

A History of Moot Court at CSULB

CSULB is one of ten schools to win a national moot court championship for oral advocacy, one of fourteen schools to win a national moot court championship for written advocacy, and one of just five schools to win a national championship for both oral (2003 and 2022) and written advocacy (2004, 2014, and 2021). It is third all-time with five titles (three for written and two for oral advocacy). Only four public universities have won the AMCA title for oral advocacy – but only CSULB has won it twice. In fact, only one other school has won more titles and only two have advanced to more national finals or semi-finals. CSULB won for oral advocacy in 2003 when CSULB juniors Tommy Hartnett and Ja’Nene Hall finished first at that year’s American Collegiate Moot Court Association (ACMA) tournament. It also won in 2022 when seniors Vaishalee Chaudhary and Marco Romero triumphed in a final round held over Zoom. Jalyn Wang won for written brief in 2004. In 2014, Ashley Hall and Kyle Maury won for written advocacy. That same year, Hall and Maury were runners up in oral advocacy. Aleece Hanson and Barry Klein won the 2021 national championship for respondent brief.

In the years since 2003, at least fifty-two CSULB teams have reached the elimination rounds at the national tournament: twenty-one of which reached at least the national sweet sixteen (four were hybrids with another school). Katelyn North-Cheo (2004 and 2005), Timothy Appelbaum (2009 and 2011), Ryan Chapman and Yasmin Manners (2012 and 2013), Ashley Hall (2014 and 2015), Myles Chaney (2016, 2017 and 2018) (with Sarah Geesaman of PHC), and Vaishalee Chaudhary and Marco Romero (2020, 2021, and 2022) are the only CSULB students to advance to multiple national sweet-sixteens. North-Cheo did so with teammates Anna Maria Banchemo and Ben Koegel, while Appelbaum advanced with Heather Pegg and Alexandra Lohman. Chapman and Manners were teammates both years. Hall advanced to the national finals with Maury and the Sweet Sixteen with Krist Biakanja, IV. Chaney reached the Sweet Sixteen with Sarah Geesaman of Patrick Henry College. Chaudhary and Romero were teammates in 2020, 2021, and 2022. North-Cheo, Appelbaum, Reema Abboud, Chapman, Manners, Hall, Maury, Biakanja, Kevin Poush, Amethyst Jefferson-Roberts, Justin Adofina, Chaney, Anna Sasaki, Mindy Vo, Amanda Botelho, Barry Klein, Chaudhary, Romero, Aleece Hanson, Georgina Tierney, Kelton Munch, are the only CSULB students to advance to the elimination rounds of the national tournament more than once: Abboud, Appelbaum, Biakanja, Chaney, Chaudhary, Hall, Romero, Sasaki, and Vo each did so three times. There are very few students in the history of the ACMA who have advanced to elimination rounds three times.

As of January, 2023, CSULB has won fifty-nine competition titles: fifty-six for oral advocacy and three for written brief. CSULB has registered thirty-nine First Place Finishes in Tournaments, Classics and Invitationals for Oral Advocacy, and seventeen First Place Finishes in Scrimmages. This includes fifteen regional titles (3rd in AMCA history). CSULB teams have reached the finals of nineteen regionals, the quarter-finals of six national tournaments (8 teams total – 3 in 2022), the semi-finals of four national tournaments, and the finals of three national tournaments. In addition, it has placed teams in the semis in at least twenty-eight regional tournaments. CSULB students to win regional or national tournaments include: Tommy Hartnett/Ja’Nene Hall (2003), Adria Bonillas and Krist Biakanja (2012), Krist Biakanja and Kevin Poush (2013), Ashley Hall and Krist Biakanja (2014), Shelby Morgan and Kevin Poush (2014), Justin Adofina and Anna Sasaki (2016), Anna Sasaki and Jonah Zeko (2018), Vaishalee Chaudhary and Marco Romero (2019, 2020, and

2021), Aleece Hanson and Barry Klein (2020), Georgina Tierney and Kelton Munch (2020 and 2021), Aleece Hanson and Celeste Sanchez (2021), Emma Nelson and John Littles (2022), and Ashley Harding and Jacqueline Zambrano (2022). Tierney and Munch were a hybrid of the College of Wooster and CSULB and they may be the only hybrid to win a regional title in AMCA history. Chaudhary and Romero are one of just two teams in AMCA history to win three regionals.

