

## TRIAL TEAM

### • What We Are All About

- Trial Team is different than Moot Court. We run mock trials from beginning to end.
- If you are selected to join the team:
  - You will receive individual instruction on trial skills from coaches who are practicing attorneys and judges in the Chicago legal community.
  - You will learn to try cases “better than attorneys who have been practicing for many years”
    - This is consistently a compliment we receive from judges at our competitions
  - You will form relationships with and receive mentoring from actual attorneys and judges
  - You will make invaluable career connections
    - We have an incredible alumni network interested in helping members of the team in future careers.
    - You will also compete in front of prominent lawyers and judges.
- Trial Team looks great on your resume
  - Chicago-Kent’s Trial Advocacy Program is currently ranked 5<sup>th</sup> in the nation by U.S. News and World Report.
  - Kent’s trial team has won four national titles (1988, 2007, 2008, 2015), countless regional titles, and many more invitational tournaments including the prestigious NITA Tournament of Champions.
- You will be able to travel across the country paid for by the school for competitions
  - Examples of places people have travelled to include: NY, Texas, L.A., Las Vegas, Florida, Sacramento, Washington D.C.
- You will make great friends
  - You will become very close with your teammates and other members of the Trial Team
- You will have lots of FUN!
  - Trial Team is one of the most rewarding experiences you will have in law school

### • What Trial Team Involves

- Significant time commitment
  - We practice six days a week for several hours each day
  - However, this is only while you are preparing for a competition
    - You should expect to attend at least one competition per semester, and we typically practice six to eight weeks before the competition
    - During those six to eight weeks, you are busy, but before and after your competition, there is no practice.
- You will have time to do other things
  - You can get good grades on trial team. Several of our members are in the top 10% of the class and on Law Review; you will not fail out of law school if you join this activity.
  - Since 1997, we have 98% bar passage rate.
  - Many of our members:
    - Work at outside firms while they are on the team.
    - Have internships and externships.
    - Clerk at the State’s Attorney’s Office and Public Defender’s Office.
    - Work in the Clinics
  - Many of our members also have time to be involved in other student organizations and even take leadership roles in those other organizations.

- **Tryouts**

- Tryouts will be in two sessions:
  - **Sign up for a time slot on Google Docs by April 14**
  - Tryouts will begin **Wednesday April 21 starting at 4:00pm** via Zoom until everyone is finished.
  - If you are selected to move on, call backs will be **Friday, April 23 (time TBD)**
  - We will make decisions that day (on Friday)
- Wear Suits if possible!!! Look put together and appropriate
  - Dress like you would if you are going to a job interview
  - Don't go out and buy one if you don't already have one, just wear very nice business casual attire
- What we are looking for:
  - People who are teachable, have personality, are engaging and comfortable speaking in front of people
  - Be yourself!!!
- You will be asked to prepare:
  - A 3 to 5 minute opening statement (see attached handout for how to)
  - A 7 to 8 minute closing argument (see attached handout for how to)
  - For the case of *State of Lone Star vs. Peter Paul Seger*

- **It's not so much about what you say, as HOW you say it**

- Don't worry if you don't know how to write things
  - We are more interested in your personality than your substance
- You should try to memorize your opening and closing so that your personality can shine through

## **WHAT to Prepare for Tryouts**

First choose ONE side (Prosecution or Defense). Prepare an open AND a close for your side.

### **HOW to Prepare** **Opening Statement**

*(for tryouts 3-5 minutes)*

*\*\* Time yourself – you will be cut off after these time limits so do not plan on going over*

Opening statements are your opportunity to tell the story of the case from your client's perspective. Your objective is to give a preview of the evidence the jury will hear throughout the trial in a persuasive way.

- Parts of an Opening Statement:
  - Theme, headline, attention grabber
  - Introduction of yourself and who you represent (the State or the Defendant)
  - Story of what happened
  - Call to the jury – tell them what you want them to do

### **Closing Argument**

*(for tryouts 7-8 minutes)*

Closing arguments are your opportunity to remind the jury what evidence they have heard and why it matters. This should be a persuasive summary of what they heard throughout the trial and how it proves your theory of the case.

- Parts of a Closing Argument:
  - Theme, headline, attention grabber
  - A reminder of the evidence they heard and why it matters
  - Call to the jury – tell them what you want them to do (i.e. find your client guilty or not guilty)