

What does *soap* have to do with it?



Chase students are learning that innovative techniques of the world's largest consumer products company may help them serve potential clients

In purely business terms, Professor Chris Gulinello would be something of a new-product development manager in his role as director of the W. Bruce Lunsford Academy for Law, Business + Technology at Salmon P. Chase College of Law.

The two-year-old honors program is designed to help students shift from traditional views of law, business, and technology as being separate brands to seeing them on the same shelf as a co-branded approach to problem-solving. To develop that way of thinking, Professor Gulinello has had to design classes that had not been part of a law school inventory—and find instructors for them. He had to do what the Lunsford Academy was designed to do—innovate.



P&G represents innovation. It is a firm that has been around for close to 200 years, and is on the cutting edge of product development because of its commitment to innovation and the use of 'design thinking' in all aspects of its business.



For a class that teaches students how to identify potential clients' needs and to think creatively about solutions, he recruited a manager from Procter & Gamble Co. who leads a team that thinks creatively about possibilities for new products.

For a law practice technology course he found a practicing lawyer who retired from Procter & Gamble after a career in information technology, largely in the company's legal, manufacturing, and research and development divisions.

For a course in data privacy that academy students this past fall asked to have added for spring semester he brought in a lawyer now in the Procter & Gamble legal department.

In seeking adjunct professors for a leading-edge program who have expertise that is not typical among law professors, Professor Gulinello has gathered, by coincidence, an adjunct faculty from a background that showcases a common assessment among business analysts: There are few better examples of innovation than the world's largest consumer products company, headquartered seven miles from Chase.

"P&G represents innovation. It is a firm that has been around for close to 200 years, and is on the cutting edge of product development, because of its commitment to innovation and the use of 'design thinking' in all aspects of its business," Professor Gulinello says.

The creative thinking course he co-taught with P&G design manager Tiffany Stevens was developed around a technique known as "design thinking." It was once used primarily in product design, but many companies now use it in a variety of areas to guide thinking beyond traditional strategies.

"'Design thinking' is an approach to problem solving," Professor Gulinello says. "It is a process for understanding the user, defining the problem, generating possible solutions, prototyping solutions, and testing them to have the best chance to come up with a good solution."

"Law students typically look to the law for answers, and many lawyers do the same. But the answers to clients' problems sometimes are not in the law," he says.

Much of the fresh thinking at Procter & Gamble in recent years has come out of an in-house think tank known as the Clay Street Project, for its location in Cincinnati's Over-the-Rhine neighborhood. Multidiscipline teams use it as a place to envision ways to revitalize sagging brands and to create new products.

Even in technology, which is constantly innovating, reinvention has to be part of lawyers' thinking, says William Lunceford, who retired from P&G and now practices law in Greater Cincinnati and teaches the law practice technology course. "P&G constantly re-invents itself, and this is even more true in Global Business Services and IT," he says of two divisions in which he worked.

"My experience allows me to give the students a taste of what is to come in the legal industry as law firms reinvent themselves or die. The legal service startups these days are similar to, although smaller than, the dot-com boom, in terms of the variety of new applications, services, and offerings that come and go each month.

"One goal [of the course] is to impart to the students how they can invent and reinvent themselves using technology as a tool throughout their careers, while not wasting time chasing the latest gadget or glossy presentation," Mr. Lunceford says.

The type of multidisciplinary approach to problem-solving that goes into P&G brand development is also part of the Lunsford Academy approach to preparing students to practice law. The classroom lesson is that a solution for a client's problem may be in more places than just a statute.

