**Sonoran Desert Conference**

**International Court of Justice Simulation**

The Sonoran Desert Conference, hosted by Mesa Community College Model United Nations is proud to introduce a new simulation: The International Court of Justice (ICJ). We hope you will join us as we establish a new simulation and continue to expand the opportunities for students to engage and learn about international systems of justice.

Objectives:

* Provide an accurate and immersive simulation of international dispute resolution.
* Create a level of engagement that is as challenging and fulfilling as the experience for country delegates.
* Encourage research and meta-discussion around the nature and use of global dispute resolution systems; their sources, consequences, and resolutions; and to encourage wholistic understanding of international justice.
* Broaden the scope of the conference discussion of global events by showing them in different stage in development and resolution.
* Provide as accurate an introduction to international legal proceedings and legal argumentation.

Event Process:

The conference will simulate oral and written arguments for four cases from the immediately preceding session of the International Court of Justice. Cases are selected by the Secretariate in advance and will be announced with the topics for each year. Each case has two country-based parties, a plaintiff and a defendant leading to a simulation of eight unique parities.

ICJ teams will consist of two-person teams with dual roles. Role 1: Each 2-person team will represent a country litigating a case before the court. Role 2: Each participant will sit *en banc* as a Member of the Court during the cases for which they are not a party. The simulation will have two Secretariate Members assigned, one serving as President and the other as Court Registrar. Each case will have four litigators arguing the case and will be heard before the other 13 members of the court, including the President.

Prior to each case—after the parties are settled—the parties will stand as the Registrar announces the present Members of the Court. The Members will take their oath, administered by the Registrar. The case will be announced by the Registrar and the President will invite the party filing the complaint (Plaintiff) to begin.

Each litigation team will be given 20 minutes of argumentation time. Litigation teams must decide how to divide that time between primary arguments and rebuttal and must announce how much time to reserve at the beginning of their statements. The Court Registrar will keep time. During the arguments, Members of the Court may interrupt and ask questions. Litigants should pause to allow the question and, after answering decorously and succinctly, the party should return to the regular flow of their oral argument.

Plaintiff argues first, then the Defendant, then any rebuttal by the plaintiff, and finally any rebuttal by the Defendant. Litigant teams should alternate speakers so that all four litigants speak once.

The President will then announce the retirement of the court. The Registrar will call for all to rise and the Members will exit. Court Members will privately review the evidence, filings, and arguments together *in camera*. They should deliberate only on those arguments made by the parties in filings or oral argument. Members of the Court must write a majority decision within 2-3 hours. Members of the Court may request, by majority vote, a second abbreviated round of rebuttal (no longer than 10 min each) if they feel that additional clarification is required to reach a majority decision. Members of the Court who wish to express an alternate view to the Majority may file concurrent or dissenting opinions as they wish.

During deliberation, litigant teams are encouraged to work the court of public opinion in the press while they await a decision from the Court.

After a decision is drafted, the Registrar will recall the parties and the Members will again reenter the Court to announce their decision. The majority decision will be read by the President and any concurrences or dissents by the parties who drafted them.

There will be a 15-minute break and the next case will be called to order.

Expectations:

Litigant Expectations

* Each Litigation Team is required to write 1 brief to be submitted to the Court prior to Conference as part of the Team Packet. Failure to provide a brief will result in a default judgment and the Team will not be allowed to appear before the Court. Briefs should be 10 pages or fewer and must include:
	+ the date of filing,
	+ the names of the parties,
	+ counsel and advocates of the parties,
	+ a summary of the argument,
	+ a statement affirming jurisdiction,
	+ a statement of the facts,
	+ requested reasons in point of law,
	+ requested judgment and relief.
* Each Litigation Team is expected to read and be familiar with the briefs filed by the opposing party sufficiently to be able to refute the opposing party’s arguments and assert their own.
* Each Litigation Team should be practiced at maintaining their composure, decorum, and flow despite interruptions with questions from Members of the Court. Litigants must show proper deference to Members’ questions. They should be prepared to answer questions about their own arguments and those of the opposing party.
* Each Litigation Team is expected to use their time wisely.

Court Membership Expectations

* Members of the Court are required to be fluent in the arguments presented in the briefs filed in all cases prior to attending the conference.
* Members of the Court are expected to be prepared sufficiently to participate in oral argument questioning and to follow up on questions they, and other Members, pose.
* Members of the Court are expected to have formed basic opinions on the cases to be heard before them prior to attending the conference.
* Members of the Court are expected to participate in deliberations and drafting of the opinions of the Court and to be sufficiently attentive as to ensure that the decision is rendered in at timely manner.
* Members of the Court are expected to complete a draft decision within the time constraints of the conference. Court Opinions must include:
	+ the date on which it is read,
	+ the names of the judges participating,
	+ the names of the parties,
	+ the names of the counsel of the parties,
	+ a summary of the proceedings,
	+ the submissions of the parties,
	+ a statement of the facts,
	+ the reasons in point of law,
	+ the operative provisions of the judgment,
	+ the number and names of the judges constituting the majority,
	+ a statement as to the authority of the judgment.
* Members of the Court are expected to keep confidential the arguments of the Members of the Court not disclosed as part of the published decisions.