Law students win regional

by Steve Murray
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In the wake of the William S. Richardson Law School being ranked in the nation's top 50 law programs, UH law students earned another honor on Feb. 21.

The students, belonging to the client counseling team, won the western regional competition for the second time in three years with a victory in Denver.

"Not bad for one of the smallest schools in the country," said team faculty adviser and assistant law professor Calvin Pang.

UH is part of the western region which consists of 12 teams from four states; Hawai'i, Colorado, Wyoming and California.

The UH team is made up of two teams of two students each. The students are Juliann Tigert, Christine Andrews, Albert Cook and Belinda Hall.

Although the winning team was the twosome of Albert Cook and Belinda Hall, the competition is more than a one or two-person project.

"We all work on the issues as a team," said Tigert, the unofficial team leader.

Prior to the contest, the teams are given a few sentences describing the topic, or the case, that they will work on. "From that point on, we really put in a lot of hours brain storming and practicing," Tigert said.

"Their motto is hard work, diligence and more hard work," Pang said.

During the competition, the teams address a group of judges that act as clients. It is the team member's job to advise their clients and deal with any legal, personal or emotional issue that may arise. And best of all, the student lawyers have no idea what idea what those problems may be. It's entirely up to the judges.

The competition can be very stressful, but the UH team is determined to have fun.

"It was great," Tigert said. "We always go with the attitude to have fun."

She said that every panel is different and that much of the chance to win depends on what judges they get. "Some judges are tougher than others," Tigert said. "Plus there is the human element; if clients cry or if they're angry, it's stressful... but you can't beat yourself over the head."

The next step is the national competition on March 13 and 14 at UCLA. At this competition, Andrews will serve as an alternate and Tigert will be a second alternate and team coach. If they win, they will represent the United States at international competition in Vancouver, Canada in April.

The competition is sponsored by the American Bar Association. Tigert said the benefits are immeasurable. "It's my second year on the team — it's built my confidence. It's taught me to be prepared and to able to think of canned answers," she said.

The client counseling team celebrated in Denver with dinner. The members are students (from left to right) Juliann Tigert, Belinda Hall, Albert Cook and Christine Andrews.