Academic Course on International Trademark Law

The Academic Course is a series of introductions to basic trademark law and practice around the world. But that doesn’t mean everyone in the audience is a novice.

Law students who attend have the opportunity to network with the instructors—some of the leading experts in trademark law—and with other seasoned practitioners who see benefit in the course. “I’ve been practicing law since 1978, but I still found the briefings useful. So many things change in so many countries—it’s impossible to keep up,” said Bill Coughlin, President and CEO of Ford Global Technologies, during the lunch break yesterday: “The range of countries and sessions is always spot on, and updated every year.”

During the 2012 course, trademark experts and professors shared experiences and reviewed registration systems and case law from such regions as Africa, Asia-Pacific, Canada, Central America, Eastern Europe, Mexico, South America, the U.S., and Western Europe.

Academic Day: A day of practical matters for professors and students

Exploring the Outer Limits of Trademark Law
This year’s professor track kicked off with a panel open to all Annual Meeting attendees. “In previous years professors have talked about the limits on trademarks where, for example, trademarks come up against free speech concerns,” says David C. Berry, professor at Thomas Cooley Law School and vice-chair of the Academic Committee. “The idea here was to look at areas where trademark law is actually expanding. The panelists spoke about how rights are being recognized in new areas, such as the growth of nontraditional marks.”

Professor Luncheon
Speakers at the 2012 professor luncheon included Deborah Cohn, Commissioner for Trademarks at the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office and

David C. Berry, professor at Thomas Cooley Law School and vice-chair of the Academic Committee.
Ernesto Rubio, Special Projects Coordinator—International Cooperation & Legal Affairs Dept at OHIM, the trademark office of the European Union.

“In the past we have had talks from in-house counsel—which have been wonderful because they have given the academics a real insight into commercial trademark concerns, but we couldn’t miss the opportunity of having government speakers while the Annual Meeting was in Washington DC,” says Karina Dimidjian-Lecomte of Casalonga Avocats, and chair of the Academic Committee.

Cohn and Rubio discussed the role the academic community plays in trademarks.

Academic Day’s Student Track included sessions about networking and how to interview—providing law students with tips on how to tackle the tough job market. “We all went to law school. We know what it’s like and how it doesn’t teach you how to get a job at the end of it or ways of enhancing your career,” says Dimidjian-Lecomte.

**Networking 101**

The networking session offered some dos and don’ts for expanding students’ professional networks. One of the speakers, Susan Brady Blasco of Birch, Stewart, Kolasch & Birch, says that the session gives students plenty of practical advice.

“Networking is an essential component of the life of an attorney,” says Honore Ndondjie, INTA student member (Thomas Cooley Law School, United States). The skill to network efficiently is not taught in law school or is it part of the curriculum. However, the Career and Professional Development in most schools place emphasis on networking when counseling students.”

Blasco advises students to set goals before they attend networking events to ensure that they remain focused. “Tell yourself that you want to meet two new people, or five,” she says. They should also widen their definition of networking. “Every time you meet new people or catch up with friends is an opportunity to network.”

**What to Say to Land the Job: How to Answer the Tough Interview Questions**

This session explored how to best present yourself during an interview and discuss what employers are looking for when they ask, “Where do you see yourself in five years?” Pooja S. Krumenacker, Esq., founder and CEO of Balanced Legal Solutions, Inc. shared her advice with the attendees.

“Some useful tips provided during the session included how to deal with your weaknesses by turning them into strengths and learning about the firm or company at which you are interviewing, says Nancy Verastegui, INTA student member (Instituto Tecnologico y de Estudios Superiores de Monterrey, Mexico).

“It is often overlooked but so important to know the firm or company at which you are interviewing. You will come across as being prepared and having done your homework, but it also helps create a conversational tone during the interview—you will have something in common to talk about,” says Verastegui. “You don’t want the interview to feel like it is just a Q&A session. The person conducting the interview should take away something memorable from the interview, which can’t happen if it is just a Q&A.”