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Teachers With 'Real World' Expertise

MBA schools call on the business community's experts

By Liz Swain

*Attorney Louis Galuppo, who teaches real estate courses at USD, finds the classroom a nice transition from work.
(photo/lambertphoto.com)*



If you really think you know a subject, try to teach it," advises Roger Mandel, a business systems analyst consultant working with Spawar (Space and Naval Warfare Systems Command).

Graduate business program adjuncts like Mandel — an instructor for the Keller Graduate School of Management — generally work full time in occupations ranging from strategic management to the law. They teach part time and draw upon their experience to provide depth to course materials like textbooks.

"Taking the value of real-world experience and allowing a faculty to relate that to the theories taught from academia is where the real learning takes place," says Bruce Williams, University of Phoenix vice president and director of San Diego campuses.

In addition to bringing work experience into the classroom, instructors find that teaching provides off-campus career benefits. "When you teach, you're always learning," says Mandel, who recently taught project management at Keller. In the classroom, he regards students as his customers. At the start of a course, these customers fill out questionnaires so that Mandel can structure classes to meet their needs.

Mandel's involvement in teaching started on the job. While in civil service, he taught Navy courses. He enjoyed the mix of working in business and the classroom, so Mandel earned a

teaching certificate from San Diego State University. He also has a graduate degree in organizational management from the University of Phoenix. Mandel went from teaching business courses like PowerPoint at East County community colleges to assisting at Keller in 1997.

National University instructor Noel Haskins-Hafer knows that teaching enhances career opportunities. After moving to the San Diego area in the mid-1990s, Haskins-Hafer found a need for educators with MBAs. She had a graduate business degree and computer experience. However, the campus wanted an instructor to teach computer security. So Haskins-Hafer researched the topic and ended up teaching it for 13 semesters.

“I constantly pick up new ideas and skills,” says Haskins-Hafer, who worked until Oct. 31 as a consultant at SRA International. She served as a systems requirements analyst for Spawar until that contract ended, but teaching could again lead to employment. “My previous job I found through a student,” says Haskins-Hafer. She was wrapping up work on a Y2K contract when the student asked for a job recommendation. They discussed the job, and Haskins-Hafer ended up working for the company too. Another time, a student impressed with her teaching skills took Haskins-Hafer’s résumé to National University.

Haskins-Hafer developed a data warehouse management course for National’s e-commerce program. “I looked at the textbook— it was a wonderful book— but it was old,” she says. She researched to update the text material and first taught the course this fall.

Chapman University instructor Gary Brenner began teaching while in the Air Force. He later earned an MBA and came to California to attend law school. “I got hooked on teaching — I wanted to teach part time,” he says. A business attorney whose area of law includes acquisitions, mergers, sales and incorporation and partnerships, Brennan has been teaching for 19 years.

At Chapman, Brenner teaches business-related courses like accounting and economics. “Lots of times when clients call, it’s more about business (than law) — licenses, international transactions, employment and breach of contract,” says Brenner. “It all has a direct application to class. Bankruptcy, Chapter 11 issues — I’ve been there, representing clients on the other side. I tell students, ‘There isn’t anything here you won’t use.’”

Brenner also learns from his students. Because of teaching, “I’m a better attorney, a better person,” he says. “No matter how tough my day is, I get recharged (in the classroom). Students generally work full time, have families and are in class. They hunger for knowledge, and it gives me energy and enthusiasm.”

Attorney Louis Galuppo’s teaching started with a seminar he gave at his alma mater, California Western School of Law. He spoke about how to be a sole practitioner. “I enjoyed mentoring rather than lecturing. I thought it’s not a bad way to earn a living,” says Galuppo. That thought was reinforced by the fact his wife, Kati, is a teacher. She taught at the Summit School, a county court campus for at-risk students. She persuaded her husband to coach a mock trial.

“I thought maybe it’s time to give something back,” says Galuppo, who has taught at the University of San Diego since 1998. He teaches a graduate course in real estate law with a land-use perspective and an undergraduate course about the legal aspects of real estate.

Galuppo finds the classroom a nice transition from work.

