Both of Loyola’s Vis Moot teams garnered awards for their impressive performances this year. The competitions have continued to grow, with 107 teams in Hong Kong, and 298 teams in Vienna.

After competing in two pre-moot competitions in Belgrade and Zagreb, the Vienna team made a strong showing in the 2015 Vienna Vis Moot Competition. The team advanced to the Round of 64 (the top 20% of all schools) and received an Honorable Mention award for best Claimant’s Memorandum. The team also received Loyola’s Gary David Friedman award for excellent fellowship and commitment to advocacy.

The Hong Kong team also gave a strong performance this year. In the Shanghai pre-moot the team was one of eight to advance to the playoffs. Chantal Boctor also received an Honorable Mention award for being a top oralist. In the 2015 Hong Kong Vis Competition, the team won an Honorable Mention award for their Respondent’s brief. Christina Sanfelippo and Sean Farrell also received Honorable Mention awards as top oralists in the competition.

**Loyola’s All-Women Vis Team**

*By: Thai-Binh Tran*

Like the other Vis Moot teams, we studied the CISG, wrote memoranda, and refined our oral arguments. Unlike the other Vis Moot teams, Shirley Chen, Elisabeth Fiordalisi, Chelsie Nelson, and I, formed an all-women team.

As an all-women team, we gained more than just international experience and oratory skills. We learned the value and importance of women supporting each other through challenging arguments, difficult criticism and insightful praise. We also learned that talented women with strong voices are extremely influential in the field of commercial arbitration. In particular, we were honored to receive critiques and advice from Professor Doctor Ingeborg Schwenzer during our Pre-moot at the Austrian Oberster Gerichtshof (Austrian Supreme Court Building).

I also can’t forget our celebratory dinner on the night we had advanced to the Round of 64. After Professor Moses finished her toast, a group of Vis participants nearby walked over to congratulate us and asked for our business cards. In particular, they looked at our team, a bit perplexed, and asked, “So there are no men on your team?” We grinned and proudly said, “No, we’re all women.”

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The Vienna Team:
- Shirley Chen
- Elisabeth Fiordalisi
- Chelsie Nelson
- Thai-Binh Tran

The Hong Kong Team:
- Chantal Boctor
- Sean Farrell
- Christina Sanfelippo
- Ryan La Valle

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The Vienna Team with Professor Moses and Professor Dr. Ingeborg Schwenzer

The Hong Kong Team
Zagreb Pre-Moot
By: Chelsie Nelson

After an eventful pre-moot in Belgrade, the Vienna team headed to Zagreb, Croatia to compete in another pre-moot competition. The pre-moot in Zagreb was a less competitive atmosphere than in Belgrade and we became very close to the teams there. The pre-moot was located at the University of Zagreb Faculty of Law and we were accompanied by teams from Iran, Pittsburgh and Zagreb.

With only four teams competing we found ourselves becoming much more comfortable in Zagreb than we had felt in Belgrade. We bounced ideas off not only other teams but also coaches and arbitrators. The atmosphere in Zagreb was collaborative and it provided us with the confidence to try new arguments or a new line of reasoning before the main event in Vienna.

Although Zagreb’s pre-moot is less structured and less intensive than the pre-moot in Belgrade, we walked away feeling like we gained as much experience (arguably more) from Zagreb. Not only was the competition highly beneficial, the city of Zagreb was also a part of our abroad experience that we truly enjoyed. It is a quaint city that has so much character and charm. Our very hospitable hosts from Zagreb were kind and generous and gave us a real sense of the city. We considered them friends when we left Zagreb and headed to Vienna.
We walked into the ceremony that would announce which teams would advance to the round of 64 a little deflated. We had each had one argument we felt great about, and one we felt not so great about. Well, it turns out we are our own hardest critics. Thai, Shirley, Chelsie and I were all seated in the ceremony, half listening and half writing down the names of the teams who were advancing with no real expectations. Everyone was screaming and yelling and celebrating, and we were just diligently writing down the team names. When there were three spots left, we all half thought to ourselves, “It’s okay, we gave it our best effort.” And that’s when we heard it. “Loyola University Chicago!” Honestly, I half heard it and half saw it written on my page. I think that between the shock and excitement of the announcement, we all fell completely silent. Everyone around was clapping and yelling with excitement—but for us the whole room fell silent for a moment. It was go time.

As soon as we could grasp the fact that we had just advanced, we smiled and hugged and...immediately started to worry about the next argument. We had arranged amongst our team that every argument we would switch off which pair argued. It just so happened that Thai and I were next when we advanced. As quickly as I became excited, my stomach dropped. So much pressure! But we did exactly what we always did: we prepared as a team. The four of us sat down and brainstormed. With Chelsie and Shirley playing the judges, we talked over the problem until Thai and I had mastered every response to every possible question.

