

LEAP

LEGAL EXPERIENCE AND ADVANCEMENT PROGRAM

LEAP encourages the professional development of patent attorneys and agents through oral advocacy opportunities, helping them gain experience in proceedings before the Patent Trial and Appeal Board.



UNITED STATES
PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

uspto

Do you aim to become a highly-skilled practitioner in the IP Law community?

The USPTO is heavily invested in the success of America's IP lawyers. LEAP facilitates the training of junior practitioners from every demographic by helping them gain court access and experience.

Eligibility

To qualify as a LEAP practitioner, a patent agent or attorney must have:

- Three or fewer substantive oral arguments in any federal tribunal including the Patent Trial and Appeal Board (PTAB); and
- Seven or fewer years of experience as a licensed attorney or agent.

It's easy to participate in LEAP:

Once the PTAB has assigned an oral hearing date for the case, submit a [LEAP Practitioner Request and Verification Form](#) to PTABHearings@uspto.gov at least 5 days prior to the hearing.

At the oral hearing:

- A LEAP practitioner can conduct the entire oral argument or share time with other counsel as long as the LEAP practitioner is offered a meaningful and substantive opportunity to argue.
- The type and quantity of oral argument by the LEAP practitioner is at the party's discretion.
- PTAB will permit more experienced counsel to assist a LEAP practitioner to clarify, if needed.



Mock arguments

The PTAB also offers a mock argument practicum through which practitioners can argue before a panel of actual PTAB judges and receive individual feedback on strengths and ways to improve.

Webinar trainings

The PTAB hosts free webinar trainings on oral advocacy, including:

- use of demonstratives
- effective use of hearing time
- decorum
- oral hearing logistics, and more!

Mock arguments and webinar trainings provide an added measure of confidence for LEAP practitioners and their clients, for both the PTAB case at hand and any future IP litigation.

For a full schedule of trainings, visit <http://bit.ly/PTABLEAP>.

There you can also find Frequently Asked Questions, a "New to PTAB" Toolkit, and more information on LEAP.

Did you know?

The PTAB grants up to 15 minutes of additional argument time to parties that participate in LEAP, depending on the proceeding length and PTAB schedule.

"The PTAB has done a great job with the LEAP program. I really hope all practitioners who are eligible will take advantage of this program. In fact, not only law firms, but clients are very supportive of an initiative like this one that helps a practitioner grow and develop professionally!"



—Naveen Modi - Partner & Global Vice Chair of IP - Paul Hastings, LLP

"This program provides a runway of sorts to give people, incrementally, a shot at having those opportunities while balancing the risk to clients that something would go awry."



—Michael D. Specht,
Director and Co-chair
Patent Office Litigation Practice
Sterne, Kessler, Goldstein & Fox

(Photo Credit: Joe Shymanski)

"PTAB's program strikes a great balance. It incentivizes and encourages parties to allow more junior or less experienced attorneys to argue, while ensuring that if other counsel have value to add or would like to supplement the record, they may do so. There is little risk and much upside. This

program will go a long way toward moving the needle and empowering and training our next generation of lawyers. Any time we rise the tide for junior lawyers, we necessarily rise the tide for all and thus promote diversity."



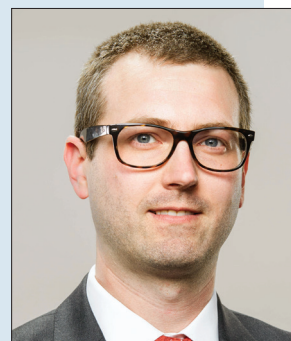
—Kathi Vidal - Managing Partner of Winston & Strawn's Silicon Valley Office and founder of the ChIPs Next Gen Effort

"The PTAB's LEAP provides meaningful and substantive opportunities for junior practitioners to hone their oral advocacy skills."



—Akkad Moussa
- Associate - Kilpatrick
Townsend & Stockton, LLP

"By giving the extra time, it takes that out of the equation and makes it more accommodating, which can mitigate clients' concerns about splitting time," Bell said.



—Cory C. Bell - Partner
- Finnegan, Henderson,
Farabow, Garrett &
Dunner, LLP