Several CSULB students have advanced to multiple semi-finals or finals of tournaments or invitationals. These include: Hartnett/Ja'Nene Hall (2002 and twice in 2003), Ted McNamara (once in 2008 and in 2009), Appelbaum (twice in 2010), Ewan (2009 and twice in 2010), Aaron Sibley (twice in 2010), Chapman/Manners (twice in 2012), Briana Wilbur (2012 and 2013), Ashley Hall (twice in 2013 and three times in 2014), Kyle Maury (2012 and 201), Biakanja (2012, twice in 2013, and 2014), Asmita Deswal (twice in 2013), David Casarrubias (twice in 2013), Kevin Poush (2013 and 2014), Justin Adofina (twice in 2015 and twice in 2016), Myles Chaney (two in 2016 and three times in 2017) Mindy Vo (once in 2015, twice in 2016, four times in 2017, and once in 2018), Lilian Truong (twice in 2016), Julieta Hernandez (twice in 2015 and once in 2016 as a member of a hybrid with Eryn Mascia of the University of North Texas), Ali Piane and Zsofia Slovak (twice in 2018), Anna Sasaki (twice in 2016, four times in 2017, and three times in 2018), Jonah Zeko (twice in 2018), Gabby Passeri (twice in 2018), Diego Magana (three times in 2018), Nicole Opendo (four times in 2018) Amanda Botelho (three in 2018 and three times in 2019), Chaudhary and Romero (five in 2019, five in 2020-21, and five in 2021-22), Aleece Hanson (two in 2019, four in 2020-21, and two in 2021-22), Barry Klein (two in 2019 and four in 2020-21), Kelton Munch and Georgina Tierney (two in 2020-21 and four in 2021-22), Celeste Sanchez (one in 2020-21 and one in 2021-22), Mikayla Brown and Jocelyn Soto-Rivera (2022).

The following students have qualified for multiple tournament or invitational finals: Hartnett and Ja'Nene Hall (once in 2002 and two in 2003), Ewan (twice in 2010), Ashley Hall (once in 2013 and twice in 2014), Maury (once in 2012, 2013, and 2014), Biakanja (once in 2012, twice in 2013, and once in 2014), Poush (2013 and 2014), Justin Adofina (twice in 2015 and once in 2016), Julieta Hernandez (twice in 2015), Mindy Vo (twice in 2017 and once in 2018), Myles Chaney (twice in 2016 and once in 2017), Anna Sasaki (once in 2016, twice in 2017 and three times in 2018), Jonah Zeko (twice in 2019), Chaudhary and Romero (four in 2019, five in 2020-21 and five in 2021-22), Hanson and Klein (twice in 2020), Tierney and Munch (twice in 2020 and twice in 2021), Jocelyn Soto-Rivera (2021 and 2022), and Mikayla Brown (2022).

Thirty-six CSULB students/hybrid teammates have been runners up in tournaments or invitationals. These include: Nina Flores and Tyson Thomas (2002), Tommy Hartnett and Ja'Nene Hall (2003), Jillian Ewan and Ted McNamara (2009), Ian Dunbar and Cassandra Ibarez (2012), Asmita Deswal and David Casarrubias (2013), Emily Lees and Beatriz Reyes (2013), Ashley Hall and Kyle Maury (2014), Will Torres and Dillon Westfall (2014), Justin Adofina and Julieta Hernandez (2015), Mindy Vo and Diego Duarte (2015), Myles Chaney and Sara Geesaman (2016-2017), Lilian Truong and Dominique Noble (2016), Diego Magana and Nicole Opendo (2018), Anna Sasaki and Jonah Zeko (2018), Klein and Hanson (2020), Tierney and Munch (2020-21 and 2021-22), Kamra Jackson and Jocelyn Soto-Rivera (2021), and Emma Nelson and Grady Smith (2022)

Fifteen CSULB students have won several national moot court awards for individual oral advocacy. Myles Chaney (2nd), Kyle Maury (3rd), Thomas Hartnett (4th), Timothy Appelbaum (4th), Alexandra Lohman (4th), Ashley Hall (7th), Jessica Zatarain (8th), Ryan Chapman (9th), Diego Magana (11th), Matthew Gunter (11th), Amanda Botelho (12th), Jacqueline Zambrano (13th), Kelton Munch (15th), Chris Heffernan (20th) and Asmita Deswal (22nd) have won national orator awards.

Jalyn Wang (1st), Aleece Hanson and Barry Klein (1st), Ashley Hall and Kyle Maury (1st), Ryan Chapman and Yasmin Manners (2nd), Zsofia Slovak and Ali Piane (2nd), Amanda Botelho and Barry Klein (3rd), Zsofia Slovak and Ciarra Lofsrom (4th), Mindy Vo and Anna Sasaki (4th), Vaishalee Chaudhary and Marco Romero (4th),

2006-07

Starting in 2006-07, teams had to earn bids to the national championship through a series of automatic and at-large-bids. In addition, the national finals adopted a seeding system in 2006-07. These changes have made it more difficult to reach, and succeed, at the national tournament. To date, CSULB teams (including four hybrid teams) have earned thirty-eight bids to nationals. Thirty-three of these bids have been automatic bids, while five have been at large-bids.

In 2006-07, CSULB senior Michaelyn Thomas, paired in a hybrid team with Will Glaser (a junior from Patrick Henry College), became the first CSULB student in history to be on a team that earned an automatic bid. Paige McCormack and Shelia Soroushian and Kristin Hallak and Jillian Martins became the first CSULB teams to earn at-large-bids.

2007-08

2007-08 proved a good year at nationals for the CSULB squad. The program again earned three bids to nationals. A hybrid of Mason Taylor and Anna Accomazzo (a freshman from Patrick Henry College) earned an automatic bid. In addition, CSULB teams of Paige McCormack (the only CSULB student to earn two bids to nationals) and Muhammad Ataya and Melissa Sanchez and Ted McNamara earned at-large-bids. Traveling to Iowa in January, CSULB took along an alternate, senior Lindsay Nelson. When fate (and the weather) kept two teams from attending the national tournament, Nelson teamed with Justin Jenkins (a junior from Patrick Henry College) to form a hybrid. The two hybrids survived to the elimination rounds with Taylor and Accomazzo missing a trip to the Sweet Sixteen by a mere two points. The team of McCormack and Ataya just missed becoming CSULB's third member of the round of 32.

