



The State University  
of New York

**Office of University Life &  
Enrollment Management**

*announces*

***2012 Benjamin & David  
Scharps Legal Essay Competition***

An essay competition for SUNY Juniors and Seniors

First Prize - \$1,500  
Second Prize - \$1,000  
for the Best 2,000 Word Paper

THIS YEAR'S TOPIC:

**Cyber Bullying**

**For additional information, please contact:**

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## **2012 BENJAMIN AND DAVID SCHARPS LEGAL ESSAY COMPETITION**

### **Description**

The award is offered in accordance with a gift accepted by the State University of New York Board of Trustees under the will of Hannah S. Hirschhorn to establish the Benjamin Scharps and David Scharps Memorial Fund. Students will be asked to write an essay on a legal topic and submit their paper for review. A selection committee will review all submissions and select both a first and second place winner. This award is offered annually.

### **Eligibility**

Competition for the prize is open to SUNY students in their junior and senior year at state-operated campuses. Students, who are interested in legal issues, or interested in pursuing a career in the legal field, are especially encouraged to apply.

### **Prizes**

The winner will receive \$1,500; the second place finisher will receive \$1,000. Both the first and second place winners will receive a certificate and will be added to the recipients list on the SUNY website.

### **Instructions**

The competition requires students to demonstrate their analytical skills in a legal opinion of 2,000 words. Students are to identify the legal issues and defend a position in a scholarly manner. The essay submitted must be carefully reasoned, well researched, authoritatively documented, and precisely written. It is to be neatly printed on 8.5 x 11 paper, and may include notes or foot notes.

### **Geneseo Instructions:**

Interested Geneseo students may submit essays to Dr. Sancilio, the Dean of Students (CU 354) no later than 12:00 noon on Friday, February 10, 2012. Electronic submissions (only) must be sent to [deanstu@geneseo.edu](mailto:deanstu@geneseo.edu). A College committee will review essays; no more than 3 essays may be submitted to Albany from campus.

### **Selection Procedures**

The SUNY Associate Provost, in consultation with the Selection Committee in Albany, will recommend the winner and runner-up to the Chancellor for approval, and the results of the competition will be announced on or before **March 19, 2012**.



## BENJAMIN AND DAVID SCHARPS LEGAL ESSAY COMPETITION

### **Case Topic: Cyber Bullying**

The First Amendment to the United States Constitution states that, “Congress shall make no law...abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.” Relevant Supreme Court cases also apply this restriction to states, including the State University of New York.

At the same time, many a mother has told her child that, “sticks and stones may break your bones, but names will never hurt you.” Yet study after study, and plain experience, show that often not to be the case. While name calling and taunting have plagued playgrounds since time immemorial, the advent of the Internet has made it significantly easier to stalk, taunt, expose and harass others, all from the comfort of one’s home, and without ever confronting the victim or exposing the identity of the poster. Results range from hurt feelings to cutting to suicidal ideation and other self-harming behaviors.

For your essay, discuss whether there is a legal role or responsibility of SUNY Colleges in addressing cyber bullying. In your essay, you may wish to address some or all of the following issues: Does the First Amendment allow a College to regulate harassing speech, either on campus or on the Internet? Are there legal steps that a college must take, should take, should not take, *or* may not take in addressing cyber bullying? May *or* should a college block access to a Web site that contains offensive content? May *or* should a college discipline a harasser through the judicial or conduct process? What legal and administrative options exist for students who are harassed or defamed on the Web? What, if anything, is the College’s educational role in addressing cyber bullying?

Please cite to at least five (but likely more) sources which can include statutes, court cases, journal and periodical articles, Dear Colleague Letters issued by the Department of Education’s Office of Civil Rights, and stakeholder’s Web sites. Please be careful to cite to other’s work and only use other’s work to strengthen your own arguments and analysis, not as a replacement for your own thoughts.

To ensure anonymity, please refrain from including your name or the name of your home institution on any page within the essay. Please place this information on a cover page accompanying your essay. This page will be redacted during the selection process and essays will be reviewed anonymously.

**Please submit your essay by February 10, 2012**

Note: To ensure anonymity, please refrain from including your name or SUNY Geneseo on any page within the essay.