SCU Law Alumni Honor Community Achievement

By Nikki Webster
Senior Editor

Although the dictionary defines ‘achieve’ as “to bring to a successful end,” Father Paul Goda, Santa Clara Law professor emeritus, proposed an alternative definition in his invocation of this year’s Santa Clara Alumni Celebration of Achievement ceremony. The Santa Clara Law community continuously achieves in its devotion to positively impacting the legal profession and the broader community at large.

On Saturday, March 14th, the Fairmont Hotel Regency Ballroom buzzed with nearly 350 members of the Santa Clara Law community. Law students, local practitioners, alumni, professors, and award recipients’ families gathered to honor this year’s esteemed individuals for embodying “conscience, competence, and compassion.” Second year law student Sasha Demienne commented that even in the context of such a large, accomplished group, the eve felt surprisingly intimate.

In recognition of their remarkable achievements, the 2014 honorees presented this year’s four Alumni Awards: Paul ‘Chip’ Lion, III, J.D. ’82, magna cum laude, received the Alumni Special Achievement Award. Currently a partner in Morrison & Foerster’s

Professor Gerald Uelmen, our dean from 1986 to 1994, explained to me that people stay with our law school because it is like a family, because people treat each other with love. Retired Judge Robert Yonts, who now serves as a JAMS arbitrator, echoed that the alumni have a desire to help people. Art Plank, retired litigation shareholder from Hopkins & Carley, told me, “Giving back to the community is what you ought to do as a lawyer.”

This year’s award recipients epitomize the spirit of our community. Notably, the recipients comprise a range of professional types, including private practitioner, professor, judge, and CEO. More importantly, each has made significant beneficial contributions to their respective communities.

In HTLI Hosts Fifth Annual Internet Law Works-in-Progress Conference

By Hannah Yang
Business Editor

On Saturday, March 7th, while law school students were drinking up the final hours of spring break, the High Tech Law Institute hosted the Internet Law Works-In-Progress conference. The conference is sponsored by Santa Clara University School of Law and the Institute for Information Law and Policy at the New York Law School. Now celebrating its fifth year, over fifty attendees (representing seventeen states, Washington D.C., and seven other countries on five continents) spent the day on campus, engaging in presentations on topics such as “Cybersecurity,” “Patents,” and “Analog to Digital.” This year’s participants included speakers from educational institutions, such as our own Santa Clara University School of Law, Stanford Law School, Georgetown Law, and National Chengchi University (Taiwan), as well as law firms such as Cooley, Jones Day, and Field Fisher Waterhouse.

Professor Eric Goldman, Co-Director of the High Tech Law Institute, stated, “The event has two main purposes. First, the event creates a space for scholars to get peer input on their draft papers that will help improve the final version. Second, the event builds and strengthens the community of Internet Law Scholars.” These purposes aid and affect each other.

The Honorable Socrates P. Manoukian receives the Amicus Award. Photo Credit: Nancy Martin

Even more notable than the vibrant atmosphere was the powerful theme that emerged over the course of the evening. Kevin Albanese, a 2015 honoree, succinctly stated, “It’s the people you touch that define life’s journeys.” The people of Santa Clara Law achieve through giving.

Professor Goldman would also like to thank the student timekeepers who did a great job. Star Wars inspired menu (because who doesn’t love Star Wars – and also because a truck-themed menu is harder to come up with than you’d think). Finally, to cap off the day’s events, the attendees were treated to a game night. This was not just your average game night, but a game night on a game truck. Professor Goldman noted, “The conference’s real highlight is game night. As the maxim might go, scholars who play together, stay together.” The game truck featured both contemporary and vintage video games, with something to satisfy all video game tastes. Additionally, attendees themselves hosted rounds of popular games such as Cards Against Humanity and Settlers of Catan.

Planning the Internet Law Works-In-Progress Conference took a full year, and the planning for next year’s conference, scheduled for March 5, 2016 at the New York Law School in Manhattan, has already begun. This year’s event could not have been achieved without the efforts and expertise of Professor Goldman, Joy Peacock, and Dorice Kunis of the High Tech Law Institute. Professor Goldman would also like to thank the student timekeepers who did a great job.

The success of this event and events similar to this are a continued source of vitality for the Santa Clara Law community and beyond.
The Advocate is staffed by law students. Printing is contracted to Fricke-Parks Press of Union City, California.

Email The Advocate: lawadvocate@scu.edu

The Advocate is the student news publication of Santa Clara University School of Law. The various sections of The Advocate are articles that reflect the viewpoint of the authors, and not the opinion of Santa Clara University, The Advocate or its editors. The Advocate is staffed by law students. Printing is contracted to Fricke-Parks Press of Union City, California.