In the spring of 2008, two CSULB teams competed in the Capital Challenge. This was an invitational moot court tournament held at the Prettyman Federal Courthouse in Washington DC. Students from four universities competed. The team of Mason Lawrence Taylor and Ted McNamara reached the semi-finals before being eliminated by the eventual champion.

2008-09

In 2008-09, three teams from CSULB garnered automatic bids. Heather Pegg and Timothy Appelbaum, Laila Nikaien and Reema Abboud, and Nicole Wilson and Edgar Gutierrez competed at Chapman Law School in Orange County. Two teams advanced to elimination rounds with one, Pegg and Appelbaum, reaching the sweet 16. These were the first non-hybrid CSULB students to earn automatic bids and the first to reach the elimination rounds since the tournament went to a bid and seeding system.

2009-10

In the spring of 2009, several CSULB teams competed in the first annual California Classic. This was an invitational moot court tournament held in Los Angeles at Mt. St. Mary's College. Three CSULB teams reached the elimination rounds. The finals pitted the champions Heather Pegg (the top orator) and Timothy Appelbaum against class-mates Jillian Ewan and Ted McNamara.

In 2009-10, five teams from CSULB garnered automatic bids. Timothy Appelbaum and Reema Abboud, Jillian Ewan and Ryan King, Richard Bosanko and Kyle Bourne, Ashlie Brillault and Jose Reynoso, and Kathleen McHale and Kyle Lee (of Chapman University). Three teams advanced to elimination rounds before losing split-decisions. Appelbaum was named the number four orator.

2010-11

In the spring of 2010, five CSULB teams competed in the 2nd California Classic. This was an invitational moot court tournament held in Fresno, CA at the campus of Fresno State University. Three CSULB teams reached the elimination rounds. The finals pitted the champions Jillian Ewan and Matthew Gunter against Fresno States Alisa Campbell and Matias Bernel in a thrilling split decision. Also reaching the semi-finals were Aaron Sibley/JaVon Payton and Thomas Linton/Payal Pancholi.

The CSULB moot court team of 2010-11 was a veteran squad that earned four bids to the national tournament. Timothy Appelbaum and Alexandra Lohman advanced to the Sweet 16 – for Appelbaum this was his second appearance in the Sweet 16 and his third appearance in an elimination round. Appelbaum graduated with an overall record of 25-7-3 (Western Regional 13-3, CA Classic 5-0, and ACMA National Tournament 7-4-3). At that time, no CSULB student had won more rounds in a career. Reema Abboud and Andrew Klein advanced to the Round of 32. For Abboud, this marked her third straight appearance in the Round of 32. Abboud graduated with a record of 20-10-2 (Western Regional 13-3, CA Classic 2-1-1, and ACMA National Tournament 5-6-1). Also attending nationals were Jillian Ewan/Aaron Sibley and Matthew Gunter/Richard Bosanko. Jillian Ewan graduated with a lifetime record of 22-8-2 (Western Regional 10-3, CA Classic 9-1-1, and ACMA National Tournament 1-4-1). Alex Lohman was named the number four orator. Appelbaum and Lohman won recognition for their written brief.

2011-12

2011-12 was a rebuilding year in which CSULB exceeded expectations. At the 2012 national tournament, for the first time, every CSULB team advanced to the elimination rounds. Wyatt

Lyles and his teammate Kari Rice (Carroll College) and Yasmin Manners and Ryan Chapman advanced to the Sweet 16. Peter Vasilion and Taylor Carr qualified for the Round of 32. Lyles and Rice won every ballot cast Friday night and finished the year as the 10th ranked team in the nation. Manners and Chapman finished ranked 15th while Vasilion and Carr finished 21st.

Three teams from CSULB competed in Dallas, Texas in March, 2012 in the Texas Undergraduate Championship. Every CSULB team advanced to the elimination rounds. CSULB's Ryan Chapman and Yasmin Manners won the tournament and in the process went an impressive 7-0. Manners was named the third best orator. Wyatt Lyles and his teammate Kari Rice (Carroll College) advanced to the Elite Eight. Rice was named the 7th best orator and Lyles was named the 11th best orator. Andrew Kemper and Robert Lane advanced to the Sweet Sixteen before dropping a split decision. Chapman and Manners finished the year with a record of 14-3 – that appears to be the most wins in a single season in CSULB history.

2012-13

In April of 2012, five CSULB teams competed in the 3rd California Classic which was held in Anaheim at Westwood College. CSULB won the tournament and the top four teams were from CSULB. Kyle Maury and Brianna Wilbur defeated Ian Dunbar and Cassandra Ibaraz in the finals. Robert Lane and Sara Castillo and Jonathan Sellers and Allan Ngyuen finished third and fourth respectively. Lane, Maury, Wilbur, and Dunbar won speaker awards.

In October, 2012, three CSULB teams competed in the South Texas College of Law Moot Court Invitation Tournament. CSULB's Ryan Chapman and Yasmin Manners finished 3rd overall. Chapman was named the 2nd best orator. Krist Biakanja and Brianna Wilbur finished 11th and 12th out of 76 orators.

