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THE OPINION

BELATED EARLY FALL EDITION

"C'mon, you've turned in stuff late too"

WILLIAM MITCHELL
COLLEGE OF LAW

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THE OPINION

October Issue 2009

NEWS FEATURES:

02

William Mitchell's new PLP policies

04

Bread and Chocolate

HUMOR FEATURES:

05

Federalist Society Researchers Discover Scalia's Presence at the Framing of the Constitution

06

Gang Violence Increases Between William Mitchell and Hamline Law Schools

07

Advocacy Idol

08

Prof's Say The Darndest Things

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WILLIAM MITCHELL'S NEW PLP POLICIES

New PLP policy adds financial literacy, global justice to requirements

Just when you think you can check something off your “to-do” list, they go and change the list. The Multicultural Affairs office made changes to the PLP requirements for students this year including, among other things, the addition of a new Financial Literacy category.

William Mitchell students are required to accumulate a minimum of 86 credit hours to graduate. Additionally, students need to finish their PLPs – that is, their Perspectives on the Legal Profession. Previously, as 1L’s know well from orientation, students were required to attend nine PLP events across four categories and to attend a court or administrative hearing before the end of their fall semester as a 2L.

Now, students will be required to complete a fifth category, and fulfilling those requirements may have become a little tougher under a slightly more stringent enforcement of PLP certification policy. No longer are events like “movie night” rubber-stamped for PLP status; now they have to earn their PLP stripes.

CHANGES FOR STUDENTS

As Multicultural Affairs Specialist Sharon Van Leer noted, PLP’s exist to help students function in a complex legal environment. William Mitchell made changes for this year in PLP requirements for students, as well as organizations seeking to put on certain kinds of PLP events.

Before the end of their third semester at Mitchell (fall semester of second year for full-time students), all new 1L’s are required to complete the following: two events of Global Justice in a Diverse Society, two events of Financial Literacy, two events in Career, and three events spread across the two categories of Perspectives and Stress Management. This is in addition to a one-hour court visit of a trial, dispositive motion (think 12(b)(6) or summary judgment), administrative hearing, ADR hearing or settlement conference.

Under a grandfather clause, 2L’s and anyone else beyond 1L still finishing PLP requirements have the same requirements as when they started: two events for Justice in a Diverse Society, two events in Careers, two events Perspectives, two events in Stress Management, and the one-hour visit to a trial, dispositive motion, administrative hearing, ADR hearing or settlement conference.

The new Financial Literacy category will focus on students’ debt management and getting grants and loans. New students are required to attend two events. Two events will be offered in the fall, and two events will be offered in the spring to help students complete this requirement.

While it has always been a requirement for a student to complete their PLP requirements by the end of their third semester, the school is stepping up enforcement. For those who fail to complete the requirement, Van Leer’s office will be sending out reminder letters earlier in the student’s fourth semester. As always, if a student fails to complete the PLP requirements, William Mitchell may not certify him or her to graduate.

CHANGES FOR STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

Student organizations are often a resource for students to complete their PLP requirements in a timely manner. This highlights the importance of any change in policy or increase in policy enforcement for a student organization function to get certified as a PLP event.

While it is always a policy that a student organization event cannot receive PLP certification for just showing a movie, there will be more focus by the Multicultural Affairs office to see what else the event is offering. This issue most often surrounds an attempt to get a Diverse Society PLP credit. The office will be looking at the nature of the event itself, whether the event evaluates the movie, and whether it has a Q&A session. Van Leer noted that movies take well over an hour of a student's time and that her office wants to look at the quality of the event as a whole before certifying it as a PLP.

For student organizations that are seeking certification of their event as a PLP, there are people to contact. All potential Diverse Society events should be sent to Sharon Van Leer. Perspective events can be sent to the Office of Student Life or Van Leer. Financial Literacy events should be sent to Patty Harris (Director of Financial Aid). Career events should be sent to Karen Vander Sanden (Manager of Career and Professional Development). If a student organization is unsure whether their event qualifies for PLP certification, they can ask Sharon Van Leer.

PLP FESTIVALS

A change from last year that some students may have already noticed is the availability of fewer PLP Festivals or other programs designed to allow students to get multiple PLP's completed in a single day. Last school year, SBA (Student Bar Association) President Elise Peterson put on multiple PLP Festivals during the fall and spring semester.