As I write this, the ABA Site Inspection Team is in the middle of Academic Advising Week. Reports so far indicate that other than the mandatory event, the rest of the events have had low turnouts. We have spent many years fine tuning Academic Advising Week and I think we have it packed full of really helpful information for you all. If you have any thoughts about how we can make it better (at least good enough to make you all. If you have any thoughts about how we can make it better (at least good enough to make us want to attend), please let me know. The goal here is to be helpful –

Dear Rumor Mill – Any comment about the US News Rankings?

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Per Dean Kloopenberg:
US. News has released its annual rankings of U.S. law schools, and I’m pleased to let you know that Santa Clara Law was ranked 94th, an improvement of 13 spots from last year’s ranking of 107th. In addition, our specialty ranking for Intellectual Property Law was 4th, behind only Berkeley, Stanford, and NYU; our ranking for law student diversity was 14th; and our ranking among part-time programs was 35th.

We continue to build upon the Santa Clara Law tradition with a renewed focus on skills, competencies and experiential learning – as well as our new building project – that will produce outstanding graduates and further enhance our reputation as the Law School of Silicon Valley.

Dear Rumor Mill – Do we have a number nine?

NO! Yay! We made it through another Barristers Ball without an incident! It really was impressive watching everyone look out for each other all night. Congratulations to the SBA for a job very well done!

I was at Barristers and everything was fine! Why do you waste so much time on all of this number nine stuff? What do we on our own time is our business!

You are right. What you do is up to you. If your behavior now makes it difficult or even impossible for you to be a lawyer later, and we could have prevented it, then I think it becomes our business. We will risk being slightly annoying now if it prevents big problems for you later.

Keep in mind that your behavior right now has long term effects on your reputation. Picture this: You are an attorney working in a big law firm 10 years from now and in walks one of your classmates from good old SCU Law looking for a job. You haven't seen him in 10 years. What do you do? You start thinking about law school and about this person's behavior in law school and make a judgement about his trustworthiness. Be honest, would you trust the person who walked around barristers picking up all of the half-consumed wine bottles and hiding them in his jacket? How about the girl who asked you to share your answers on the take home? Or the guy that was always, always at the hut? Or the walking encyclopedia of inappropriate jokes? Would you hire any of these people? What do you do on your own time is your business. And someday it will matter to your business. Listen to us now, believe us later . . .

Dear Rumor Mill – why are there only 2 Advocacy classes this summer?

We have a smaller 1L class. And enrollments have been down the last couple of summers. Therefore, we are guessing that we will need 2 or 3 advocacy classes this summer. We will start with 2 and if we have wait lists, will start looking for another prof.

Dear Rumor Mill – are there any rumors lately? If so, send me an email – serwin@scu.edu

Professor Cynthia Mertens poses after receiving the Lawyer of the Year Award. Photo: Nancy Martin

Corporate Finance Group, Lion is a lead innovator in corporate governance and nationally recognized for his work with LLCs. Prior SCU Law adjunct lecturer, Lion is currently chair of the ABA Business Law Section.

Professor Cynthia Mertens received the Edwin J. Owens Lawyer of the Year Award. She has dedicated four decades to Santa Clara Law, as professor and twice as Associate Dean of Academic Affairs. Mertens has also contributed countless hours as Executive Director of the Katherine & George Alexander Law Center and leader of social justice immersion trips to El Salvador.

Honorable Socrates P. Manoukian received the Santa Clara Law Amicus Award. Judge Manoukian presides in Santa Clara County Superior Court, where he has trained over 280 student externs during his 22 years on the bench. Additionally, Judge Manoukian teaches California Civil Procedure at Santa Clara Law, where he enjoys our law students' collaborative spirit.

Kevin Albanese, J.D. ’08, received the Young Alumni Rising Star Award. Magna cum laude graduate of SCU Law’s part-time program, Albanese is now President and CEO of Joseph J. Albanese, Inc., a commercial concrete and general engineering contractor. Albanese also serves as Trustee for the Operating Engineers Local 3 Trust Funds and is on the Contractors State License Board.


Several generous sponsors supported the 2015 Celebration of Achievement ceremony: Morrison Foerster, Joseph J. Albanese, Inc., and Wombly Carlyle provided the most significant contributions, followed by Devcon Construction, Inc., McCurdy Fuller Ruettgers LLP, Heritage Bank, Littler, and Hopkins & Carley. Thank you, sponsors, honorees, and SCU Law community members who achieve through service to others.

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Rumor Mill with Dean Erwin

By Susan Erwin
Senior Assistant Dean

As I write this, the ABA Site Inspection Team is here visiting classes and stopping folks in the hallway to ask about SCU. I don’t know what the final report will say, but I can tell you that the team is really impressed by you all. A couple members of the team have reported that our community is just so nice and collegial and supportive of each other. They said that every student they talked to had nothing but positive comments about the law school. The students really like their professors and the professors really like their students. It’s been really nice to hear all of these comments that validate my opinions of our community!

