

Business & Transactional Law Center

CENTERS
of
excellence

Professor David Pierce



From the New Director, Professor David Pierce

I am honored to serve as director of the Washburn University School of Law Business and Transactional Law Center. My goal as director is to provide our students with additional educational opportunities to expand their knowledge in business law while developing the essential skills of the transactional lawyer. The ultimate outcome from these efforts will be new graduates who possess the knowledge and skills a first-year attorney will need to effectively represent for-profit and not-for-profit organizations.

Often it is asked, "What exactly is a *Center*?" The answer will vary with the program, but the Business and Transactional Law Center is defined by its clear mission: to provide a variety of educational opportunities for students to learn how to function as transactional lawyers who can effectively represent clients engaged in business enterprises. As with virtually all of our programs at Washburn, the focus is on adding value and enrichment to the educational program we provide our students. These are educational opportunities provided to our students beyond the regular curricular offerings which they purchase with their tuition dollars. In this manner the Business and Transactional Law Center, and indeed all of the Centers at Washburn Law, provide this additional programming to our students free of charge. This

Center is only one of the many ways faculty and alumni seek to create a total learning environment that extends far beyond the classroom to provide our students with a total immersion in the profession while attending Washburn Law.

The Centers are able to provide this additional programming because of the active involvement of our alumni who donate their time and expertise. The hands-on involvement of our alumni actively engaged in business and transactional law also allows the Center to accomplish a major subsidiary goal: making the law school experience more realistic, and relevant, by providing additional opportunities to "bridge the gap" between theory and practice. Students presently have many opportunities to see the law in action, in a litigation context, through Washburn's excellent advocacy classes and programs. However, in a non-litigation context, the law often remains a casebook experience; a collection of legal principles we apply to facts to predict a judicial outcome. The Center provides students with additional opportunities to see how lawyers use the legal principles students study to effectively counsel clients, structure and complete transactions, and draft documents.

Another role of the Center is to serve as a catalyst to create the critical mass of professors, students, alumni, and other practicing attorneys who are dedicated to expanding knowledge regarding business law and the transactional side of law practice. This is reflected in their contributions to the scholarly commentary on business and transactional law and in the expanded programming offered at Washburn Law. This catalyst function is best illustrated by the phenomenal work of our students in the Washburn Business Law Society, as reported by last year's president Amy Kutschka, who graduated in May 2006 and is now working with Hampton & Royce, L.C. in Salina, Kan.

Center Report by Amy Kutschka '06

The spring 2006 semester proved to be another busy and exciting time for the Washburn Business and Transactional Law Center.

The Center hosted ten lunch and lecture series throughout the semester. The program provides students an opportunity to engage in discussion with successful business and transactional practitioners. Last semester the Center featured alums with experience as in-house counsel. Angela McGuire '99, senior corporate counsel of Marketing and Contracts for H&R Block, discussed her role and transition into an in-house counsel position. McGuire also introduced students to the Association of Corporate Counsel. Three members of Security Benefit Group's in-house counsel, J. Michael Keefer, senior vice-president, general counsel and secretary; Amy J. Lee, vice-president, associate general counsel and assistant secretary; and John Guyot, vice-president, associate general counsel and assistant secretary, gave a hands on presentation about the various aspects of practicing law as in-house counsel. Students were provided examples of letters of engagement and drafting techniques.

In addition, the Center held lectures on public utility law, international tax planning, health care, securities and real estate law. Jonathan Martin '99, of Baker & McKenzie LLP, spoke about international taxation and associated planning opportunities. Martin also volunteered his expertise in two tax courses during his visit at Washburn Law. Frank Ross '78, of Polsinelli Shalton Welte Suelthaus, addressed his role serving a corporate client. Ross stressed the importance of building a relationship with clients and becoming a member of the client's business team. Jeff Ellis '77, of Lathrop & Gage, focused on managing hospital and physician competition.



The lecture series is what makes Washburn Law unique. Angela Robinson Markley '06 said, "Through the Washburn Business Law Society (WBLS) lectures, I was able to explore practical concepts and current trends in business law outside of the classroom." Angela served as secretary of the Washburn Business Law Society from 2004-2006. Students look forward to the weekly lectures which provide a practitioner's perspective and exposure to sophisticated cutting-edge business and transactional law issues.

Beyond the lunch and lecture series the Center also sponsors several other activities that add value to the educational experience of students interested in business and transactional law. Students have many different opportunities to meet and learn from business attorneys who have found success down a variety of avenues. For example, the Center sponsored six students to attend the ABA Business Law conference held in Tampa, Fla., in April. The students spent four days attending meetings on various topics and networking with professionals from across the United States.

The Center continues to welcome and encourage feedback from interested alums. Most of the lecturers for the lunch and learn series are alumni who volunteer their time. It is essential to the Center's mission that it continue to benefit from alumni who provide their insights and expertise on innovative and challenging issues in business and transactional law.

If you wish to learn more about the Center or if you would like to volunteer, please contact director, Professor David Pierce, at (785) 670-1676 or david.pierce@washburn.edu