

The Rebuttal



What is Moot Court?

Moot Court combines the best of both worlds—persuasive written and oral advocacy! Similar to what attorneys actually do at the federal and state appellate and supreme courts, teams of two to three students write an appellate brief and prepare to present oral arguments in front of panels of judges, attorneys, and professors, at competitions, around the nation.

What will I learn by being a member of the Moot Court Board?

As mentioned at the beginning of Stetson’s “J.D. Program Learning Outcomes,” “Stetson Law’s educational objective is to maintain a rigorous program of legal education that prepares its students, upon graduation, for admission to the bar and for effective, ethical, and responsible participation as members of the legal profession.” And after that introduction, the seven learning outcomes are listed. Membership in the Moot Court Board touches on all seven learning outcomes.

This issue of *The Rebuttal* focuses on the “soft skills” that are learned as part of learning outcome #5 (exercise professional and ethical judgment) and learning outcome #6 (demonstrate competencies and character traits important to the role of a professional).

- ◆ **Professor Bowman:** Collaboration—One of the most important skills an attorney has is the ability to work with others. Collaboration involves sharing information and knowledge; developing relationships; treating everyone with respect and as an equal; working towards a common goal; and expressing enthusiasm about team assignment and meeting new people, among other skills. On Moot Court, collaboration is not only with your colleagues, but also with faculty, alums, judges, and attorneys, as you prepare for competition.

From our newest Board members:

- ◆ **John Bartel:** I joined Moot Court because I wanted to develop attributes that practitioners possess and employers desire. Moot Court provides the experience of managing a hefty workload, maintaining your composure in stressful times, and developing time management skills. These attributes are hard to learn in a classroom, and Moot Court provides the experience required to foster the skills of a professional.
- ◆ **Christina Burroughs:** I joined Moot Court to learn time management skills. In order to avoid extra stress, being on a Moot Court teaches us to plan ahead and make earlier deadlines for ourselves than the published due date. This helps you stay ahead of the game in case something unexpected happens.
- ◆ **Evan Dahdah:** Moot Court has quickly exposed me to the value of working alongside a team where there is one single goal. The experience of writing a complex brief with others is not only a rewarding experience because of the great work product we achieve at the end, but more importantly, a humbling experience. As we all love to imagine our way of explaining an idea is “the best way,” Moot Court helps you truly discover the “best way” by utilizing the great minds of your teammates.

What will I learn being a member of the Moot Court Board?

(continued from page 1)

- ◆ **Carmen Cato:** The first time I did an oral argument, I was petrified and most of what I said was terrible. But after surviving my first oral argument and listening to advice from Moot Court Board members, I knew this experience was what I needed. This Board supported each other and made it clear that most of these fights are won or lost long before you stand in front of any judge in a courtroom.
At a job interview many months later, a shareholder reinforced that message, telling me while in school, Moot Court is the closest thing I'd get to real lawyering. This person wasn't a litigator—he was a transactional lawyer who worked with estates. But he said Moot Court teaches that attention to detail, the responsibility to something bigger than yourself, the pressure, and the ability to balance it all while pushing through the nerves, really matters.
- ◆ **Bianca Damasio:** I wanted to join Moot Court to improve my active listening skills. One of the most important aspects of an oral argument is answering precisely the question asked by the judge. Being able to listen attentively, and respectfully, is essential to being a successful advocate and, as a member of the Moot Court Board, I will be able to develop my active listening skills with every competition.
- ◆ **Bridget Dennis:** Although being a part of Moot Court adds to your responsibilities as a student, it helps you learn how to juggle your competing priorities. As attorneys, you will be given multiple clients and assignments at once, and you must be able to properly handle them, all while dealing with obstacles and challenges in your personal life. Moot Court gives you a sense of what that pressure feels like and teaches you how to harness that feeling for the better.
- ◆ **James Doyle:** Moot Court focuses on why you say something instead of simply how you say it. Joining the Moot Court Board at the #1 advocacy law school in the nation raises the bar for the expectations of the professionalism and preparation each member of the Board must have. Every day offers an opportunity to refine my research and writing skills, work with fellow students, and learn to manage my time, as both a law student and an advocate.
- ◆ **Romina Drazhi:** Attention to details is one of the most important skills that we learn in Moot Court. It is small details that impress judges and will set you apart from other competition teams. To quote Coach John Wooden, "It's the little details that are vital. Little things make big things happen."
- ◆ **Audrey Gangloff:** Being a part of the Moot Court Board will teach me the steps of how to be a lifelong learner. In order to write a best brief or win a best oralist award for your team, it is necessary to motivate yourself to become an expert on the topic you are arguing. That means you are researching, digging into the issues, and picking apart the best arguments until the day the brief is submitted. On Moot Court, this is a fun process because you go through it with teammates who are equally enthusiastic about being experts with you.
- ◆ **Christopher Gieger:** Moot Court is a fantastic opportunity to hone in on your writing skills. Having the opportunity to work and collaborate with teammates during brief writing is an invaluable learning experience that will undoubtedly prepare you for real-life practice.
- ◆ **Kendall Griesse:** Moot Court has really helped me with my ability to receive constructive criticism and, instead of taking it to heart, using it to address my weaknesses. I think in some capacity, we are all afraid of criticism or of others discovering our weaknesses, but being told where you can improve is an essential part of developing a more complete product.

What will I learn being a member of the Moot Court Board?

(continued from pages 1 and 2)

- ◆ **Daniel King:** Attention to details, organization, and efficiently meeting deadlines are necessary skills for any good attorney. Participating on the Moot Court Board will help me greatly improve all of these important aspects, and I will be a better attorney because of it.
- ◆ **Frieda Lindroth:** Although our curriculum at Stetson is rigorous, there are so many professional skills that we simply cannot learn in the classroom. I knew that Moot Court provided a unique opportunity to learn these critical skills, such as an ability to cooperatively work with individuals from different academic, cultural, and professional backgrounds, confrontation of one's personal weaknesses to turn them into strengths, and the discipline to perform under pressure. Moot Court provides the essential experience that helps me close the gap between feeling like simply a law student and feeling like a developing future attorney.
- ◆ **Wilma Metcalf:** Moot Court teaches us that you can do more than you think is possible. Moot Court makes you develop better time management skills and learn to perform your best under immense pressure so that you can be proud of what you have accomplished. Then, at the end of the day, you will be a better communicator, advocate, and, ultimately, lawyer.
- ◆ **Ashley Norus:** Honoring commitments is a “soft skill” that, in my opinion, can teach a hard lesson. In Moot Court, we honor the commitments we make because the repercussions may not only affect us, but they affect our teammates and our representation of Stetson. It is important to honor commitments in all that you do—when you say you will do something, people are counting on you to get it done.
- ◆ **Christopher Odgers:** Law school and a legal career are tough because you have to work under pressure and manage your time effectively. Competing in Moot Court teaches you both of those skills. You must manage your time effectively under pressure in competition and during the rest of the semester while preparing for competition.
- ◆ **Toria Ryan:** Being a part of the Moot Court Board creates an extra opportunity for me to improve on my time and workload management skills by teaching me to better balance my personal, academic, and team priorities. It also allows me to hone my oral and written advocacy skills throughout my second and third years at Stetson while working in a team. In all, my goal is to use what I learn during this experience to continue improving myself and do better for others throughout my career.
- ◆ **Mia Tolliver:** Moot Court is one of the best ways to experience growth while in law school. Aside from the writing and oratory skills, you will learn how to handle pressure, learn how to work with colleagues, and together, you will make a finished product that you are truly proud of.