2015 JOHN BLACK MOOT COURT COMPETITION RULES

1. Only 1L law students are eligible to compete in the John Black Moot Court Competition.

2. The John Black Moot Court competition works best with an even number of teams. If an odd number of teams sign up, it is within the sole discretion of the competition director whether to drop the last team to complete registration or give someone a bye.

3. Participants may sign up from February 18, 2015 through February 24, 2015. Advocates members will table in the commons at 12-1 PM and 5-6 PM from February 18, 2015 through February 24, 2015 to accept your payments. If you would like to participate but are unable to sign up at the Advocates tables, please email the Competition Director, Davut Atik, at adatik@uh.edu.

4. Team Registration form must be filled out at http://goo.gl/forms/MXuwL9Vp0q. Not completing the online registration form or not paying the competition fee will result in the cancellation of a team’s registration.

5. Scheduling preferences are based solely on the following:

   a. Class conflicts: every effort will be made to accommodate class conflicts. The Advocates **DO NOT** encourage competitors to miss class. If you are scheduled when you have class, please notify the competition director IMMEDIATELY.

   b. Order of sign-up: Scheduling preferences will be given to those who signed up first. Thus, if Team #2 and Team #13 both want to be scheduled at 8 pm on Friday and there is only 1 slot available at that time, Team #2 will receive the time slot. **It is in your interest to sign up as soon as possible!** Note: a participant does not receive a registration number or a packet until their entry fee is paid in full.

   c. Personal conflicts: If you have a personal conflict with your schedule, please notify the competition director immediately.

6. Any withdrawals must be done by **February 25, 2015** You may withdraw by notifying the competition director, Davut Atik, via email (adatik@uh.edu). **FAILURE TO GIVE NOTICE OF WITHDRAWAL BY THE DEADLINE WILL RESULT IN FORFEITURE OF ENTRY FEES. YOU MAY ALSO BE BARRED FROM PARTICIPATING IN ADVOCATES-SPONSORED COMPETITIONS FOR ONE CALENDAR YEAR.**
7. Rounds:
   - **Preliminary rounds**: February 27 – March 1
   - **Quarterfinals** (Top 8 Teams): March 2
   - **Semifinals** (Top 4 Teams): March 4
   - **Finals** (Top 2 Teams): March 6
   - The competition director has the discretion to change this sequence of events if circumstances require.

8. Competitors MUST leave the room in which they compete in exactly the same condition as it was found. Anything relocated or rearranged must be returned to its original location. Chalkboards must be erased. No trash or debris may be left anywhere in the room. FAILURE TO COMPLY WITH THIS RULE MAY RESULT IN PENALTIES TO BOTH PARTICIPANTS.

9. The competition is closed research for substantive legal issues. Only case law (i.e. cases cited in the opinion) contained in the packet may be referred to in any way during the competition. You may not conduct any additional research on the cases in your packet or on the law in general.

10. Each side is allotted 20 minutes per round. Each team member must speak a minimum of 8 minutes per round. Each team will prepare and present oral arguments for both the Appellant and the Appellee. Each team member will handle at least one issue per side (depending on the amount of issues in the fact pattern).

11. While participants may draw reasonable inferences from the record, they are cautioned to stay within this reasonable sphere. If a judge feels that a participant has gone beyond reasonable inference, he/she may lower their score accordingly. In the event of a violation of this rule, competitors are to use the following language to discourage the use of improper inferences and to alert the judge of a possible violation of this competition’s rules: “This is new information that is beyond the scope of the material provided to me for this appeal. Consequently, I am not prepared to address that issue at this time.”

12. If a competitor would like to petition for one (1) hour of credit, then s/he must submit a brief to Davut Atik via email (adatik@central.uh.edu) by Monday March 9, 2015 by 5:00 pm. If one team member wants to receive credit the brief must be a minimum of 8 doubled spaced pages, excluding any such pages as cover page, table of contents, table of authorities, and questions presented. If both members of a team would like to petition for credit, then they must turn in one 15 page brief for the team. The 15 pages exclude the cover page, table of contents, table of authorities, and questions presented. The brief should be written in accordance with the rules of the Texas Supreme Court. If a competitor does not want to petition for credit, then s/he does not need to turn anything in.

