



**2020 INTRAMURAL
TRIAL ADVOCACY COMPETITION**

**TO SELECT THE MEMBERS OF
LOYOLA'S 2020 / 2021**

BYRNE TRIAL ADVOCACY TEAM

Guidelines and Rules

GUIDELINES & RULES

2020 INTRAMURAL TRIAL ADVOCACY COMPETITION

1. *Purpose of the Competition:*

This competition is designed to select the members of the Byrne Trial Advocacy Team for the 2020/2021 school year. The Byrne Trial Advocacy Team consists of students who participate in a series of regional and national mock trial competitions. This fall, some team members will compete in one of three or four fall competitions. In the spring, some team members will compete in the regional rounds of the National Trial Competition, and if successful there, the final rounds to be held in Texas next March. Other students will compete in the regional rounds of the AAJ Student Trial Competition. If successful they will advance to the national finals. A third team may compete in an additional spring tournament.

*****All team members will be required to participate in a summer boot camp intensive, summer boot camp trials and mandatory weeknight practices during the school year on Monday and Wednesday nights from 6 to 10 p.m. as well as weekend practices. There will also be a course component requiring several training sessions each semester (on one of the normally scheduled meeting times) where advanced trial advocacy skills and trial ethics will be taught.***

***Please note that this year, a student's placement after tryouts will no longer make them eligible for the ABOTA award or for participation in the annual Byrne exposition trial next Spring. Those selections will now be based on performance in Summer boot camp (for the Byrne exposition) or selection by Professor Poehls at the end of the year (for the ABOTA award.)

2. *Eligibility:*

All Loyola Law School day students who will be entering their second or third year or evening students entering their third or fourth year of law school ***who are in good academic standing*** are eligible to compete.

There are no prerequisites. If team members have not yet taken evidence, they will be required to do so **in the fall semester of their year on the team,**

3. *Entering the Competition:*

To participate in the tryouts you must register on the Byrne Team website located at:

<http://www.lls.edu/academics/advocacyinstitute/mootcourtandadvocacyprograms/byrnetrialadvocacyteam/tryoutinformation/>

and register by submitting the **online registration form and attaching a resume and unofficial transcript**. Once you have submitted your registration materials you will be emailed a password to access the tryout packet. Registration must be completed by **3:00 p.m. on Monday, April 6th**. If, after you have submitted a registration, you choose not to compete please contact Professor Poehls *immediately* at susan.poehls@lls.edu.

4. Schedule:

A detailed schedule of all relevant dates is contained on the Byrne team website.

5. Units:

The students who *actually participate as team members for the entire school year* will receive six pass/fail units for their participation during the entire year- three each semester. Students who were team members the previous year are entitled to **four** pass/fail units, two per semester. All units are awarded at the end of the year. ***Please note*** the Byrne Team is a full year commitment*** You may NOT drop the course after the fall add/drop deadline without losing ALL units for the year and receiving an F on your transcript.***

6. Competition Format:

The intramural competition will consist of three rounds. Round I will require competitors to submit a self-taped video of a five minute closing argument (without notes or use of a podium) for the side of their choice no later than **Friday, April 10th** at 3:00 p.m. After Round I, there will be a cut for Round II, announced by email, late at night on April 14th. ***Round II will take place on Friday, April 17th*** and will consist of a live on Zoom, 5-minute cross examination and a 15-minute interview with the coaches. Cross exams do not need to be memorized and notes may be used. There will be a cut made after Round II, announced by email late on April 17th. ***For students advancing to Round III, it will take place on Saturday, April 18th live on Zoom between 8:30 a.m. and 8:00 p.m.*** and will consist of a performance of your original 5-minute closing (same side as Round I) as well as a 5-minute Question & Answer period in which the judges will pose questions to the competitor about the case, their arguments and potential counter arguments.

Students will receive no feedback on their performance from Round 1 unless they advance to round 2. For all rounds, judges will assign each competitor a score between 0 and 100. The top ranked competitors will advance to the next round.

In Round III, each student will present their five minute closing argument again (without notes or a lectern.). Each student will also be questioned by the panel of judges. The questions will concern issues raised by the student's closing argument. The questions will focus on arguments made, possible responses to arguments and factual questions.

At the conclusion of the final round the judges will rank the students. The top students will be invited to join the Byrne Trial Team. If one of the selected students is unable or unwilling to

join the team, the next ranked alternate will be offered the position until all positions are filled.

*****STUDENTS MAY *NOT* LIST THE BYRNE TEAM ON THEIR RESUME UNLESS THEY ARE OFFERED *AND ACCEPT A POSITION ON THE TEAM AND REMAIN ON THE TEAM ALL YEAR.* *******

7. *Returning Team Members:*

Students who were members of the team last year must compete for a position again this year including participation in Round I.

8. *Judges:*

Judges for Round I will consist of team coaches, practicing attorneys in the area including former team members, as well as some graduating team members.

The judges for Round II and III will consist of the team coaches and former team members.

9. *Assistance:*

Once the fact pattern is released, students participating in the competition *may not receive any* instruction, or assistance in preparing for the competition from any member of the faculty, coach, *current or former team member.*

10. *Training Video:*

It is strongly recommended that all competitors watch the video on the tryout website of Professor Poehls' group training session. In that video, she discusses advice on how to draft and perform a successful closing argument for tryouts. For students advancing to Round 2 it is required that you watch the training video on cross examination.

In addition, we recommend the following books to help with closing argument and cross exam preparation. Both books have helpful chapters on both topics.

1. Mc Elhanev's Trial Notebook (any edition, with paperback versions available at a reasonable price on Amazon). I will also place a copy on reserve in the library.

