

SOCIETY OF ADVOCATES

Organizational Charter and Bylaws

William S. Boyd School of Law
University of Nevada, Las Vegas

As revised on April 6, 2020

I. NAME OF ORGANIZATION

Until changed, the name of the appellate and trial forensic program (including client counseling and ADR competitions) will be the William S. Boyd School of Law Society of Advocates. The Society may be revised to honor donors or major figures in the legal community.

II. SCOPE AND PURPOSE OF PROGRAM

It is the goal of the School of Law to support a co-curricular activity of student advocacy, which will be called the Society of Advocates. The Society will operate its programs as an official student activity of the Law School for which academic credit is awarded. The Society will consist of an Executive Board of three to six students and up to forty additional team members participating in interscholastic competition. The size of the Executive Board and the Society may be adjusted as determined by the Program Administrators with approval by the faculty. The Society will field teams in a variety of competitions each academic year including, where feasible and prudent, mock trial, client counseling, negotiation, mediation and alternative dispute resolution advocacy as well as traditional appellate advocacy.

III. PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

The Program generally shall be overseen by a group of Program Administrators consisting of a Faculty Director, the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, and the Associate Dean for Administration and Student Affairs. The Program will be operated by the student Executive Board subject to oversight and supervision by the Program Administrators. The Executive Board will also receive support and supervision on logistical matters (e.g., authorized travel, reimbursement) from the Operations Manager. The Operations Manager may set forth criteria and procedures for the handling and expenditure of funds in connection with Society activity. The Selection Process and internal competition will be administered by the Program Administrators, who shall have the right to modify the oral argument phase of the selection process as necessary.

The teams themselves will be assigned and supervised by the Faculty Director with the assistance of the Program Administrators, the faculty and the Executive Board. Interested faculty will serve as team coaches. In addition, a team may be coached by local attorneys with sufficient expertise and interest. Coaching assignments must be approved by the Program Administrators.

IV. SELECTION OF STUDENT PARTICIPANTS AND EXECUTIVE BOARD

A. Student Participant Selection

Students will primarily be selected based on their performance in Lawyering Process II and the Clark County Bar Association moot court competition, which will include oral argument before volunteers from the Clark County New Lawyers Division. Students will be given a composite score based on the LPII final brief grade (65% weight), argument before LP faculty (20% weight), and argument in the CCBA competition (15% weight). If it is impossible to give a student a composite score based on these factors, students will be selected by means that the Program Administrators deem appropriate. For example, in the event that the CCBA competition is cancelled for any unforeseen reason, the Program Administrators may elect to select members based solely on the students' LPII final brief grade and argument before LP Faculty. Students with the highest composite scores will be offered membership in the Society provided they are otherwise in good standing, subject always to the Program Administrators' determination as to the size of the Society.

Offers of membership will be extended until the desired number of students are selected, with a presumed ratio of two-thirds from the day program and one-third from the evening program. These figures are subject to adjustment depending on student interest and ability. For example, in a given year, the day students with highest scores could all decline in membership. Rather than going deeper into the day division pool, the Program Administrators and Faculty would have discretion to select a membership with a larger percentage of evening students if this results in a team composed of students receiving higher rankings.

For all outside competitions that are not appellate advocacy-based (including, but not limited to, mock trial, client counseling, negotiations, and mediation and arbitration), the Society may select team members using corresponding in-house competitions.

B. Executive Board

Students selected for the Society will be given the opportunity to apply for the SOA Executive Board. The Executive Board will consist of approximately three to six students responsible for administering the operation of the program, its participation in competitions, and assisting the faculty and the administration with in-house competitions. Members may apply for the Executive Board in their second year on the Society and may only apply for positions that correspond with their section on the team unless no other members apply. The Executive Board may accept applications for positions that do not correspond with a member's section on the team if the Executive Board deems necessary to fill the position. Executive Board members will not receive additional credit but will receive compensation in the form of a stipend or tuition credit in an amount to be determined each year by the Program Administrators. The current Executive Board shall select the next year's Executive Board subject to approval from the Program Administrators.

V. ACADEMIC CREDIT

Students may participate in competitions either on behalf of the Society (“SOA Students” who receive an invitation to join and compete), or with the approval of the Program Administrators (“non-SOA Students” who petition to compete). All students who compete will receive academic credit based on evaluation of their oral and written work in connection with the corresponding competition.

A. Requirements

To receive credit, students must complete at least 42.5 hours of academically related work, such as legal research, brief writing, practice, and participation in competitions, per credit. Generally, for each competition with both a writing and an oral advocacy component, students are eligible receive two credits. For competitions with only an oral advocacy component, students are eligible to receive one credit.

The briefs (if applicable) and student activity will be evaluated by the Faculty Director and, when applicable, faculty coach. Although, in most instances student competitors may receive up to a maximum of two credits, a faculty member or students may petition the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs to receive up to three credits for competitions requiring a substantially greater time commitment or in very unusual circumstances. Grading shall be Pass/Fail.

All students are responsible for keeping a detailed log of their hours. Students must submit the log of their hours to the Faculty Director, who is responsible for reviewing each student’s log before determining whether credit should be awarded and certifying that the student has completed the requisite number of hours.