While fewer in number, similar events are being planned this school year. The Minnesota Justice Foundation scheduled a two-part Navigating Public Interest series in October. Students would receive one Diversity, one Career, one Perspective and one Finance PLP credit for completing the two-Saturday series. The second part of this series is scheduled for October 31 from 9 to 11 a.m. in room 223. Additionally, Elder Law and the Estate Planning Society are conjunctively planning another PLP festival for the spring.

However, SBA-directed PLP Festivals were eliminated over this school year by the SBA. This was attributed to a number of issues, including the SBA working with more limited resources due to lower enrollment and an increase in student organization requests for funding. SBA President Kyle Moen noted that it's the traditional view of the SBA that student organizations are best equipped to spend student activity fees in support of the student body. At the moment, the SBA is working with several student organizations as well as sections of the MSBA to co-sponsor a variety of PLP's throughout the year.

In the interest of full disclosure it should be noted that Elise Peterson was a Calendar Editor and regular contributor to The Opinion

AROUND THE NEIGHBORHOOD: BREAD AND CHOCOLATE

By: Mike Vogel

Editor's note: We at The Opinion have made it an initiative to highlight the neighborhood which Mitchell shares. We all hear students talking about various nearby places to eat and drink (Starbucks, Café Latte, Chipotle, Billy's, Axel's), however, the Mitchell neighborhood, has many more places to hang out, have coffee, have a meal, or have a drink. All food and beverages are paid for out of pocket from the reviewer, and are not subsidized by The Opinion, or the SBA (because nobody is subsidizing a law student when they go on these excursions).

Yeah, I'm a chocoholic. I've been known to walk seven blocks in freezing rain to buy a Campfire Mocha Cooler from Caribou Coffee, and then spend the remainder of the week recovering from pneumonia thinking to myself: "totally worth it." Thus, when I see a coffee and pastry shop known as "Bread and Chocolate," I tend to find myself entering the establishment in the same way that a 1L walks into Civil Procedure and turns on his/her laptop. It just happens.

It was about 1:30 on a Saturday afternoon in October when I got in there. The tables were about 85 percent full, and there were two sets of lines: one for sandwiches and one for coffee/pastries. The coffee/pastries line took about two minutes. I got a 16-ounce iced coffee and a chocolate fudge brownie. I counted roughly 27 different pastry items to choose from. (I'm cheap, so I just got the brownie.) The medium decaf iced coffee set me back only \$1.50, and the brownie was \$1.85 (not including tax).

It took me a minute or two to find a table with a nearby outlet to plug in the laptop, although they are available, especially near the door leading outside. Those tables are a little out of the way of everyone, which could be useful if you are there to study. It was a nice touch that a staff member (I counted six total behind and in front of the counter) did follow me to the table and made sure it was clean before I put my stuff down; you won't get that at every coffee shop. The extra crowd did provide a little more noise than I'm used to for a coffee/pastry/sandwich shop-type environment.

My usual test for a coffee shop is whether they can brew a good iced coffee. Bread and Chocolate did not use cold-pressed coffee, which is often how most coffee shops do that drink, but they iced the fresh, hot stuff. This made for a fresher-tasting coffee that I found to be less acidic than the larger chains; however, the lower acidity may or may not have been because of the icing of the hot coffee, causing more dilution. I would have liked to have known what this would have tasted like with the use of cold pressing. Although, I only paid \$1.50 for the coffee before tax, so I can still recommend it at this lower price. At the usual table of coffee additions, I found half-and-half (which I normally use), but I couldn't find skim, whole, or 2 percent milk.

The brownie was everything a chocoholic could want and more. I usually don't like my chocolate too sweet because I like to taste the actual chocolate itself, which is a little bitter, and not just the sugar. This establishment seemed to understand this concept. This brownie was moist and had chocolate ganache piled on top. Definitely worth your \$1.85 (before tax).

Overall, I would recommend this place. Make sure your laptop is charged, though, if you go during a crowded time. Since it gets noisy when it's crowded, you may want to bring an MP3 player full of study music if that's what you are planning on doing while you're there. Bread and Chocolate is on Victoria and Grand is just across the street from Pottery Barn.

Federalist Society Researchers Discover Scalia's Presence at the Framing of the Constitution

Supreme Court Justice also observed legislative sessions for Amendments

Researchers at the Federalist Society for Law and Public Policy Studies have recently discovered the presence of Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia at the drafting and ratification of the United States Constitution in 1787.

"Our research has uncovered definitive proof that Justice Scalia was present at the Philadelphia Convention, during which the Constitution was written and enacted." Federalist Society President Eugene Meyer said.

