

SMU team wins moot contest in The Hague



(From far left) SMU team members Sampson Lim, Ilene Chua, Tessa Tan Si Ying, Tracy Gani, Yu Zheng Yi, Ng Pei Qi and Lee Chuan with ICC Judge Geoffrey A. Henderson. They beat top student teams from across the globe to win the competition. PHOTO: ICC-CPI

University claims third win in four years at prestigious ICC competition

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Singapore Management University's (SMU) law students did their school and country proud in trumping some of the top university teams worldwide to win the 2018 International Criminal Court (ICC) Moot Court Competition held at The Hague in the Netherlands.

The "Grand Slam" level moot competition marked SMU's third win in four years at the world's largest and most prestigious competition on international criminal law. SMU made its debut in the decade-old competition in 2015, reaching the final round for four years in a row and winning in 2015, 2016 and this year.

The latest version was organised by Leiden University, in partnership with the International Bar Association, and sponsored by the Netherlands' Ministry of Foreign Affairs, among others. Top student teams from 46 countries including Australia, Brazil and South Africa took part, with the English edition drawing a global turnout of more than 100 teams.

The SMU team edged to the top of the 60 best teams that qualified for the international round held at The Hague from May 27 to June 1.

The large-scale moot court simulates proceedings of the ICC at The Hague. The issues in this year's moot problem related to abusive labour practices and human trafficking, among other things.

The SMU team reached the championship final after eight matches, and in the final round beat Ireland's The Honourable Society of King's Inns – the country's oldest school of law founded in 1541 – and West Bengal National University of Juridical Sciences, reputed to be India's second best law school.

The SMU team – students Ilene Chua, Tracy Gani, Lee Chuan, Ng Pei Qi, Tessa Tan Si Ying and Yu Zheng Yi – scored well on their composure, clarity and conviction. SMU alumni Edmund Koh, Nicholas Liu, Beverly Lim and Sampson Lim coached the team.

The judging bench for the final round, presided by sitting ICC judge Geoffrey A. Henderson, hailed the SMU team's "masterful" performance.

Ms Gani said yesterday that "competing in the final round was nerve-racking yet exciting as we had the honour of appearing before an actual ICC judge in an ICC courtroom". She added: "Our winning formula is hard work, but more importantly great alumni and school support. We thank Professor Chen, our coaches and the seniors who took time off to judge our practices rounds."

Assistant Professor Chen Siyuan, head of SMU's International Moots Programme, said these mooters "are really the future of our legal profession. If Singapore is serious about maintaining its status as the premier dispute resolution hub, it must continue to invest heavily in training our law students. Mooters doing well in international competitions also raise the country's profile before leading lawyers and judges."

"We look forward to scaling greater heights with the continued support of the university and our partner, WongPartnership."

Lawyer Peter Ong Lip Cheng, who has served as a judge in Beijing for the regional stage of the Philip C. Jessup International Law Moot Competition, said high standards of advocacy skills and strong capabilities are shown at such contests.

"The SMU team should be similarly lauded for matching up to the best. This is no small feat and shows their consistently high calibre."

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