



The Business Law Section's Program for Law Students at the Sandra Day O'Connor College of Law

by Professor Myles V. Lynk | Sandra Day O'Connor College of Law, Arizona State University

Among other things, a legal education should prepare law students for careers in the practice of law. To do this effectively, law schools must engage with the organized bar on a regular basis to bring the reality of law practice onto campus and into the classroom. In order to make this idea a reality, and give students a sense of the variety of legal practices encompassed in the term, "business law," beginning in January 2010 I reached out to the Business Law Section of the State Bar of Arizona, to bring practicing members of the bar together with the law students at ASU, particularly the student members of ASU's Corporate and Business Law Students Association ("CABLS").

I contacted Scott DeWald of Lewis & Roca, LLP, who was the chair of the Business Law Section at the time, Paul Buser, and law student Sarah Olson, who then was the president of CABLS. Throughout January, February and March 2010, Scott, Paul and I discussed via numerous e-mails how best to approach this, while at the same time me and Sarah were discussing how to gauge student interest and insure a good turnout for whatever program

we decided upon. We ultimately concluded that the best way to proceed was to host two related events:

The first event would be a panel presentation at the law school by members of the Business Law Section. Each panelist would represent and discuss a particular area of business law practice. From the formation of corporations and other business entities, to bankruptcy, to commercial litigation, to probating estates or handling divorces in which business assets are involved, to the registration and sale of publicly-traded securities – we agreed to define business law broadly. The presentations would be followed by a question and answer session with the audience. This program would be open to all students at the law school.

After the close of the panel presentations there would be a second event. This would be a dinner for some of the students to meet with the panelists. Students who wanted to attend the dinner had to register in advance since the dinner was to be held in the faculty center lounge on the second floor of the law school and space

was limited. Preference was given to CABLS members. The dinner was organized so that each of the six panelists sat at a different table, and up to seven students could sit at each table. In this way, the students would be able to engage in extended and somewhat more in-depth conversations with the lawyers about the topics they had discussed on the panel, and other aspects of law practice, than they would have been able to do during the question and answer session following the earlier panel presentations. Not coincidentally, this also was an opportunity for the students to network and to introduce themselves to lawyers in areas of practice in which they might want to work after graduation from law school.

This first panel discussion and dinner took place on March 29, 2010. The six members of the Business Law Section who volunteered to serve on the panel and have dinner with the students that first year were: Charles Berry, Paul J. Buser, Ellis Carter, Scott DeWald, Brandon Kavanagh and Nancy White. The program was a great success. The panel presentations took place in room 105, the largest lecture hall at the Sandra Day O'Connor College of Law after the Great Hall, and the room was packed. Students also eagerly signed up for the dinner. They were delighted to meet with and learn from these members of the bar. One of the nicest spin-offs from this program was that the Business Law Section invited the CABLS president, Sarah Olson, and other members of CABLS to attend one of the Section's monthly breakfasts at the University Club in downtown Phoenix. The students were delighted to do so.

The program in 2010 was such a success that the Business Law Section, CABLS and I decided to repeat it in 2011. Because I was away at Duke Law School for the Fall 2010 semester, we got a slower start on the planning for 2011, but after returning to Tempe I worked with the current Business Law Section Chair, Charles Berry, and with Kyle Robertson, this year's CABLS president, to organize the event. It was held at the law school on April 7, 2011. This year's participants from the Business Law Section included some of the participants from 2010 and some new faces: Charles Berry, Paul Buser, Scott DeWald, Irena Juras, Brandon Kavanagh and Laura LoBianco. We again had a good turnout of students who were very appreciative of this opportunity to learn about how the substantive knowledge they learn in law school can be utilized in practice in widely different ways, thus enabling a lawyer to both benefit her or his clients, and craft a rewarding career.

From the law school's perspective, we would be happy to make this two-part program an annual event on the law school's spring calendar. It has been a wonderful way to help students learn about the variety of practices that encompass business law. The student organization CABLS would also like to see the panel presentation and dinner continue; this has been a great learning experience and networking opportunity for its members. Therefore, we deeply appreciate the Section's support and assistance in making this program possible, and we hope it will continue to partner with the College of Law to make this opportunity available to our students in the years to come.

about the author

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