



November 25, 2010

University Students in Mock IRS Investigation

Last week, twenty business and accounting students participated in a mock IRS investigation of a fictional terrorist financing organization that ended with the issuance of a warrant of arrest. The simulation was called the Adrian Project and is aimed at exposing the university students to a possible career with the IRS upon graduation. Robert Glanz, a Special Agent with the IRS' Criminal Investigation Division organized and facilitated the Project. At the same time, the Project was aimed at compliance with the law and increase confidence in the tax system.

The simulation, which began at 7 a.m. started with the students being given an overview of the Criminal Investigation Division and a synopsis of the case. Then they were 'sworn in' as honorary IRS agents and briefed about the task of investigating Jay Albright, the fictional terrorist financier.

The person primarily responsible for bringing the Project to New Jersey was Professor Marjorie Yuschak, faculty advisor of the Beta Alpha Psi, a national accounting, finance and information systems honor society.

Professor Yuschak desired to expose the university students to career options other than working for one of the big four accounting firms namely Ernst and Young, Deloitte, PriceWaterhouseCoopers and KPMG.

The honorary agents were taught the tools of the trade by Special Agent Eric Rennert. The group poured over various documents like mock bank statements and tax returns searching for their next lead. Agent Rennert helped them to spot anything suspicious in the documents such as overly huge consulting fees and charitable contributions just below the deductible limit every month.

Then the teams paid a surprise visit to the accountant, 'BK' of Returns 'R' Us and conducted an 'interview'. Agent Rennert explained the need for persistence when interviewing anyone. At the same time, the interview should be conducted without allowing the accountant the chance to consult with his client to receive instructions on what to say or not to say.

All the persons involved in the simulation were IRS special agents who took part to teach the students about their type of work. The simulation also involved defensive firearms training where the students were allowed to put on vests and holsters, given plastic guns and taught how to command and arrest a suspect.

Then there was undercover surveillance of targets and training on how to obtain an arrest warrant from the magistrate court. This led to the actual arrest. Finally, the case was closed at 4 p.m.

The honorary IRS agents were each presented with a certificate of recognition and invited to apply for full-time positions or co-ops with the IRS.