

MEDIA RELEASE

UP Law team ranks third in international moot court competition

PRETORIA – A team from the University of Pretoria’s (UP’s) Faculty of Law (UP Law) has scored a third-place finish in the 29th Annual Willem C Vis International Commercial Arbitration Moot Court Competition, held virtually recently. The UP Moot Society team’s ranking is not only UP Law’s strongest showing in the competition since it started participating in 2021, but also the furthest a university on the African continent has made it overall.

Currently the largest moot court competition in the world, the Vis Moot sees 365 top law faculties from around the world participating in a fictional arbitration case between two international corporations, presided over by a panel of arbitrators.

The UP Law team consisted of six students: Nicole Gloy (LLB III), Tiara Joseph (LLB III), Simon Augustyn (BCom Law II), Michela du Buisson (BCom Law II), Chloe Eacott (LLB IV) and Liam Bolton (LLB II). The coaching was headed by UP Law’s Keeghan Smith (LLB IV) and Nick du Toit (LLM). Tara Dakin, a final-year law student from Deakin University in Australia, participated as a remote consulting coach. In the final global rounds Augustyn received an honourable mention in the Best Speaker Award category.

An elated Head Coach Smith said, “As this is only the second time UP Law has participated in the competition, and with a semifinal placement this year and a top 32 placement in 2021, I believe that UP has clearly set themselves apart in the competition as one to look out for in the future.”

He added, “Seven months ago, the team set out with the goal of improving on UP Law’s 32nd-spot placement in 2021. After months of sleepless nights, the team began to see success at the various pre-moots hosted in preparation for the actual competition. The team won the Africa Round in the pre-moot hosted in Nairobi and scored second place in the virtual Fox Williams Pre-Moot. UP Law team member Nicole Gloy received an award for third-best speaker at the 13th Annual Breakfast Pre-Moot. This string of successes gave the UP Law team confidence at the start of the global rounds on 12 April 2022.”

During the competition the team fought group stage rounds that saw them placed in the top 64 teams. “The elimination rounds began in the early morning and progressed late into the night, with the team triumphing over seasoned Vis Moot universities such as the University of Vienna (round 8), University of Münster (round 16) and WU Vienna (round 32). It was furthermore an honour for the team to have been presided over by esteemed names in the international commercial law community such as Ingeborg Schwenzer, Louis Flannery and Peter Ashford, to name but a few.”

A large number of teams consisted of LLM and Doctorate of Law students coached by experienced lawyers and academics. Thus, UP Law’s achievement is even more significant. “Being part of the first Africa team to make it this far, the UP Law team is elated to have been able to represent the Africa continent and show the world that we are as skilled and as determined as our global counterparts in becoming key players in the wonderful world of international commercial law,” Smith said. “A word of special appreciation goes out to the

non-profit organisation [Africa in the Moot](#), which provided our team with access to resources, connections with previous mooters across the globe, and much-needed motivation during the actual rounds.”

UP Law congratulated Sofia University on winning the overall tournament, and Smith added that, “Third place is no small feat, especially for a university new to the Vis Moot competition. The knowledge, experience and direction it has provided for the team will remain with us for the remainder of our legal careers.”

Team member Liam Bolton added, “To lose oneself in the pursuit of knowledge is a plight both filled with joyful love and painful revelation. This pursuit can be a heavy burden if it was not for the humanity and humility found in fellow team members, coaches and arbitrators. Thanks to all for the memories and the experience.”

Caption: Front - Dean of UP Law, Professor Elsabe Schoeman, Nicole Gloy, Tiara Joseph, Liam Bolton and Michela du Buisson. Back - Simon Augustyn, Keeghan Smith and Chloe Eacott

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ABOUT THE UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA

The University of Pretoria (UP) is one of the largest contact and residential universities in South Africa, with its administration offices located on the Hatfield Campus, Pretoria. This 114-year-old institution is also the largest producer of research in South Africa.

Spread over seven campuses, it has nine faculties and a business school, the Gordon Institute of Business Science (GIBS). It is the only University in the country with a Faculty of Veterinary Science, which is ranked top in Africa. UP has 120 academic departments and 92 centres and institutes, accommodating more than 55 000 students and offering about 1 100 study programmes.

UP is one of the top five universities in South Africa, according to the 2019-2020 rankings by the Center for World University Rankings. The QS World University Rankings also placed UP among the top 100 universities worldwide in three fields of study (veterinary science, theology and law), and UP is in the top 1% in eight fields of study (agricultural sciences, clinical medicine, engineering, environment/ecology, immunology, microbiology, plant and animal sciences and social sciences), according to the Web of Science Essential Indicators.

In May 2020, the annual UK Financial Times Executive Education Rankings again ranked GIBS as the top South African and African business school. The University also has an extensive community engagement programme with approximately 33,000 students involved in community upliftment. Furthermore, UP is building considerable capacities and strengths for the Fourth Industrial Revolution by preparing students for the world beyond university and offering work-readiness and entrepreneurship training.

For more information, go to www.up.ac.za