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Law Team Triumphs in UK Mediation Competition

ORANGE, Calif., Dec. 7, 2009 -- A team from the Chapman University School of Law has won first place in the inaugural National UK Mediation Competition, held in Liverpool, England besting teams from major universities across the United Kingdom and several top teams from the U.S.

The competition, hosted by Liverpool John Moores University's School of Law, consisted of 13 teams from the UK and U.S. testing their skills before a panel of judges.

Commenting on their experience, Chapman students Aaron Goben (3rd-year law student from Nashville, Tenn.), Lisa Fiance (2nd-year law student from Oceanside) and Kyndell Paine (3rd-year law student from Anaheim) said: We were shocked and excited at being named overall team winners it is a great surprise for a U.S. team to receive such an accolade and we feel extremely privileged.

John Eastman, dean of the Chapman School of Law, said, Our mediation team has done Chapman proud. This success is an outgrowth of our new Mediation Clinic, a wonderful partnership with the Orange County Superior Court providing important mediation services to the community. I'm just delighted that we can now tout those services as international award-winning!

The teams advisor, David P. Dowling, visiting assistant clinical professor at the Chapman School of Law, said of the team's win, I am very proud of our students, who put their talent and skills clearly on display in this rigorous competition. Several judges commented that our students won because they displayed a perfect mix between the U.S. and British mediation competition styles.

Mediation is quickly becoming an extremely useful tool to solve disputes throughout international forums in a highly effective and cost-efficient way, said team member Goben. Though different parts of the world approach mediation with varying tactics, the end result is always the same. Mediators strive to solve complex disputes by facilitating the negotiation process between two adverse parties. Thus, law school mediation competitions have formed around the world to provide law students with practical experience in solving disputes before litigation ensues.

The competition involved three rounds over two days. In each team of three, the team members played both mediators and clients twice, Dowling explained. The individual awards were based on the student's rounds as a mediator and client combined - Kyndell won 2nd place individual and Aaron was 3rd for individual awards. Then each team member's score combined to provide the team's overall score. Therefore, Kyndell's 2nd place and Aaron's 3rd place with Lisa's scores put Chapman in first place overall.

Judges included local legal practitioners from Liverpool, team coaches (both professors and practitioners from the UK and U.S. schools) and faculty from Liverpool John Moores University. Chapman team member Fiance said, We want to thank LJMU for the great job they did hosting

the competition, and to all the competing teams for welcoming us so warmly. I'm proud of my teammates, Kyndell and Aaron, for their individual accomplishments. All of us involved gained some new practical mediation skills, and this was a wonderful learning experience. Also, this win would not have been possible without the coaching and leadership of Professor David Dowling. It was an amazing opportunity and accomplishment for our team of four and for Chapman.

The competition included three U.S. teams (Lewis University, Illinois; Drake School of Law, Illinois; and Chapman University School of Law) and ten UK law school teams (Westminster University; Liverpool John Moores University; Edinburgh University; The College of Law - Bloomsbury, BVC; BPP Law School - London, BVC; Leeds Metropolitan University; Kingston University; The University of Strathclyde; Manchester Metropolitan University; and Staffordshire University).