

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 5th 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 8**
 - Tryouts will begin **Wednesday April 13 starting at 4:00pm**
 - If you are selected to move on, call backs will be **Thursday, April 14 starting at 4pm**
 - We will make decisions that day
- Wear courtroom attire!!! Look put together and appropriate
 - Dress like you would if you are going to a job interview
 - Don't go out and buy anything you don't already have, 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)