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BC Law Hosts Regional Client Counseling Competition

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BC Law Hosts Regional Client Counseling Competition

2/27/03--This year's New England Regional Client Counseling Competition will be held at Boston College Law School on Saturday, March 1, beginning at 2:30 p.m. The competition will occur in East Wing room 120. BC Law will be represented by the teams of Heather Pierce and Joan Savage, and Patrick Jackson and Ellen King, who were the winners at the finals of the BC Law internal competition, held on January 30.

"This time last year, Brandon Barkhuff and Doug Tillberg won the New England Regionals of the ABA sponsored Client Counseling Competition," said Director of Advocacy Programs Alexis Anderson. "Due to their commanding performance, the ABA asked Boston College Law School to host this year's Regionals. Our two BC Law teams will compete with teams from other area law schools for the honor of representing the region in the Nationals next month in Florida."

This year's client counseling problems involve criminal law matters. Two veteran criminal law practitioners and a skilled mediator will serve as the finals' judges: Malden District Court Judge Geoffrey Packard, formerly a criminal defense attorney for Committee for Public Counsel Services; Paula DeGiacomo, a former Asst. U.S. Attorney now in private practice; and Stephen Linsky, collaborative mediator at the New Law Center.

The Client Counseling Competition provides an opportunity for law students to develop valuable skill in interacting with and proposing solutions for clients. The competition simulates an office environment "consultation" in which the attorneys meet their client for the first time. Each team of two attorneys attempts to obtain the legally relevant information from the background factual context and then supplies the client with a preliminary summary of the client's legal position and the client's possible actions.

The purpose of the competition is to promote greater knowledge and interest among law students in the preventative law and counseling functions of law practice and to encourage students to develop interviewing, planning and analytical skills in the lawyer-client relationship through an enjoyable and positive process. The competition simulates a law office consultation situation in which law students, acting as attorneys are presented with a typical client matter. They must conduct an interview with a person playing the role of client and then explain how they would proceed with the hypothetical situation. Each situation poses both legal and ethical dilemmas with which the attorneys must deal. All relevant background will be provided to the competitors.