We are also in the middle of Academic Advising Week. Reports so far indicate that other than the mandatory event, the rest of the events have had low turnouts. We have spent many years fine tuning Academic Advising Week and I think we have it packed full of really helpful information for you all. If you have any thoughts about how we can make it better (at least good enough to make you want to attend), please let me know. The goal here is to be helpful –

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Santa Clara Law Ranked #94 by U.S. News & World Report

By Lindsey Kearney Associate Editor

The ubiquitous U.S. News & World Reports law school rankings for the academic year 2016 were published in early March. SCU Law has regained its footing in the top 100, celebrating a 13-spot climb to #94 from its previously-ranked position at #107. Santa Clara Law also cemented its status for intellectual property law rankings, tying for 3rd in the nation behind only Berkeley, Stanford, and NYU. Furthermore, SCU Law ranked 14th for student diversity, and 35 for its part-time program.

The top-ranked schools remained fairly intact, with Yale, Harvard, and Stanford continuing to occupy the top three positions, Berkeley and Duke each climbing a spot within the top ten, and Michigan and Georgetown each sliding a spot down. In fact, the top seven ranked law schools are exactly the same as last year’s accept that University of Pennsylvania and Stanford law had switched spots, rather than being second and third, respectively.

Tiers

Curiously, this year’s rankings were ridden with ties to an even greater extent than is normal for USNWR rankings. Popular legal industry commentary website Above the Law described the rankings as “A gigantic rankings orgy,” with nothing but ties, ties, and more ties.” In fact, SCU shares its position at #94 with seven other schools in an astounding eight-way tie.

Change in Methodology:

The rankings and (sadly have been) based on a weighted average of twelve measures of quality, including peer assessment by law school deans and faculty chairs, assessment by lawyers and judges, selectivity, job placement success, and bar passage rate.

In the USNWR ranking methodology, job placement success is an important factor, making up 18% of a school’s overall ranking. According to Robert Morse, commentator on rankings methodology for U.S. News, the job placement success score is determined by calculating employment rates for graduates at graduation, which count for 4% of the overall ranking, and at nine months after graduation, which count for 1%. For the first time in last year’s rankings, however, U.S. News has changed its methodology so that law schools receive less credit for employing their own graduates. The new methodology discounts the value of post-law school jobs in cases where the job was funded by the law school or the university.

What the Rankings Mean for SCU Law Students:

This year, of course, nice to be back in the top 100, receiving positive recognition is a pleasantancy that humans have long revered. At the same time, while it is not per se valid to write the USNWR rankings off as arbitrary, the rankings do not mean what many people interpret them to mean for our futures, jobs prospects, and overall career success. Explains Kyle McEntee of Law School Transparency, “Only a handful of schools have a truly national reach in job placement. The rest have a regional, in-state, or even just local reach.”

Outside of the top 10, maybe top 20 elite law schools, the rankings probably don’t actually reflect much useful information about the quality of an individual law school. For example, the University of Arkansas School of Law is ranked considerably higher than SCU Law. However, if two candidates apply for a job at a large or medium Palo Alto or San Francisco law firm, both with functionally equal credentials, one from Arkansas Law and one from SCU Law, the bets on the table would almost certainly reflect the SCU lawyer as the favorite. Why? Because of the importance of a local network: hiring partners at a Bay Area firm are likely to have many friends, neighbors, colleagues, opposing counselors, bar association contacts, etc. who are SCU alumni. No hiring partner is going to look at two applications and opt for the Arkansas student simply because their school is ranked in the mid-seventies, which is twenty positions higher than SCU.

The bottom line about rankings seems to remain consistent among analysts, columnists, attorneys, judges, and those in the legal field. The rankings of the top ten law schools matter. If a law school is unranked, or “ranked alphabetically” (#4, #5, #6, lower), that might matter. For the remainder of law schools, being comfortable in the middle? Not so much. Congrats to SCU for making it back into the top 100, but ultimately we are doing alright in our Bay Area job market, and will almost certainly remain so whether our ranking is #107, #67, or #94.

Seismic Shift Coming to SCU Law’s Library

By Whitney Alexander & Prano Amjadi Co-Directors of Heafey Law Library

These are turbulent times. As change is sweeping through legal education, libraries are also experiencing tremendous reorganization brought on by many factors including digitization. Combine both these change agents, and you will find the makings of a very different library.

A seismic shift is occurring that moves the focus from gathering large collections of books to offering a broad range of services. The concept of ‘library’ is undergoing a transition to an array of patron services rather than a physical place. In law libraries, this was first evident in the firm environment, as large showcase libraries were reduced to smaller, utilitarian operations. In recent years, academic law libraries have given up space and removed thousands of volumes from their collections to make way for this new library of the 21st Century.

