

As the CTLS Team for the 32nd Annual Willem C. Vis International Commercial Arbitration Moot, we are honored to share our experience as we explored commercial law and arbitration in a global context. Our journeys began with an interview with the CTLS Vis Moot Team Coach, Grace Cheng, who leads a successful career in arbitration, works as an English barrister, and was a former Vis mootie herself. Grace introduced us to the Vis Moot, explaining the intricacy of past problems and the importance of working collaboratively as a team to achieve success.

Once we accepted our positions on the team, preparations promptly began as Grace introduced us to the world of international commercial arbitration, including how to dissect and analyze the case packet, find authorities, and formulate effective arguments. Within weeks, our problem was released, which contained over fifty pages of arbitration filings, communications between the parties, legal reports, and witness statements. As a team of three students, we quickly realized the importance of working together as we divided the issues in preparation for drafting our written memoranda and crafting arguments to be leveraged on behalf of our clients.



As we continued our preparations, we had the opportunity to enhance our oral pleadings by participating in virtual pre-moots, including the 22nd CIETAC Cup International Commercial Arbitration Moot, 5th IAC Central Asia Vis Pre-Moot, and the APAC-BICAM Vis Pre-Moot. At our first pre-moot, hosted by the China International Economic and Trade Arbitration Commission, our team received awards for “Third Prize” and our team member, Alyson Smith, was awarded a certificate for “Best Individual Oralist.” Our team had great success competing in the APAC-BICAM pre-moot, placing in the top thirty-two teams advancing to the elimination rounds.



When we arrived in Budapest, it was our first time presenting our arguments in person since completing our semester at CTLS. We competed against teams from all over the world, which pushed us to refine our advocacy skills and benefit from valuable feedback. One of the most unique parts of this experience was that all three of us also had the chance to act as arbitrators for other teams. Seeing the competition from the other side gave us a new perspective, as it helped us to understand what makes an argument effective, how to

engage with the tribunal, and what really stands out in a hearing. Between competing, arbitrating, and joining the social events, including a river cruise along the Danube river, we built friendships and connections that carried into Vienna, where the official Vis Moot began. It was a great way to bridge the gap between our preparations and the final stages of the competition.

The magic of the Vis Moot in Vienna began right away at the opening ceremony. Held in a grand historic venue, the event brought together thousands of participants from all over the world. The atmosphere was electric, buzzing with excitement and anticipation. Listening to speeches from respected arbitrators and organizers and witnessing the official launch of the competition made us feel part of something much larger, a global community united by a shared passion for international arbitration.



Then came the competition rounds, where we faced outstanding teams from China, Argentina, Mexico, and Brazil. Each hearing pushed us to the limits of our preparation, teamwork, and ability to quickly adapt to the questions and interests of our arbitral tribunals. Experiencing a variety of advocacy styles and legal perspectives broadened our understanding and helped us grow.

Outside the competition, we toured Vienna and explored the local culture and cuisine, visited the United Nations Head Quarters, attended insightful conferences and debates, visited global law firms, and built lasting friendships that captured the spirit of the Vis Moot.

Lastly, we want to sincerely thank our coach, Grace, for all the support and guidance throughout our Vis Moot journey. We also want to express our deep gratitude to CTLS for making this incredible experience possible. We encourage everyone to seize the opportunity to take part in the Vis Moot because it is a truly rewarding and unforgettable adventure.

