School Launches ADR Program

Growing demand among students and practicing attorneys has led the School of Law to create the Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) Program. In January 2004 Karen Tokarz, professor of law and director of clinical education, was named director of the new program, and C.J. Larkin, lecturer in law, was named ADR administrative director.

“Awareness of ADR and interest in this swiftly developing field is steadily increasing among law students and lawyers. There is a growing demand for new ADR classes and training programs,” notes Larkin, an experienced community mediator and mediation trainer.

ADR, an umbrella term, encompasses such skills and processes as problem solving, negotiation, mediation, arbitration, and other forms of conflict resolution.

“Negotiation and mediation are nuanced approaches that require diverse analytical and interpersonal skills,” explains Larkin. “Once students and attorneys are exposed to a systematic approach to understanding ADR theory and begin working on skill development, they are eager to continue with additional course work and training.”

The School offers multiple sections of ADR Theory & Practice and Mediation Theory & Practice. Small class sizes allow extensive role-playing and use of simulation exercises.

“We are fortunate to have exceptionally talented mediation experts in our community to assist us as adjunct faculty in these intensive formats,” says Tokarz, a civil rights and employment law mediator.

Current ADR faculty include Leonard Frankel, JD ’65, Frankel, Rubin, Bond & Dubin; Alan Freed, JD ’83, Paule, Camazine & Blumenthal; Michael Geigerman, U.S. Arbitration and Mediation Midwest; and Kathleen Whitby, Spencer Fane Britt & Browne.

A new course, Negotiation Theory & Practice, is being offered this academic year. It is being taught by Judi McLean Parks, the Reuben C. and Anne Carpenter Taylor Professor of Organizational Behavior at Washington University’s Olin School of Business. She is editor of the International Journal of Conflict Management and past president of the Conflict Management Division of the Academy of Management.

“Businesses have been using ADR and negotiation for a long time as a way to contain costs,” says McLean Parks. “Being a skillful negotiator is a central aspect of being a successful lawyer.”

Students in Tokarz’s Civil Rights & Community Justice Clinic also receive 16 hours of mediation training; observe mediation experts; and participate in community, juvenile, employment, and family mediations with Larkin and Tokarz.

The ADR Program plans to bring speakers and conferences to the School of Law. Kenneth Feinberg (see page 44) will be discussing negotiation and the September 11 Victim Compensation Fund this fall.

To help address the St. Louis professional community’s ADR needs, the School recently offered two mediation trainings. The March program focused on civil mediation, while the June program offered civil mediation and family mediation training.

C.J. Larkin conducts a mediation training.

Larkin and Tokarz also are working with local mediators, including lawyers from Sonnenschein Nath & Rosenthal LLP to provide conflict resolution skills training for youths in St. Louis neighborhoods.

Tokarz concludes, “Our goals are to develop capable, ethical mediators and to build new conflict resolution resources in the region.”