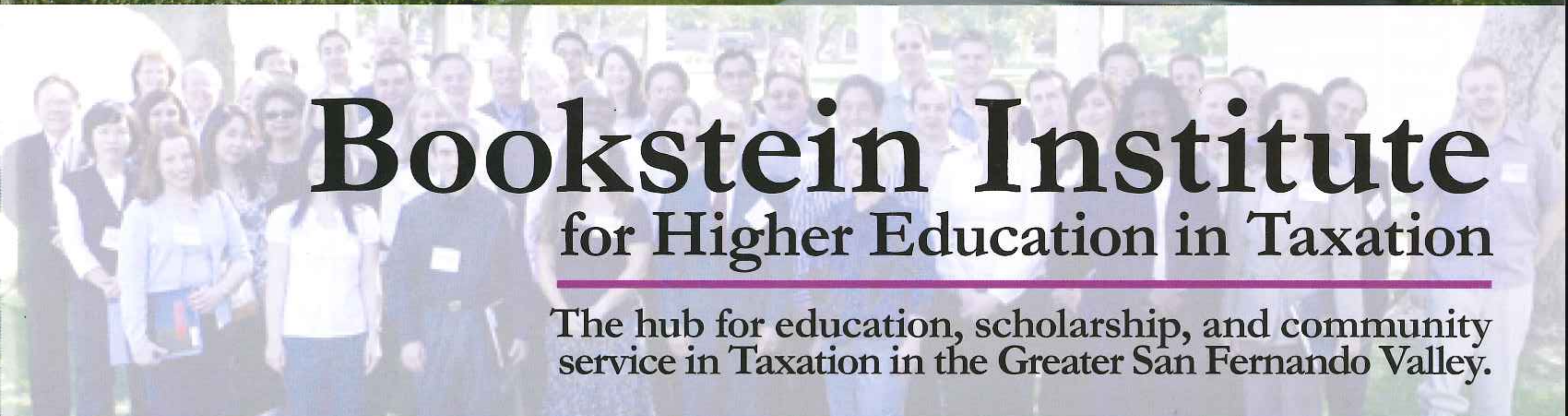
NEWSLETTER
Fall 2009



Bookstein Institute
for Higher Education in Taxation

The hub for education, scholarship, and community service in Taxation in the Greater San Fernando Valley.

INSIDE THE NEWSLETTER:

Launching of Tax Development Journal

Graduation of our Inaugural Cohort

Grant Award for the Bookstein Tax Clinic

California State University
Northridge

COLLEGE OF BUSINESS and ECONOMICS

Director's Note

Welcome to the second edition of the Bookstein Institute for Higher Education in Taxation's newsletter! Despite the economic turmoil over the past year, the Bookstein Institute has grown and reached a number of important milestones. Most importantly, the Bookstein Institute has celebrated the graduation of the inaugural class of its newly designed M.S. in Taxation program. Also, the Bookstein Institute completed its first year of service to the community by representing its 100th client. Finally, the Bookstein Institute witnessed the launching of the first edition of its student-run, practitioner oriented Tax Development Journal.

In this edition of the newsletter, we will reflect on these and other fine accomplishments of the Bookstein Institute. As always, we welcome your input and involvement in the evolution of the Bookstein Institute. There are number of opportunities for members of the profession to become involved. Here are some of these opportunities:

1. M.S. in Taxation Program: This practice oriented program is always looking to expand its part time faculty pool with prominent practitioners in the field.

2. Cal State Northridge Tax Development Journal: The Tax Development Journal sets a new standard in practitioner based tax scholarship as an innovative forum for intellectual discourse on emerging issues for tax practitioners and policy makers. This refereed journal is currently soliciting article submission to its upcoming edition.

3. The Bookstein Tax Clinic: The Bookstein Tax Clinic provides free representation on federal controversy matters to low income taxpayers in the Los Angeles area. We are currently looking for tax practitioners with experience in federal tax procedure to join our Pro Bono Panel.

It is my sincere hope that as you become familiar with the Bookstein Institute and its mission, you will take part in the various opportunities that it offers.

Best wishes,

Rafi Efrat

Dr. Rafi Efrat
Director, Bookstein Institute for Higher Education in Taxation

Our Staff

Mr. Roberto Aguirre joined us as a student assistant a year ago and became a full time staff member following his graduation with a B.S. in Finance from the California State University, Northridge College of Business & Economics.

