

Business & Transactional Law Center



Professor Steve Ramirez



The Washburn Business & Transactional Law Center announced the consummation of two major innovations this academic year, each builds upon successes over the last three years of the Center's existence.

First, the Center announced the availability of two certificates for students wishing to focus their studies on business or transactional law. The transactional certificate will give students the opportunity to obtain demonstrable facility in transactional skills such as drafting and negotiation. The corporate law certificate will do the same for students wishing to learn corporate counseling skills and principles of business law applicable to business organizations and their managers. "We intend each of these certificates to expose students to a rigorous course of study in business and transactional law that will signal to the job market that these elite Washburn law grads have developed a foundation of skills and knowledge essential for the practice of business and transactional law," stated Steve Ramirez, Director of the Business and Transactional Law Center.

In addition to requiring a set of courses designed to achieve this goal, each certificate recipient will have to satisfy specific GPA requirements. Moreover, each recipient is required to comply with specific advanced writing and hands-on skill building experiences such as an externship or clinical representation. Fall 2005 begins the inaugural year of the Washburn Transactional Law Clinic, under the direction of Professor Janet Thompson Jackson.

The certificate programs also require each recipient to master business fundamentals such as accounting and finance. This inaugural requirement reflects perhaps the most urgent need in the education of business and transactional lawyers today. Under recent case law interpretations under the federal securities laws, under the Sarbanes-Oxley Act, under new proposed rules of professional responsibility, and under recent developments in attorney malpractice law, counsel for businesses and entrepreneurs now are obliged in certain circumstances to second-guess the business propriety of their client's decisions in order to assure they comply with fiduciary obligations and are not fraudulent. For better or for worse, the best practitioners of tomorrow must be equipped to understand the underlying business dynamics of their client's transactions. The Washburn Law Business and Transactional Center intends to give students access to this facility.

In sum, the new certificates are designed to give Washburn Law students the ability to set themselves apart from students at other institutions by permitting them to pursue a rigorous and thorough course of study in the full panoply of skills and expertise necessary to be the brightest business and transactional lawyers of tomorrow. "From our new transactional law clinic to our emphasis on business fundamentals we are convinced that our program in business and transactional law offers our students the ability to get the best business and transactional law education now available," said Ramirez. The certificates build directly on the Center's efforts over recent years to enrich the business curriculum at Washburn Law.

The second innovation for the Center this academic year is the finalization of its Board of Advisors. Three years in the making, the board gives the Center access to the experiences and expertise of a wide range of business leaders, seasoned and successful business counsel, and entrepreneurs. "We are truly privileged to have such outstanding business and transactional law leaders committed to the success and growth of the Center," Ramirez notes.

BUSINESS & TRANSACTIONAL LAW BOARD OF ADVISORS



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These leaders will serve to expose students to the most sophisticated and cutting-edge developments in business and transactional law. They will also help the Center continually refine its certificate and course offerings to reflect the most challenging problems facing business and transactional counsel.

Indeed, many of these seasoned experts have already visited with Washburn Law students to discuss a wide variety of issues related to business and transactional law. This academic year the Center brought experienced voices into the law school to discuss issues ranging from the value of an MBA or LLM degree to franchise law and recent developments in white collar crime.

The finalization of the board builds upon the continuing efforts to bring the best and brightest voices to the law school to share their insights and experiences with students. In the spring, the Center sponsored *The Third Annual Corporate Counsel Institute: Recent Developments in Kansas Financial Regulation*. The conference featured an overview of the new Kansas Blue Sky Act by Kansas Securities Commissioner Chris Biggs and his General Counsel Richard Fleming. A second panel addressed recent changes in Kansas Trust Law. Again, the goal was to expose students to the most authoritative voices available on the most current developments in business and transactional law.

Next year promises to bring even more exciting developments. Professor Jackson will be reporting on the successful initiation of the Washburn Transactional Law Clinic. Professor Brad Borden will serve as interim director of the Center, and he will certainly bring new energy and fresh perspectives on the direction of the Center. The Center is planning a symposium marking the 20th Anniversary of Delaware's landmark *Smith v. Van Gorkom* decision addressing the director's duty of care. It will be held on September 30, 2005. Ramirez who is coordinating the *Van Gorkom* symposium notes, "Once again we anticipate bringing the best authorities possible to Washburn Law to analyze the current meaning and the evolution of the duty of care over the last twenty years."

The underlying source of the Center's success has been the constant support of Washburn Law alumni. Virtually every program offered by the Center has benefited from the generous support of alums.

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 or Brad Borden at 785-670-1857 or brad.borden@washburn.edu. We look forward to hearing from you, and thank you in advance for your continuing support.