2. Trial Techniques and Trials, by Thomas Mauet- 10th edition. This is an excellent standard textbook available in our book store, the library and online.

11. *Questions:*

Any questions should be sent to Professor Susan Poehls' at susan.poeahls@lls.edu. If an answer is deemed appropriate, it will be emailed to all competitors.

13. *Conduct during Trials:*

For all rounds, live and taped, no spectators may be present. Judges will **not** critique your performance and score sheets will **not** be provided to the competitors. No exhibits, white boards, flip charts or props are permitted in any round.

Dress as though you were going to Federal court. This means a conservative looking suit that fits comfortably.

14. *Mandatory informational meeting:*

All participants are required to attend or watch the informational meeting held on Zoom on Tuesday, March 24th. The link to the video is on the tryout webpage at:

<http://www.lls.edu/academics/advocacyinstitute/mootcourtandadvocacyprograms/byrnetrialadvocacyteam/tryoutinformation/>.

15. Competition participation:

Being a member of the Byrne Team does not guarantee that you will be a competitor in any given competition. Sometimes coaches will determine that some students should sit out for a particular competition, or may only act as a witness. While the large majority of students who work hard will get to compete as an advocate, (often in more than one competition a year) it ***cannot be guaranteed***. Some semesters we have more team members than available competitor spots. Team assignments will be made to maximize our competitive chances and provide maximum learning opportunities.

See you at try outs, and Good Luck!

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

WHAT DOES THE BYRNE TRIAL TEAM DO?

We are a team of hard-working, well trained advocates who compete in regional and national trial advocacy tournaments and are consistently ranked as one of the best law school trial advocacy teams in the nation. We are ranked #5 in the top Trial Advocacy Programs in the country by US News and World Report and have one of the most successful records in the country for winning regional and national competitions.

WHAT WILL I LEARN AS A MEMBER OF THE BYRNE TEAM?

You will learn to be an effective trial lawyer. A dedicated team of experienced lawyers will train you to handle every aspect of a jury trial. You will learn how to evaluate a case and develop a case theory. You will be taught how to draft and deliver effective opening statements, direct examinations, cross examinations and closing arguments. You will master the rules of evidence and learn how to make a persuasive legal argument to a judge. You will learn how to be an ethical and zealous advocate who wins in the courtroom.

WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO BE A TEAM MEMBER?

Talent and a lot of hard work. During preparation periods (before competitions) students will meet two weeknights each week from 6:00 p.m. to approximately 10:00 p.m. and on weekends. In addition to this in-class time, students will require additional outside preparation. As tournaments approach- additional practices are added. The busiest months for team members are October, November, January, February and March, and spring is definitely more demanding than the fall. Spring practices generally begin for some team members the week between Christmas and New Years (before classes resume.) If needed, practices may also be held during spring break. Travel may be required in October or November, February, March and/or April.

Team members must work closely with coaches and visiting judges. The process is an intense one, based largely on performance, critique and revision. All team members must be able to deal well with constructive criticism and work well with others. Most importantly, students must be competitive and willing to do the work that it takes to win.

CAN I DO *BOTH* LAW REVIEW AND BYRNE?

Yes, *providing* you are organized, a good multi-tasker, efficient and not afraid of hard work. Many Byrne team members have also been members of one of the Law Reviews, and have also served as editors while members of the Byrne team. They will tell you it wasn't easy, and they had to make many sacrifices in other areas (very understanding and supportive family members and friends) but they made it work.

WHAT DO WE GET WHEN WE WIN?

First, the incredible satisfaction in knowing that you probably have more trial experience than most partners in the large law firms...but on the less practical side-trophies, cups, bowls, plaques, graduation awards, potential scholarship money, and recognition by some of the top trial lawyer organizations (AAJ, ABOTA, IATL, American College of Trial Lawyers). If you win a national championship- you'll also get one of those fabulous banners that you see on campus.

WILL THIS HELP ME FIND A JOB?

While we can't guarantee that being on the Byrne team will **always** lead to a job, we can guarantee it will **definitely help** you in the process. With our well-known record of success, the Byrne team has a strong regional and national reputation among law firms, District Attorney Offices and Public Defender Offices. Many of these employers give actual "bonus points" in their application process for former team members. In addition, Byrne team alumni can be found in each of these offices, many large law firms and some even have their **own** successful firms (some of whom routinely hire Byrne team members when they have openings). Team membership will provide great resume value, as well as a wealth of trial experience and war stories to talk about during interviews and call backs. More importantly- it will give you the confidence and sense of accomplishment that will make you a great prospect for any employer.

WILL I GET UNITS FOR BEING ON THE BYRNE TEAM?

Absolutely. All team members who remain on the team for the entire year receive six pass/fail units for their work. (Four for returning team members)

WILL IT REQUIRE ME TO SACRIFICE TOO MUCH OF MY FREE TIME?

If you have to ask, you probably should consider some other activity. We need a total commitment...the kind of commitment it takes to win a national championship.

WHAT ARE THE GOALS OF THE BYRNE PROGRAM?

We have two goals. The first is to train our students to be effective trial lawyers. The second is to win national championships.

WHAT WILL THE JUDGES BE LOOKING FOR?

The judges will be instructed to look for RAW TALENT. Competitors will be scored on their demeanor, courtroom presence, voice, organization, creativity, use of language, appearance and persuasiveness. In the question and answer portion, the judges will be looking at the competitor's ability to think quickly on their feet, poise under pressure and their ability to respond appropriately. If you think you have the talent, drive, sense of humor and dedication; if you love winning and hate losing; and if you are ready to give us your very best effort-come and try out.