The next morning we faced off against a team from Indonesia. I remember looking around and realizing that all four students at the counsel tables were women. I thought to myself how fortunate I had been to come this far and what an incredible gift it was to have such a rewarding and mind-opening experience. We were lucky enough to learn a great deal while forging new friendships, too. I think Thai and I gave the best argument the two of us had ever given. I remember looking back at Chelsie and Shirley and seeing wide eyes and big smiles. At that moment, I knew the problem the best I would ever know it and we both had given 200%. When we got the news that we would not advance any further we were disappointed, sure. But honestly, as a team, we had succeeded. And after all, getting knocked out of a competition isn’t so bad when you happen to find yourself in Vienna.
In the weeks leading up to our departure for the Vis Moot competition, we learned that we had been invited for the second year in a row to the prestigious pre-moot competition hosted by the law firm of Graf & Pitzkowitz. What was unique about this competition was the fact that it was held at the Austrian Supreme Court, a structure that, like many of the buildings in Vienna, had both prominence and beauty. Although we had arrived after already participating in two other pre-moots in Belgrade, Serbia and Zagreb, Croatia, the mere stature of the giant columns and elegant stairway gave us an impression that we were amongst a niche group of teams that had the unique privilege to be there.

At this particular pre-moot, we had the opportunity to not only practice against other leading teams in the competition, but I personally had the honor of arguing in front of the esteemed scholar, Professor Doctor Ingeborg Schwenzer. I remember that when I first heard the news that she would be serving on the arbitral tribunal during my round, I spent all morning practicing the phrase, “as distinguished scholar Ingeborg Schwenzer stated…” which of course never found its way into my actual argument. Instead, I found myself being pulled from one part of my argument to another, being poked and prodded at the weakest elements of my side. Through it all, I found the words that I relied upon the most were “I respectfully disagree, Madam Arbitrator.”

Being able to have a back and forth exchange with the Professor Doctor Ingeborg Schwenzer, though terrifying, was one of the most rewarding experiences I have had in my law school career. That is what is especially extraordinary about the Vis Moot competition: Not only do we write memoranda and practice our oral arguments hours on end, we have the wonderful chance to connect with the actual scholars whom we cite. The competition brings people from all different backgrounds and experiences together to essentially solve a problem together in a competitive but collaborative environment. Each argument made us better oralists, but more importantly, better advocates.

Star-Struck at the Austrian Supreme Court
By: Shirley Chen

Vienna Team Members at the Austrian Supreme Court (from L to R): Thai-Binh Tran, Shirley Chen, Elisabeth Fiordalisi, Chelsie Nelson
After completing the general rounds at Moot Shanghai, the Loyola Vis East team anxiously awaited to learn if it would be one of eight teams chosen for the final rounds of the competition. During the general rounds we went up against some highly skilled teams so we all understood how difficult it would be to advance. As all the teams began to trickle into the auditorium, one could easily sense the excitement and anticipation that filled the room.

The organizers of Moot Shanghai gave several speeches thanking the sponsors and all the competitors before the results were announced. This buildup created even more tension in the room as each team had to anxiously wait to see if their name would be called. The first four teams were announced and we were not one of them. We did not give up hope yet, but there was a sense of doubt that began to creep through. However, our agonizing wait finally came to an end as the next team that was called was Loyola University Chicago School of Law. All our hard work and preparation prior to the Moot paid off as we came to the realization we would be advancing through to the quarterfinals.

We were paired up against SungKyunKwan University Law School from South Korea. Prior to the announcement, our team had decided that my partner, Chantal Boctor and I would be competing in the quarterfinals if we drew the Respondent side, while my other teammates, Sean Farrell and Chrissy Sanfellipo, would be arguing if the Claimant side was chosen.

As we entered the large, conference-style room that would be hosting our quarterfinal matchup we immediately noticed the large number of spectators that would be viewing the argument. We introduced ourselves to SungKyunKwan University Law School and the esteemed Tribunal that would be arbitrating our proceedings. The Tribunal asked a variety of challenging questions throughout the arbitration. It was definitely noticeable that the level of questioning had risen compared to the general rounds.

After both sides presented their argument, everyone in the room was asked to leave for a few minutes as the arbitrators reached their decision. Throughout this long day of waiting anxiously, that period of time right before the results were read was especially agonizing. Once all the arbitrations had been completed, the results from the round began to be announced. The Chair of the Tribunal that arbitrated our quarterfinal round went up to the podium to read our results. Unfortunately, our team was told that we would not be moving on, but we were still very proud of what we had accomplished. Even though our time at the Moot Shanghai was coming to a close, we left knowing that we had significantly improved our arguments during our time there and were ready for the next big challenge of competing at the Vis Moot East Competition in Hong Kong.
Despite the competitive nature of the Vis Moot, the most important thing I took away from the entire experience was not the best way to defeat another team. It was how to collaborate with other legal minds to reach a deeper understanding of the law.

