

Press Release

**SMU moot teams kick-start the academic year with impressive results
in Seoul and Tokyo**

Self-coached and self-funded mooting team brought home Singapore's first WTO-FTA Moot title

Singapore, 7 September 2015 (Monday) – Following an excellent showing in academic year 2014-2015, Singapore Management University's (SMU) international mooting teams have gotten off to a good start in the new academic year 2015-2016, beginning 17 August 2015, with impressive results. They achieved Singapore's first championship title at the **WTO-FTA Moot** held in Tokyo, Japan, on 29 August 2015, with two mooters named Best Orator. They also won first runner-up position at the **Asia Cup International Law Moot Court Competition** held in Seoul, Korea on 27 – 28 August 2015, with two mooters named Best Oralist.

WTO-FTA Moot 2015

A total of 22 teams participated in the sixth edition of the competition this year, with the top 16 making it to the international round in Seoul. The SMU team comprised recent SMU Juris Doctor graduate Nicholas Liu, and recent LLB graduates Qabir Sandhu and Nanthini Vijayakumar. Commendably, this team was self-funded and self-coached, and as none of the members had taken a trade law course before, they were faced with a steep learning curve and had to understand a complex area of law in a short period of time.

Inaugurated in 2010, the WTO-FTA Moot held at the Seoul National University is an annual moot court competition co-hosted by the South Korean Ministry of Trade, Industry and Energy (MOTIE), and the Korean Society of International Economic Law. This is the first time law schools outside Korea have been invited to take part in the competition, which featured, in the final round, a judging panel of seven senior lawyers comprising members of the WTO Appellate Body, including Ricardo Ramirez-Hernandez from Mexico, Thomas R. Graham from the U.S., Ujal Singh Bhatia from India, and Yuejiao Zhang from China.

This year's moot problem required teams to examine the legality of various trade-restrictive measures imposed on an imported car priced significantly lower than other cars in the market, in light of the states' WTO obligations.

After five rounds of competition held back-to-back in a single day, the SMU team triumphed over Korea University in the final to emerge champions. Nicholas and Qabir were also named Best Orator for the final and semi-final rounds respectively.

SMU's Associate Professor of Law Henry Gao, who was on the judging panel, called the team's performance 'superb'. "As I am also a judge in the moot, I couldn't advise the team or judge their rounds for obvious reasons, but according to the lawyers who judged their rounds, including several WTO Appellate Body members, they were really impressed with both their deep understanding of the WTO rules and advocacy skills. Given that none of them have taken a trade law course before, this is really a remarkable achievement," he said.

Asia Cup International Law Moot Court competition

The SMU team at the Asia Cup International Law Moot Court Competition comprised third year law undergraduates Chow Zi En, Daniel Ho, Sean Sim, Beatrice Wee and Wong Yan Yee. This is SMU's sixth year of participation, and for the sixth year running, the University has managed to reach the championship final. SMU was the champions in 2010, 2011 and 2014.

This year's competition saw 31 teams from 11 countries competing for the top awards, with the top 11 teams making it to the international rounds. The moot problem involved the interpretation of a jurisdictional clause, as well as the obligations of States in a disputed maritime zone. SMU met India's West Bengal National University of Juridical Sciences and Thailand's Thammasat University in the preliminary rounds and the University of Malaya in the final.

Besides clinching the first runner-up position, Daniel and Yan Yee were also ranked first and second for Best Oralist, which means SMU now have the most number of Best Oralist titles in this moot competition despite being a relative latecomer. The team was coached by SMU alumni Daniel Liu and Kenny Lau.

SMU's international mooting achievements

With these recent results, SMU has now reached 28 international championship finals, winning 14. The university has also reached the championship final on its international debut in 11 moots, winning six. Nanthini also became the 14th mooter in the world to win more than one international moot championship. These are significant achievements for the SMU School of Law, a young law school which was established in 2007 and had graduated its first batch of students in 2011.

Assistant Professor of Law Chen Siyuan, who heads the International Moots Programme at the law school, said, "This is a good start for SMU in this international moot season, and we will aim to do even better than the last."

The law school's remarkable achievements have also garnered the attention and support of the legal fraternity in Singapore. In August 2015, SMU School of Law signed a partnership agreement with WongPartnership, where the firm will not only support the School's moot budget for the next three years, but also provide greater mentorship to SMU's mooters and work even more closely with SMU to coach the various international moot teams.

"The enhanced support from WongPartnership, in addition to the support and commitment of our faculty members and alumni, will certainly inspire and further encourage our young mooters to excel in their mooting endeavours," Assistant Professor Chen added.

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Please visit the respective competition websites for more information:

- WTO-FTA Moot: <http://english.motie.go.kr/?p=5941>
- Asia Cup International Law Moot Court Competition: <http://2015ilsec.wix.com/ilsec#about-1/c2111>

Enclosure:

- Annex 1: Photos of the WTO-FTA and Asia Cup moot competitions
 - Annex 2: SMU School of Law – List of international moot competition achievements (From Academic Year 2009-10 to date)
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About SMU School of Law

SMU School of Law proudly welcomed its first cohort of 116 students in August 2007. Taught by a dynamic faculty with postgraduate degrees from renowned universities such as Harvard, Yale, Stanford, Oxford, Cambridge, Bristol and London, the School aims to nurture its students to become excellent lawyers who will contribute significantly to society. Trained with the ability to contextualise legal expertise and to think across disciplines and geographical borders coupled with SMU's interactive pedagogy, SMU's law graduates are confident articulate and analytically agile.