"This just proves what we've already known for years: Scalia and Scalia alone best knows how to read and interpret the U.S. Constitution.

"Because of his unique position and experience, he bests understands how a reasonable person living at the time of ratification would have understood the words [of the Constitution] to mean."

Many were perplexed at the idea that Scalia, born only in 1936, could have been witness to an event occurring almost 150 years prior to his birth. Meyer admitted that he did not have a definitive answer to this, but posited several possibilities, including time travel and wizardry.

"Scalia has many powers and abilities beyond that of a normal Justice. He found a way."

Meyer then gazed longingly at a large portrait of Scalia hanging on his office wall.

Further Federalist research has shown Scalia to be present at every Congressional legislative session at which Constitutional amendments were drafted.

Additionally, researchers have also uncovered a unique practice of Scalia's: while hearing cases on Constitutional issues, Scalia consults with the souls of the drafters using their collected skulls via a complex and arcane ceremony. This process allows Scalia communion with the meaning of the Constitution as regarded at the time of its respective drafting.

"This doesn't come as any surprise to me really" said William Mitchell Student and WMCL Federalist Society Member Chad Gangestad.

"Scalia knows what he's talking about. I mean it's Scalia. How could someone be that arrogant in his opinions if he wasn't the world's foremost authority on the Constitution?"

"You know, I've heard a lot of non-believers whine about how Scalia's 'original meaning' doctrine is just a flimsy ideological cover used by individuals with a vested interest in maintaining the status quo.

"This new research puts that sacrilege to rest for good."

GANG VIOLENCE INCREASES BETWEEN WILLIAM MITCHELL AND HAMLINE LAW SCHOOLS

TURF WAR ESCALATES TO DRIVE BY LAW REVIEW CHUCKINGS

By: Shmuck Maccallister

Yesterday, three William Mitchell students were taken into custody by St. Paul's Gang Strike Force on gang related destruction of property charges. This arrest was in connection with a brick that flew from an unidentified SUV into the Dean's Suite at Hamline earlier this month. Tied to the brick was a copy of the Spring 2009 edition of The William Mitchell Law Review, and a note saying "FOOTNOTE THIS!" The three are being held on 25,000 dollars bail.

This latest incident of gang destruction comes after a recent escalation between the gangs from William Mitchell, commonly referred to as The IRAC's, and Hamline University School of Law, commonly referred to as The Rulers of Civil Procedure. William Mitchell's IRAC gang members are often seen wearing red and black, and identify themselves by holding up to each other their latest project in WRAP class. Hamline University's The Rulers of Civil Procedure often dress in red and white, and identify themselves to one another by showing a list of their OCI bids.

John Patterson, head of the St. Paul gang strike force explained to The Opinion that this turf war seemed to originate from a constant fluctuation of rankings between Hamline University and William Mitchell in the US News and World Report rankings. Patterson noted, "One year, one school would be ranked higher, and another year, another one. This creates animosity between the two rival gangs, as it is well noted that the only thing that prospective law students ever look at is the US News rankings."

US News and World Report declined to comment over the phone, but did send a press release stating, "We Rule All!"

In 2008, while Mitchell was recovering from being ranked lower than Hamline in the US News rankings, members of Hamline's Rulers of Civil Procedure spray painted on Mitchell's walls "come see our sub-par scholarship offerings." The Strike Force noted that this was a pre-emptive strike onto Mitchell to secure Hamline's ranking for the next year. Mitchell's The IRAC's retaliated three weeks later by papering Hamline's campus with flyers stating, "Your following of proper Blue Book Citations in your legal research papers are inconsistent and not worthy of publication."

The 2009 Rankings placed Mitchell higher than Hamline causing Hamline gang members to drive by William Mitchell's campus in an unidentified sedan, stop the vehicle, and shout, "Your analysis of post Pennoyer v. Neff jurisdiction rulings is below average and shows only a rudimentary understanding of personal jurisdiction issues." Witnesses say the vehicle then sped off, and many were left in tears. Sources tell The Opinion that the latest law review chucking, that led to the arrests, was in retaliation to this incident.

Patterson commented, "I've been working to bust gangs in the Twin Cities for fifteen years, and I've never seen a war as bad as the one between William Mitchell and Hamline."

Shmuck MacCallister is a staff writer, who, when asked where he gets his ideas from, replied "none of your damn business."

WILLIAM MITCHELL ANNOUNCES: Advocacy Idol

By Stuart Stendahl

Appellate Advocacy students at Mitchell seem to be smiling more this year than ever before. Why is this, the curious observer might ask?

