because of a family illness, 19 students ultimately participated.

One aspect of Business Camp that most reflected practice was the time pressure the schedule imposed. Each of the first three days of Business Camp was booked from 8 a.m. until 6 p.m. with instruction sessions. Somewhere between all of the sessions, teams had to find time to meet to analyze the case study and prepare their presentations. Despite the time pressure, the students did an excellent job analyzing the problem and presenting their recommendations. They received excellent reviews from the mock board of directors.

The work effort and commitment demonstrated by the Business Camp students are indicative of the type of students at Washburn Law. Each student attended Business Camp voluntarily knowing they would receive no academic credit for their participation. Without academic credit or grades to motivate them, the students put in tremendous effort and produced an excellent product. The students' effort demonstrates their interest in learning and their competitive natures, which will serve them well as future lawyers.

### **THE BUSINESS CAMP INSTRUCTORS**

The Center's objectives in contacting instructors were to (1) create an instructor roster of people who do not teach at the law school and (2) line up a roster of instructors with varied experiences and backgrounds. Many very talented professionals donated time to help achieve those objectives. As the list of instructors and topics covered demonstrate, not only did the instructors generally come from practice, they represent the best professional talent and a cross-section of the business community that transactional lawyers often encounter in practice. They were business executives from large and small companies, attorneys, accountants, bankers, trust officers, actuaries, government officials and entrepreneurs. Being exposed to these professionals, law students were able to learn the substantive material presented and rub shoulders with the type of professionals with whom they will be practicing very shortly. The Center thanks the instructors for the time they donated to Business Camp. Some drove from



Business Camp at Payless ShoeSource

Kansas City, Wichita and even Denver to participate. The Center also thanks Susan Tucker '92 from Payless ShoeSource, and Stephen Page '77 and Daryl Craft '77, from GT trust for inviting students to their headquarters for some of the Business Camp sessions. The contribution of time and resources made Business Camp possible.

### **BUSINESS CAMP IN REVIEW**

Feedback received from students and instructors indicates that the inaugural Business Camp was successful. Students said it was a considerable amount of work but that they learned from the experience. They also appreciated the opportunity to interact with professionals. Some of the students made contacts that led to job interviews. All of them had the opportunity to spend time in the business environment and prepare themselves for situations that will arise in law practice. The instructors, after donating their time and resources to make Business Camp a success, indicated they enjoyed the experience and appreciated the opportunity to serve.

### **LOOKING AHEAD**

The Center learned much from the inaugural Business Camp, perhaps most significant is that when Washburn Law partners with alumni, other lawyers and the business community, great things can happen for students. In the future, Business Camp and other BTLC programs will continue to be a success as Washburn Law's dedicated alumni and others in the community join together to provide quality programs for Washburn Law students. Efforts in this direction continue to make Washburn Law a great law school.

If any Washburn Law alum would like to get involved with the Center, please contact Steve Ramirez at 785-670-1668 or [steven.ramirez@washburn.edu](mailto:steven.ramirez@washburn.edu) or Brad Borden at 785-670-1857 or [brad.borden@washburn.edu](mailto:brad.borden@washburn.edu). We look forward to hearing from you, and thank you in advance for your continuing support.

# Final Business Camp Presentation



# Summer 2005 Business Camp Participants

