

Washington College of Law  
Alvina Reckman-Myers First Year Moot Court Competition Rules  
2011-2012

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Updated: Monday, November 28, 2011

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- I. **FIRST YEAR COMPETITION COMMITTEE:** The officers of the competition will form the Competition Committee. The Committee will perform any and all duties as assigned by the Moot Court Honor Society Constitution and these Rules.
  - A. **DIRECTORS:** Responsible to the Moot Court Honor Society for the planning, preparation, and conduct of the competition. The Directors will enforce the Rules of the competition as set forth below.
  - B. **VICE-PRESIDENT:** The Vice-President of the Moot Court Honor Society shall have input into decisions regarding judges for all rounds of the Competitions.
  - C. **PRESIDENT:** The President of the Moot Court Honor Society shall serve as the liaison with WCL faculty and staff regarding the Competition.
  
- II. **ELIGIBILITY OF COMPETITORS:** All first year full-time or part-time students who attend the Washington College of Law and are in good academic standing as a candidate for a Juris Doctorate (J.D.) degree are eligible to compete in this competition. This includes students participating in dual-degree programs completing their first year at WCL.
  
- III. **PREPARATION FOR THE COMPETITION**
  - A. **Problem**
    - 1. The problem for the First-Year Moot Court Competition will be edited and modified as the Directors see fit. All edits and modifications will be made available to competitors in a timely fashion.
    - 2. Participants are not required, nor are they permitted, to research or prepare a brief.
    - 3. Participants **MAY:**
      - a. Read any or all of the cases and/or statutes cited in the materials they receive,
      - b. Consult general treatises or other general references materials,

- c. Discuss the problem and moot with other First Year Washington College of Law students participating in the Competition, and
  - d. Consult video and audio recordings of previous First Year Competitions, held in the Washington College of Law library.
4. Participants MAY NOT:
- a. Read any actual court documents filed for their case or the case upon which the First Year problem is based, including, but not limited to, court decisions, pleadings and briefs (participants are limited to reading ONLY those cases actually cited in the materials they receive).
  - b. Enlist the aid of any faculty member at any law school, or any student at any law school other than WCL,
  - c. Enlist the aid of any attorney,
  - d. View any Supreme Court or Appellate Court oral arguments between when the problem is released and the final round of the Competition in which the competitor argues, or
  - e. Collaborate with or enlist the aid of any other student at the Washington College of law not participating in the First Year competition.

Violations of these standards may subject the participant to sanctions under these Rules.

IV. JUDGING THE COMPETITION: The following guidelines are a general statement of the judging procedures to be used in the First Year Competition. All judges are volunteers. Prior to each round of the Competition, judges will be given information regarding the criteria to be used in evaluating participants. Moot Court Honor Society members may serve as judges in any round. Due to the large number of judges required, the Directors may alter or amend the following rules as they deem appropriate.

A. PRELIMINARY ROUNDS

- 1. "Preliminary rounds" includes the first round, the quarter-final round and the semi-final round of the Competition.
- 2. Judges of these rounds will be second, third, and fourth year law students who have either competed in or judged past competitions; alumni of the Washington College of Law; and/or faculty of the Washington College of Law. Preference will be given to those judges with the most experience. The Directors and the Moot Court Honor Society Vice-President reserve final judgment as to the judges used in all preliminary rounds.

2. Judges will not evaluate any competitor where reason exists which would make it difficult for that judge to be impartial or which, in the Directors' sole discretion, would give the appearance of impropriety. Any violation of these standards may subject the judge to sanctions under these Rules.
3. No fewer than two (2) and no more than four (4) judges will sit and evaluate each oral argument round.
4. Spectators will be allowed to observe the first round of arguments, subject to the permission of all competitors and judges in the respective courtroom. The term "spectators" shall not be construed to include the Bailiff assigned to that courtroom or members of the Moot Court Honor Society
5. First Year Competitors are prohibited from attending first round arguments other than those in their assigned courtrooms.

**B. FINAL ROUND**

1. Generally, the final round will be judged by sitting and/or retired judges from the District of Columbia, Maryland, or Virginia, or active members of the District of Columbia, Maryland, or Virginia bars. The Directors and the Moot Court Honor Society Vice President reserve final judgment as to the judges used in this round.
2. No fewer than three (3) and no more than four (4) judges will sit to evaluate the oral arguments presented during the final round.
3. Spectators are encouraged to attend the final round. The Directors shall resolve any disputes regarding or involving spectators.

