

Around the water cooler: John Marshall and intellectual property

By Olivia Clarke

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Richard Gruner says there's a lot going on in The John Marshall Law School's Center for Intellectual Property Law.

In July, a group of 10 to 20 law students nationwide will participate in the school's summer abroad program to China. It is offered in conjunction with Peking University's law school, and will entail three courses on intellectual property topics taught in Beijing for four weeks this summer, Gruner said.

There will also be a number of educational tours, including to the state IP office, which John Marshall has an ongoing relationship with, an IP law firm, and Caterpillar's Beijing legal office.

"It allows us to make use of the remarkable ties we have in China already," he said. "For over 15 years, John Marshall has been educating here in Chicago a number of IP specialists [from China]. These are parties who are already patent examiners in China, and they come to us to learn about U.S. IP laws.

"There is an enormous group of alumni in China now in either leadership positions or in IP specialty practices. When we go over there we are received by a wonderful group of officials and other parties in the rapidly growing IP community. And we are able to use those contacts for the benefit of the student group we are bringing over."

On campus, the school will host May 1 its second annual IP ethics conference featuring members of the Illinois bar and disciplinary office of the U.S. Patent Office, as well as a range of ethics leaders from the IP community, Gruner said.

John Marshall also offers a distinguished professor lecture series where each month a leading IP professor from around the country speaks about a cutting-edge area of IP research, he said.

For example, from noon to 1:30 p.m. March 27, R. Polk Wagner, from the University of Pennsylvania Law School, will speak about "Understanding Patent Quality Mechanisms" at John Marshall, room 1200.

Box lunches will be provided, and there is no cost to attend this program.



Richard Gruner - Director of JMLS Center for Intellectual Property Law

But reservations are required online at www.jmls.edu/events/032709IPasp. The deadline to RSVP is March 20.

"We've actually had a very good turnout of both students and practitioners and even a number of other academics from Chicago-area law schools," he said about the lecture series. "This is a typical active season for us at John Marshall."