In the Fall of 2012 CSULB captured its second Western Regional Championship when Adria Bonillas and Krist Biakanja, the 18th seed, won five straight split decisions en route to their first tournament title. CSULB placed four teams in the elite eight. These included Ashley Hall and Kyle Maury, Ryan Chapman and Yasmin Manners, and Brianna Wilbur and her teammate from Patrick Henry College Rebecca Sampayan.

CSULB sent four teams to the 2013 national championship tournament. Three of these teams advanced to elimination rounds. Yasmin Manners and Ryan Chapman advanced to the Sweet 16. In doing they became just the third and fourth CSULB students to qualify for two national sweet sixteens and the first CSULB team to qualify for two national sweet sixteens. Adria Bonillas and Krist Biakanja and Ashley Hall and Kyle Maury qualified for the Round of 32. Chapman and Manners finished the year as the 11th ranked team in the nation in oral advocacy and they finished second in the nation in written advocacy. Chapman finished 9th in oral advocacy. Chapman and Manners became the winningest team in CSULB history with a mark of 26-7-1. At the time they graduated they were tied for the most wins in CSULB history.

2013-14

Three teams from CSULB competed in Dallas, Texas in February, 2013 in the Southern Methodist University Law School Moot Court Tournament. CSULB placed all three teams in the semi-finals. Asmita Deswal and David Casarrubias were the runners up while Brianna Wilbur and Ruben Frausto and Ashley Hall and Kyle Maury finished third and fourth respectively. CSULB won five orator awards with Brianna Wilbur finishing second overall with an average of 372 out of 400. Also winning orator awards were Asmita Deswal, Ruben Frausto, Ashley Hall and Kyle Maury.

In April of 2013, six CSULB teams competed in the 4th California Classic which was held in Anaheim at Westwood College. CSULB won the tournament and the top four teams were from CSULB. Ashley Hall and Krist Biakanja defeated Emily Lees and Beatriz Reyes in the finals. Jose Hernandez and Brandon Drew and Michelle Monroy and Mario Gomez finished third and fourth respectively. Hall, Biakanja, Lees, Hernandez, and Natalie Sanchez were the top orators.

The fall 2013 moot court season was a magical one. At nationals, the team of Ashley Hall and Kyle Maury finished first in the nation in written advocacy for the respondent and second in the nation in oral advocacy. They finished the season as the best overall team in the nation terms of oral and written advocacy skills. CSULB is just one of four schools to have advanced to more than one regional finals. Krist Biakanja and Kevin Poush, David Casarrubias and Asmita Deswal and Amethyst Jefferson-Roberts and Greg Brown (CSU Fullerton) qualified for the Round of 32. Maury finished 3rd in oral advocacy, Hall was 7th and Deswal 22nd. All three were in the top 15% of advocates. Maury's graduated with a lifetime mark of 29-7. He advanced to two finals and four semi-finals. That same year, CSULB's Krist Biakanja and Kevin Poush won the Upper Midwestern Tournament in a thrilling final round against a terrific team from Arkansas State University. This was CSULB's third regional title. Biakanja, who holds the CSULB record with three tournament titles, was named 2nd best orator and the team went undefeated. At the Western Regional, Ashley Hall and Kyle Maury and David Casarrubias and Asmita Deswal finished third and fourth respectively. Amethyst Jefferson-Roberts and Greg Brown (CSU Fullerton) and Laura Mergenthaler and Dillon Westfall also advanced to the Sweet 16. Hall and Deswal won top orator awards. The season ended with Will Torres and Dillon Westfall finishing as runners up at the 5th Annual California Classic. Shelby Morgan and Kevin Poush also advanced to the semi-finals.

2014-15

2014 saw the CSULB team win two regionals and earn four bids to the national championship. The season began with Shelby Morgan and Kevin Poush successfully defending CSULB's title as Upper Midwestern Champions. Poush and Morgan were named the first and third orators respectively. In two regionals, Poush compiled a record of 13-0-1. Next up, Krist Biakanja and Ashley Hall won the Western Regional. For Biakanja it marked his third regional title in three tries (an ACMA record) and his CSULB-best fourth title. Also advancing to nationals from the Regional were Jefferson-Roberts and Dominique Noble and Julieta Hernandez and Chris Nielson. Noble and Jefferson-Roberts won orator awards. At nationals, CSULB advanced two teams to the Sweet 16. Biakanja and Hall and Morgan and Poush. Ashley Hall graduated as CSULB's winningest individual mooter with a lifetime record of 41-10-1, and Biakanja graduated with a mark of 36-7-3. Poush graduated with a mark of 22-3-4. His winning percentage of 88% is the best in CSULB history. The season ended on a high note. The team of Justin Adofina and Julieta Hernandez won the 2015 6th California Classic in a 2-1 decision over their classmates Mindy Vo

and Diego Duarte. Adofina was the top orator. Adofina and Hernandez also won the CSULB Spring Classic defeating a team from Fresno State. The squad earned two top ten written brief awards.