The main focus of the briefs and the subsequent oral arguments was about a contract for a letter of credit transaction. We researched an exhaustive amount of letter of credit law, and were often frustrated that the problem’s scenario would never realistically occur for a number of reasons.

This process began as collaboration so often does, in a vacuum. My partner on the issue of the brief, Olivia Popal, and I split up the issues by topic and each went our separate way to research. We would meet, she would know her area, I would know mine, and we would talk about how we would apply this to the problem. Eventually, we knew enough about each other’s area to help each other and point out flaws or sources that might be useful. At the time, we were confident that we had the best solution to the problem and turned in the brief without a moment’s hesitation. We were excited to be done researching.

How wrong we were. Once we received the brief we were responding to from University of Free Berlin, we sifted through arguments that we had never considered. At that time, we reconsidered our own brief and research, and modified our arguments to incorporate what we considered to be the best insights from these international schools. Again, we turned in our brief to the competition believing that our stance on the problem was polished and ironclad, and that all of the research was over.

Once we arrived to the Shanghai and Hong Kong Moots, we yet again realized how very wrong we were. After our practices with China-EU School of Law in Shanghai and Deakin University in Hong Kong, we took the time afterwards to chat about our arguments and picked up some pointers about Chinese and Australian arbitrators. In the rounds in Hong Kong, we faced Monash University and had to counter points that we had completely disregarded from the beginning, and saw other teams with varied strategies and styles. Each time we heard something interesting we began researching and sometimes implementing new arguments.

Beyond letter of credit law, the teams we practiced with and faced gave so much insight to their own legal systems. At the Happy Valley Racetrack in Hong Kong, I was explaining the American jury system to the very confused Germans from University of Bucerius. I was just as dumbfounded by their criminal law procedure. Over lunch with the China-EU team, we compared the process of becoming an attorney in different countries with Europeans going to school in China.

I realize now that I will never be done researching the law, but that through collaboration with other legal minds, you not only forge a stronger legal argument, but life-long friends. Even if I never use my knowledge of letters of credit in my career, I will always be happy I took the time to learn it through the collaboration with my Vis Moot team in Chicago, and with my new international friends from the Shanghai and Hong Kong Moot.
Shining in Shanghai
By: Chantal Boctor

Before heading to the Willem C. Vis East Moot Court Arbitration in Hong Kong this year, we made a pit stop to Mainland China to attend the Shanghai Pre-Moot. The Shanghai Pre-Moot is hosted by the East China University of Political Science and the Law and is sponsored and supported by various organizations, including Shanghai International Arbitration Week and the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC). From March 10th to March 13th, 33 teams from around the world gathered in Shanghai to arbitrate.

Fortunately, we arrived in Shanghai a day before the competition began and were able to appreciate the culture and play tourists. We had an opportunity to host a mock arbitration round with China EU School of Law. This was a great way to meet our colleagues and to make new friends, who we would meet again in Hong Kong a week later. We enjoyed a wonderful lunch on campus before attending the opening ceremony and meeting our student guide. The highlight of the Shanghai Pre-Moot was meeting our student guide, Lily. Every year, East China University of Political Science and the Law assigns a student volunteer to assist the competing teams with navigating the pre-moot and the city as a whole. What started off as a student volunteer ended up as a great friendship! We had the privilege of touring Old Town Shanghai, Pudong, the French Concession, and other quarters of Shanghai with Lily and the rest of the team.

Our first arbitration was against Bucerius School of Law in Hamburg. We had a great first round and received very positive feedback from arbitrators. Although we met as adversaries, Bucerius grew to be our closest friends in Shanghai and Hong Kong, and the team we kept in touch with the most. This pattern would prove true for all of the remaining arbitrations. Unlike Hong Kong where the arguments were spread out across the week, in Shanghai, our team had to compete twice in a day. We alternated arguments throughout the day, took notes on each other’s performance, and re-grouped at the end of the day to give each other feedback and guidance for the following rounds.

