MEMORANDUM

To: Members of the Class of 2018
From: Alaska Law Review
Duke Environmental Law & Policy Forum
Duke Forum for Law & Social Change
Duke Journal of Comparative & International Law
Duke Journal of Constitutional Law & Public Policy
Duke Journal of Gender Law & Policy
Duke Law & Technology Review
Duke Law Journal
Law and Contemporary Problems

Date: March 2016
Subject: Casenote Competition Overview

The nine student edited law journals at Duke jointly sponsor one combined Casenote Competition to select rising second-year students for membership on all of the journals. This Memorandum introduces the competition, its purposes, and the general process. More information about the Journals and the competition will be given at upcoming events and distribution of documents.

There is a dedicated email address to handle questions about the Casenote Competition, including questions about the online system. Please email CaseNote@law.duke.edu with any questions.

Links to all Journals, and Casenote Competition information, documents, and recordings:
https://law.duke.edu/scholarship/journals/

I. Why the Casenote Competition Exists

Each journal considers writing, Bluebooking and researching ability important for their work. The Casenote Competition aims to gauge that ability on a level playing field. Each participant submits one casenote for submission to all journals selected, and submissions are identified by number only with blind grading. Each journal independently reviews and grades submissions to their journal with a process that includes reads by 2-5 different journal members. Although each journal considers performance in the casenote program in a slightly different way, the casenote counts for 40% to 100% of the determination of journal membership. For all of our journals, first-year grades are also considered to some degree in the selection process, although Duke Law Journal and Law and Contemporary Problems also select some of their members based on the casenote alone. Some journals also require or strongly recommend the submission of a statement of interest.

Specific information about each journal and its selection criteria is contained in a separate Journal Information Packet document.
We strongly encourage you to participate in the Casenote Competition regardless of your grades. The benefits of journal membership include working with other students in your class and the class above, the opportunity to help develop top legal scholarship, and the chance to gain important career and professional benefits. We also want to emphasize, however, that editing and producing a journal is no light task. Accepting an invitation to join a law journal means taking on a two-year commitment. Journal membership can be an integral part of your legal education, offering an enjoyable and rewarding chance for direct participation in bringing legal scholarship to publication, but we ask that you consider this commitment and learn as much as possible about the responsibility involved before you join us. The competition will also require you to rank your journal preferences.

II. Exclusive and Non-Exclusive Journals

   Duke Law School has two different types of journals: exclusive and non-exclusive. Students will be offered membership from only one exclusive journal; students may not be members of more than one exclusive journal. Duke Law’s exclusive journals are the Alaska Law Review, Duke Journal of Comparative & International Law, Duke Journal of Constitutional Law & Public Policy, Duke Journal of Gender Law & Policy, Duke Law Journal, and Law and Contemporary Problems.

   Students may be a member of an exclusive journal and one or more non-exclusive journals, or multiple non-exclusive journals. Non-exclusive journals are the Duke Environmental Law & Policy Forum, Duke Forum for Law & Social Change, and the Duke Law & Technology Review.

   As part of the Casenote Competition, you must indicate the journals to which you are applying and rank the exclusive journals based on your preferences for membership. Remember, you may receive an offer from only one exclusive journal. That means that if you qualify for membership on more than one exclusive journal, you will receive only one invitation—from the journal you ranked the highest among that group. Therefore, it is important that you investigate each journal and give careful consideration to your preference list.

   Please note that your rankings will not affect the scoring of your casenote and will not be made available to the journals; instead, they inform the casenote matching system in placing you with the highest ranked journal for which you qualify to receive an offer.

III. What is a Casenote

   A casenote focuses on the outcome of a recent case. The purpose of the casenote is to analyze a case in terms of its legal background, persuasiveness of argument, internal consistency, policy concerns, and possible ramifications. Students are given the name and citation for a specific case along with instructions, including the specific sections to be included. The journals are looking to see how you analyze the legal issues present in the case. Sample casenotes will be distributed on USB drives. Eugene Volokh’s Academic Legal Writing includes information about Student Notes and is available on Reserve from the Goodson Library.
IV. The casenote system

On the release date all Class of 2018 members will be sent an email with a memo that includes a case name and citation that you will write about, along with more detailed instructions on formatting and submission. The casenote is designed to be written in about one week, although you will have 13 days to complete it and other supporting materials. You will need to do some research on the issues in the case in order to find material to support your analysis of the case. However you should spend the majority of your time on writing.

All materials (casenote, statement of interests, ranking etc.) MUST be submitted using the “Casenote System.” Instructions and training for using the system and downloading documents are upcoming. It is important to register and practice using the system to upload documents well before the deadline so that you will be familiar with the functions. Traffic is heavy near the end of the competition and can slow down processing time.