

JEFF MILLER, UNIVERSITY COMMUNICATIONS



Steve Meili (left), Director of the University of Wisconsin Law School's Consumer Law Clinic, consults with a fellow clinical supervising attorney during a conference phone call while working with second-year Law School students Holly Pomraning and Hugo Rojas.

## Consumer Clinic Wins New Victory

This January the UW Law School's Consumer Law Litigation Clinic won an important victory, overturning a mandatory arbitration clause in a consumer contract. The case was against Cross Country Bank (CCB), which markets credit cards to lower-income consumers with credit and debt problems.

Although a Wisconsin case, the decision will have an impact across the country. Attorney Paul Bland of Trial Lawyers for Public Justice circulated a message on the significant impact of the opinion. Bland commented, "It's a terrific decision ... Congratulations to the lawyers and students of the University of Wisconsin Consumer Law

Litigation Clinic for winning this huge victory."

The Consumer Law Clinic, one of ten clinical projects at the Law School, represents low-income clients in disputes ranging from scams to unfair debt collection to payday-loan abuses. The clinic also works behind the scenes, to encourage legislation that protects consumers against unfair practices and helps to stop future violations through community outreach. For instance, the clinic works closely with Centro Hispano, alerting them to possible scams targeting the Latino population in Madison.

The clinic is an important teaching tool of the Law School, providing opportunities for students to develop important lawyering skills in real cases under the supervision of a clinical professor. As Steve Meili, Director of the clinic for the past 15 years, explains, "We train students to become effective, ethical legal advocates, and all of us in the clinic—students included—pride ourselves on the quality of our work."

## East Asian Legal Studies Center Receives Major Grant

The East Asian Legal Studies Center at the University of Wisconsin Law School received a \$488,000 grant from the U.S. State Department Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor. The grant will fund a two-year project, the "Program in U.S. Administrative Law and Regulatory Practices," which will train officials in the Shanghai government at the municipal and district levels.

The goal of the program is to increase transparency, predictability,

legality, and fairness in government regulation and in the delivery of services in Shanghai.

The center, headed by Professor Charles Irish, was established in 1990. It provides a variety of programs and activities related to the people and academic institutions of East and Southeast Asia, continuing the Law School's long history of involvement in international and comparative law. The center formalizes and increases the Law School's academic interaction with

universities, government ministries, and the private sector in this part of the world. The center also provides activities of special interest to J.D. students in the form of short programs, internships, research grants, and Law School part-time jobs.

The grant was written primarily by Professor John Ohnesorge, the center's Assistant Director, and Pam Hollenhorst, Associate Director of the Law School's Institute for Legal Studies.