The first day the arguments were all hosted on campus. The second day however, we had the opportunity to travel to Pudong, a city across the Shanghai river. The second day, our arguments were hosted by various law firms in Shanghai. We went to Denton’s in Shanghai, also known as Dacheng Law Offices, to compete in two arbitrations before finding out if we would advance to the Quarterfinal rounds. Intermittently, we enjoyed a wonderful lunch with some of the associates and partners at the firm, generously hosted by Dentons. Our arguments paid off, as we were able to successfully advance to the Quarterfinal rounds in Shanghai! We had a wonderful experience in Shanghai, and a great start to the Willem C. Vist East Moot Court Arbitration Competition.
The Hong Kong General Rounds

By: Chrissy Sanfelippo

Following our week in Shanghai, the Loyola Vis East team participated in the 12th annual Vis Moot East competition in Hong Kong. The competition brought together a total of 107 teams from all around the world. The day before the competition began, our coaches set up a practice round with Deakin University from Melbourne, Australia. It had been a few days since our last round so the practice was a great way to knock off the rust and we felt more prepared after fielding questions from the Deakin team’s coach who acted as a practice arbitrator.

On the first day of arguments, Sean and I argued against Dong-a Law School, a team from South Korea. After the round, the panel commended the two South Korean students on arguing in English and acknowledged just how difficult it was to carry on such a debate in a non-native speech. It was the first time we had heard such comments from a panel of arbitrators and it was something that we reflected on later. While it is not a factor the judges are permitted to consider, we did recognize just how impressive it is that non-native English speaking students can argue complex contractual issues in English.

The next day, Chantal and Ryan argued against the Free University of Berlin. They faced a tough bench with two New Yorkers firing off questions left and right. Both maintained excellent composure under the intense pressure. The German team had impeccable English and very well structured arguments. It was interesting to have a bench with two American arbitrators after we had expected, and prepared for, the styles of non-American arbitrators from jurisdiction with different legal customs and advocacy ideals. It was almost like being back in Chicago!

The following afternoon, Sean and I faced two women from the Symbiosis Law School in Pune, India. Personally, it was the most fun I had had in a round of arguments up to that point in Vis. After our group prep-session that night we attended the Happy Valley race track event, which took place at the horse racing track in the middle of the city. We were able to take a break from the competition, and meet up with our friends from Shanghai.

After we found out we did not advance to the elimination rounds, we decided to truly experience Hong Kong. The team attended the famed Lamma Island seafood dinner on Saturday night and the event did not disappoint! We had a fantastic time riding the Hong Kong ferry, sampling the local seafood cuisine, meeting new friends, and being forced to partake in the Lamma Island singing tradition with old friends. We also made our way through outdoor markets, discovered the beautiful Avenue of the Stars, and found our way to the Moot Alumni Association sponsored Moot bar, Rula Bula Bar. Overall, participating in the Vis East was an incredible experience, and certainly one of the best experiences I have had in law school.
The HK team take a ferry to Lamma Island.

The Vienna team, with Coach Rae Kyritsi, explore Schmetterlinghaus, or the “Butterfly House.”

The Vienna team enjoying schnitzel at the classic Viennese Figlmüller restaurant.
A Special Thanks to Our Donors...

The opportunity to compete in Hong Kong and Vienna was made possible by the generous contributions from the Chicago legal community. We thank you and hope that together we will continue to ensure future success for the Loyola Vis teams.

The Chicago International Dispute Resolution Association (CIDRA), headed by Peter Baugher, Esq., and the Chicago Branch of the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators, headed by Terry Moritz, Esq., helped support the pre-moot at Loyola in February both by a financial contribution and by providing experienced arbitrators to serve on tribunals for our student advocates.

John H. Calhoun, Esq., whose son Michael is an alumnus of Loyola, is also the coach of the Hong Kong team. His continued support, dedication, and guidance to the Hong Kong team throughout the competition have been invaluable to the team.

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Peter B. Carey, Esq., is an alumnus of Loyola Chicago School of Law and has provided consistent support over the years. He has been an insightful arbitrator and generous donor. He also visited Vienna many times to arbitrate and to assist the team. His daughter, Ellie, participated on the first Loyola Vis Moot Team. He specializes in commercial litigation.

Freddi L. Greenberg, Esq., an alumna, has also generously supported the Vis Moot Program. She has a boutique energy practice in Evanston, Illinois, founded in 1983, which focuses on the electric and natural gas industries with a special focus on renewable energy.

Terry Moritz, Esq., an alumnus of Loyola Chicago School of Law, made generous contributions to the Vis Moot program. Mr. Moritz has more than 35 years of experience in

The ADR setting, and is currently teaching an arbitration course at Loyola.

Silvia Rota, an alumna of Loyola Chicago School of Law graduate program, supports the Vis teams through contribution and through an endowed fund she and her brother have created in honor of their father, Dr. Aminta Rota.

Professor Margaret L. Moses contributed the royalties from her book arbitration—The Principles and Practice of International Commercial Arbitration, published by Cambridge University Press.

The Loyola Vis Moot teams would also like to thank the following friends and alumni of Loyola, a number of whom are past participants in the Vis Moot program, for their financial support:


Thank you again to all of the donors. We are very grateful for your support.

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