B. Credit Limits

Students may obtain a maximum of four credits for competing in moot court or mock trial competitions, starting in the second year for full-time and the third year for part-time students. Students will not be permitted to compete in more than one competition per semester, nor will they be permitted to obtain more than three credits in any academic year. Students who compete as members of the Client Counseling section and another SOA section may not obtain more than six credits over the course of their time on the Society.

C. Withdrawing from a Competition

Once the deadline to withdraw from a competition has passed, students will be required to show extraordinary circumstances before withdrawing from a competition; if such a showing is not made, students will be administratively withdrawn from the SOA course and will receive a failing grade. Furthermore, if a student or team fail to withdraw from a competition without a showing of extraordinary circumstances, they will not be eligible to compete in the following academic year.

D. Advancing in a Competition

If a student or team advances in a competition, they must participate in that round, unless they can show extraordinary circumstances that would prevent their participation. In the event a student or team decides not to compete in the subsequent rounds of a competition, each member will be administratively withdrawn from the SOA course and will not receive any academic credit for their participation in the competition. Furthermore, if a student or team decides not to advance without a showing of extraordinary circumstances, they will not be eligible to compete in the following academic year.

E. SOA Competition Selection

SOA Students must submit preferred competition requests to the Faculty Director for consideration. Competition tournaments will be selected in light of the academic component of the Society. This may require that certain otherwise worthwhile tournaments be bypassed because of an insufficient academic, evaluative component. The Program Administrators will ultimately select which competitions SOA Students will attend. In the discretion of the Program Administrators, Society members may participate in such tournaments without receipt of academic credit.

VI. ELIGIBILITY FOR MEMBERSHIP

A. Academic Eligibility

SOA Students must remain in good academic standing consistent with the Student Policy Handbook to be eligible for membership on the Society. Students who are not in good standing with the University must petition to the Associate Dean for Student Affairs to compete on the team. A team coach of a competition may, with the approval of the Program Administrators, require prior or concurrent enrollment in a law school course for membership on the team.

B. Volunteer Obligations for SOA Students

All SOA Students are required to volunteer for at least two of the in-house competitions in each academic year, for each year that they are a member. SOA Students may be required to volunteer for an additional in-house competition if the Executive Board determines that additional volunteers are necessary. If a member is unable to attend a required volunteer obligation, the SOA President may arrange alternative volunteer opportunities including but not limited to volunteering for alternative competitions.

The Executive Board shall track SOA Students' volunteer requirements. If a member fails to complete their volunteer requirements, that member shall be ineligible to compete or participate as a member of the Society.

C. Ineligibility

The Executive Board and Faculty Director shall determine eligibility for the Society. Students who the Board and Director deem ineligible must petition to the Associate Dean for Student Affairs to continue their participation on the Society.

VII. NON-SOA STUDENT PARTICIPATION

In any given year, students in good-standing who are not members of the Society may, after receiving the approval of the Program Administrators, compete in a competition in which the Society does not field a team. Student organizations may also petition the Program Administrators to field a team in a competition relevant to the mission of that student organization. Interested students, student organizations or a faculty advisor shall submit the petition to the Program Administrators before the deadline for the semester in which they wish to compete. These deadlines will be in the first week of the Fall semester for Fall competitions, and in the first week of November for Spring Competitions. These petitions must include:

- a description of the desired competition, including the competition's requirements and registration deadlines;
- the names of the competing students, including how those students were selected;
- a statement detailing the nature of the team members' interest in the competition;
- the name of a William S. Boyd School of Law faculty member who has agreed to serve as the team's coach; and
- a commitment to compete in each round to which the team advances.

In granting or denying such a petition, the Program Administrators will consider such factors as the quality of the competition, the perceived academic benefit of the competition, team members' particular interest in the subject matter of the competition, and the students' commitment to fielding a strong team.

Petitions must contain a proposed practice schedule of at least 42.5 hours, approved by the faculty coach. Upon completion of the competition, the faculty coach must verify that the team members have practiced the required number of hours before students may receive academic credit.

VIII. AMENDMENT OF BY-LAWS

By-laws may be amended from time to time by a majority vote of the faculty at the suggestion of faculty, the Administration, the Program Administrators, or the Executive Board.

IX. FUNDING AND BUDGET

Until such time as the Society enjoys funding from outside sources, the Society's budget shall be determined each year by the Dean in consultation with the Program Administrators and shall be funded as determined by the Dean. The Program Administrators, after consultation with the Executive Board and Society members, shall each year submit a proposed budget to the Dean.

In the event that there are not available funds to fund non-SOA students who wish to compete in competitions in which the SOA is not competing, students and teams will be funded via a lottery system administered by the Program Administrators. Preference will be given to students who have not already received funding for a competition in the current academic year. Students and student organizations will not be permitted to solicit funding without the approval of the Dean and the Director of Development.

Adopted by the Faculty February 25, 2000; first revision approved by the Faculty November 15, 2002; second revision approved by the Faculty May 6, 2004; third revision approved by the Faculty October 13, 2006; fourth revision approved by the Faculty May 10, 2010; fifth revision approved by the Faculty April 10, 2020.