

# SMU Dedman Law Steps Up with Test Drive

By Mark Curriden  
Senior Communications Counsel  
Vinson & Elkins LLP

Zach Burd was attending an Inn of Court meeting this spring when he overheard a lawyer

Dedman School of Law Class of 2010, Burd immediately saw an opportunity for work upon graduation.

The lawyer told Zach that she needed help, but that she felt like she should be very cautious about hiring new lawyers due to the tough economic times.

Only a few weeks later, Zach was one of scores of students attending a luncheon program where the Office of Career Services unveiled a creative new initiative in which SMU Dedman Law would pay \_\_\_\_\_ first month salary \_\_\_\_\_ if the employer and the graduate believed the effort would lead to a full-time, long-term position.

y to get my foot

Burd landed his full-time, permanent position through this new, highly innovative effort created exclusively \_\_\_\_\_. He is one of six SMU Dedman Law 2010 graduates whose Test Drive resulted in full-time, permanent employment within one month after taking the bar in July. As of September, twenty-five SMU Dedman Law 2010 graduates have secured Test Drive jobs since the program was launched in mid-May. Graduates have until December 31 to secure a Test Drive and have until the end of February to complete their Test Drive employment.

Test Drive is designed to empower SMU Dedman Law graduates and give them an advantage in a very tough economic environment. The program encourages law firms struggling with the decision of hiring an additional associate to take a stronger look at graduates of the Class of 2010 by offering a financial incentive to help offset the cost. If a law firm agrees to give a new graduate a test drive, SMU will cover up to \$3,500 of the first

and law firm agree that it will lead to full-time employment. If the law firm decides after the first month that it cannot offer the graduate permanent employment, there is no further obligation by the firm or the graduate.

market for new

to be extraordinarily cautious abo