

American Bar Association (ABA) Introduces Construction Law Module to ACE Mentor Curriculum

The ACE Mentor Program and the American Bar Association (ABA) Forum on the Construction Industry have teamed to integrate a contract, claims and dispute resolution activity into the ACE after-school program.

The ABA construction law module is a three-part activity, designed to introduce the students to contracts, contract administration/interpretation, construction claims, dispute resolution, negotiation and settlement over the course of two hours.

After a brief introduction about contracts, mentors divide students into the roles of owner, general contractor and subcontractor in the midst of a mock negotiation about a contract dispute that arises during the construction of a new school.

Ideally, the module is facilitated by an attorney. However, if one is not available, the module is self-explanatory for mentors from other professions. After the three parties to the contract engage in a mock negotiation, mentors lead students through a post-negotiation analysis of lessons learned. The construction law module was piloted in the Greater New York Affiliate this past year generating great enthusiasm among the students.



Robert M. D'Onofrio, P.E., ACE mentor and a project manager with URS Corporation, recalls, "The students especially enjoyed the mock negotiation. Most young people never have an opportunity to learn how to effectively resolve problems in a calm professional manner. Through the module curriculum, they learn a valuable skill that will benefit them in whatever career they choose to pursue."

The construction law module will be available to all affiliates for the 2013-2014 school year. The ABA Forum on the Construction Industry is also compiling a list of ABA mentor volunteers from across the country to help facilitate the module.

International Risk Management Institute, Inc. (IRMI), also a sponsor of ACE, is considering the development of a similar risk management module for the program. Jack Gibson, president and CEO of IRMI, says, "Risk management, insurance and surety tie into the construction law issues to some extent and are critical to the success of projects. Those companies wherein risk management thinking permeates through the organization tend to be the most successful at managing risk. For this reason, it makes a lot of sense to introduce young people to the concepts before they enter the workforce."

For more information or for a list of ABA mentor volunteers, contact Nicholas D. Siegfried at nsiegfried@siegfriedlaw.com. ■

Mentoring Simply Makes Good Business Sense



Murray Savage

CEO

Professional Service Industries, Inc. (PSI)

ACE Mentor Program National Board of Directors/Treasurer

PSI has been a proud national sponsor of the ACE Mentor Program for several years. As an industry leading engineering, testing and consulting firm, PSI believes it is important to invest in the future of our industry. Moreover, the ACE Mentor Program provides PSI a great avenue to impact the next generation of workforce talent.

Several of PSI's offices are engaged in the ACE Mentor Program with staff participating as mentors and

contributors to the program. The opportunity to present students real-world challenges and work situations in a collaborative and learning environment benefits not only the students but the mentors as well. ACE exposes students to real world projects in a real work environment resulting in an invaluable hands-on education and gives mentors the chance to teach and share their knowledge and experience. Additionally, involvement with ACE at both the national and local level presents PSI with opportunities to network and build relationships with other industry leaders and decision-makers.

Put simply, PSI's sponsorship and active participation in ACE makes good business sense by giving back to our industry, positively influencing young people, and involving our staff with other industry leaders.