

Canada's Report on the International Client Counselling Competition Las Vegas, Nevada – 2009

2008 – 2009 Client Counselling Competition

This year 22 teams competed in the Louis M. Brown International Client Counselling Competition held in Las Vegas, Nevada: Australia, Canada, Cambodia, the Caribbean, England and Wales, Finland, Hong Kong, India, Northern Ireland, Malaysia, New Zealand, Namibia, Netherlands, Nigeria, Puerto Rico, Republic of Ireland, Russian Federation, Scotland, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Ukraine and the United States.

Amy Bartel and Adam Bates from the University of Nebraska College of Law in the U.S.A. were the winners this year. In an unusual result, Russia's Alexey Sokolov and Ekaterina Elizarova tied for second place with Kim Corby and Lindsey Crockett from England & Wales.

The University of British Columbia team of Jarrett Alexander Plonka and Jennifer Poirier represented Canada this year at the International, accompanied by coach Doug Cochran. The Canadian team performed well, but was eliminated prior to the final round of the competition.

The Annual General Meeting of the ICCC (the "AGM")

The 2009 ICCC AGM was held on Wednesday, April 1st at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. Both Nicole Smith and Brigeeta Richdale attended the AGM as delegates for Canada, and provided Canada's National Report, as well as an update on Canada's newly created Client Counselling Committee.

New developments with the ICCC were discussed at the AGM, including the location of future international competitions, potential changes to the format of the competition, and the finances of the ICCC.

Future International Competitions:

The ICCC for 2010 will be held in Hong Kong, in either the first or second week of April. The topic of law is white collar crime. In 2011, the competition will move to the Netherlands, with a topic to be decided.

Canada is scheduled to host in 2012, but unfortunately no Canadian law school has volunteered to act as the host school. Canada has been given three additional months to find a school to host the competition. If we are not successful, then Puerto Rico has expressed interest in hosting in 2012.

Ireland is tentatively scheduled to host in 2013.

Changes to the Competition:

Delegates at the AGM discussed the possibility of changing the name of the competition from “Client Counseling” to “Client Interviewing.” Those in favour of the name change suggested there may be greater support for the competition from the legal community if the word “counseling” was left off the title to the competition. This topic will be discussed further at the 2010 AGM.

Delegates also discussed whether the “reflection” portion of the competition should be changed to allow judges to ask questions of the teams. There is a concern that judges may not understand the cultural reasons for certain behaviours exhibited by some teams. By providing an opportunity to ask questions, the judges may question teams about behaviour they may not otherwise appreciate or understand fully. This topic will be discussed further at the 2010 AGM.

One of the goals of the competition is to increase opportunities for learning and growth. With this goal in mind, in 2010 teams will be permitted to observe other teams at the competition, at any stage of the competition. After a team has finished competing in a round of the competition, that team will be permitted to watch other teams conduct interviews, as long as the observing team moves to a different room and does not watch the teams in direct competition with them.

Finances of the ICCC

The ICCC is operating under severe financial constraints this year. The collapse in the stock market has made it difficult to provide funding to teams that would otherwise qualify for the funding. Delegates at the AGM were encouraged to canvas their friends and associates for donations to the ICCC.