

Practitioners deliver diverse curriculum

Visiting and adjunct professors, who are skilled practitioners and jurists, fill an important role in delivering a relevant and diverse curriculum to today's law students.

David N. Lefkowitz, who has been teaching legal malpractice law as an adjunct at Georgia Law for the last three years, enjoys his role in the classroom, ensuring that students know how to recognize and avoid malpractice. "I love providing practical knowledge to students whose previous knowledge has been mainly theoretical," he said. "Every lawyer needs to understand the risks – both legal and ethical – that arise in the attorney-client context."

With more than 25 years of experience, Lefkowitz said it is important for lawyers to recognize risky transactions, including conflicts of interest, and to consider the interplay between the Rules of Professional Conduct and the legal duties lawyers owe their clients. "I wish that when I was in law school, someone had taught a class where I could learn about the practical aspects of being a lawyer, including risk management, client relations and legal malpractice," he said.

Practitioners bring "unique and valuable" perspectives that come from their "interesting and exceptional" careers, according to Associate Dean for Academic Affairs Lori A. Ringhand. "The courses they teach are designed to tap into their expertise and to complement our already strong teaching faculty," she said.

Examples of other practitioners teaching at Georgia Law include: Rupert M. Barkoff, Kimberly R. Bourroughs (J.D.'07), J. Michael "Mike" Levensgood (J.D.'80), Kenneth W. "Ken" Mauldin (J.D.'80), Donald F. "Don" Samuel (J.D.'80) and Tina K. Shah.



Adjunct Professor David Lefkowitz said many attorneys today are running a business and practicing law, which at times are entirely consistent with each other and at times travel divergent paths. His legal malpractice course offers real-world guidance on how to navigate this sometimes tricky road.

Clerkship benefits emphasized

Georgia Law faculty and career development staff have refocused their efforts on communicating to students the advantages of post-graduate federal judicial clerkships, and these efforts are showing considerable success.

Since 2015, 30 students have secured federal clerkships both in the state of Georgia and beyond in states such as New Mexico, Texas and Florida. One student will also clerk for the Delaware Court of Chancery, which is considered the most important court in the country for business law.

Furthermore, a recent ranking published by Excess of Democracy places Georgia Law among the top 20 law schools in the nation (and 9th among public law schools) for graduates from the Classes of 2013, 2014 and 2015 securing full-time, long-term federal clerkships.

"We found that many students, especially first-year students, did not understand what a judicial clerkship is, the work they will perform or the valuable relationship they will develop with their judge," said Associate Professor Kent H. Barnett, who also serves as one of the school's faculty clerkship advisers along with David E. Shipley, who holds the Georgia Athletic Association Professorship in Law. "They did not realize the prestige marker or the gold star this will be on their résumés," Barnett added.

Part of the outreach includes faculty advisers making contact with qualified and interested students to find out their career goals; meeting with judges in locations where the students want to work; inviting these judges to campus, especially those from other circuits or states, to learn more about the quality of education provided at Georgia Law; and emphasizing to students the importance of summer internships and externships in judicial chambers, which are often unpaid but can lead to post-graduate clerkships through the advantages of clerking experience and recommendations to other judges.

"Clerkships provide a valuable introduction to the legal profession through the mentoring that takes place," Barnett said. "One's writing, thinking and professional demeanor are all shaped during this time. It's also a useful stepping stone to other prestigious and well-paying jobs, including positions in the federal government and the legal teaching academy."

Laura E. Woodson (J.D.'90), who serves as the judicial clerkship adviser in the school's Career Development Office, said the office also supports a variety of informational programs for students like the "nuts and bolts" of applying for clerkships in addition to "very hands on" consulting for putting together and improving their application packets.

She added that once judges hire from Georgia Law and they see the caliber of our students they often continue to look for other Georgia Law graduates to hire. "There is a real continuity to these relationships with our school, in addition to the lifelong relationships these judges create with their clerks."