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History of the Bookstein Institute for Higher Education in Taxation

The Bookstein Institute was established in 2005 through the visionary and generous contribution of Harvey Bookstein, CPA ('70) and his wife Harriet. Mr. Bookstein, a prominent practitioner and philanthropist in the Los Angeles area for many years, has embarked on this initiative as a platform for transforming the tax curriculum at Cal State Northridge and beyond.

The Bookstein Institute focuses on delivering a number of innovative programs in the field of tax. The Bookstein Institute has been instrumental in launching a high quality, graduate education in taxation for mid-career professionals. It is also facilitating the publication of a tax journal that disseminates relevant, cutting edge, practice-based scholarship in the field. Moreover, the Bookstein Institute awards scholarships to support deserving students in the pursuit of tax education. Finally, it provides much needed controversy and education related services to low income taxpayers in our area.

Our Mission

A. Promote advanced education in the area of taxation through the support of a skills-based, practice oriented Masters of Science in Taxation;

B. Support professional growth and development of students pursuing a career in the field of taxation;

C. Facilitate the pursuit of scholarly projects in the field of taxation;

D. Facilitate service learning opportunities for our students in taxation through partnerships with community organizations.

Warner Center's Estate Planners Seminar

Last fall, the Bookstein Institute, along with the CSUN Foundation, co-sponsored the annual Warner Center Estate Planners Seminar. The Warner Center Estate Planners is a group comprised of life insurance agents, CLUs, CPAs, and attorneys who meet regularly for continuing education and networking. Our first seminar featured a vibrant panel of discussion titled: "The Post-Mortem Administration of Decedent Estates- A Probate Litigation Kaleidoscope." The panel included Professor Todd Reinstein, Emeritus faculty at Cal State Northridge, Randy Leff, a probate litigation attorney at Ervin, Cohen & Jessup, LLP, and the Honorable Judge Alan Haber, the retired head of the Probate Department in Santa Monica and currently a mediator and arbitrator with Alternative Dispute Resolution.

Luncheon Seminar Series

To further enrich our graduate tax program's curriculum, the M.S. in Taxation Program launched in 2008 the Luncheon Tax Seminar Series. As part of our program, our graduate tax students attend monthly full day Saturday classes. During lunch time we offer the students the opportunity to attend a continuing education session. During those seminar sessions, we invite guest speakers to talk to our students about various emerging issues in the tax field. Over the past year, we were fortunate to welcome to campus a number of leading tax professionals. Last October, Mr. James DeBree, a tax partner at Deloitte, spoke to the graduate students on Real Estate Investment Trusts. During the following monthly luncheon, we had Mr. Michael Ozen, a tax partner at Moss Adams, LLP, who spoke on Foreign Tax Credits and Entity Classification. In January we welcomed to campus Mr. Harvey Bookstein, a co-founding partner at RBZ, LLP, ('70) to speak to our graduates on client development strategies. Later that month, Mr. Navin Sethi, LLM, from Rothstein Kass, LLP, engaged our graduate students on the topic of Hedge Funds and the Performance Allocation. Finally, later in the spring, Mr. Scott Schmidt, Partner Ernst & Young, LLP discussed current development in federal tax procedure.

If your firm would be interested in sponsoring its own luncheon seminar, please contact our M.S. in Taxation Office at: (818) 677-3600 or at mstaxation@csun.edu.

What's New

Tax Fellowship Program

This past academic year we have launched the Tax Fellowship Program, which is offered by the M.S. in Taxation Program and the Department of Accounting & Information Systems at Cal State University, Northridge. This is an innovative collaboration with a select number of accounting firms in the Los Angeles area with the goal of identifying and cultivating the next generation of leading tax practitioners. The participating firms are: Ernst & Young, LLP, Moss Adams, LLP, RBZ, LLP, Rothstein Kass, LLP, and Singerlewak, LLP.

For more information about this program, please contact the M.S. in Taxation Program at: (818) 677-3952 or via email at: mstaxation@csun.edu.

Tax Development Journal

The inaugural cohort in our MS in Taxation program was remarkable in many ways including its innovation, drive and initiative. Few months after the first cohort was launched, administration received an email from two students in the program inquiring about whether the program would support a student run tax journal.