2015-16

2015 was a rebuilding year. One that started and ended well. Justin Adofina (29-7-2) and Julieta Hernandez (26-9) led the squad to scrimmage triumphs over the Air Force Academy and The College of the Holy Cross and they reached the semi-finals of the University of North Texas School of Law Undergraduate Moot Court Invitational which was held in Dallas, TX. All CSULB students returned from Dallas with an award either for individual advocacy or for advancing to elimination rounds. Adofina and Hernandez finished second at the Upper Midwestern Moot Court Regional. They lost a 3-2 decision in the final (CSULB's only loss to date in that regional) by one point. Hernandez was named the second best orator and Adofina was named the fifth best orator. At the Western Regional the hybrid of Myles Chaney (CSULB) and Sarah Geesaman (Patrick Henry College) and CSULB's Mindy Vo and Diego Duarte reached the quarter finals. Chaney was named the top orator. Dominique Noble was named the 11th best orator. CSULB hosted the 2016 ACMA national championship. Chaney and Geesaman reached the Sweet Sixteen while Adofina and Hernandez (Round of 32) and Vo and Duarte (play-in round) all advanced to elimination rounds. Adofina and Hernandez finished tied for 5th in the nation in the Respondent Written Brief Championship while Ciarra Lofstrom and Zsofia Slovak finished 4th in the nation in the Petitioner Written Brief Championship.

2016-17

The 2016-17 moot court season was one of CSULB's best to date. Julieta Hernandez competed on a hybrid with Eryn Mascia of the University of North Texas in the Southern Methodist University Law School Moot Court Tournament. Mascia and Hernandez both won top orator awards (finishing first and third respectively) and they reached the semi-finals of the tournament.

In May of 2016, six CSULB teams competed in the 7th California Classic which was held in Los Angeles at Mt. Mary's University. CSULB won the tournament and three of the top four teams were from CSULB. Malia Blake and Dyana Beshay defeated Lilian Truong and Dominique Noble in the finals. Andrew Aronesty and Kimberly Mondragon finished third. CSULB had five of the top seven top orators: Zsofia Slovak finished the highest – she was the second best orator.

In the fall of 2016, CSULB teams competed in two scrimmages, one invitational, and three regionals. Justin Adofina and Anna Sasaki, a first-semester freshman, began the season with a win in the CSULB Fall Classic (a four-school/sixteen team tournament). CSULB closed out the Classic as Chaney finished second (he argued all three issues), Andrew Aronesty and Kimberly Mondragon and Mindy Vo and Lilian Truong finished third and fourth respectively. Adofina and Sasaki finished third at the Falcon Classic held at the United States Air Force Academy. The pre-season closed with Chaney and Geesaman winning the fifty-team Southern University Law School Invitational. Vo and Truong finished third. Vo, Sasaki, Chaney, and Mondragon won speaker awards. CSULB competed in three regionals – finishing first, second, and fourth. Adofina and Sasaki reclaimed the Upper Midwestern Regional title in a thrilling 3-2 decision over Loyola

University of Chicago. Adofina won a top orator award. Chaney and Geesaman dropped a 4-3 decision in the Western Regional to Patrick Henry College. Geesaman was the top orator. Chaney, Mondragon, Daniel Ishu, and Nancy Gomez also won speaker awards. Vo and Truong finished fourth in the Windy City Regional. Vo was the number two speaker. CSULB earned three bids to nationals which was held at Stetson University College of Law in Gulfport, FL. Chaney and Geesaman advanced to the semi-finals and finished third in the nation. Adofina and Sasaki advanced to the round of Thirty-Two. Vo and Truong also advanced to elimination rounds. Chaney was the number two orator. Geesaman was number four. Zsofia Slovak and Ali Piane finished second in the nation in Petitioner brief. Vo and Truong finished sixth and Aronesty and Mondragon finished tenth.

2017-18

In April of 2017, CSULB teams competed in the 8th Annual California Classic which, for the first time, was held in Long Beach. Anna Sasaki and Mindy Vo delivered an undefeated performance. Sasaki and Vo topped a team from Occidental College. Victoria Duffy and Levi Tristao advanced to semi-finals in their first tournament.

2017-2018 started and ended well. In the fall of 2017, CSULB teams competed in two scrimmages, one invitational, and two regionals. Mindy Vo and Anna Sasaki won both scrimmages and won the Holy Cross Invitational. The final round was a 5-4 decision. Myles Chaney and Sarah Geesaman advanced to the semis at Holy Cross. Vo and Sasaki finished third at the Windy City Regional. Chaney and Geesaman were runners-up at the Southern University Law School Regional. CSULB won numerous orator awards. Vo and Sasaki advanced to out-rounds at national. Chaney and Geesaman, the greatest hybrid in AMCA history, advanced to their third-straight national sweet-sixteen. Sasaki and Vo finished 4th in the national written brief contest.

2018-19

In the Spring 2018 season, Vo and Sasaki won the Hastings College of the Law Moot Court Championship. Ali Piane and Zsofia Slovak finished 4th. Piane was the top orator. Piane and Slovak then defeated Nicole Opendo and Diego Magana in a 6-3 decision at the 9th Annual California Classic.

