

## AMBASSADORS PROVIDE 'EXTREME' CUSTOMER SERVICE

They dress in Washburn Law-branded shirts, and with their bright, inviting smiles greet guests with a firm handshake and a friendly “Welcome to Washburn Law.” Although they help visitors navigate the halls of the law school, they are much more than tour guides — they are Washburn Law Student Ambassadors, committed to providing “extreme” customer service that reflects the tenets of a Washburn Law education.

“They are not just walking around the building pointing things out. In a way, they are mentoring the students,” Karla Whitaker, former director of admissions, explained about the successful program launched nearly a decade ago.

On average, 50 Washburn Law students apply each spring for the 25 to 30 ambassador openings for the following academic year. The applicants’ backgrounds and geographic locations vary but their commonality is the desire to pay forward the positive experiences of their initial visit to Washburn Law. “We have students who can talk about what it’s like to pick up and move here. They had a good experience with their ambassador and want to share that with others,” Whitaker said.

The student ambassador program’s mission is two-fold: to expand resources for the admissions process and to add another dimension to recruiting efforts. Janessa Akin, assistant director of admissions, pointed out that, although admissions staff is available and always willing to talk with prospective students, the students have a comfort level with those who have walked in their shoes. “Prospective students are more apt to ask questions of the ambassadors, of those who have ‘been there.’”

Exceptional customer service and high standards are paramount to the ambassador program’s success, and Whitaker believes they are the keys to attracting a high number of qualified applicants to fill available positions. “I feel like it’s a pretty prestigious assignment.” Whitaker explained that the Admissions Office does not operate on a stringent 8 to 5 schedule, preferring instead to work around a prospective student’s calendar. “We are a very customer service-oriented office that accommodates the



*2011-12 Washburn Law Ambassadors*

needs of our visitors. We strive to be flexible, very flexible.”

In addition to maintaining flexible hours for tours and other visitor needs, Whitaker stressed the Admissions Office’s requirements of its ambassadors to always take the high road when talking with prospective students and to project a positive attitude. “During the first week of school, ambassadors give tours as a training tool, to address the students’ expectations. They talk about how they made the decision to attend Washburn Law but never say anything negative about other schools.”

Admissions staff works diligently to partner ambassadors with students of like circumstances. “Our ambassadors are matched up with prospective students based on demographics and interests, which helps in making a more personal connection,” Akin explained. She described how the ambassadors use a variety of communication tools to enhance a prospective student’s relationship with Washburn Law. “They take time to make personal phone calls, send e-mails to them [prospective students], and write personal thank you notes to those they have met and guided through halls of the law school. Each admitted student receives a phone call too.”

“The ambassadors are an important piece of our recruiting and retention efforts,” Akin explained. “They are a valuable asset to Washburn Law.”