While it appeared a bit over-ambitious given that we just started a new program and no other graduate tax program in the country has launched such an experiment before, the two students were determined to make it a reality. Over the past year and a half they have worked tirelessly to make it happen. We are pleased to report that in September, the Tax Development Journal published its first edition.

Professor Sharyn Fisk
Editor-in-Chief
Tax Development Journal

As co-editors of the Tax Development Journal, Leslie Sobol, CPA, MST and Robert Hymers, CPA, MST were directed and supervised by our talented and highly driven faculty, Professor Sharyn Fisk, who serves in the role of the Editor-in-Chief of the Journal. Professor Fisk specializes in civil tax and criminal tax controversy. She earned her LL.M. in taxation from New York University School of Law. She is also a certified specialist in taxation law, The State Bar of California, Board of Legal Specialization. She teaches in our program Federal Tax Procedure.

The Tax Development Journal sets a new standard in practitioner based tax scholarship as an innovative forum for intellectual discourse on emerging issues for tax practitioners and policy makers. This student run journal uniquely combines tax expertise with scholarly discourse to provide timely, insightful, and important contributions to scholarly discussion in a broad array of topical tax areas.

Tax Development Journal

The following articles were published in the first edition of the Tax Development Journal in July:

David R. Chan, Executive Director, Ernst & Young, LLP, Drop & Swap: Can You Relax If the Police Aren't Looking for You?

Arkady Vaserfirer, CPA, MST, Tanner, Mainstain, Blatt & Glynn, LLP, Incentives by States to Encourage Intrastate Development of Entertainment Projects.

Jacob Stein, JD, LLM, Boldra, Klueger & Stein, LLP, The One-Two Punch: The Use of Trusts and LLCs in Asset Protection.

Nikhil Bassi, EA, Systemwide Tax and Legislation Analyst for the California State University, The Application of Unrelated Business Income Tax to Exempt Organizations.

Sharyn M. Fisk, JD, LLM & Heather Kim Lee, Esq., Hochman, Salkin, Rettig, Toscher & Perez, Section 6676 Erroneous Claim for Refund or Credit Penalty: The Penalty has No Reasonable Basis.

Leslie Sobol, CPA, MST, Hinton, Kreditor and Gronroos, LLP, Advising Clients Participating in the Private Activity Bond Market § 144.

Robert L. Hymers, III, CPA, MST, Ernst & Young, LLP, IFRS Impact on State and Local Taxation.

To read any of these articles and/or to subscribe to the online journal, please visit the journal at http://tdjournal.csunacctis.com/index.php/home/index, email us at taxdevelopmentjournal@csun.edu or call us at (818) 677-3600.

HARVEY BOOKSTEIN'S COLUMN

In today's climate, it has become apparent that we should have focused far more on economics and cash flow than on tax savings. An example of this would be (what I have preached for several years) having little or no mortgage on your personal residence, if you can afford not to have one. Even though this might not be a good tax strategy, it might have given you less concern during financial downturns where cash flow is far more important.

As I have also discussed in the past, many of my clients have felt the need to find a tax-free exchange on an investment property that had been sold in order to avoid paying taxes currently. They may have discovered that it was not always the best answer if they couldn't find a "good" qualified exchange property. You might lose more on the new investment than the taxes you may have had to pay. It might have been better to pay taxes on the gain at the time of the sale rather than acquiring a property that either you do not understand or one in which you only could "hope" would work out well in the long-run.

How about all those deferred compensation plans that one uses to avoid paying taxes, on a current basis, only to find out that the company you work for (that created such a "helpful" plan) filed for bankruptcy and your deferred compensation turned into no compensation. How about the stock you owned with a large unrealized gain that you chose not to recognize because you've owned it for under one year and did not want to lose the opportunity of getting the long-term capital gain rate treatment; and now that you have held it for over a year, there is no reason to worry about the tax because there is no gain left to recognize?

It's human nature to look to avoid the things that appear to bother us the most, and certainly taxes are one of those things. Usually we look at the short-term effect not the long-term effect of our decisions. Taxes are always considered bad in the short-term because we need to spend money currently to pay them, but is there a benefit in going through that short-term pain? Even today I see several examples of individuals looking at things only one way.