2018-2019 was a rebuilding season. CSULB teams competed in two scrimmages, two invitationals, and three regionals. In total, it produced eight semi-finalists in scrimmages/invitationals and three in regionals. CSULB's Anna Sasaki and Jonah Zeko won the Windy City Regional and they finished first in the sixteen team CSULB Fall Classic. Sasaki and Zeko finished second on the Rocky Mountain Invitational in a final round held at the Colorado Supreme Court. Gabby Passeri and Diego Magana reached the semi-finals at the Southern University Law School Regional. CSULB earned two bids at the Western Regional: Nicole Opendo and Amanda Botelho and Marissa Rael and Chris Heffernan finished 4th and 5th respectively. Both teams face the two-time former national champs, Caleb Engle and Chris Baldacci. Rael and Heffernan tied the champs in the preliminary rounds, while Opendo and Botelho, in the defining moment of their season, bested the defending champs in a 2-1 decision in

the sweet 16. At nationals, Rael and Hefferman advanced to the quarter-finals, before being ousted by the 2018 national runners-up from the University of Chicago (Henry Filosa and Rebecca Lin). Sasaki and Zeko advanced to the Sweet-16 before losing to the College of the Holy Cross. All four teams advanced to out-rounds. Magana and Hefferman won top orator awards, while Opendo and Botelho and Sasaki and Zeko finished among the top ten in the nation in respondent written brief.

2019-20

The rebuild started in 2018 continued in 2019-20. CSULB's Marissa Rael and Riley Anderson won the 10th California Classic besting a team from San Francisco State University. In the Fall, CSULB teams competed in two scrimmages, one invitational, two regionals, and the national championship. In total, it produced nine semi-finalists. CSULB's sophomores Vaishalee Chaudhary and Marco Romero had a great season winning three competitions (including the Frank Guliuzza Memorial Western Regional Qualifying Tournament and the Rocky Mountain Invitational) and advancing to the national sweet 16. They also finished 8th in the nation in petitioner written brief. Amanda Botelho and Barry Klein advanced to the semis of the Windy City Regional and finished 3rd in the nation in respondent written brief. Botelho was named the 12th best orator in the nation. Aleece Hanson and Alexis Liautaud earned an invitation as an official alternate team invited to nationals on the basis of advanced to the Elite 8 at the Windy City Regional. Chaudhary and Romero capped the season off by winning the Hastings College of the Law Moot Court Championship held in early 2020 just before COVID-19 hit. The CA Classic was cancelled for 2020 due to COVID-19.

2020-21

2020-21 was the Zoom/COVID-19 season. Ten students – nine from CSULB and one from the College of Wooster – came together to deliver what will go down as quite possibly CSULB's finest season. It included a national championship in written advocacy, a national quarter-finalist, three regional titles, four regional quarter-finalists, four bids to nationals, and four-pre-season titles in invitationals. There were numerous top orator awards, every teams advanced to at least one semi-final, and no one who was a coach or on the squad will soon forget the sight of classmates not waiting for them in Zoom at very early hours to help get them ready to win (we competed in three east coast regionals and several invitational in other time zones). Vaishalee Chaudhary and Marco Romero were the most consistent and dominant team in the nation. They went 40-2 – at one point winning 30 straight rounds. They won five competitions and became the first CSULB team to repeat as regional champs. They also repeated as Rocky Mountain Invitational Champions and both won orator awards at their regional and at the Rocky Mountain Invitational. Chaudhary and Romero advanced to the quarter-finals – finishing 5th in the nation.

Aleece Hanson and Barry Klein won the first ever Eastern Michigan Regional. They won the National Championship for Written Advocacy (Respondent), won orator awards at the regional and at the Rocky Mountain Invitational, and advanced to four semi-finals and two finals. At nationals, they advanced to the Round of 32.

Georgina Tierney (College of Wooster) and Kelton Munch (CSULB) became quite probably the first hybrid to win a regional title. Their win in the Midwestern Regional was even more poignant in that it was the legendary Wooster coach, Mark Weaver, who suggested the pairing. Tierney and Munch were the number two and three orators at the regional. Munch finished 15th in the nation in oral advocacy. Tierney and Munch advanced to two finals under the rallying cry of – “go Scots/Go Beach!!” At nationals, they advanced to the Round of 32. They finished 17th on the season.

Alexis Liautaud and Jessica Zatarain earned a bid to nationals by advancing to the quarter-finals of the South Atlantic Regional. Both were among the top 25 orators at the regional. In addition to their success in their regional, Liautaud and Zatarain advanced to the semi-finals of the Texas-California Fall Classic. At nationals, they advanced to the Round of 32 – just missing a trip to the Sweet 16.

The fifth CSULB team, Celeste Sanchez and John Littles also had a very successful season. Sanchez and Littles advanced to the Sweet 16 of the South Atlantic Regional and were one ballot away from nationals. Sanchez was voted the third best orator and Littles finished eleventh. They advanced to the Semis of Rocky Mountain Invitational and narrowly lost to one of the top teams in AMCA history Courtney and Jensen Request.

It was a truly special season of finished (and some unfinished) business which capped off a tough year for so many and which showed that beneath the Beach-Scots jersey beat the heart of a champion. Geaux Beach – onto 2021!!

2021-22

2021 Spring Season:

CSULB wins the 2021 11th Annual California Classic

CSULB's Jessica Zatarain and Nichole Athanitis won the 11th Annual California Classic. This was the first California Classic to be held on Zoom. It was the 10th California Classic title in CSULB history and the 7th in a row. Zatarain and Athanitis dominated from start to finish winning 20 of 20 ballots. CSULB's Aleece Hanson and Ryan Marden finished third. Hanson was named the top orator with a 380/400 average. Kellie Sala, Marden, and Zatarain were also named top ten orators.

