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Newsroom: Kuckes on Litigation Academy

Roger Williams University School of Law

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Newsroom

Kuckes on Litigation Academy

For the first time, a federal court, a law school and a bar association come together in partnership to teach newer attorneys essential litigation skills.

From Rhode Island Lawyers Weekly: "[Bench, bar grappling with deficits in court experience](#)" by Pat Murphy.

Oct. 23, 2014: The phenomenon of the “vanishing trial” has lawyers and law firms scrambling to find innovative ways to develop and hone those essential courtroom skills.



The problem is measurable, **according to Niki Kuckes, a professor at Roger Williams University School of Law.**

“Forty years ago, maybe 10 percent of civil cases went to trial,” **Kuckes said.** “Now, only about 1 percent of civil cases go to trial in the federal courts, so there just isn’t the opportunity for the newer lawyers to get that trial experience that some of the more experienced members of the bar had.”

Responding to the problem, the U.S. District Court in Providence is set to unveil a ground-breaking “Litigation Academy” to train new lawyers in the courtroom arts.

The Vanishing Trial



The problem of the vanishing trial is exacerbated by the simple fact that there are more lawyers, according to **[RWU Law Adjunct Professor] Brooks R. Magratten**, the partner in charge of Pierce Atwood's Providence office.

"There are more lawyers out there than there used to be and they are all competing for that smaller pool of trials," Magratten said. [...]

Innovative program

The Litigation Academy is the brainchild of **[RWU Law COB] U.S. District Court Chief Judge William E. Smith**. What makes the program unique is that it is a partnership between the federal court in Rhode Island, RWU School of Law and the local chapter of the Federal Bar Association.

The program is co-chaired by Kuckes and Magratten, a past president of the Rhode Island FBA.

"It's tremendously exciting," **Magratten said**. "It's the first time ever that you have a federal court, a law school and a bar association coming together in partnership to offer these programs." [...]



The aim of the academy is to provide a low-cost, high-quality program for teaching newer attorneys the skills needed to successfully litigate cases. The faculty includes federal judges as well as experienced trial attorneys who have volunteered their time.

“We see this as a long-term project for the court, the bar and the law school,” **Smith said**. “It’s pretty intensive training with a serious time commitment.” [...]

For full story, click [here](#).