

Negotiating Sustainability:

8th Annual Canadian National Negotiation Competition

Hosted by McGill Sustainable Growth Initiative
at McGill University Faculty of Law, March 1 & 2, 2024

The CNNC brings together law students from schools across Canada to practice and improve their negotiation and problem-solving skills. The competition simulates negotiations in which teams of two law students, acting as lawyers, negotiate a series of legal and business problems – *in English or in French*. The winning team goes on to represent Canada at the International Negotiation Competition, with law school teams from around the world.

This year's CNNC theme will focus on issues relating to sustainable business practices, opportunities and challenges under the auspices of McGill University's Sustainable Growth Initiative.

Why a Negotiation Moot?

Concerns about accessible justice, and about the interactions of the legal system with social and economic policy – along with even broader concerns about social order, sustainability and the planet – have caused legal regulators and educators to revisit what capacities law students ought to be developing. In all of these areas, problem-solving, communication and negotiation skills, are central. Transformative individual and societal outcomes are less likely to happen when legal structures and legal actors act in constraining ways. This is even more the case as the landscape of sustainability governance continues to evolve in a similar way that we have been observing in other areas of economic and financial regulation. Here, too, the levels and locations of norm creation continue to expand, as public and private actors assume regulatory roles in elaborating a wider range of norms, which include recommendations, guidelines, reporting standards and best practice indicators. Climate change governance on the macroeconomic level as well as corporate governance and sustainable finance efforts have moved corporations – both financial and non-financial institutions – into the spotlight as key actors in creating robust and effective instruments to address the climate crisis. Without the ability to analyze and tackle problems creatively, productively and responsibly, lawyers will not be able to bring the leadership that will be increasingly crucial in the coming decade.

Until recently, most competitive moots (popular features of the law curriculum) have focused on appellate advocacy. **This competition puts students 'in the boardroom', in bilateral and multi-party negotiations, looking for solutions to complex problems.** It also focuses on education and feedback, as panels of judging volunteers (lawyers, members of the judiciary, and others) engage in thoughtful discussions with students about their negotiations.



Who Can Participate

The competition is open to law students from across Canada. Students compete in teams of two, representing their schools. Law faculties can send up to four students in the English stream, **and can also send up to four students to compete in the French stream of the event.** Universities that have participated in the past include: University of Calgary, University of Alberta, University of Saskatchewan, University of Manitoba, Osgoode Hall Law School of York University, University of Toronto, Western University, University of Windsor, University of Ottawa, University of New Brunswick, Dalhousie University, McGill's Faculty of Law, and l'Université de Sherbrooke. In 2023, 52 Law students took part.

In 2023, the competition added a French language stream. That stream provided an opportunity for bilingual students from both Civil and Common Law schools to take part – and, even more significantly, for students in French language law school programs in Western Canada to interact with Quebec law teams, and receive feedback from French/bilingual lawyers and members of the judiciary. The cross-language and cross-cultural component of this competition – all in a problem-solving setting – is unique.

Stay Tuned for More Information

CNNC's website contains general information about the event and registration. <https://www.canadiannationalnegotiationcompetition.com/>. We expect to include a Master Class prior to the competition's first round. Teams should plan to be on-site by early afternoon on March 1st. The event will wrap up on the evening of March 2nd.

Teams can register until mid-December 2023. After registration, teams are assigned one side of each of the three problems. All information about the problems is released in January.

Questions? Please don't hesitate to contact Chair, CNNC National Committee, Professor Michaela Keet, m.keet@usask.ca.