Heafey Law Library is no different; change is happening. For the first time in more than 40 years, the library has a new leadership team. Whitney Alexander and Prano Amjadi, the library’s new co-directors, have hit the floor running with more than 40 years, the library has a new change is happening. For the first time in recent years, academic law libraries have large showcase libraries were reduced first evident in the firm environment, as docking stations that allow you to walk to the second floor to make way for a new law library administrative suite. The new lab upstairs now has four docking stations that allow you to hook up your laptop to a monitor and keyboard. The state materials on the second floor were largely moved to storage and recycled, and the shelving was removed to expand the area for more study space. The study carrels in the main floor room were relocated to allow for casual soft seating in the main reading room, to allow this area used for more collaborative projects and small group meetings.

The library is definitely affected by the law school restructuring last spring. It was very fortunate that the reduction occurred through attrition, and not staff. The library is providing services to the library is open. You can also walk in to speak directly with a librarian during most hours and you can walk in to speak directly with a librarian during most hours that the library is open. You can also schedule an appointment with a specific librarian, and they will come to you. Not fall, the library will institute a Personal Librarian program which will assign a librarian to support each incoming student to support their research and educational needs.

The library is bringing more and more services to your fingertips so they are available when you need them. Interlibrary loan and Link+ requests are self service; and most journal and chapter requests are delivered electronically. A myriad of legal databases can be accessed anywhere you have an internet connection. Research guides and tutorials can walk you through research steps on your own. The library is also devoting more time and staff to developing the institutional repository, Santa Clara Law Digital Commons. The repository houses the three student journals, faculty scholar pages, the library digital law school historical and archival information.

Librarians as Teachers

With ABA standards requiring more hours of skills courses, the librarians are ready to offer more Advanced Legal Research courses in the future. Nearly 56% of first-year associates report their firm expected strong research skills but did not provide formal legal research training. This summer the first online Advanced Legal Research course will be offered. No matter where you are this summer you can take this skills course to help you in your summer internship or job. Aside from the general Advanced Legal Research course, there will also be regular offerings for Intellectual Property and Foreign. Comparative and International Law research training as well.

Physical Changes

This past summer the library undertook several construction projects:

- The Toso computer lab was relocated to the second floor to make way for a new law library administrative suite. The new lab upstairs now has four docking stations that allow you to hook up your laptop to a monitor and keyboard.
- The state materials on the second floor were largely moved to storage and recycled, and the shelving was removed to expand the area for more study space.
- The study carrels in the main floor room were relocated to allow for casual soft seating in the main reading room, to allow this area used for more collaborative projects and small group meetings.
- Staffing

The library was definitely affected by the law school restructuring last spring. It was very fortunate that the reduction occurred through attrition, and not staff. This necessitated a major reduction in library hours, but overall, all services have been maintained. Other staff positions were reconfigured to reflect the reduction in book ordering and processing and increased emphasis on digitizing imaging and metadata management.

Collection

Last summer the collection of materials for other states was recycled; now, with the exception of California, all state materials are available only online. As materials are cleared out of the remote storage location, many of the law journals that are available online will also be eliminated. The reasons for the reduction of the collection are two-pronged: first, the need to reduce expenses, so we’re not paying for duplication of materials, and second, to prepare for the smaller space the library will have in the new building.

Your Thoughts?

What has not changed is the Library staff’s dedication to seeing you succeed in law school and law practice. The goal is to make the center of the library more inviting for gentle conversation, collaboration, and teaching, with the outlying areas remaining quiet study space. The library is soliciting student ideas for changes that would make the library feel more like ‘your’ library. As the library confronts more changes over the next few years, the library staff would like to partner with you to ensure that the library is providing services and resources that are relevant to your educational and research needs.
**IAPP Privacy Summit Brings Perspective to Safe Harbor**

By Sona Makker  
**Privacy Editor**

Last week, I had the opportunity to attend the **International Association of Privacy Professionals’** largest event of the year—the Global Privacy Summit in Washington D.C. Starting with Glenn Greenwald (the Guardian reporter who broke the Snowden/NSA story) **keynote speech** and continuing into the workshop sessions, one of the reoccurring themes at the conference focused on one question in particular: how can companies tackle the challenges that will arise as more countries around the world adopt data protection and data residency laws? 