2021 Fall Season:

The 2021 Fall season was a great success. For the second year in a row, CSULB won three regionals. In addition, it tied an AMCA record by advancing to four regional finals. In sum, CSULB earned six bids to nationals.

2022 AMCA National Champions!!!

Oral Advocacy:

For the second straight year, CSULB's Moot Court Program has produced a national champion. Over the weekend of January 21-23, CSULB Seniors Vaishalee Chaudhary and Marco Romero won the American Moot Court Association's (AMCA) Oral Advocacy National Championship. This is CSULB's second national championship in oral advocacy. Only one other school has won more. CSULB is one of just two public universities to win a national title for oral advocacy in AMCA's 22-year history and it is the only public university to qualify for more than one national final (three) and more than two national semi-finals (four). The competition, which was held on Zoom, featured 100 team from schools such as the University of Chicago, Yale University, Pennsylvania University, and UC Berkley. Chaudhary and Romero, the only team in AMCA history to win three regional tournaments, won five of five competitions in 2021-22 and went undefeated on the season. They graduate as the winningest team in CSULB history. Chaudhary and Romero defeated three teams from the University of Chicago, including one in the finals, one from traditional AMCA powerhouse Patrick Henry College, and their own teammates Kelton Munch and Georgina Tierney (quarter-finalists). CSULB's Aleece Hanson and Celeste Sanchez also qualified for the quarter-finals. This gave CSULB three of the nation's top 8 teams. In addition, CSULB's Jessica Zatarain was named a top ten orator finishing 8th in the nation.

The final panel featured:

Illinois Supreme Court Justice Michael Burke, North Carolina Court of Appeals Justice Lucy Inman, California Court of Appeals Justice Lamar Baker, Maryland District Court Judge David Carey, and West Virginia Solicitor General Lindsay See

Written Advocacy:

CSULB's Vaishalee Chaudhary and Marco Romero finished 4th in the nation in respondent written advocacy. This keeps CSULB's streak of at least one brief in the top ten over the past twelve years alive!! Chaudhary and Romero also finished eighth in written brief in 2019-2020.

Read a tribute to the CSULB team in the Congressional Record: [Congressional Record Extension of Remarks | Congress.gov | Library of Congress](#) Go to Extensions of Remarks. E 93.

Fall Regionals:

CSULB Earns More Orator Awards:

The weekend of December 3-5 saw CSULB earn four more top 15 orator distinctions. Jessica Zatarain (4th), Nichole Athanitis (9th), Emma Nelson (T-10th), and Alexa Alvarez (13th) all averaged above 360 to finish in the top 15 of their regionals. In all, CSULB captured 11 orator awards and 12 top 20 finishes. These represent the most orator awards in CSULB history.

CSULB Earns Record 6th Bid:

On December 3-4, CSULB's Emma Nelson and Jessica Zatarain earned a bid to the AMCA national championship by advancing to the quarter-finals of the Great Lakes Regional. This marks the first time in CSULB history that it has earned 6 bids to nationals. Zatarain (4th) and Nelson (t-10th) earned orator awards.

CSULB Defends Its Title as Eastern Michigan University Regional Moot Court Qualifying Tournament Champs!!!

On November 19-20, Aleece Hanson and Celeste Sanchez won the second ever Eastern Michigan University Regional Moot Court Qualifying Tournament. Hanson (1st) and Sanchez (3rd) both were awarded orator awards. CSULB defeated the same team from Patrick Henry College the finals as it did in 2020. The final panel included the Solicitor General of West Virginia, Lindsay See, and Judge John Tobin. This is the second time in CSULB history that it has won three regionals in a single season. The other time was 2020.

CSULB-College of Wooster Hybrid Team Defends Its Title as Midwest Regional Moot Court Qualifying Tournament Champs!!!

On November 19-20, Georgina Tierney (College of Wooster) and Kelton Munch (CSULB) defended their title as the Midwest Regional Moot Court Qualifying Tournament Champs. The Midwest Regional is one of the oldest and most storied of undergraduate regionals. It was just the second time that a student from CSULB had competed in the Midwest Regional. Tierney (5th) and Munch (7th) both were awarded orator awards. Tierney and Munch, who have never met face-to-face, defeated a team from Patrick Henry College in the finals. Munch is just the second mooter in AMCA history to compete in multiple regionals without ever losing a round -- the other being CSULB's Kevin Poush.

CSULB Earns Bid at Eastern Regional!!!

On November 19-20, Jake Hill and John Littles earned a bid to the AMCA national championship by finishing among the top 8 of the Eastern Regional. Over 50 teams competed. The Eastern Regional is one of the oldest and most storied of undergraduate regionals. It was the first time that a student from CSULB had competed in the Eastern Regional. Hill and Littles beat a team from USC to claim their bid to the national championship.

CSULB Wins Windy City Regional!!!

