

SPOTLIGHT

Class act

Students at Suffolk University Law School in Boston have benefited from an innovative new antitrust course, thanks to Partner Kevin Adam.



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When Kevin Adam made partner in 2022, he was proud to be the first 'home grown' partner in the Firm's Boston office and the only partner at White & Case to have graduated from Suffolk University Law School.

He says: "I went to Suffolk Law School in Boston and started in the evening program while I worked full time. While Suffolk is well known around the city, the school isn't renowned for sending a lot of graduates to major law firms. I really enjoyed my time there though and I attribute a lot of my success to the school's practical approach, as well as the work ethic that I had to develop to be successful there. I wanted to do something to give back."

Kevin, whose practice focuses on antitrust litigation and counseling, initially helped by volunteering to speak at various panel events and mentoring law students looking to break into the world of large law firms. But in 2022, when the school's antitrust professor stepped down, the deans came to Kevin with a bigger ask: would he be willing to come back and revamp and teach the school's three-credit antitrust course.

He explains: "Right away, I knew I wanted to do it, but making the time for it was going to be a real challenge. So I told them I was too busy to teach the fall semester, but could do it in the spring, as long as the course only met once a week, and it had to be in the evening. The school really bent over backwards to make it work around my schedule."

The course started in January of this year and met every Wednesday night from 6-9 pm for 14 weeks.

Preparing the course structure and materials was time consuming, but Kevin was passionate about making the content relevant, practical and engaging.

He says: "Of course, I wanted to teach them the basics of antitrust, but I also wanted to go beyond the theory and put them in the shoes of a real antitrust lawyer – what it's like to make real strategy decisions and advise clients on close calls. That's the part that I think many law school classes are missing. You don't see that until you get your first job and find out what it's like in the real world.

"It can take a new lawyer a few years to get used to the fact that legal questions and challenges often come at you without warning, so you need to think on your feet. I wanted to help them develop that peripheral vision as a law student, so that they're better prepared when they make it to practice."

To that end, Kevin broke his lectures up with unexpected mock exercises for his students, including simulated phone calls from clients that forced the students to apply the law they were learning to real-world issues and advise demanding clients on the spot.



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He says: “I also took a lot of time scanning news stories and current events in the week prior to each lecture, often basing part of each class on tackling the most relevant antitrust-related news of the week.

“For example, one class started with a heated debate about the price of Taylor Swift tickets and the conduct of Ticketmaster. When I saw how interested the students were, I went with it. I paused the discussion and split the class down the middle – one side had to come up with an antitrust theory against Ticketmaster and the other needed to argue why that hypothetical complaint should be dismissed. That one was fun to watch.”

Kevin also used his contacts, old and new, to compile a star-studded list of inspiring guest speakers, including in-house antitrust lawyers from Apple, Meta, Microsoft, and Nike, as well as two White & Case partners.



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“We started and ended the course with guest speakers from the Firm – Partners Kristen O’Shaughnessy from New York kicked things off, and Chris Curran from Washington, D.C. closed out the class on the last day. The students really loved hearing about some of the cases Chris had worked on and what it’s like to argue before the Supreme Court.

“In between Kristen and Chris, I was able to bring in in-house lawyers from my network every other week, which was great opportunity to build and grow those relationships while, at the same time, exposing my students to some of the opportunities that are out there if you really roll up your sleeves and get to work.

“It was also great to raise the profile of antitrust as a potential career path, because it’s sometimes seen as a bit niche by students, and to give the next generation of legal talent from the school an insight into White & Case and what it’s like to be an antitrust lawyer in practice.”

At the end of the semester, Kevin received an award from the Center for Teaching & Scholarly Excellence for his innovative approach to teaching the course. Feedback from the students has also been highly positive, and Kevin hopes to teach the class again in future.

He says: “A lot of the students told me that they loved the practical approach and hadn’t experienced it in any other class. It was refreshing, they thought, to be learning based on cases and real-world issues that are happening today.

“Grading the students was a challenge, particularly because there were 30 students and less than a week to turn around grades, but it was clear the students engaged with the content and learned a lot, so I sort of had fun going through the answers and watching them apply what we learned.

“Overall, teaching was a great experience. I enjoyed talking to the students about everything from proposed antitrust legislation to how to nail a job interview. It’s wonderful to be able to send the elevator back down and help students who are in the same place that I was in 10 or so years ago.”

