

## **Why the Business Law Option?**

### **The Business Environment**

The law of business...why Business Law is the "option of choice" for business professionals in the 21ST Century

Increasingly, businesses are facing a wide range of liability arising from their roles as employers, sellers, buyers, and investors. Additionally, companies seeking to expand into the global market or enter the stream of e-commerce are faced with a myriad of regulatory issues, ranging from licensing to consumer privacy to employee rights.

"Employers are looking for self-starters who are flexible and can view problems from different angles," says Beth Moeller, a career services professional at UCLA. Ms. Moeller stresses that the law and business fields are so tightly bound together that a student with knowledge of both worlds will essentially have the cutting edge talent needed to compete in the current market. (From "Anderson Students Earn Concurrent Business and Law Degree," Business Wire, May 4, 2000)

The Business Law option will give you that competitive edge as you develop the skills necessary to identify potential areas of liability, and to integrate sound preventive practices into strategic and operational plans.

For example, in introducing a new product to the market, a manufacturer should consider what kind of warranty disclaimers would be appropriate. Beyond this operational consideration, the manufacturer who does not analyze potential liability costs in its strategic decision to add a new product could be making a costly mistake. With a Business Law option in your background, you could be the one to prevent the manufacturer from making this error as you contribute to its strategic plan.

With the increasing number of employment-related lawsuits, businesses are focusing on the development of sound employment practices and policies to prevent liability arising from their role as employers. After completing the Business Law option, you will be able to understand the impact of legal developments on employment practice, and be able to develop operational plans and policies that protect your business from such liability. For more information on employment-related liability, go to [www.eeoc.gov](http://www.eeoc.gov).

As you begin your career, you may be asked to conduct research on regulations and other legal controls over business. The Business Law Option will provide you with the opportunity to develop the skills needed to complete such tasks.

Business transactions typically involve complex contracts that formalize the rights and responsibilities of the parties. Throughout your career, you will have to review and interpret contractual language laden with legal terminology. You will find yourself drawing upon the knowledge you gained from the Business Law option as you engage in business transactions.

If you are considering starting an Internet-based company, have you thought about how you will comply with the increasing protections of information that your visitors will give you in accessing and using your site? DoubleClick.com has considered this issue, and decided to name a Chief Privacy Officer to ensure that internal policies and practices of the company comply with the complex and changing regulations affecting consumer privacy on the Internet. For more information on electronic privacy, go to [www.eeoc.gov](http://www.eeoc.gov).

And the new Chief Privacy Officer at DoubleClick.com will not be alone in the effort to comprehend and apply these legal developments. According to William Seidman, former chair of the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation: "Like it or not, the private sector executive may spend one third or more of his time dealing with the government. In large part, the executive has had to learn this part of his duties by experience, often painful." "Dealing with government" means understanding complex government regulations, and being able to apply them in practice. Without any legal background, this can be painful indeed. (From "Six Forces and the Legal Environment of Business: The Relative Value of Business Law Among Business School Core Courses," George Siedel, 37 Am. Bus. L.J. 717 Summer 2000)

The impact of the law on the practice of business has created a market for continuing education. For example, UC Berkeley has started to offer courses to business professionals on legal issues affecting them, ranging from intellectual property to the law of partnerships and corporations. (For more information, see, "UC Berkeley Extension Announces Summer Slate of Legal Courses," Business Wire, May 18, 2000).

Instead of learning by experience, or through continuing education courses while you are working, consider the Business Law Option. Focusing on business law as an undergraduate will help you make sound decisions as a business professional.