**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
  o 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
  o 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
  o What we are looking for:
    • People who are teachable, have personality, are engaging and comfortable speaking in front of people
    • Be yourself!!!
  o 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
  o Don’t worry if you don’t know how to write things
    • We are more interested in your personality than your substance
  o 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)