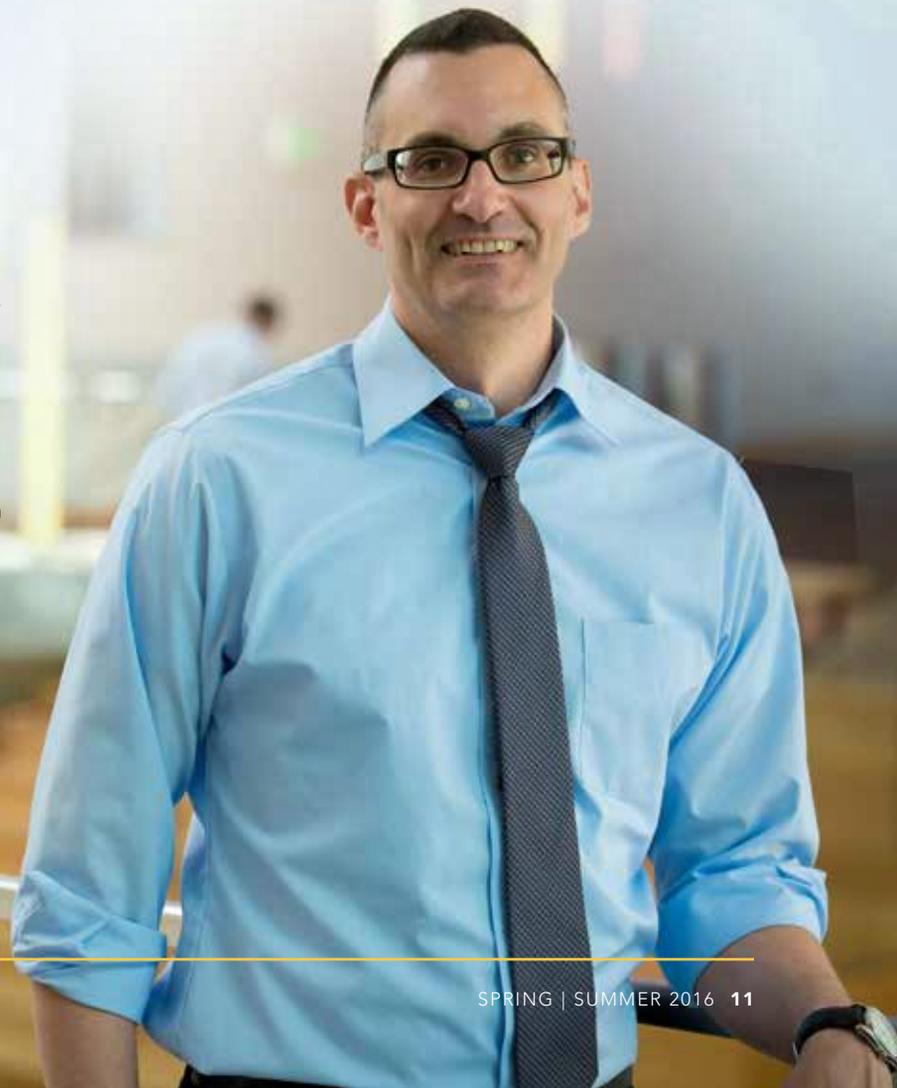
"One of the things I have found most striking about working at P&G is the high level of collaboration, both within the company's legal practice groups, and between the company's lawyers and our internal clients," says Matthew Lawless, a P&G lawyer who teaches the data privacy course.

"This tight-knit collaboration allows us, as lawyers, to do our best work. Not only can we readily share and advance our expertise through challenging discussions with our legal colleagues, we can improve our legal guidance by working to understand our clients' businesses and the mediums and markets in which they operate."

For Chase Lunsford Academy students, being able to innovate and collaborate are ways to put their brands on an established profession.

"Lawyers who want to create value for their clients," Professor Gulinello says, "need to be able to work with them to develop creative solutions for their needs, especially in the business context. If firms like P&G employ design thinking in various aspects of their business, then any lawyer who serves these firms will have to understand and be able to participate in design thinking processes to be part of the team that works on a problem."

At Chase, learning to "think like a lawyer" also means learning to think beyond the traditional.



Professor Chris Gulinello