On November 12-13, CSULB won the Windy City Regional. Vaishalee Chaudhary and Marco Romero defeated the University of Chicago in the finals. In doing so, Chaudhary and Romero become the first team in the history of the American Moot Court Association to win three regional titles. This marks the 2nd Windy City title for CSULB and the 10th straight season that CSULB has reached a regional final. The second longest streak in the nation. Romero (4th) and Chaudhary (5th) were both awarded orator awards.

CSULB Runners-Up at South Atlantic Regional!!!

On November 13-14, CSULB finished second in the South Atlantic Regional. Kamra Jackson and Jocelyn Soto-Rivera, the last seeded team to advance to elimination rounds, reeled off three straight upset wins before falling to a team from Cal Berkeley. Along the way, they defeated two defending regional champions (including the 2020 champ of the South Atlantic Regional) both of which had finished among the Sweet 16 at the 2020 AMCA national championship tournament. Jackson (2nd) and Soto-Rivera (17th) were both awarded orator awards.

Invitationals and Classics:

On October 30-31, CSULB won the Fall Moot Court Classic. CSULB's Vaishalee Chaudhary and Marco Romero defeated Morehouse College in the finals. Kelton Munch (CSULB) and Georgina Tierney (College of Wooster) finished third.

On October 22-32, 2021, CSULB defended its Rocky Mountain Invitational Title. CSULB's Vaishalee Chaudhary and Marco Romero, the number one seed, triumphed in a split decision over the number two seed Kelton Munch (CSULB) and Georgina Tierney (College of Wooster). This was the third-straight win in this invitational for Chaudhary and Romero. CSULB's Aleece Hanson and Jessica Zatarain and Emma Nelson and Celeste Sanchez finished third and fourth respectively. All members of the team who competed finished among the top twenty-five mooters and all nearly all averaged a 360 (90%) or better. This included: Hanson (1st), Chaudhary (2nd), Romero (3rd), Kamra Jackson (4th), Munch (5th), John Littles (6th), Jessica Zatarain (7th), Tierney (8th), Jocelyn Soto-Rivera (14th), Nelson (15th), Nichole Athanitis (17th) Sanchez (20th), Jake Hill (21st) and Alexa Alvarez (24th).

On October 17-17, 2020, CSULB defended its Fall Long Beach (49er) Classic title. CSULB's Vaishalee Chaudhary and Marco Romero bested Holy Cross's Catherine Yackira and Will Hamilton. Chaudhary and Romero, the defending champs, had to beat two regional champs along the way including Kelton Munch (CSULB) and Georgina Tierney (College of Wooster) who also advanced to the semi-finals.

Spring 2022

CSULB's Mikayla Browne and Jocelyn Soto-Rivera won the 12th 2022 California Classic. They defeated CSULB's Grady Smith and Emma Nelson in a round in front of five California jurists (California Court of Appeal Justices Lamar Baker and Dorothy Kim and R. Gary Hastings (ret.), Social Security Administration Judge John Tobin, and Superior Court Judge Maria Puente-Porras). CSULB's Alexa Alvarez and Morgan Barragan also qualified for the semi-finals. Both teams in the finals had been undefeated until the final round. Browne was voted the top orator. CSULB's Stevie de la Fuente was voted the number 3 orator. The top ten was rounded out by CSULB's Barragan (4th), Nelson (6th), Soto-Rivera (7th), and Muskan Jawanda (10th).

The Fall 2022 Season:

The Fall of 2022 was a rebuilding year – the start of a new generation of CSULB mooters. It was arguably the best first season of a new generation. The season began with Mikayla Browne and Jocelyn Soto-Rivera winning the CSULB Fall Classic. The squad produced three semi-finalists in that competition. CSULB fell short at the College of the Holy Cross – Alexa Alvarez and Stevie De La Fuente finished 2nd. But CSULB rebounded to “four-peat” in the Rocky Mountain Invitational as Brown and Soto-Rivera closed out the tournament. From there it was on to regionals. Emma Nelson and John Littles bested a great team from UCSB to win the Western Regional for the fifth time in CSULB history. Ashley Harding and Jacqueline Zambrano won CSULB’s first Eastern Regional in a thrilling round over an excellent team from PHC. Alvarez and De La Fuente (semi-finals in the Mid-Michigan) and Muskan Jawanda and Isabella Thompson (quarter-finals in the Eastern) also earned bids to nationals. CSULB mooters won six top orator awards: Browne (2nd) and Jawanda (2nd), De La Fuente (3rd), Morgan Barragan (4th), Soto-Rivera (6th), and Zambrano (7th). No school had a better percentage of teams winning bids than CSULB (66%).

Nelson and Littles reached the national sweet 16 and finished tied for 9th in the nation. This marks the 13th straight season with an appearance in the national sweet 16 for CSULB. Alvarez and De La Fuente and Harding and Zambrano advanced to the round of 32. Alvarez and De La Fuente finished 23rd in the nation giving CSULB two top 25 teams.

Zambrano became the fifteenth CSULB mooter to win a top orator award when she was voted the 13th best orator in the nation.

CSULB earned four written brief awards. This was two times more than any other program and the most in school history. The awards went to: Grady Smith and Morgan Barragan (4th Respondent), Muskan Jawanda and Isabella Thompson (5th Petitioner) Jocelyn Soto-Rivera and Mikayla Browne (9th Petitioner), and Ashley Harding and Jacqueline Zambrano (9th Respondent).