The SMU School of Law offers a four-year full-time Bachelor of Laws programme, a five-year double-degree programme which combines law with Accountancy, Business, Economics, Information Systems or Social Sciences, and a Master of Laws programme. The School has also launched a full-time graduate programme, the Juris Doctor Programme which can be completed within three years, and in some cases, accelerated for completion within two years. www.law.smu.edu.sg

About SMU

A premier university in Asia, the Singapore Management University (SMU) is internationally recognised for its world-class research and distinguished teaching. Established in 2000, SMU's mission is to generate leading-edge research with global impact and produce broad-based, creative and entrepreneurial leaders for the knowledge-based economy. SMU education is known for its highly interactive, collaborative and project-based approach to learning, and for its technologically enabled pedagogy of seminar-style teaching in small class sizes.

Home to around 8,800 undergraduate, postgraduate, executive and professional, full- and part-time students, SMU is comprised of six schools: School of Accountancy, Lee Kong Chian School of Business, School of Economics, School of Information Systems, School of Law, and School of Social Sciences. SMU offers a wide range of bachelors', masters' and PhD degree programmes in the disciplinary areas associated with the six schools, as well as in interdisciplinary combinations of these areas.

SMU has an emphasis on generating rigorous, high-impact, and relevant multi-disciplinary research that addresses Asian issues of global relevance. SMU faculty members collaborate with leading international researchers and universities from USA, Europe, China and India, as well as with partners in the business community and public sector, through its research institutes, centres and labs. SMU's city campus is a state-of-the art facility located in the heart of downtown Singapore, fostering strategic linkages with business, government and the wider community. www.smu.edu.sg

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Annex 1

Photographs

• **WTO-FTA Moot**



Photo1: SMU's WTO-FTA moot team with South Korea's Deputy Minister for Trade, Mr Woo Taehee (2nd from left). The SMU team comprises (left to right) Qabir Sandhu, Nicholas Liu and Nanthini Vijayakumar.

(Photo credit: Seoul National University)



Photo2: The SMU moot team in action at the WTO-FTA Moot held in Seoul. Front row L-R are Nanthini, Nicholas and Qabir.

(Photo credit: Seoul National University)

• **Asia Cup International Law Moot Court Competition**



Photo3: (L-R) The SMU team comprising Sean Sim, Wong Yan Yee, Daniel Ho, Chow Zi En, Beatrice Wee, at Asia Cup moot competition 2015.

Annex 2

SMU School of Law – List of international moot competition achievements
(From Academic Year 2009-10 to date)

International moot competition	Organiser	Achievement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asia Cup International Moot Court Competition 	Japanese Society of International Law and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan	2010 champions, 2011 champions, 2012 runner-up, 2013 runner-up, 2014 champions, 2015 runner-up
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asian Law Students Association Moot Competition 	Asian Law Students Association	2009 runner-up, 2014 champions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • D.M. Harish International Moot Court Competition 	Government Law College	2015 semi-finalist
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frankfurt investment Arbitration Moot Court Competition 	Wilhelm Merton Centre for European Integration and International Economic Order of Johann Wolfgang Goethe University, Frankfurt am Main	2015 runner-up
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hague Choice of Court Convention Moot Competition 	Hague Conference Asia Pacific Regional Office	2014 champions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • International Criminal Court Moot Court Competition 	Grotius Centre for International Legal Studies	2015 champions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • International Maritime Law Arbitration Moot 	Murdoch University	2013 quarter-finalist
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • International Law Competition 	International University Mitso	2011 champions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Philip C. Jessup International Moot Court Competition 	International Law Students Association	2011 exhibition champions, 2012 exhibition champions, 2013 runner-up, 2014 runner-up
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LawAsia International Moot Competition 	LAWASIA	2009 runner-up, 2011 runner-up, 2012 runner-up, 2013 champions, 2014 champions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moot Shanghai 	Shanghai Bar Association	2014 runner-up
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Price Media Law Moot Court Competition 	University of Oxford	2010 champions, 2012 quarter-finalist, 2013 semi-finalist, 2014 quarter-finalist, 2015 runner-up
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Red Cross International 	Hong Kong Red Cross	2010 semi-finalist,

Humanitarian Law Moot		2011 semi-finalist, 2013 semi-finalist, 2014 semi-finalist, 2015 quarter-finalist
• Willem C. Vis International Commercial Arbitration Moot	Association for the Organisation and Promotion of the Willem C. Vis International Commercial Arbitration Moot	2015 runner-up
• Willem C. Vis (East) International Commercial Arbitration Moot	A sister moot to the Willem C. Vis International Commercial Arbitration Moot	2013 Asia-Pacific runner-up, 2015 champions
• WTO-FTA Moot	Co-hosted by the South Korean Ministry of Trade, Industry and Energy (MOTIE), and the Korean Society of International Economic Law	2015 champions