A question I constantly hear from someone who is retiring at an earlier year than Social Security recognizes as retirement age is, "Should I collect on Social Security now, even with a discount in amount, earlier in my life (usually about three years earlier) or wait for the full amount when I reach the official retirement age?" Even if Social Security was solvent, which it is not, it may take in excess of 15 years of payments (180 monthly checks) to break even by waiting for the non-discounted amount. This does not even include the fact that much, if not all, of your Social Security will be lost when you die and if you had not taken it early, it would have been lost forever.

If you can afford making gifts to your children while you're alive rather than having them inherit it at your death, would that be a benefit to them? Of course you'll need to consider the psychological effect and be sure not to incent your heirs to stop working or putting out maximum effort by the fact that they will be receiving their entitled gifts. My wife Harriet and I love to see our children have a few extra benefits while we are living by helping out with (not solving) some of their financial issues. There are many ways this can be done, but you are in fact, economically using your assets in the short run to give them an early benefit. Even if you give them more than the maximum tax-free amount and it creates gift taxes that you have to pay now, it may be beneficial to your overall estate and to the needs of your heirs in the long-run.

How about "wasting" your money today to buy long-term care insurance or second-to-die life insurance to possibly make life easier in the future for your heirs? Is this really a waste or is it planning for the future? Harriet and I have done both; first to make sure that we do not become a financial burden on our children and second to minimize the inheritance tax for them.

All of this is just the tip of the iceberg. Every day we may encounter issues that need to be examined both from a short-term and long-term perspective. Try to look at both sides of the issue.

In summary, what I am trying to say is, "Don't always look at the easy answer, many times it is the non-obvious that is the correct answer."

People Watch

Faculty Profile

Jim Givens

Professor Jim Givens joined the faculty in spring 2009 teaching advanced corporate taxation. While truly a complex subject matter, Professor Givens has managed to captivate the student body in providing clear, well organized and engaging discussion of the subject matter. Some of the end of the semester comments that he received following his first teaching engagement include the following: "The course Professor Givens taught helped the students to become familiar with issues relating to corporate reorganization, asset acquisitions, and other complicated business models in a relatively short period of time. I really enjoyed Professor Givens' lectures. He really went out of his way to make sure we understood everything, no matter how complex the issue was. He provided interesting examples relevant to my current position in a tax department of a publicly traded corporation." As a reflection of Professor Givens' dedication and commitment to our program, he has decided to donate his entire teaching salary towards student scholarships.

"Continuing education is the foundation to a successful career in taxation. I am a better practitioner because I am in the classroom and a better student/teacher because I practice. I love the interaction with other professionals whether they are students or professors, and learn something new each and every time I meet with them. I always tell the young professionals at my firm that you have hunger to learn in order to succeed in this business and truly believe that CSUN helps to develop this mind set through the Masters program. The students in the CSUN Masters program have very diverse professional backgrounds and bring a wealth of knowledge and experience to the classroom. I was honored to be a part of the program this past spring and look forward to contributing to the program going forward."

During the day, Professor Givens is a tax partner at Ernst & Young LLP in Los Angeles. He serves a wide range of both public and privately held companies in diverse industries. He has extensive experience with corporate tax issues as well as state and local tax and FAS 109. He holds a M.S. degree in taxation and a B.S. in accounting.

Student Profiles

Robin Rousellet, CPA

Joined the M.S. in Taxation program after a successful career

I retired as the Chief Financial Officer of The Voit Companies in early 2007 after 22 years of service. A year and a half into retirement, I started thinking about embarking on a second career. I decided to start a small CPA firm that specializes in taxation and works exclusively with small businesses and individuals. Although I had significant tax experience as the CFO of Voit and as a CPA with Deloitte & Touche, I needed to build on my knowledge in order to feel comfortable running a CPA firm. I turned to CSUN for additional study in taxation since it was close to home and I was familiar with the quality of the business school having earned a B.S. in Business Administration and a M.S. in Accountancy from the university.

The CSUN M.S. in Taxation program seemed particularly suited to my needs because the class schedule is designed to provide significant semester breaks during busy tax filing periods and the program can be completed in 18 months. Also, the course curriculum is very comprehensive covering all of the critical subject areas that are relevant for a serious tax practitioner. Additionally, I knew the cohort class structure would provide an effective learning environment as I had previously participated in a cohort program at UCLA where I earned my MBA degree.

