

STUDENT PROFILE

Jason Schulte

First-year law student

Golf has been his life since he was a toddler, but law student Jason Schulte is changing course to follow another ambition—serving in the military. Schulte said he first caught golf fever from his dad at age 3, and although his dad got him interested in golf, the rest was up to him.

“It was completely driven by me. My dad wasn’t one to force me. If I wanted to do it, he would say ‘go for it.’”

Schulte’s years of practice and play on the links led to his success with the golf team at Rockhurst High School in Kansas City. His talent caught the attention of Kansas State University, where he was recruited to play at the collegiate level beginning the fall of 2006. While balancing the demands of academics and athletics, Schulte immersed himself in various leadership roles, including serving as captain of the golf team and president of the Student Athlete Advisory Committee, as well as participating in the Big 12 Leadership Summit. Always interested in the NCAA and issues related to student athletes, Schulte was eager to represent the Kansas State student body when his golf coach nominated him to serve on the NCAA Compliance Steering Committee. “When I got the opportunity, I jumped on it.” In this leadership role, he collaborated with university officials to coordinate a university-wide research effort into the athletics program as part of the NCAA Division I athletics re-certification process. “It was a lot of work but also very interesting.”

While at KSU, Schulte began contemplating a future outside of golf. He said he had always been an athlete and always aspired to be a collegiate athlete, but began thinking about serving in the military. “I wanted to do more than professional golf.” He looked for a way to make it happen and applied to the United States Marine Corps Officer Candidate School (OCS).

His next step was to apply to law school. “Law school made sense to me. It fit with everything I wanted to do, in terms of OCS,” he said. By attending law school, Schulte would follow in the footsteps of his father, who is an attorney in the Kansas City area. “He was definitely an influence. His attitude toward law school is that it’s an education that is invaluable, regardless of what you do.”

An important criterion for Schulte in choosing a law school was to live close to family. He knew friends who attended other law schools but he was looking for something different. On his first visit to Washburn Law, he knew he had found the right fit. “I loved Washburn the moment I set foot in the door. Here, I immediately felt like the law professors were focused on helping you to learn, versus a super-competitive atmosphere. It’s definitely student-oriented.”

After a year and a half wait, Schulte received notice in spring 2011 of his acceptance to OCS and would be reporting to Quantico, Va., on June 3 for 10 weeks of training. Simultaneously, he began preparing for college graduation, OCS, and the start of law school in the fall, all of which would require preparation, organization, and assistance from others. “I have a really, really good support system—my fiancée, and my mom and dad.” Schulte was also thankful for help from Washburn Law’s Admissions Office. “Karla [Whitaker] helped me acclimate and get things in order the first week of school, and everyone was very flexible with first week information and assignments.”

Schulte described OCS as “definitely the most challenging” experience for him to date. “It is surreal how they can make the training environment feel like combat. It’s extremely intense.” Now a second lieutenant, U.S.M.C., he will return to Quantico after law school for six months of additional training before moving on to Naval Justice School for judge advocate general training. He will no doubt sneak in a round of golf when his schedule permits, but Schulte’s future focus will be on a different kind of bunker. “I feel like there are bigger things, different roads I want to pursue.”

Schulte received two bachelor’s degrees from Kansas State University, one in business administration, with a major in marketing and a certificate in international business, and the other in modern languages, with a major in Spanish.



STUDENT PROFILE

Todd Thomason

JD candidate, Business and Transactional Law Certificate, December 2011, Washburn University School of Law, and MBA candidate, December 2011, Washburn University



During his freshman year in college, Todd Thomason decided to defer his studies so he could volunteer in southern Brazil to serve the underprivileged. For two years, he performed a variety of work for the people of Curitiba, including teaching English, volunteering at a hospital, and helping residents of the “favela” or shanty towns.

“I came away from that experience knowing the power there is in caring about people and providing meaningful service to others,” Thomason said.

He returned to college and completed his studies while continuing to volunteer where needed. He served as a student leader for the Charity Anywhere Foundation in Ecuador assisting dentists and physicians who were providing care to people in need. He also tutored children to help develop their reading skills through his work with The Family Learning Center in Utah.

Thomason opted to join the workforce after completing his undergraduate degrees, intent on gaining hands-on experience before beginning his law studies. He worked for a marketing company where he was responsible for training employees, strengthening client relations, and increasing revenues. He said he strongly believes that this work experience was the best preparation for law school. “For me, working in a corporate environment and working to solve problems was a far better preparation for law school than any one undergraduate course I could have taken.”

The dual JD/MBA degree offered through Washburn Law was a factor in Thomason’s decision to apply here. “I was looking for an MBA program that was AACSB-accredited, as well as a program that complemented my legal studies. Washburn offered such a program.” He said he also looked at the law school’s certificate options, Legal Analysis, Research, and Writing Program, and the experiences available through the Washburn Law Clinic. “This combination of opportunities eventually persuaded me to choose Washburn over other schools,” he said.

A decade after his first trip to Brazil, Thomason returned to the country last summer break to complete an internship with the Office of General Council for Brazil. Thomason assisted with a variety of projects from drafting legislation position papers submitted to the Brazilian Senate to negotiating land purchases and construction contracts throughout the country. He also worked on Brazilian employment issues and constitutional issues. “The comparisons between their legal system and ours were fascinating and helped me gain a better appreciation for the American system of law,” he said. He also had the opportunity to work for a local Brazilian law firm in São Paulo, where he translated documents, observed court hearings, and worked with Brazilian attorneys.

At Washburn Law, Thomason has continued to seek out personally rewarding experiences that are vital to the less fortunate by working in the Washburn Law Clinic during the fall 2011 semester. “Working at Clinic is highly rewarding and highly educational. There are many people in the community who benefit from the legal services offered through the clinic, and that is important to see on a personal level,” he said. “I cannot compliment the professors at the Clinic enough, especially Professor **Lynette Petty, ’87**, who is an incredible attorney and a wonderful professor.”

Thomason believes earning the dual JD/MBA has prepared him to be a more competitive and comprehensive problem solver. “I believe the primary role of a lawyer is that of a problem solver. The JD/MBA program provides the opportunity to learn about each discipline through an additional lens.”

He is grateful for the opportunities he’s had as he prepares to complete his law studies and begin the next phase of his life. “I count myself lucky to have learned dozens of life lessons early on to give me perspective as I move forward and pursue a career.”

Thomason received a bachelor’s degree in English from Brigham Young University, with minors in chemistry and business, and an associate’s degree from Brigham Young University - Idaho.