As Chris Piatt, JD ’10, has discovered, it pays to think outside
the box, especially outside the traditional, post-law-school, job-
market box. And it pays to find just the right mentor.

Although he originally envisioned a different career path, Piatt
now utilizes his law training as a campus director in Oklahoma
for Vatterott Educational Centers Inc. “I’ve always thought law
would be interesting no matter where you ended up, but I was
particularly drawn to business defense, including employment
law and product liability,” Piatt says. “However, my current job
pushed me into a different career path, while still allowing me to
use my legal training. It has made me realize that I could step into
any job and be successful.”

As a law student, Piatt had completed a summer internship
with a Tulsa law firm. Unfortunately, the firm couldn’t afford to
hire any of its interns. “The market was tough, especially at the
time I was looking for a job,” he recalls.

Now a captain in the Army, Piatt was deployed to Iraq after
three semesters of law school, which meant his graduation date
was pushed back to December. He soon found himself competing
with associates who were also looking for work. “It seemed like
I was the only one interviewing for entry-level jobs without
three years’ experience,” he says. “Recent graduates had flooded
the market.”

Enter Scott Casanover, JD ’00, chief administrator and general
 counselors at Vatterott, who had approached the Career Services
Office about an opening for a student affairs liaison at Vatterott.
The position required handling everything from “I don’t like my
teacher” to negotiating a settlement when a student breaks x-ray
equipment during an externship, Casanover recalls.

“Hiring recent law graduates is a luxury that the current
job market allows,” Casanover says. “A decade ago, I couldn’t
have afforded to hire a young lawyer for this type of position.”

Despite a fairly narrow job posting and the call to the
CSO office, Casanover still received 200 résumés from around

Poscover Guides National CLE Transformation

Alumnus Inspired by Value of Ongoing Education, Service

As law schools adopt learning models that incorporate
more web-based technologies, those same cutting-edge tools are
required of vehicles for postgraduate legal training, says Maury
Poscover, JD ’69.

For the past seven years, Poscover has been on the front lines
of a significant transformation in the national delivery of Con-
tinuing Legal Education (CLE) programs, working to advance
both quality and accessibility. By all accounts, those efforts have
paid off.

A partner with Husch Blackwell LLP in St. Louis, Poscover
has participated in providing CLE as a panelist and presenter for
many years. His interest is heightened through his work as a
board member of the American Law Institute–American Bar
Association’s CLE (ALI–ABA CLE), a joint effort of the ALI and
the ABA formed in 1947. After being appointed to the board in
2005, he served as president for three years with his term ending
in May 2012.

Then when the long-standing ALI–ABA CLE was recently
phased out by mutual agreement, he agreed to serve a one-
year term on the new ALI–ABA committee to help guide
the transition.

Historically, the most common way to access CLE programs
was through on-site instruction, but in recent years, new learning
platforms developed quickly and dramatically, Poscover says.

“Compared to 2005, about 50 percent of current ALI–ABA
CLE revenues come from web-based products and services that
didn’t exist seven years ago,” he says. “Now, a practicing law-
ner who has an issue come up at 4:30 p.m. on a Friday can, at
midnight, go online and watch an hour-and-a-half CLE program,
which may have been recorded six months ago, but that provides
information and background to permit him or her to better
understand a particular area of law.”

It’s a constant challenge to keep up with technologies that
permit state-of-the-art delivery, Poscover says, but he stresses that
ALI–ABA is remarkably agile. “Because ALI–ABA is so current
in technology, if, for example, new regulations are announced
tomorrow or there’s a Supreme Court decision on the health
care law, we can put a program together drawing on a wealth of

For Students, Alumni Are Formative Mentors

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20 | Washington University Law Magazine  FALL 2012
Piatt says. “I’m gaining experience in business, management, operations, and education.”
Above all, Piatt says he is grateful for Casanover’s help. “Scott is a great mentor,” Piatt says. “He is always trying to help me develop as an attorney and a professional.”
Casanover believes attorneys make great mid-level and leadership-level employees, citing their critical reasoning and analysis abilities, communication skills, and tendency to serve clients with compassion.
Casanover’s own career has taken several interesting turns. Following law school, he was a trial lawyer for eight years and then served as general counsel for a small St. Louis corporation. His current role at Vatterott affords a rewarding combination of work challenges. As chief administrator, he manages Vatterott’s marketing department, a call center, and the human resources department. As general counsel, he deals with intellectual property, real estate transactions, contracts, employee litigation, regulatory considerations, and other legal concerns.
“The education sector is interesting from a legal perspective because for-profit institutions are heavily regulated and because of the variety of legal issues that can come up on any given day,” he says.
Casanover encourages current students and recent alumni to consider opportunities beyond traditional law practice. “There’s a lot of variety in rewarding positions within nonlegal markets. Employers are hungry for smart, hard-working people like law school graduates.”
—By Janet Edwards