According to Fieldfisher in 2011, 76 countries had data protection laws, and by September 2013, that number rose to 101 countries, with at least 20 more countries with data protection bills on the books. “The trend is clear—the adoption of data privacy laws is accelerating worldwide; and, with that, so too will the adoption of data residency rules,” says Phil Lee, a Partner in the Fieldfisher’s Information Privacy Group who presented on the topic at the conference. “Data residency” refers to data protection laws that prohibit companies from storing data outside of their country or region unless certain legal standards are met. These types of policies are generally directed at specific types of data, such as government data or personal data, but some target all domestic data. Several countries, including Canada and Indonesia, have adopted data localization laws for national security-related data. In Australia, data localization prohibits the storage of digital health records of Australian citizens from being stored abroad. Another example is the Personal Information Protection Act in South Korea, which requires companies to obtain consent from the individuals associated with particular datasets (“the data subject”) prior to any export of any kind of personal data. The most well known example of a data residency law is the EU’s Data Protection Directive, which prohibits the transfer of personal data to recipients outside of the EU unless they ensure an “adequate” level of protection for the personal data. But wait, you’re thinking, what’s all this fuss, isn’t that what Safe Harbor is for?

For the Safe Harbor agreement, EU citizens’ data can be transferred to U.S. companies if they voluntarily self-certify to uphold certain data protection obligations. This is legally binding and enforced by the Federal Trade Commission in the U.S. When it was implemented in 2000, it was considered a practical, cost-effective solution for companies involved in the collection of personal data of European Union residents, but today, Safe Harbor is under attack. The Snowden revelations stirred up a lot of concern in the EU about government surveillance and has led to a general disposition of distrust toward Silicon Valley technology companies, and thus, sharp critique of the adequacy of the Safe Harbor framework. And in case you’ve been following the Max Schrems case, the Austrian law student who began Europe-wide Facebook (who also did a short stint here at SCU), you’ll know that the fate of Safe Harbor could now lie in the hands of European Court of Justice who agreed to hear Schrems’ case. The issue in that case is whether the U.S. intelligence programs, revealed by Edward Snowden, that involve sharing of EU citizen data with organizations such as the NSA, violate the fundamental rights EU citizens. If the answer to that is yes, then Safe Harbor could be invalidated.

It’s become clear that the issues of cross border data flow and data residency are no longer just privacy issues, but are deep political ones. What’s an aspiring privacy lawyer to do in the face of all of this political and legal uncertainty? Keep up with the debates, my friend. The outcome of the Max Schrems’ decision could lead to varying interpretations of the validity of Safe Harbor which means it’s time to start looking into other solutions, as countries around the globe continue to adopt data privacy and residency laws.

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**Russia’s New Data Localization Law Bytes**

By Brent Tuttle  
**Managing Editor**

From March 3rd-5th, privacy professionals from around the world flocked to Washington D.C. for the IAPP’s Global Privacy Summit. While the Summit’s three day schedule was jam-packed with seminars, workshops, and keynote presentations, one meeting in particular drew a larger than normal audience: “Managing Privacy: The Tension between Global Systems and Local Law.”

The panel consisted of four speakers, but the bulk of the discussion centered around Russia’s new data localization law. Vera Shaftan, a Senior Associate with Norton Rose Fulbright’s Moscow office was there to present on this topic and take questions.

In sum, the kind folk of the Kremlin have decided that due to “national security” concerns, all Internet and other companies collecting personal information on Russian citizens will be required to store that data locally within the borders of Russia.

Titled Federal Law No. 242-FZ, the law was originally slated to take effect September 1, 2016, but recent developments in the State Duma, the lower chamber of the Russian parliament, have accelerated the implementation date to September 1, 2015.

The law has many Internet companies and multinational corporations raising their eyebrows for a variety of reasons. While the legislation is still a working draft, it is full of ambiguous wording and lack of proper explanations from the Russian data protection authority, Roskomnadzor. Furthermore, it’s clear that the motive behind the law stems back to geopolitical tension with the West. Russia is using this legislation as an opportunity to try and gain some leverage against the U.S. and the tech behemoths that it houses. Federal Law No. 242-FZ is premised on the collection and processing of personal data to ensure an “adequate” level of protection for the personal data. But wait, you’re thinking, what’s all this fuss, isn’t that what Safe Harbor is for?

Under the Safe Harbor agreement, EU citizens’ data can be transferred to U.S. companies if they voluntarily self-certify to uphold certain data protection obligations. This is legally binding and enforced by the Federal Trade Commission in the U.S. When it was implemented in 2000, it was considered a practical, cost-effective solution for companies involved in the collection of personal data of European Union citizens. If the answer to that is yes, then Safe Harbor could be invalidated.