“The practice of law is very grueling day-to-day,” he says. “I re-examine an issue or a particular legal theory as a lawyer and a (former) real estate professional,” says Galuppo. “They come out understanding what the law is about. ‘If you do this in this case and breach that contract, it will cost X amount of dollars and cause this.’”

Not only legal professionals enjoy the transition from the workplace to the classroom.

“Sometimes it’s a welcome break,” says Mary Ellen Dellefield, clinical program manager of nursing at the Veterans Administration Hospital. She’s been teaching since 1993 and teaches several courses at the University of Phoenix. These include an introductory graduate nursing course and the final capstone course for nursing management. “I started because it seemed like a fun adjunct to work,” says Dellefield.



Mary Ellen Dellefield of the Veterans Administration Hospital uses work situations as case studies for her University of Phoenix students. (photo/lambertphoto.com)

Like Galuppo, she may discuss a work situation with her class. “I use it as a case study. Students share insight, I go back (to work) and see things in a new way,” says Dellefield. “I think it makes our teaching more vibrant that we come from settings where we apply concepts.”

When Ed Rogers inquired about the University of California Irvine’s MBA program, school officials asked him to lecture about e-commerce. Rogers realized that the topic couldn’t be covered in a lecture. “I asked to do a class. In 1998, the Internet was beginning to work into the corporate world,” says Rogers. He found that teaching led to improved on-the-job presentation skills. Rogers, vice president of professional services for Integrated Micro Systems, teaches courses in three quarters at UCI’s Graduate School of Management — an e-business lab, an e-commerce practicum and an e-commerce course. “Students hear the reasons behind case studies. I worked at Cisco. (I tell them) ‘Let me tell you what really happened,’” he says.

Rogers schedules guest speakers, an arrangement that benefits students and instructor. Students gain access to representatives from different companies. So does Rogers. “I get to hear what I wouldn’t in a customer/vendor relationship. We bond. Later, if they have a project, we network.”

The instructor says most employers make time for his teaching schedule. “In my job, I travel a lot. I don’t travel on Monday because Monday is when I teach,” says Rogers.



Teaching tax courses at SDSU helped Katie

San Diego State University instructor Katie Jaques first taught as an employee with the state Franchise Tax Board. Jaques and a co-worker began teaching a California tax law course at the University of California, San Diego extension. When the course was discontinued, SDSU asked Jaques to teach a tax course in 1980.

She moved to private sector employment when, in 1987, Arthur Andersen hired her as a state and local tax consultant. When she started work, Jaques received an outline and the assignment to teach a

Jaques in her career as a tax consultant for Arthur Andersen. (photo/lambertphoto.com)

three-day training program on taxes. “I think my being recruited by Andersen was influenced by my teaching at State,” she says.

Jaques continued as a trainer at Andersen and now teaches an elective taxation course for SDSU’s master of science in accounting. At SDSU, students study tax court cases and complete tax returns. She retired from Andersen on Oct. 31, but will work as a freelance consultant and continue to teach.

When Jon Kingsbury retired, he moved from the East Coast to earn a doctorate in strategic management administration at United States International University (now Alliant International). He spent most of his career working as an administrator and chief financial officer for colleges and universities. He expected to apply his degree to similar employment, but changed direction during a faculty interview. Educators asked Kingsbury if he wanted to teach. He said “yes” 10 years ago and is an adjunct professor at Alliant.

“I got the bug for it. Now I don’t work — I teach,” says Kingsbury, who teaches an MBA capstone course and accounting to undergraduates. Kingsbury also instructs students preparing for the Graduate Management Admissions Test. That preparation includes study of English and mathematics. In the other courses, Kingsbury draws upon career experience.

“I explain to them that the book says go from A to B to C. In the real world, we go from A to B and C at the same time,” says Kingsbury. “Students can see that I’ve done this for 20 years.”

Teaching led Kingsbury to stay on the campus. He earned a master of education degree and is finishing a doctorate in multicultural education. “I teach business because I think I can offer a different perspective,” he says. “In multicultural education, I learned to teach anything.”

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