Memo

From: Erich Schanze, professor II UiB

To: Study Committee, Law Faculty

Course evaluation JUS 282-2-A Schanze „International Business Contracts: Structures, Negotiation, Conflict Avoidance and Resolution", block January/February **2011**

This course, taught in English, views non-standard business transactions from a drafting perspective. This is unusual for law students who typically study substantive law applied by courts. In some aspects the course is a sequel of "Economic Analysis of Law" but it also comprises theories of negotiation, documentation and professional updating of contracts including notions of alternative dispute resolution. Originally started under the title of "complex business contracts" it attracts steadily increasing participation at Bergen in the range of 20 to 30 students. Given the size of assignments of more than 300 pages, partly fine print, the course requires a substantial amount of self study during and after the course. Students receive an outline in form of slides. The class attendance was very good. Most attendants took the three hour closed book exam. Generally, the assignments and the teaching were well understood. This is reflected in an above average response in the examinations, typically 10-15 pages well written responses to structural questions in English. In a limited number of cases a deficiency in understanding and writing technical legal English was noticeable. As in the course on economic analysis of law (fall), it is difficult in a specialist subject raising the basic language proficiency of individual students. From a teacher's perspective the inadequacy in the foreign language of a small minority of students is hard to tackle, because constant terminological explanations on a basic level will bore the large (competent) majority. Nevertheless, the technical terminology was largely available, even in weaker exams – a positive result in view of the relevance of legal English and economic theory in the future practical work in the area of business law. No student failed. A high proportion of answers were excellent, demonstrating a substantive engagement of the students in working through the materials.

The service from administration was diligent and helpful. Also, the daily slideshows ran well in all rooms assigned.

The direct response in class (I usually ask the students and talk to them individually in every break of the block course for receiving direct feedback on comprehension and speed) was positive throughout. The students understood that they were exposed to a relatively high work load during and after the course, and that this was altogether an unusual offer within their law curriculum. I will monitor the issues raised in two negative responses in the post-examination internet evaluation in the next course but feel that they are partly caused by a misunderstanding of the (language/ technical) prerequisites of this advanced specialist course. It is one of the policies of the course, clearly stated and repeated throughout the block teaching, that students should raise issues of comprehension at the spot.

13 July 2011

Erich Schanze