The actual experience of the program has exceeded my expectations. The faculty includes highly qualified tax professionals and academics that provide a rigorous learning experience. My fellow students come from diverse backgrounds including CPA's from public accounting, accountants from private industry and agents with the IRS. The hands-on experience gained from working in the tax clinic allows students to apply what they have learned while working with disadvantaged taxpayers.

The program has helped me accomplish the goals I had set out for myself. On July 1 of this year, I joined together with Michael Shaw CPA, a local CPA firm, to form Shaw Rousselet LLP, Certified Public Accountants. I am confident the education and training I have received from the Master of Science in Taxation from CSUN will be essential in helping me do my part to lead our firm.

Edward Martinez

Senior Tax Professional, Corporate Tax Department, Bank of America

I chose the M.S. in Taxation program at CSUN mainly because of the schedule offered. Classes are conveniently scheduled around the traditional busy season and minimal conflict between my work and school schedules have ensued thus far. Having a young child at home makes it difficult to prepare for class and complete assignments. The faculty is sensitive to the various personal circumstances each student faces and the work assigned is challenging, but rarely overwhelming.

I was a little intimidated at the beginning of the program because of my limited experience in taxation (3 years - State and Local). However, after our first class meeting I was happy to learn that the cohort consisted of a diverse group of tax professionals. The wide range of experience and background levels add to classroom discussion and alternate opinions are frequently expressed. I have enjoyed my time in the program and look forward to completion in 2010.

Shannon Roskowick, CPA

Senior, Tax Department, Moss Adams, LLP

I graduated from California State University, Northridge in 2005, with a B.S. in Accountancy, and shortly after joined Moss Adams LLP as a Staff Accountant. Even prior to graduating, I planned on going back to school for a Master's degree in taxation; however I anticipated that I would attend a nationally ranked program, such as USC. While at a CSUN "Meet the Firm's" event, Dr. Efrat, the Director of Taxation, approached me regarding the inaugural Cohort (Fall 2007) for the M.S. in Taxation program. We discussed all the advantages of attending the program, and supporting my alma mater. I decided then, I would apply for cohort 2.

There are three distinct factors which easily took my attention away from USC and placed it on CSUN; the schedule, the cohort style approach and the professors. As a professional with two young children, I was extremely attracted to a schedule which is designed around an accounting professional's life. This format really gives me the ability to focus on the program while not in my busy season. Additionally, I was intrigued by the idea of everyone starting together, working in the trenches and then graduating together. Lastly, all of the professor's are high level professionals, working in the area of taxation. That truly takes away the sterile academia feel, and gives it a real world focus.

When I started the program, I was fascinated by the unique variety of individuals accepted. In our cohort we have professionals from; public accounting, private industry (from large corporate tax departments to small size companies), IRS, etc. This variety brings a wealth of interesting perspectives to our work. For example, I worked on a group project with an IRS agent. It was truly eye opening to look at the analysis from the opposing side. What a great experience. Working together with diverse teams, has really given me a new perspective on collaboration.

As I look forward to the last group of classes, I see how the program is already benefiting me as a professional, as I am constantly applying the theories I have learned to my clients. I am absolutely driven to serve my clients, and I believe that building a strong technical foundation, and being able to collaborate effectively, will help me achieve that objective.

Lillie D. Johnson, CPA

Internal Revenue Service, Large and Mid-Size Business Division

I have been employed with the IRS since July 1988. I served most of those years in the Large Medium Size Business Unit. I am a licensed CPA. I am the mother of two, grandmother of one, and God Mother of three. I am actively involved in my Church and Church community.

A long-term goal of mine was to complete my Masters in Taxation. Last April my employer announced that it was partnering with California State University, Northridge (CSUN) in an accelerated M.S. in Taxation Program. This was a dream becoming a reality! I applied and was accepted into the program. I was also a recipient of the Harvey & Harriet Bookstein Scholarship offered by the CSUN College of Business & Economics.