13. In order to petition for the credit, the competitor(s) must fill out a credit petition on the Blakely website. You will register for the credit the next time you register for classes.
14. Competitors may consult with each other regarding strategy and tactics. Competitors MAY NOT consult with attorneys or professors about strategies or tactics.

15. Competitors may reveal their own strategies and tactics to anyone. NO PARTICIPANT MAY REVEAL INFORMATION ABOUT ANY OTHER PARTICIPANT’S CASE, STRATEGY OR TACTICS. VIOLATION OF THIS RULE CAN RESULT IN DISQUALIFICATION AND REFERRAL TO THE HONOR COURT.

16. You MAY NOT ask your judge for the results of the round. This will result in immediate disqualification. Ballots remain confidential until all rounds of the tournament are completed.

17. You must show respect for your judge. The judges volunteer their time and expertise and the competition could not happen without them. Disrespect for your judge may result in disqualification and/or being barred from Advocates-sponsored competitions for one calendar year.

18. All entrants must put in a good faith effort in both the brief and oral rounds. Judges will be asked whether competitors put in a good faith effort to safeguard the integrity of the competition. Failure to put in a good faith effort may result in disqualification, loss of credit, and/or being barred from Advocates-sponsored competitions for one calendar year.

19. If there is a conflict between the rules in the case packet and the rules in this document, these rules govern.

20. The Board of Advocates reserves the right to amend and interpret these rules in a manner consistent with the fair and effective administration of this competition. Any substantive amendment to these rules will be noticed to competitors.

21. The Board of Advocates further reserves the right to change the number of participants competing if circumstances permit or restrict more or less competition. Any substantive changes to the competition will be noticed to competitors.

22. Any further questions should be directed to Davut Atik via email at adatik@uh.edu.
2015 JOHN BLACK MOOT COURT COMPETITION FAQ

When can I sign up?
Participants can sign up online at http://goo.gl/forms/MXuwL9Vp0q anytime from February 18 to 24. The Advocates will be tabling at the Commons from 12-1 PM and 5-6PM on February 18, 2015 through February 24, 2015 to accept the payment of your competition fees. In addition, you can email adatik@uh.edu to set up a time to sign up.

How much does it cost?
Cost per participant is $15 for Advocates members and $25 for non-Advocates members.

When will I receive the fact pattern?
The fact pattern will be published on February 19, 2015 on The Advocates’ website, for any Team to draft an appellate brief and to develop their arguments based on the closed research in that fact pattern. All teams that have signed up and paid will receive the fact pattern as they sign up and pay.

How many preliminary rounds must I compete in as a participant?
Each participant will compete in THREE preliminary rounds before the top 8 participants advance to the quarter finals. The competition director reserves the right to hold 0-2 preliminary rounds, should the tournament so require.

Do we need to prepare for both sides of the case?
YES. Each participant will have to present for the Appellant and the Appellee at least once during the preliminary rounds.

Do I need to sign in before my round? Do I need to sign out afterwards?
You must sign in at the room designated (which will be assigned at a later date) so we may begin the rounds in a timely manner. Additionally, you will need to sign in to receive your room assignment. You do not need to sign out after the round is finished.

Is there a prize?
Yes, there is cash prize!

Do I have to write a brief even if I don’t want credit for the competition?
No, only competitors who want to receive one hour of credit must write a brief.

If I want to get credit, what are the requirements?
You must petition for credit at the Blakely website, https://www.law.uh.edu/blakely/credit-petition.asp. You must also write a brief. All briefs must represent a good faith effort. If only one team member wants to get credit, the brief must be a minimum of 8 double spaced pages, excluding cover page, table of contents, table of authorities, and questions presented. If both members of a team want to get credit, they should turn in one 15 page brief for the team. The 15 pages exclude cover page, table of contents, table of authorities, and questions presented. The brief should be written in accordance with the rules of the Texas Supreme Court. The brief must be emailed to Davut Atik (adatik@central.uh.edu) by March 9, 2015 at 5pm.
credit petition is accepted, then you can register for the course “5132 Advocates - Blakely - Moot Court – RETRO” for your one-hour non-substantive competition credit.

**If I think someone broke the rules, whom should I contact?**
Please see Davut Atik, the competition director, ASAP. He can be reached at (832) 814-9900.

**What if I have an emergency?**
Please see Davut Atik, the competition director, ASAP. He can be reached at (832) 814-9900.