Is it because the now famous trial of Lamar v. Cullen has come out on DVD? No, no, of course not, that would be too easy.

Well, in short, Paula Abdul has been lured away from less illustrious (and perhaps, lucrative) programs like “VH1 Divas” and “X-Factor,” and has been hired full-time as the WMCL Chief Resident Advocacy Judge.

Responding to some crestfallen student complaints recorded in Hachey Commons last spring after their appellate arguments, WMCL decided to instill a sitting judge that might use a kindler, more gentle approach to constructive criticism.

Her knack for finding something positive in almost every performance, and her emotionally-laden praise for contestants whose style she really likes makes her naturally a “star” faculty member already.

Simply put, she’s begun counteracting some of the advocacy criticisms such as: “During your oral argument, all I heard you say was blah blah blah...” and “Just turn around, stick your little tail between your legs, and leave my courtroom...” to “Are you really going to wear your hair like that to court, because it is really distracting?”

With more positive criticisms like this: “America loves you!”¹ or “When you go to meetings or auditions and you fail to prepare, prepare to fail. It is simple but true;” or “You’re authentic!” or “It wasn’t your best performance, but...”

Abdul told The Opinion that she was inspired to make her coup de grace by the recent confirmation of one Sonia Sotomayor to the Supreme Court.

And Abdul believes she will relate very well with the diverse student body. After all, she is on Facebook (but not during oral arguments wink, wink), a Latino, and was a Laker Girl last decade.

So far, Justice Abdul has exhibited a similar clothing preference to Justice Ginsburg, and students are giddy to get showered by her signature hand-clapping; That is, before coming back down to earth after their grades are posted from their written work.

When asked about her judicial scoring philosophy, Abdul told us that she is constrained by the well-known “advocacy tradition” of giving lower scores at the beginning of the semester, only to become more liberal toward the end, just to make students work harder and harder and harder for no good reason.

Abdul reasoned it this way: “When people expect me to go right, I’ll go left. I’m unpredictable!”

Ahhh yes... I think she will fit right in with the rest of the cadre.

PROF'S SAY THE DARNDDEST THINGS

As boring as many of them are, law professors are capable of producing witty zingers. We've collected many of them and printed them here. If you have any fun quotes, quips, sayings or verbalizations from your Mitchell professors, send them to us. We could print the quotes, and then take credit for finding them.

"We're going to get through assault and battery in the next hour. It's like speed dating...except its assault and battery."

"Here's part of the practical wisdom that you get for no extra charge."

"I have a queen size bed, and I have two things next to me: The UCC, and The Blue Book."

"Let me start off by telling you how cool Sales is..."

"Do you guys wanna hear some good gossip?"

"I just wanna stick around here long enough to get Erlinder's office."

"You guys all get A's tonight just because you showed up and your classmates didn't."

"This school is like Noah's ark -- its got two of everything!"

"Who puts the Patent Act after the Bern Convention. This thing must have been put together by copyright attorneys"

"Samuel Morse is a dirtbag."

"This shows you the degree to which I have studied this stuff way too much."

"I train people as patent attorneys. I'm wasteful myself in economic costs."

"We had a screenwriter, who decided to become a patent attorney, now we have less entertaining films because of it."

DO YOU HAVE AN OPINION?

- ARE YOU A JOURNALIST?
- IF NOT, DO YOU STILL WANT TO DO SOME REPORTING ANYWAY?
- DO YOU LIKE TO WRITE?

OR

- DO YOU THINK YOU'RE FUNNY
- WERE YOU THE CLASS CLOWN
- DID YOU THINK YOU WERE FUNNIER THAN THE CLASS CLOWN, BECAUSE HE WAS A COMPLETE HACK AND YOU WERE HANDING YOUR HIGH SCHOOL CLASSMATES COMIC GOLD AND THEIR ONLY RESPONSE WAS "UH...I DON'T GET IT" BECAUSE THEY HAD THE COLLECTIVE INTELLIGENCE OF A NUMBER 9 STEEL LOCK WASHER BUT THEY STILL PUSHED YOU SO FAR OVER THE EDGE YOU DECIDED TO SELL YOUR SOUL AND GO TO LAW SCHOOL AND STUDY PATENTS, TRADEMARKS AND COPYRIGHTS*?

**WE'RE LOOKING FOR REPORTERS AND HUMOR WRITERS!
E-MAIL michael.vogel@wmitchell.edu IF YOU ARE INTERESTED.**