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**From Russia With Love**

The Russian data protection authority Roskomnadzor has the power to issue fairly weak fines ($250). However, several commentators have suggested that these fines will likely increase as the law looms on the horizon. Most importantly though, this new law opens the door for the Russian authorities to blacklist websites they deem to be out of compliance. Along those lines, some believe that this legislation will be used as a tool for censorship. It could create a quasi-legal basis to shut down sites like Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube, which are seen by some Russians as crucial platforms for dissent. At this point it’s too early to say anything, but converse, it don’t look good.
By Jodi Benassi

In late 2014, Stanford's Center for Law and Bioscience convened a conference on how the law should regulate genetic testing. Similarly, the Intellectual Property Section of the Bar Association of San Francisco held a meeting with Sir Tim Berners-Lee, the inventor of the World Wide Web, pronouncing via video stream that the vote "preserves the ethos of permissionless innovation that’s always been at the heart of the Internet.” He said that access to the Internet should be regarded as a basic human right, someone else should not be deciding how we access, when we access, or what we access on the Internet. According to Tim, the basic design principle of the Web is the idea that network owners may charge individuals to access their networks as well as for data use, but, once individuals are on the network, the network must treat all data equally. The Internet is a forum for democracy that enables free speech, free assembly, free expression, free information, and free competition. It’s a place for civil discourse that brings people together, allows them to organize, build communities, share ideas and foster innovation. Most notably, it allows people to have a direct conversation with their government. In this case, an unprecedented 4 million people sent comments to the FCC. People the FCC stating, "The FCC must take the necessary steps to ensure that the Internet remains an open platform for speech and commerce." The current Internet governance has the opportunity to tap the greatest political resource created by the digital revolution: public participation. It is well known that the FCC's Open Internet docket has been the most commented upon rulemaking in the agency's 80 year history. Overwhelmingly the comments were one-sided. 99% were for net neutrality and less than 1% clearly opposed. Simply put, the overall battle for net neutrality has been a public one, representing democracy in action. Throughout the meeting the Commission highlighted the new protection. The traditional options of intellectual property are by attaining patents, copyrights, trade secrets, or trademark protection. There is much debate around how the intellectual property tools are used to protect genetic information, however, as such tools were not set up for such purpose. According to Tamara Frazier, Principal Economic and Clinical Health (HITECH).}

The Open Internet: A Victory For Everyone

By Angela Habibi

many consumer-generated companies are interested in using genetic information for personalized products, such as personalized deodorant. Similarly, pharmaceuticals are trying to personalize medicine based on genomic information. Thus, at issue is not the DNA itself, but the information obtained from it. databases may not be. Further, Frazier opined that "the problem with trade secrets is that the value of genetic information occurs because of the quantity, not because you have one genetic sequence." In this way, a trade secret cannot explain how the information is useful overall. Traditionally, for trademarks, it still works and there are options for protection in this arena. Despite the above limitations, there are still ways to obtain patent protection around diagnostics rather than the genes themselves. Additionally, for software, where a company is able to connect such software with a process, there are still ways to obtain protection. Lastly, one may then wonder, when the information in your genes is publicly available, who is able to use it and do you have a right to restrict others' use? Some laws are in place to protect misuse of genetic information. Through the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act of 2008 (GINA), "shall be an unlawful employment practice for an employer [to discriminate] because of genetic information." Additionally, when visiting a doctor or consulting with a healthcare professional, you may be asked to complete employment practice for an employer to protect your genetic information from being shared by such professionals without your permission. This Act has also been extended to business associates under the Health Information Technology for Economic and Clinical Health (HITECH).
Small Business Innovation Research Grants

By Kyle Glass & Campbell Yore
Copy Editor & Staff Writer

One of the most significant political questions in America is the role of federal spending in the country’s economic growth. Generally, the debate centers on whether the government can effectively stimulate the economy, or whether the risk and reward aspects of the capitalist system make any government entanglement in the free market a detriment. This question has been one of the major catalysts for the current gridlock the nation’s capital currently finds itself in. Despite this gridlock, the government has found ways to create programs and contribute to our country’s development. One of these is the Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) program.

The SBIR program was established under the 1982 Small Business Innovation Research Act, to incentivize small businesses to focus their efforts in technology and science industries. In addition, the program serves to supplement the growing research needs of the Department of Defense as well as several other agencies. Many proponents of the program also suggest that it effectively bridges the gap between commercialized research and federal spending.

In 2014, the federal government allocated close to $2.5 billion for the program. Each participating agency is required to dedicate a small percentage of their budget to the SBIR program. The agencies are required to dispense these funds, as grants, to small businesses that apply and meet the requirements. In 2014, the DoD had the largest SBIR budget of over a billion dollars, The Department of Health and The National Institute of Health, which share funds, have the next largest budget of almost $750 million. Since 1982, 15,000 small businesses have received grants totaling close to $21 billion.

Grants are awarded in a two-phase process, each having its own criteria and grant size. Phase I grants are aimed at examining the feasibility of a particular type of research. These grants are capped at $150,000 and businesses are expected to meet their proposed research targets within a year. Phase II grants are awarded based on a company’s performance during the Phase I period. After the Phase II period, usually a year, the research is expected to produce a functional prototype that is near commercialization. Phase II grants are capped at $1 million.

