

**Penn State Law School – University Park  
Student Bar Association**

**Bylaws of the 1L Mock Trial Committee**

*Mission Statement*

The name of this committee shall be the 1L Mock Trial Committee of the Student Bar Association. The 1L Mock Trial Committee of the Student Bar Association shall be responsible for organizing and planning the annual Penn State Law 1L Mock Trial Competition. The goal of the committee shall be to provide a rewarding experience for 1Ls to learn about trial advocacy, gain experience in the court room, and compete against their fellow classmates.

The organizing and planning of the 1L Mock Trial Competition shall consist of the following requirements:

1. Select and/or create a competition problem with the requisite fact pattern, legal authority, and applicable evidence for participants to formulate an effective case in chief
2. Schedule all preliminary, semi-final, and final rounds
3. Secure courtrooms for all rounds of the competition
4. Secure judges from the 3L class who have taken evidence and trial advocacy, past students who have graduated Penn State Law, faculty, and/or practicing attorneys
5. Assign members of the committee as coaches for all teams involved
6. Set up an informational meeting to explain the procedures, schedule, and guidelines of the competition to the 1L class
7. Provide a series of training seminars to teach and explain multiple aspects of trial advocacy
8. Create a scoring rubric for preliminary and semi-final rounds that provides a fair and impartial scoring system

The 1L Mock Trial Committee of the Student Bar Association shall maintain an open door policy for every student organization and every member of the student body at Penn State Law. It shall review student organization and individual student proposals for improving the 1L Mock Trial Competition in an objective, nondiscriminatory manner.

*Definitions*

**Nominate:** To propose by name as a candidate for election. Each nominee must be approved by the Student Bar Association before assuming the respective position

**Appoint:** A binding selection by the Student Bar Association for an office or position in the 1L Mock Trial Committee

Quorum: Two-thirds of the student members of the committee constitutes a quorum

### *Officers of the 1L Mock Trial Committee*

The Mock Trial Committee shall have as its administrative and executive officer(s) one chair or two co-chairs.

#### A. Chair(s)

The chair(s) of the 1L Mock Trial Committee shall be nominated by the SBA president and appointed through the majority consent of the SBA, and serve at the SBA president's pleasure. The term of office shall be for one academic year.

The chair(s) shall:

1. Preside over all meetings
2. Set the date, time, place, and agenda for all meetings
3. Appoint and coordinate any such volunteers deemed necessary to effectuate the purpose of the 1L Mock Trial Committee
4. Complete a monthly committee update form and submit it to the Vice President of the SBA
5. Attend and/or appoint one committee member to attend a minimum of one SBA meeting per month to provide an update to the student body

#### B. Members of the 1L Mock Trial Committee

The 1L Mock Trial Committee is open to all 2L and 3L students at Penn State Law. The Committee shall include at least two other members of the student body in addition to the chair(s). Those interested should contact the current chair. The chair will provide the SBA Vice President and President with the names of anyone interested in joining the 1L Mock Trial Committee before the next SBA meeting. Membership is subject to nomination by the SBA President and approval by the SBA Board. SBA Committee members may be removed from the Committee only by a decision of the SBA President.

### *Meetings*

The 1L Mock Trial Committee shall meet no less than two times during an academic year with at least one meeting per semester. The 1L Mock Trial Committee reserves the right to hold additional meetings when circumstances deem necessary.

A. Meeting Procedure: The following guidelines shall govern each 1L Mock Trial Committee Meeting

1. Every meeting shall begin when the chair(s) call the meeting to order
2. The chair(s) must take roll and determine whether a quorum is present for voting purposes

3. The chair(s) will announce all proposals for discussion at the meeting
4. The chair(s) will then ask the individuals or designated representatives of all organizations working with the 1L Mock Trial Committee to present their requests regarding enhancing 1L Mock Trial events or initiatives
5. After all individuals and representatives have presented, the discussion of the requests will commence
6. Each request will be discussed. At any time a member can move to vote on the request. Another member must second the motion
7. Proposals that do not obtain a majority vote will be denied
8. Upon discussion of all proposals, the chair(s) will adjourn the meeting

#### B. Voting

To vote on any matter, a quorum must be present. Any time a vote is taken, the question shall be approved by a simple majority vote.

#### *1L Mock Trial Competition*

The following guidelines the procedures of the 1L Mock Trial Competition. The 1L Mock Trial Committee has final say in the planning of the competition.

- A. The competition is to be held in the spring semester. The Committee should be mindful of ALAW class deadlines and finals such that students may participate without disregarding graded work
- B. 1L students may sign up to participate individually or with a partner to compete as a team. Individuals who do not have a partner will not be given any special consideration
- C. Teams are responsible for securing witnesses for the competition and for providing the 1L Mock Trial Committee with witnesses' names in advance of the competition
- D. Witnesses may be a student, friend, faculty/staff member, or family member. Committee members are ineligible to participate as witnesses for any team during any round of the competition
- E. The competition will consist of a minimum of one set of preliminary rounds, one set of semi-final rounds, and one final round consisting of the top scoring defense and top scoring prosecution/plaintiff teams
- F. Teams may sign up for a preferred date and time as well as side of the problem (i.e. prosecution/plaintiff or defense), as the competition allows
- G. A meeting between two teams for the purposes of the competition and presided over by a judge shall be called a trial
- H. There will be one presiding judge to rule on all trial and evidentiary matters as well as to provide feedback to the competitors. Presiding judges will not participate in the scoring of competitors
- I. At least two scoring judges consisting of members from the 1L Mock Trial Committee will score each trial

- J. Scoring judges and/or bailiffs (if applicable) are responsible for keeping track of time restraints and for bringing any violations to the attention of the scoring judges. Violations of time restraints may be taken into account when scoring
- K. Scoring judges shall not communicate scores to the competitors prior to the completion of each round
- L. Competitors may request their individual and team scores after the completion of each round by contacting their appoint coach and/or the chair(s)
- M. Any scores released must be discreetly communicated to the requesting competitor, who is then free to disseminate their scores at their discretion
- N. At the completion of the preliminary rounds, the chair(s) will gather all scores and determine the top five defense and top 5 prosecution/plaintiff teams who shall move on to the semi-final round
- O. The chair(s) shall send an email to the 1L class announcing the teams who will be competing in the semi-finals
- P. At the completion of the semi-final round, the chair(s) will gather all scores and determine the single top scoring defense and single top scoring prosecution/plaintiff team who shall move on to the final round
- Q. At the end of the Semi-Final round and the Final round, the scoring judges will vote on and announce the awards for Best Advocate and Best Witness
- R. The final round will consist of one presiding judge and a jury consisting of all 1L Mock Trial Committee Members
- S. At the conclusion of the final round, the jury will select the top overall team by a simple majority vote
- T. The chair(s) will send an email to the entire student body highlighting the winning team, all participants, and the overall success of the competition
- U. All students involved in any way with the 1L Mock Trial Competition should conduct themselves in accordance with the honor code and with professionalism
- V. In the event the competition is not able to be held in the spring semester, a modified competition will be held for any interested students the following fall.

### *Amendments*

All amendments to these bylaws shall be adopted by a two-thirds vote of the SBA Board.