

Professional Development Grant Final Report

**Grant to Fund Westlaw® Legal Research Database
2007-2008 Fiscal Year**

Submitted by

Tracy Cole
Assistant Professor of Legal Studies
School of Business
Corley 225
968-0491
tcole7@atu.edu

Restatement of problem researched, creative work, or professional enhancement opportunity.

I requested funds for a subscription to Westlaw®, an online legal research database used by judges, practicing attorneys, and academicians. Because the American legal system is very complex and the law constantly evolves and changes, I must update my knowledge of business law on an ongoing basis to remain current in my profession and to provide students with accurate information. I also need access to a broad range of legal materials to accomplish the type of research that would be relevant and useful within my professional field. The database provided me with the information necessary to update and enhance the courses that I teach and to perform legal research for use in professional publications and presentations.

Brief review of the professional enhancement opportunity, creative work, or research procedure.

I used the Westlaw® database to find and access state and federal statutes, current state and federal case law, articles in law reviews and journals, and other secondary sources of law, such as American Law Reports, treatises, and briefs. Some of these materials were used in preparation for the courses that I teach, BUAD 2033 Legal Environment of Business and MGMT 3123 Business Ethics. I also used these resources to finish editing an article on punitive damages in employment discrimination class-action lawsuits and to begin a new research project on employment discrimination based on employees' lifestyle choices, such as engaging in smoking, drinking alcohol, political activities, and nontraditional personal relationships.

Summary of findings, outcomes, or experiences had.

Teaching: I incorporated the current legal information that I obtained into my lectures and PowerPoint presentations for BUAD 2033 Legal Environment of Business and MGMT 3123 Business Ethics. Handouts in BUAD 2033 included Arkansas statutes relevant to specific areas of business law, such as tort law, contracts, and employment law.

Research: I completed the following publications, and a copy of each is attached to this report. The first is an article published in a professional journal. The second was a presentation at a professional conference. The abstract for this presentation was published in the conference proceedings.

Harold and Cole. (2008). "Darned if You Due Process, Darned if You Don't! Explaining the Due-Process Dilemma for Punitive Damages in Title VII Class Actions." *UALR Law Review* v30 (3) (Spring 2008).

Cole and Black. (2008). "Lifestyle Statutes and Discrimination: An Exploratory Study." *Society of Business, Industry and Economics 10th Annual Conference Proceedings*. April 15-18, 2008, Destin, FL. Available at <http://www.una.edu/sobie/proc2008.pdf>.

Conclusions and recommendations.

Having access to the Westlaw database during the 2007-08 academic year enabled me to better prepare for the courses I teach and to complete the research necessary to finish editing a journal article and write a presentation for a professional conference. Beginning with the 2008-09 academic year, the library has subscribed to Westlaw Campus Research database, which is a version of Westlaw designed for colleges and universities rather than legal professionals. This database, which is available to all students, faculty, and staff, provides me with access to case law, statutes, law reviews and journals, and other valuable sources. I would recommend that the library continue its subscription to Westlaw Campus Research because this database provides access to both legal information and information on news and business, which are valuable resources to students, faculty, and staff in many disciplines.