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The 2016 edition of the Willem C. Vis International Commercial Arbitration Moot was held late last month. The competition saw a close final between the University of Buenos Aires and Singapore Management University.

The team from SMU comprised Kim Shi Yin, Ni Qian, Sean Sim, Jeremy Tan, Tiffany Tseng, Beatrice Wee, Won Chian Lim and Wong Yan Yee. **Bar & Bench's Shreya Vajpei** conducted an e-mail interview with the SMU team about their experience at the competition.

This is what they had to say.

Shreya Vajpei: What made you choose this particular moot?

Singapore Management University: The Vis moot is widely recognised as the most prestigious moot on commercial arbitration in the world. It is also the largest, with more than 300 teams taking part this year. SMU only started its moot programme in 2010 and as we made inroads in the various moots we took part in, we knew we had to give our students a chance to compete at the biggest stage. They have done us proud, reaching the Vienna final in both 2015 and 2016, and doing the same for the Hong Kong Vis East.

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SV: What was the preparation phase like? Did the pattern for Vis differ from the other moots you've done in the past?

SMU: As with many law schools we divide the preparation into the research and writing phase and the oral rehearsal phase. Each phase takes 2-3 months. The problem this year was focused on more niche areas of arbitration, such as comparing damages and costs, but it was just as interesting.

SV: How was the final round?

SMU: In Hong Kong we met the Chinese U of HK in the final and in Vienna we met Buenos Aires in the final. We executed as planned and our opponents gave their best shot too. At the end of the day, it is hard to control the outcome even if one has made the better arguments. In the case of moot competitions one should always take the process seriously and just be circumspect about everything else.

SV: Any special moments that you would like to share?

SMU: We were a little slow off the blocks for the preliminary rounds, and this is always a worry in both Vis moots as qualification is not based on wins but scores. Fortunately, we got better as the rounds progressed. Both our Vis teams also entered this year's moot with some trepidation, as it was readily assumed that it would be near impossible to reach both the Hong Kong and Vienna finals yet again. But that's exactly what we did as it's a testament to the coaching and the belief of the teams.

SV: In your opinion, does mooting benefit a law student?

SMU: Mooting greatly sharpens fundamental lawyering skills such as analysis, research, writing, and oral advocacy. It is about making someone an effective communicator to a wide array of people. And in international moots, it is about being exposed to other cultures and ways of thinking. This is important in a globalised economy.