**V. CONDUCT OF THE COMPETITION**

**A. GENERAL GUIDELINES**

1. All participants will conduct themselves in a professional manner throughout the competition.
2. Each participant is expected to work independently of non-participant law students, law school faculty and members of the legal community, including, but not limited to, lawyers currently or previously registered with any state bar. Participants are expected to limit their consultation with other participating law students to mooting sessions.
3. By accepting the competition packet, each participant shall be deemed responsible for strict adherence to ALL rules and prohibitions contained in

any portion of the packet or these Rules. Failure to comply with these provisions can result in expulsion from the First Year Competition, exclusion from the Moot Court Honor Society's Spring Qualifying Competition, or additional sanctions under the Honor Code of the Washington College of Law.

4. Any complaint that arises during the course of this competition regarding any aspect of these Rules, the general instructions, the problem packet, any other material, or the actions of any student of the Washington College of Law in connection with this competition must be filed within 24 hours of the action that gives rise to the complaint, or within 24 hours of the first knowledge of the action. The complaint will then be referred to the Moot Court Honor Society Executive Board for a decision on how to proceed.
5. Directors and the Moot Court Honor Society are not responsible for any participant's misunderstanding of the issues to be argued on appeal. Participants should limit themselves to the questions presented in the United States Supreme Court Writ of Certiorari.

#### B. ADVANCEMENT OF COMPETITORS BY ROUND

1. For each round, the participant's final score shall be the average of all scores submitted by the judges for that round. Advancement from the quarter-final round to the semi-final round and from the semi-final round to the final round will take into account all of the participant's previous scores.
2. First round: Participants will be ranked against those arguing the same side of the case. Approximately thirty-two (32) competitors will advance to the quarter-final round; sixteen (16) Appellants and sixteen (16) Appellees.
3. Quarter-Final Round: Participants will be ranked against those arguing the same side of the case. Approximately sixteen (16) competitors will advance to the semi-final round; eight (8) Appellants and eight (8) Appellees. The competitor's first round scores will be added to the scores from the quarter-final round to determine advancement to the semi-final round.
4. Semi-Final Round: Participants will be ranked against those arguing the same side of the case. Four (4) competitors will advance to the final round; two (2) Appellants and two (2) Appellees. The cumulative scores from both of the competitor's previous rounds will be added to the scores from the semi-final round to determine advancement to the final round.

#### C. SCHEDULING

1. The Directors shall schedule argument rounds. Participants may ask the Directors to schedule their rounds to accommodate religious observance, emergencies, or other fundamentally unalterable conflicts. With the

exception of emergencies, all scheduling requests MUST be received via e-mail at FirstYearCompDirectors@gmail.com no later than midnight on January 23, 2012. While attempts will be made to accommodate scheduling requests, the Directors and the Moot Court Honor Society cannot guarantee that a request will be granted. Due to the large number of participants, the First Year Competition Committee is unable to make scheduling accommodations for reasons other than those specified above.

2. Participants not wishing to compete in the First Year competition must notify the Directors no later than midnight on January 23, 2012. Failure to notify the Directors by this deadline will result in a participant's inability to compete in the Moot Court Honor Society's Spring Qualifying Competition, thus barring membership in the Moot Court Honor Society. A participant may be allowed to withdraw from the First Year Competition without penalty if the reason for withdrawal is serious and legitimate and if the competitor contacts the Directors in order to explain the reason preventing participation. The Directors reserve the right to require proof of any exigent circumstances and have sole discretion as to whether a participant should be excepted from the above-stated penalty.
3. A participant may choose not to proceed to the later rounds after the completion of the first round if they so desire. However, the participant must inform the Directors or another member of the Honor Society before 6:00 PM on the day of the preliminary round. Failure to participate in later rounds without informing the Directors will result in a participant's inability to compete in the Moot Court Honor Society's Spring Qualifying Competition. Should extreme extenuating circumstances arise, the Directors may waive this requirement.

VI. **AWARDS:** Awards will be distributed to the two best oral advocates (Best Appellant and Best Appellee) and the other finalists. Other awards may be distributed at the discretion of the Directors.

VII. **AMENDMENT:** These Rules are subject to amendment by the Moot Court Honor Society. The Directors may, when necessary, temporarily amend these rules.