



# NATIONAL ANIMAL LAW COMPETITIONS

PRESENTED BY:



CENTER FOR  
ANIMAL LAW  
STUDIES  
AT LEWIS & CLARK  
IN COLLABORATION WITH THE  
ANIMAL LEGAL DEFENSE FUND

HOSTED BY:



Harvard Law School  
Student Animal Legal Defense Fund

## CLOSING ARGUMENT COMPETITION 2011 COMPETITION RULES

## **RULE I. ORGANIZATION**

The National Animal Law Competitions (NALC) are an inter-law school competition comprised of three separate events:

- Legislative Drafting & Lobbying Competition;
- Closing Argument Competition; and
- Appellate Moot Court Competition.

NALC is a fun and educational event presented by the Center for Animal Law Studies and hosted by the Harvard SALDF Chapter at Harvard Law School each year. The purpose of the event is to provide law students an opportunity to develop knowledge in the field of animal law and to hone their written and oral advocacy skills.

## **RULE II. PARTICIPATION**

### **A. Competitor Eligibility.**

Participation in the Closing Argument Competition is on an individual basis. The Competition will be open to the first sixteen (16) students to register and arrange payment. Should the competition sell out, potential competitors are encouraged to register for the waitlist as a spot may become available.

Each law school may enter up to two competitors. Participants must be full- or part-time students seeking a J.D. at any ABA-approved law school in the United States and who have completed at least one year of their studies.

*\* First year law students are eligible to compete in the Legislative Drafting & Lobbying Competition of the National Animal Law Competitions.*

**B. Substitution.** In the event of an emergency, schools may send an alternate competitor. The law school or individual competitor must immediately notify the competition administrators of the change.

### **C. Registration.**

Registration for the 2011 competitions will open on Thursday, October 7, 2010, at 10 a.m. (PST). Registration forms will not be accepted before then. Registrations are processed on a first-come, first-served basis. The order is determined by the time and date they are received via email. Send completed forms to competition administrator Laura Handzel at [lhandzel@lclark.edu](mailto:lhandzel@lclark.edu).

Competitors must submit a fully complete registration form and arrange payment for the registration fee of \$225 (per individual competitor). The registration form is provided on the NALC website under the "Registration" option.

Should a competitor need to withdraw from the competition, a full refund minus a \$15.00 administrative fee is available until December 1, 2010. There will be no refunds after that date.

Registrations may be completed by the individual competitor or by an agent acting on their behalf.

Because many law schools hold in-school competitions to select their representatives, specific competitor information is preferred but not absolutely necessary at the time of registration. All other fields on the registration form, however, must be complete and payment must be arranged. If not, the registration will not be accepted. **Specific competitor information must be supplied no later than November 15, 2010, or the spot is forfeited to a waitlisted team.**

### **RULE III. COACHING**

#### **A. Restrictions.**

Competitors may not receive any coaching, advice, or assistance from individuals who:

1. Are involved with the writing of the 2011 Closing Argument Competition problem; or
2. Are serving as a judge for the 2011 Closing Argument Competition. The burden of determining coaching eligibility rests on the competitor. If a competitor requests coaching assistance by an individual, they must first ask whether this person is acting as a judge for the 2011 Closing Argument Competition.

#### **B. During the Competition.**

Every effort is made to make NALC as fair as possible. Consequently, coaches and guests may not observe preliminary rounds, including those of their own competitors. This policy is in place to avoid any possibility of judges being influenced (for better or worse) by coaches and/or guests present in the room(s). Coaches may assist competitors before and after each round. The final competition round will be open to the public.

The competition administrators will strive to make arrangements to record rounds, allowing coaches, family members, etc. to review the video with the competitors after the event is over.

#### **C. Communication with Judges.**

During the competition, competitors and coaches may not discuss the rules, problem, cases, strategy, or scoring, and may not receive any advice, feedback, or coaching from the NALC judges beyond feedback provided immediately after each round.

## **RULE IV. COMPETITION PROBLEM**

### **A. Distribution and Components.**

The problem consists of the Trial Record, which includes a transcript of testimony, documents received in evidence, and jury instructions. The problem is posted on the NALC website, under "Problems." Please visit: [www.NationalAnimalLawCompetitions.org](http://www.NationalAnimalLawCompetitions.org)

### **B. Questions and Competition Administrators.**

Contact competition administrator Laura Handzel at [lhandzel@lclark.edu](mailto:lhandzel@lclark.edu) with questions. Be sure to read both the problem and the rules in their entirety before requesting clarification. Also be sure to refer back to the rules from time to time prior to the competition. Ms. Handzel will not respond to questions that are answered in the rules and, if needed, can only provide minimal clarification on the problem.

Please note, Ms. Handzel works closely with fellow competition administrator Liberty Mulkani. Competitors will be receiving communications from both prior to and during the event.

## **RULE V. FORMAT OF PRELIMINARY ROUND**

### **A. Format of the Problem.**

Using the trial record, each participant will prepare a closing argument for *either* the plaintiff or the defendant to be delivered to a panel of six (6) jurors who also act as competition judges. The participant need only prepare a closing argument for one side (plaintiff or defendant) and present this argument in both the preliminary round and, should she or he advance, the final round. See Rule IX (A). Each participant will be allowed a maximum of twenty (20) minutes to present their arguments.

### **B. Preliminary Rounds.**

There will be one preliminary round during which each participant will present a closing argument to a panel of jurors/judges in a standard jury trial format. Participants will not be permitted to sit in on other closing arguments during the preliminary round and will be called into the room on an individual basis.

