

# Verdict: UNH Mock Trial Team Heading to Nationals

**New Hampshire stands out in prestigious field**

---

Thursday, March 15, 2012

•  
•  
•



QUALIFYING FOR THE NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP FINALS FOR THE FIRST TIME EVER, THE UNH MOCK TRIAL TEAM (ABOVE) HAS ADVANCED TO THE APRIL 13-15 GOLD ROUND IN MINNEAPOLIS, MINN.

The 24 teams competing at the College Mock Trial national qualifier last weekend read like a who's-who of the nation's most prestigious universities for prospective law school students: Yale, Cornell, Tufts, Brandeis, Boston University, and Columbia to name a few.

When the final verdict was in, the judges ruled that the University of New Hampshire stands with the best.

Qualifying for the national championship finals for the first time ever, UNH finished fifth overall in the tournament at Pace Law School in White Plains, N.Y., and now advances to the April 13-15 gold round in Minneapolis, Minn.

“This is absolutely huge,” says Charles Putnam, the team’s coach and a clinical associate professor of justice studies at UNH. “For our current students and also for our alumni and coaches, this is a big moment because it not only says a lot about the knowledge base they’ve built up and shared over the years, but it also represents the true dedication and hard work they’ve all put into building up this program.”

Teams of 6 to 10 members competed before a panel of expert judges presiding over a complicated mock murder trial.

“We’re both lucky and challenged here in the Northeast to be in a region where we’re competing with some of the best in the nation,” says Putnam, a former litigator for the New Hampshire Attorney General’s office. “And in these college mock trials, some of the opening and closing arguments are as good as anything you’ll hear in a courtroom.”

The UNH team earned a record of 6–2 in the opening round of the championship series at Pace, finishing with the same record as Wellesley College and one win more than Tufts University. UNH compiled a better record than the teams from Yale, Cornell, Brandeis, Boston University, the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, the University of Vermont, and the Air Force Academy.

UNH has had a mock trial team since 2001, and Putnam has been lead coach since 2004.

“I’ve stayed with it because of the intense social, intellectual, and cognitive challenge it presents to the undergraduates,” Putnam says.

Team members must become experts not only in the law and rules of evidence, but in mock case law that may come into play during a trial. Poise and public speaking obviously play an important part, and team members spent long hours practicing their roles as attorneys, witnesses, and evidence experts.

Connor Barry, a UNH junior, earned an outstanding attorney award and sophomore Bret Steiman earned an outstanding witness award. The team was coached by Bryan Townsend '07 and UNH School of Law '10, and Randy Lawrence-Hurt '10, '12G. The team co-captains are Barry and Alexandra Howard. Other members are Megan Currier, Miles Ela, Kerry Murchie, Jillian Richard and Dexter Tarbox.

*Photo courtesy of Charlie Putnam*

- WRITTEN BY:  
[Jim Graham](#) | Communications and Public Affairs | [jim.graham@unh.edu](mailto:jim.graham@unh.edu) | 603-397-9654



University of New Hampshire

UNH Today is produced for the UNH community and for friends of UNH.  
The stories are written by the staff of [UNH Communications and Public Affairs](#).  
Email us: [unhtoday.editor@unh.edu](mailto:unhtoday.editor@unh.edu).

[MANAGE YOUR SUBSCRIPTION](#)   [CONTACT US](#)

Like us on Facebook

Follow us on Twitter

Follow us on YouTube

Follow us on Instagram

Find us on LinkIn

UNH Today RSS feeds

UNH Today • UNH Main Directory: 603-862-1234  
Copyright © 2021 • TTY Users: 7-1-1 or 800-735-2964 (Relay NH)  
[USNH Privacy Policies](#) • [USNH Terms of Use](#) • [ADA Acknowledgement](#)