My experiences in the program have been very positive and beneficial. The skills that I use in my day to day work have been greatly enhanced. My partnering with instructors and classmates has impacted my ability to make the vision of the IRS a reality: responding to the needs of our customers by innovative approaches and by providing quality service.

The instructors are open and share their personal experiences and solicit feedback from the students. The student body is very diverse with professionals coming from public accounting, private industry and the government.

I am excited about this opportunity and I am multitasking to stay afloat. It is challenging, but if you are committed you are able to endure until the end. I am grateful to Dr. Efrat, the staff and the IRS for this golden opportunity.

M.S. in Taxation Update

Commencement 2009

Last May, the M.S. in Taxation Program celebrated the graduation of the first cohort. At a private ceremony in the University's Grand Salon, 25 graduates along with their 150 guests were honored and recognized. During the ceremony, the Dean of the College Dr. William Jennings, and the Chair of the Department, Dr. Donna Driscoll, welcomed that graduates, their family and friends.

The 25 graduates demonstrated exemplary perseverance completing their graduate degree in taxation under two years while working full time.

Despite the challenging demands of the program, over 85% of the students that began the program in the fall of 2007 graduated on-time. Also, four months after graduation, the graduates were asked to complete an end of the program survey. From it we have learned that all of our graduates either work for a firm, organization or run their own practice. Over 90% of them are engaged in the tax field. Over 70% of the graduates reported income in excess of $100,000. Overall, the graduates seem to be pleased with their experience in the program with 58% of them describing themselves as "very satisfied" and the rest of them describing themselves as "satisfied" with the curriculum in the program.

The student speaker was Ms. Leslie Sobol, CPA '09.

Mr. Harvey Bookstein '70 addressed the graduates providing them with inspiring farewell.

Entering Class - Fall 2008

Last October, we welcomed to campus 33 highly accomplished tax professionals to join our fall 2008 cohort of the M.S. in Tax program. The Master of Science in Taxation is offered by the College of Business and Economics in collaboration with The Tseng College. Unlike other programs offered in our region, the M.S. in Tax program at Cal State Northridge is offered in a cohort format whereby each fall a group of approximately 30 mid-career tax professionals are selected to participate in this evening and weekend graduate program. Over a period of 18 months, each member of the cohort is guaranteed enrollment in every class. Classes are presented one at a time in an accelerated mode and the class schedule is set for the entire program at the outset. Courses are taught primarily by leading practitioners in the field.

Given our small class size, admission to this program is highly selective. For the our recent admission, the Admission Committee had more than 90 applications for a targeted class size of about only 30. The typical admitted applicants primarily were CPAs who had on average a 3.4 grade point average in their undergraduate studies, and five years of professional tax experience. About sixty percent of our entering students came from tax practice in public accounting, but almost twenty percent came from private industry, and another twenty percent were from government or operated their own practice.

Those who applied and were admitted to our program regarded Cal State Northridge by in large as their first choice as displayed by an acceptance yield rate of over 90%.

Student Scholars

With an enthusiastic generosity of our supporters, we have been able to provide financial support for many students in our graduate tax programs over the past year.

Select students admitted to the M.S. in Taxation program receive up to $4,000 in scholarship funds to help them fund their educational pursuits. The selection process is highly competitive and is based on merit and financial need.

Our contributors included firms, the Bookstein Institute, as well as members of our advisory board and faculty members. In particular, we would like to recognize two of our faculty members, Professor Jeff Tolin and Professor James Givens, Tax Partner, at Ernst & Young, LLP, who have donated their faculty salary to fund a number of scholarships to deserving students.

We are thankful to the following contributors for their giving. With their generosity, we were able to award more than $25,000 this spring to deserving students in our program.

To fund a future scholarship for a graduate tax student, please contact the M.S. in Taxation Office at (818) 677-3952 or at mstaxation@csun.edu.

