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Law Library Briefs

Roger Williams University School of Law Library



No. 30, August, 2006

What Types of Questions Can I Ask the Reference Librarians? (Answer: Lots!)

The Librarians who staff the Reference Desk are available to help all students and faculty with a variety of legal research questions, especially the first-year students who are just learning about legal research in their Legal Methods I and II classes. The Legal Methods Professors expect first-year students to ask the Reference Librarians for assistance with their Legal Methods assignments. If you are unable to ask for assistance in person, please call the Reference Desk at 401-254-4547.

Some appropriate questions for the Reference Librarians are:

- ♦What does the library have on topic X?
- ♦Does the library have X in the collection?
- ♦Do you have suggestions for finding a topic for a paper?
- ♦How can I find cases/statutes using the books, LexisNexis or Westlaw?
- ♦How do I determine if my case/statute is still good law?

•♦How do I use Shepard's or Keycite?

•♦How do I find X on Westlaw, LexisNexis, and other electronic databases?

•♦How do I cite X? How do I determine if this citation is correct?

•♦I need to find the answer to issue X! Where can I begin my research? What steps can I take in conducting my legal research?

•♦I have already done X, Y, and Z for my research. Am I on the right track?

•♦I have spent so much time trying to accomplish X and I am stuck, what can I do next? Is there an easier, more efficient way to do X? (Note, if you are spending more than twenty minutes and are unable to find what you are looking for, seek the assistance of a Reference Librarian!)

The Reference Librarians are here to help you. We enjoy assisting you with your legal research and helping you acquire the skills of a great legal researcher!

Library News

Gail Winson, Director of the Law Library and Associate Professor of Law was promoted to the position of Associate Dean for Library and Information Services effective July 1st. Dean Winson was a founding faculty member of the law school and the founding Law Librarian responsible for the development of the Law Library's collection. In addition to her duties as the Director of the Law Library, she teaches Advanced Legal Research. She recently authored the chapter "Researching the Laws of the Colony of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations: From Lively Experiment to Statehood" published in *Prestatehood Legal Materials* (Reference and Stacks, KF240 .P688 2005). Dean Winson is a member of the State Bars of California and Florida.



The Uniform Commercial Code: Study Aids!

During your law school career, you will study (and be tested on!) the law of commercial transactions, much of which is governed

by state law. Each of the forty-nine states (except Louisiana) has enacted the Uniform Commercial Code (U.C.C.) to regulate commercial transactions conducted within that state. While studying Contracts as a first-year student, you will become familiar with U.C.C. Article 1 (General Provisions) and U.C.C. Article 2 (Sales). The course on Sales also covers U.C.C. Article 2. The course Payment Systems covers U.C.C. Article 3 (Negotiable Instruments), U.C.C. Article 4 (Bank Deposits and Collections), and U.C.C. Article 4A (Funds Transfers). U.C.C. Article 9 is the focus of the course Secured Transactions. The remaining U.C.C. Articles are: Article 5 (Letters of Credit), Article 6 (Bulk Sales), Article 7 (Documents of Title) and Article 8 (Investment Securities).

The U.C.C. is the result of a joint project begun in 1942 by the American Law Institute and the National Conference of Commissioners on Uniform State Laws. It was drafted under the supervision of an Editorial Board composed of representatives of both organizations. It was adopted by the membership of both organizations and endorsed by the American Bar Association in the fall of 1951. The first state to enact the U.C.C. was Pennsylvania. Since 1951, the U.C.C. has undergone numerous revisions with Articles being amended and new Articles added.

For those looking to read the official text of the U.C.C., there is

a one volume softbound pamphlet, *Uniform Commercial Code...Official Text and Comments*, published annually by Thomson/West (Reserve, KF879 .A15 U55). Older editions of this publication are shelved in the stacks with the same call number. Accompanying the text of the individual sections of each Article are the Official Comments prepared by American Law Institute and the National Conference of Commissioners on Uniform State Laws. Each Comment provides a legislative history explaining the purpose and intent of the section and any changes to that section.

Some study aids on the U.C.C. are described below.

The *Uniform Commercial Code in a Nutshell* by Bradford Stone (Reserve, KF889.3 .S68 2005) is organized by subject and covers the basic concepts pertaining to that subject. Negotiable instruments, sales, and secured transactions are among the subjects discussed in the *Nutshell*.

The classic hornbook is *Uniform Commercial Code* by James J. White and Robert S. Summers. (Reserve, KF890 .W45 2000). A multi-volume version of this treatise for practitioners is shelved in the stacks (*Uniform Commercial Code*, KF890 .W451 2002 -). The hornbook is organized in the same manner as the U.C.C., proceeding from Article 1 through Article 9. Contained in the appendices are an example of a security agreement and tips for researching the U.C.C. using

Westlaw.

If one is looking for a basic discussion of individual U.C.C. Articles, there is a series published by the American Bar Association Section of Business Law with the catchy title *The ABCs of the UCC*. This series treats all U.C.C. Articles except Article Six. To view the Law Library's holdings, conduct a title search of the Law Library's WebCatalog using the title *The ABCs of the UCC*.

CALI (Computer-Assisted Legal Instruction)

The CALI website at www2.cali.org now offers over 625 interactive lessons and tutorials in 32 areas of law! There are several lessons on the U.C.C. You can conduct a keyword search of the CALI lessons or retrieve a listing by subject. Check the listings for Contracts, Commercial Transactions, and Sales. You must sign up for individual access to the CALI website. Contact a reference librarian for the law school's authorization code.

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 • LexisNexis and Westlaw training •
 • for first-year students will be held •
 • the weeks of September 3rd •
 • through October 1st. Check your •
 • mailbox for memos indicating the •
 • dates and times of your training •
 • sessions. •
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