Phase I of the SBIR program is initiated when a respective government agency releases a topic solicitation. In the DoD’s most recent topic solicitation, the Navy provided 80 topics ranging from exhaust systems for amphibious vehicles to developing methods for flexible psychology.

Businesses seeking SBIR grants must complete an application that addresses one of the solicited topics. For the DoD, the application is divided into four volumes. The first volume requires applicants to briefly state the technical nature of the proposed project and provide an explanation of the research’s anticipated benefits and potential commercial application. The second and the longest volume is the technical description wherein the applicant presents the problem or opportunity the research is intended to address. This section should also provide the objectives for the culmination of the Phase I period and describe the expected process and strategy for the research. This description includes other work in the field and the applicant’s relationship with other research institutions. The third section requires an outlaying of the expenses the research intends to generate. This includes costs for facilities, personnel and inventories but may also include legal costs such as patent prosecution and other start-up costs. The final section is concerned with the commercial application of the proposed research. Here, the agency is interested in growth of the company, how it expects to reach consumers and future forms of investment from the private sector. Each respective agency has very detailed online instructions which provide information on proposal lengths, structures, and more. Phase I grants are typically capped at 25 pages. Applicants are free to apply the same proposal at different agencies, but only one award is allowed for a particular research topic. Generally, from the date the solicitation topics are released, successful Phase I applicants can expect an award within nine to twelve months.

In addition to submitting a worthy proposal, small businesses seeking SBIR grants need to meet the statutory requirements of the program. Eligible companies must be organized as for-profit businesses located in the United States and have fewer than 500 employees. The individual submitting the grant must have their primary employment with the small business, and the business must be at least 51% owned by individuals living in the United States. The SBIR program is a unique government program that provides an accessible funding avenue for businesses and individuals who have ideas to contribute to the scientific marketplace. For businesses and individuals that do not have the resources to secure a loan and would like to limit the control lost to investors, the SBIR program is a particularly good fit. The following are examples of how some small businesses were able to effectively use the SBIR program to achieve technological and commercial success.

Symantec began in 1979 as Machine Intelligence Corporation (MIC). MIC initially secured more than $240,000 in two rounds of government funding but eventually went bankrupt. From the ashes, MIC cofounder, Gary Hendrix started Symantec by directing MIC’s software engineering resources to more marketable pc applications. The new firm achieved its first commercial success in the late 1980s when its word processing program, Q&A, caught on in Germany. Today, Symantec is a giant in cybersecurity and one of the largest corporations in Silicon Valley with a $17.5 billion market cap. Hendrix acknowledges SBIR funding was an integral part of the company’s success. It kept development of Q&A ongoing before private support arrived in the form of a merger with C&C in 1984.

Since Symantec, SBIR grants have continued to seed successful startups. Recent examples include Teachley Inc., and Lift Labs. Founded in 2012 by three former teachers with Ph.D.s in education from Columbia University, Teachley Inc. develops educational software. The firm’s first product, an iPad app called Addimal Adventures, is a series of games designed to teach basic math concepts to grade school kids. In 2014, Teachley collected a Merit Award for Addimal Adventures and launched a similarly styled multiplication teaching app, Mt. Multipiles. The Department of Education’s Institute of Education Sciences invested nearly $1 million through two rounds of SBIR fund research and development of both apps.

Lift Labs is one of many successful healthcare companies to grow from the National Institute of Health (NIH) $750 million SBIR budget for stabilizing devices to help people with tremors and perform other basic tasks. Initially founded as Lynx Design in 2010, Lift Labs broke ground with a $160,000 phase I SBIR grant. A subsequent $360,000 phase II award the following year sent the firm on a mission of creating a stabilizing system for consumer devices. With cases of Parkinson’s Disease and Essential Tremor on the rise, the market for stabilizing devices is projected to expand.

With this in mind, GoogleX acquired the company as part of its life sciences wing in 2014. With its acquisition, Lift Labs joins Symantec on the list of successful tech startups that have used SBIR money as a bridge between initial technology development and capital for market entry.

Not all SBIR funded firms, however, fast track to private support. Instead, some grant recipients like View Plus Technologies (VPT) develop long-term relationships with government research programs. Funded fourteen times since 2003 by the National Science Foundation and the NIH, VPT is perhaps the most prolific aggregater of SBIR funding. VPT uses this funding to develop adaptive technologies for the blind and learning disabled. Recent grants have funded new applications of VPT’s proprietary IVEO tactile audio system. IVEO is a process of converting visual documents into a format one can touch or hear and has been integrated into a variety of software programs. In addition, VPT has secured corporate funding from Microsoft, HP, and has partnered with the American Physical Society to distribute blind friendly publications.

