In the world of student law team competitions, Western New England University has an impressive track record. Since 2008, our moot court teams have been finalists and national champions in five competitions focusing on such areas as Transactional Law, Product Liability, Taxation, and Negotiation.

In 2011, the Transactional Law Team brought home another national championship. After two days of competition, the team consisting of Isaac Mass ’11 and Julie McKenna ’11, was declared national champions. The field of competitors consisted of teams from 30 law schools from across the country.

The Western New England team defeated William and Mary Law School in the first round and Hofstra in the second round in order to advance to the semifinals along with nine other teams. On the second day of competition Western New England beat the University of Richmond team in the semifinal. It prevailed over the team from UCLA in the final round.

Our team was coached by Professor Eric Gouvin, Director of Western New England’s Law and Business Center for Advancing Entrepreneurship, and was put through the paces in practice rounds by Professor Rene Reich-Graefe and Professor Robert Statchen. Adjunct Professor Robert Sawyer, General Counsel at Friendly Ice Cream, provided additional consulting advice on the restaurant business.

This year the deal involved a locally famous family-owned restaurant chain that hoped to go national. One side of the deal was the daughter of the founder, who had big dreams for the company, and on the other side was an experienced franchisor who had turned around a national hamburger chain. These two parties planned to form a joint venture to expand the local restaurant into a national chain. The Western New England team was assigned the task of representing the local family-owned restaurant.

The planners of the Meet had a well-developed fact pattern that was delivered to all of the teams and then each team got a URL with “secret” videotaped instructions from their specific client. The teams were allowed to email their client with questions to further flesh out the facts in order to get a more complete understanding of the deal. The questions were graded by judges as part of the team’s score in order to assess client interviewing skills.

The next requirement in the Meet involved drafting a “term sheet” for the deal representing the client’s view of the transaction. Once those term sheets were completed and submitted to the Meet organizers, they were forwarded by the organizers to the teams on the other side of the deal. The term sheets written by those teams, in turn, were delivered to the Western New England team. The next step involved a different kind of writing–marking up the other side’s term sheet. After the Western New England team marked up and commented on the term sheets from their competitors, the edited term sheets were submitted to the organizers for judging.

Two judges watched each session and evaluated the effectiveness of the teams. The Western New England team earned excellent marks throughout. Each round ends with the judges sharing their thoughts with the teams in private. The comments made by the experienced lawyers and deal-makers who had taken the time to serve as judges of the competition would have made anyone associated with Western New England very proud.