HARVEY & HARRIET BOOKSTEIN ENDOWMENT:
Ryan Katz $3,000

JAMES DEBREE, TAX PARTNER, DELOITTE:
Shahab Razani $2,000

RBZ, LLP:
Yury Pavlov $3,000

THE ABRAHAM TOLIN MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP:
Eric Schauman $3,000
Yong Wang $3,000

STONEFIELD JOSEPHSON, INC:
Candace Hinkley $3,000
Irene Covarrubias $3,000

ROTHSTEIN KASS, LLP:
Charles Settle $2,000

ERNST & YOUNG LLP:
Lap Ying Lam $3,000

Tax Clinic Update

The Bookstein Tax Clinic has received a $58,000 matching grant from the U.S. Treasury Department to support its activities and the clinic's service in the community. The Bookstein Tax Clinic provides free federal tax controversy resolution, or tax dispute, services to low-income taxpayers residing in the Los Angeles area. The clinic opened in 2008 as a component of CSUN's Bookstein Institute for Higher Education in Taxation in the College of Business and Economics.

"This grant represents an important endorsement of the vital services the Bookstein Tax Clinic is offering to the public," said Dr. Rafi Efrat, Director of the clinic and professor of taxation in the Department of Accounting and Information Systems. "It provides an opportunity for the Bookstein Tax Clinic to expand its operations consistent with the vision Harvey and Harriet Bookstein had in mind when they first endowed the Bookstein Institute for Higher Education in Taxation back in 2005."

Professor John Balian
Tax Clinic Faculty

Under the supervision of an experienced tax professional, student clinicians—undergraduate and graduate students—serve low-income taxpayers who find themselves in a dispute with the Internal Revenue Service. Since its inception last year, more than 80 students have worked as clinicians and have served more than 140 taxpayers facing a controversy with the IRS.

The Bookstein Tax Clinic also provides tax education to taxpayers not proficient in the English language by participating in numerous community-outreach programs on a wide array of tax issues. Over the past year, students facilitated more than 40 seminars and workshops to self-employed taxpayers throughout the Los Angeles area, primarily on federal payroll tax issues. As part of their community service efforts, the students also have authored several short articles on tax issues affecting low-income taxpayers. Several of these articles, including some in Spanish, have appeared in local newspapers.

The student clinicians receive instruction on the intricacies of tax law and tax practice and procedure. The students are given an opportunity to handle various aspects of controversies with the Internal Revenue Service, including interviewing clients, preparing cases for appeals conferences and appearing at the conferences, preparing offers-in-compromise and negotiating settlements with the IRS.

Last December, the Bookstein Institute hosted a recognition luncheon for all the clinicians that took part during the first year of operation of the Bookstein Tax Clinic. For more information about the Bookstein Tax Clinic, call (818) 677-3600 or visit the Department of Accounting and Information Systems' Web site at http://www.csun.edu/acctis/.

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Outstanding Student of the Year

Robert Hymers, CPA, MST - Tax Executive Institute Award

The exceptional talent our students have brought to this program has tremendously benefited the program's learning environment. The students have all contributed and had wealth of insight and knowledge to share with their classmates during so many engaging class discussions. Some of our students have particularly excelled. The University standard for graduation with distinction is a minimum GPA of 3.86 for graduate students. Two students were honored last spring at a special ceremony of the University. They are Ali Alison and Robert Hymers. Also, the Tax Executive Institute has donated $1,000 scholarship to the outstanding student of the year in our program. The Institute held a special ceremony of recognition for our Outstanding Student of Year at the Beverly Hills Hilton. This year's recipient was Robert Leslie Hymers, III. Mr. Hymers is a licensed CPA in the State of California and is a professional at Ernst & Young, LLP. At Ernst & Young, LLP, Robert is specializing in providing tax services to publicly and privately held real estate entities. He graduated Summa Cum Laude in 2006 with a Bachelor's of Science in Accountancy and a second B.S. degree in Business Administration with a Business Honors designation from California State University, Northridge.

Outstanding Faculty of the Year

Professor Robert Johnson

Our faculty makes up an outstanding group of excellent practitioners and also remarkable teachers. We have asked our graduates to make a tough choice and identify their favorite faculty. The winner of this year Outstanding Faculty of the Year Award was Professor Robert Johnson. Professor Johnson, who is also a Tax Partner at McGladrey and Pullen, is the managing director of the firm's State and Local Tax (SALT) practice. He has more than 15 years experience serving the state and local tax needs of a wide variety of clients, ranging from publicly held Fortune 500 companies to privately held emerging growth firms. Prior to joining RSM McGladrey in 2006, he worked with a national team at a Big Four firm. He holds a master of science degree in taxation and a bachelor of science in accounting. He teaches State and Local Taxes for us.