SBIR grants provide an important public source of startup funding, but are a small part of current efforts to promote the useful art of entrepreneurial technology. Entrepreneurs more frequently rely on personal savings, loans from commercial banks, and generosity from friends and family for initial funding. Angel investors, venture capital firms, and corporations then step forward if the project begins to show promise. With venture capital investment totaling $33 billion in 2013 and big corporations like Volkswagen and Google possessing annual R&D budgets in excess of $10 billion, does the government play a necessary, impactful role in seeding startups? More importantly, does it need to?

Returning to the debate between free market government exclusisionists and proponents of VC Uncle Sam, I believe the SBIR program is impactful. Moreover, with commentators becoming more dubious of the entrepreneurial policy appetite to innovate, the SBIR program seems ripe for expansion. First, instead of relying on assumptions about inventors’ motivations, SBIR grants promote the useful arts by putting researchers directly toward innovative projects. Second, SBIR grants were successful, ventures which contribute to the American economy and improve society: Finally, allocating more money to the SBIR program would result in greater entrepreneurial autonomy and a more competitive private equity market. These changes would enable more research of socially minded technologies while also equalizing leverage between entrepreneurs and institutional investors in capitalizing events.
Courses like the International Business Negotiation Simulation offer invaluable benefits for students who will find themselves increasingly working beyond our borders through commerce, globalization, the spread of democracy and institutions of immigration. The course teaches students the key aspects of international business agreements, and then puts the class up against a team of Korean students from their top law school in a mock negotiation that takes place via videoconferences. The mock negotiation allows students to practice their skills in a truly international setting without the inconvenience of traveling abroad. And while books and lectures are able to explain the law and teach strategies, the course also gives students the ability to apply their education in a deeply motivated fashion. The competitive nature of the interschool, international, and adversarial setting creates a powerful motivating factor for students to master the nuts and bolts of an international license agreement and learn the drafting strategies necessary to come out with favorable terms.

The course also features an optional trip to Korea to meet the opposing team at the end of the semester. It starts like any other class: you get one book and one professor with a lecture. Only, the professor is Jimenez and, for anyone who does not yet know Professor Jimenez, his experience spans decades and his connections cross continents. (Side note: He’s also the most interesting man ever.) And the book is incredibly on-point and advantageous when it comes to international negotiations game time too. I found myself referring to it several times over the course of the negotiation.

If you’ve had Jimenez for Civ. Pro., get ready for a surprise – he does lecture, but he focuses more on highlighting the major arteries of an international license agreement in order to help your team brainstorm strategies to get your pretend client favorable terms. The course is worth taking even if you simply want to improve your redlining or want a crash course on business negotiations. B-2-T-A and all.

However, the course shows real awes when you meet the opposing Korean team and start the mock negotiation. The negotiation itself works well using Skype-style videoconferences and each team is given enough leeway to communicate as much as necessary to come to a final agreement.

The thing that surprised me the most was how much more there is to negotiations than you will ever find in a book (like how to deal with one really irritating opposing team member while keeping everyone else on track).

In addition, the course has the added benefit of giving students a natural networking opportunity in Korea and beyond. Since the course concludes with an optional trip to Korea to meet the opposing team, students are given access to the connections Santa Clara Law has there. Take my advice: the trip is well worth it. For me, we played less like a post-game handshake session and more like a celebration of Santa Clara’s reach and a “welcome to Korea” (and, more importantly, a “welcome to Korea’s legal job market”).

In Korea, we were welcomed to Seoul. We were accommodated at Seoul National University, and being Korea’s top law school, we were considered by locals as part of the legal elite by association. We were also the guests of Santa Clara alumni and Korea’s biggest law firm, Kim & Chang, both of which gave us an insider’s take on Korea’s job market and the surrounding regions (including China). We even had lunch with the chairman of Korea’s largest private TV/medical company (winner of the Supreme Court Justice. Having lived and worked in Asia for over half a decade myself, I know that it takes years (perhaps even decades) to make such high-reaching connections there and that speaks volumes of Santa Clara Law’s reach.

In short, the course offers a nuts-and-bolts look at international license agreements and the strategies it takes to get favorable terms. Students are also able to practice negotiating against future foreign attorneys. And, as an added bonus, students can walk away from the course with some solid connections in Korea (not to mention a trip to Korea, if you opt for it). In my opinion, this kind of course is the future of legal education generally and specifically, the kind of thing that makes sense for Santa Clara Law, given our depth in IP, our access to the Valley, and our connections abroad.

The course is available in the fall semester under the official name International Business Negotiation - Simulation. Enrollment is limited and you must get Prof. Jimenez’s approval to join.