### **C. Format of Argument.**

At the commencement of each presentation, the participant shall inform the jurors/judges for which party they are delivering their closing argument. The participant will then be allowed a few moments to prepare for delivery of his or her argument. When the jurors/judges are ready to begin, the Bailiff/Timekeeper will announce that the participant may begin and the twenty-minute (20-minute) time period will commence.

#### **D. Timekeeping.**

The Bailiff/Timekeeper will display a green card until only three (3) minutes of the participant's allotted time remain. At the three-minute (3-minute) mark, a notice will be given (a card displaying the number three (3) will be displayed). When one (1) minute remains, a yellow card will be displayed. When the competitor's time has expired, a red card will be displayed, signaling that the competitor must conclude promptly.

#### **RULE VI. VISUAL AIDS AND PROPS**

Visual aids are a scored element of the Closing Argument Competition. Visual aids and props may include posters, boards, enlarged photographs, or other items. Students may not use power point projections, and are also prohibited from using any photographs not provided in the competition problem.

#### **RULE VII. SCORING**

**A.** The jurors/judges will be asked to rate each participant on a scale of one (1) to ten (10), with these numbers representing the following:

- 1-2:** Below average performance
- 3-4:** Minimum level of acceptability
- 5-6:** Average performance
- 7-8:** Good performance
- 9-10:** Outstanding performance

**B.** The jurors/judges will consider the following factors in assigning a rating to each participant:

- (a)** Use of facts (1-10 points). Selecting and using the strongest facts effectively, including the ability to address negative facts. Stating facts accurately and not misrepresenting them.
- (b)** Use of jury instructions (1-10 points). Educating the jury as to the criteria to be used in rendering a verdict. Effectively weaving in discussion of the jury instructions with the facts.
- (c)** Persuasive content of presentation (1-10 points). Whether the presentation is persuasive, creative and memorable.
- (d)** Demeanor (1-10 points). Demonstration of a professional level of confidence, delivery, pronunciation, diction, use of eye contact, appearance, overall effectiveness of the advocate.
- (e)** Effective use of appropriate visual aids (1-10 points).

## **RULE VIII. ADVANCING TO THE FINAL ROUND**

### **A. Judging Competitors.**

Following the presentation of each argument, the jurors/judges will complete an evaluation for each participant. At the conclusion of the preliminary round, the jurors will also rank the top four participants who will move onto the final round. The same six jurors/judges will score each of the participants in all rounds.

### **B. Tie-Breaking.**

In the event of a tie, the tie will be resolved by consideration of the rankings given by the jurors/judges. The rankings will be evaluated by assigning to them the following points:

**1<sup>st</sup> = 5, 2<sup>nd</sup> = 4, 3<sup>rd</sup> = 3, 4<sup>th</sup> = 2, 5<sup>th</sup> = 1, no ranking = 0 points.**

The participant with the highest rankings will advance. For instance, if participants A and B each have 24 points but participant A was ranked 3<sup>rd</sup> by three jurors and 4<sup>th</sup> by three jurors (for a total of 15 points) and participant B was ranked 2<sup>nd</sup> by one juror, 3<sup>rd</sup> by 4 jurors and 5<sup>th</sup> by 1 juror (for a total of 17 points), participant B will advance to the final round.

## **RULE IX. FORMAT OF FINAL ROUND**

### **A. Format Change.**

The format of the Closing Argument Competition changes in the final round. In the final round, competitors will deliver their closing argument as if at a bench trial. The standard jury trial format will only apply in the preliminary rounds. In the final rounds, the “jurors” are now “judges” and will act as such. Competitors should be ready to answer questions interjected by the panel of judges in this bench trial format. This format is employed to gage how competitors “think on their feet.”

### **B. Competitor Order.**

The four finalists will be randomly assigned a presentation order in the final round.

### **C. Round Closed to Finalists.**

The competitors in the final round will not be permitted to view the closing arguments of other competitors in the round.

**D. Judges.** The same six (6) judges will hear and score all arguments in the final round.

### **E. Determining Placing.**

Upon completion of the final round, the competition winner will be determined by considering the total score given to each participant. In the event of a tie, the rankings given to each participant will determine the winner. *See* Rule VIII (B).

### **F. Notification of Advancement.**

The names of the competitors advancing to the final round will be announced at the Saturday evening banquet.

## **RULE X. AWARDS**

The winner of the competition will receive an individual plaque, as well as a plaque for display by his or her law school. Semi-finalists will receive individual plaques. Winners' names and photos (unless otherwise instructed) may be posted on the NALC website.

## **RULE XI. PENALTIES**

Penalties, including disqualification, may be assessed for failure to comply with the rules or deadlines set pursuant to these rules.

## **RULE XII. INTERPRETATION OF THE RULES**

Requests for interpretation of these rules should be made at the earliest date possible. Competitors will receive prompt notification of any new rules, as well as revisions to or interpretations of existing rules. All competitors shall be bound by any changes, effective at the time of notification.

Contact competition administrators Laura Handzel (lhandzel@lclark.edu) or Liberty Mulkani (lmulkani@lclark.edu) with questions regarding the rules. Be sure to read the rules carefully and in their entirety before requesting clarification. Also be sure to refer back to the rules from time to time prior to the competition. The competition administrators will not respond to inquiries that are addressed in the rules.

---

**The Center for Animal Law Studies at Lewis & Clark, in collaboration with the Animal Legal Defense Fund, wishes you a fun and productive 2011 Closing Argument Competition. Best of luck to all competitors!**



CENTER FOR  
ANIMAL LAW  
STUDIES  
AT LEWIS & CLARK  
IN COLLABORATION WITH THE  
ANIMAL LEGAL DEFENSE FUND