

SMU bags 2nd place in two moot court contests

Alexis Ong

Singapore Management University (SMU) has proven itself to be among the world's best law schools, with two of its moot court teams being placed second in the Willem C. Vis (East) and Willem C. Vis competitions this year.

A moot court competition simulates court proceedings, in which two teams compete on written submissions and oral presentations.

The Willem C. Vis is considered the most prestigious private international law moot court competition, said Mr Lionel Leo, 33, a partner at law firm WongPartnership.

He coached the teams along with his colleague Deya Shankar Dubey and SMU alumnus Shaun Pereira.

WongPartnership has been an official partner of the SMU moot court programme since last year.

Top practitioners from the fields of international sales law and arbitration from around the world form the judging panel.

The Vis (East) competition presents the same legal problem to contestants as the Vis competition, but is targeted at Asian universities and held in Hong Kong, rather than in Vienna.

This year, the SMU Vis team went up against 332 teams, including those from Harvard University, the University of Oxford and the University of Sydney, while its sister team at the Vis (East) competition battled against 132 teams.

The Vis team met four other teams during the general rounds, before being shortlisted to join the top 64

teams. These teams then battled one another in knockout rounds, until two teams reached the finals.

SMU's Vis and Vis (East) teams were both placed second – to the University of Buenos Aires and the Chinese University of Hong Kong, respectively – during the finals.

Vis team vice-captain Jeremy Tan Zhiyi, 25, began preparing last October and met his teammates almost every day in the weeks leading up to the competition.

“While there's always some disappointment when we can't bring back the trophy for our school, I am still immensely thankful that we made it as far as we did and to everyone who enabled us to get there,” said the final-year Juris Doctor student.

Vis (East) oralist Ni Qian, 21, said: “Though the learning curve was



The Singapore Management University team for the Willem C. Vis competition held in Vienna comprises (standing) Mr Won Chian Lim, 27, and Ms Tiffany Tseng, 30, as well as (seated) Mr Jeremy Tan Zhiyi, 25, and Ms Wong Yan Yee, 21. They went up against 332 teams, including those from Harvard University and the University of Oxford. PHOTO: SHAUN PEREIRA

steep, it was an immensely enjoyable and rewarding process.”

Mr Leo said SMU is the first university to reach the finals of both competitions for two years consecutively and the first Singapore university to win the Vis (East) competi-

tion, in 2014 and last year.

The National University of Singapore won the Vis competition in 2002, and this year made it to the top 16 and the semi-finals of the Vis and Vis (East) contests, respectively.

“We are extremely proud of our

teams which got to the finals,” said Mr Leo.

“It's a testament that Singapore law students can compete on the world stage with the very best.”

alexong@sph.com.sg