

FACULTY ANNOUNCEMENT

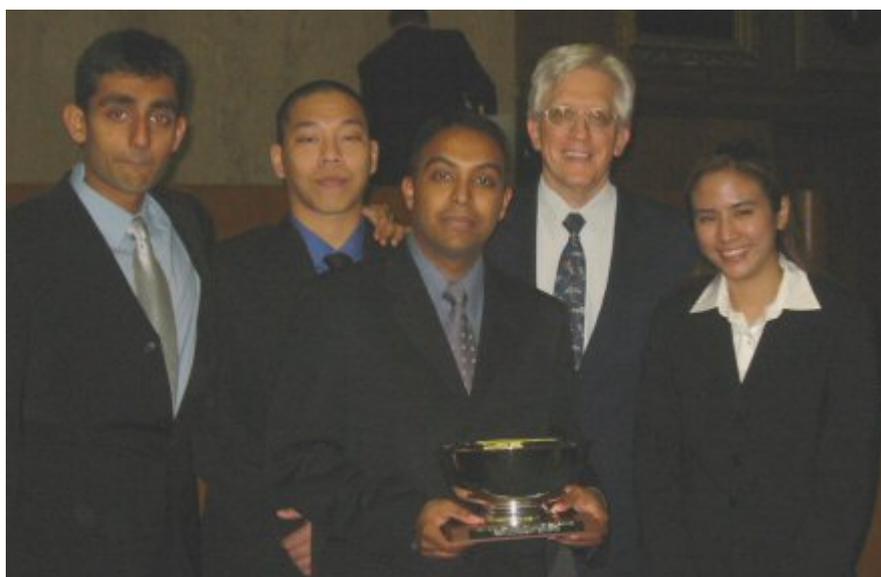
4 April 2004

NUS Law School Team is 7th-time Runners-up in Prestigious International Mooting Competition - involving 529 teams from 81 countries

The Jessup Moot team from the Faculty of Law, National University of Singapore were Runners-Up in the 45th Philip C Jessup International Law Moot Court Competition. 94 teams from 81 countries competed in the International Rounds of the Competition, which were held in Washington, DC. Singapore oralist Jaikanth Shankar was named the Best Oralist in the Championship Round.

In what was believed to be the closest and best Championship Round in several years, the NUS Law School team lost to the Ateneo de Manila University team, the national champion of the Philippines. This is also the first time in the history of the Competition that two teams from Southeast Asia faced each other in the Championship Round.

The 2004 NUS Law School Jessup Moot Team consists of one third-year student, Melanie Chng, and three final-year students, Jaikanth Shankar, Ramesh Selvaraj, and Geoffrey Liem. The team is accompanied by their coach, Associate Professor Robert Beckman, who has coached the NUS Jessup teams for the past 25 years.



From left to right: Jaikanth Shankar, Geoffrey Liem, Ramesh Selvaraj, Prof Robert Beckman (coach), Melanie Chng

The Jessup Moot Competition is the largest and most prestigious moot court competition in the world. It is organised by the International Law Students Association and is sponsored by the American-based law firm of Shearman & Sterling. The Jessup Cup World Championship Round was held on Saturday 3 April in the Ceremonial Courtroom of the US District Court of Washington DC.

Having been in the World Championship Jessup Cup Round 11 times and being the only team to have

won the championship four times, NUS Faculty of Law has a better record than any other law school in the Jessup Competition.

Background of the 45th Philip C Jessup International Law Moot Court Competition

The Competition is based on a complex problem consisting of a hypothetical dispute between two states before the International Court of Justice involving issues of international law. The problem, entitled "The Case Concerning the International Criminal Court", was released in September 2003.

A total of 529 teams from 81 countries registered to participate in the 2004 Competition. After several months researching the issues of international law in the problem, each team submitted two memorials (written arguments) on behalf of the two parties (the Applicant State and Respondent State) involved in the dispute. After the memorials are graded, the teams proceed to the oral argument stage of the competition. Each team (representing either the Applicant State or Respondent State) has 45 minutes for two speakers to present oral arguments before a panel of three judges. During the oral arguments, the judges interrupt the speakers very often to ask questions. To succeed, the students must not only be able to present their arguments persuasively, but they must be able to demonstrate that they can "think on their feet" and respond to questions. When scoring teams in a round, the oral arguments carry a weight of two-thirds, and the memorials carry a weight of one-third.

If only one law school in a country participates in the Competition, that law school proceeds directly to the International Rounds in Washington DC in late March. When more than one law school in a country participates, national rounds are held in February to determine national champions, who then proceed to the International Rounds. When more than 10 law schools, in a country participate, a country is entitled to send one team for every 10 law schools. Countries such as the United Kingdom, Australia, Canada, Germany, Russia and China send their national champions and runners-up to the International Rounds in Washington. Regional Rounds are held in the United States and the 12 regional champions proceed to the International Rounds. India organised two regionals and sent the champions and runners-up in each.

In 2004, 94 national and regional champions came to Washington for the International Rounds of oral arguments. Over a three-day period, each of the 94 teams had to present oral arguments in four Preliminary Rounds. Teams argued two times on behalf of the Applicant State and two times on behalf of the Respondent State.

At the end of the Preliminary Rounds, the top 24 teams proceeded to the run-off rounds. The top eight teams proceeded directly to the run-off for top 16. Teams ranked from 9 to 24 had a run-off round to determine who would proceed to the run-off round for the top 16. The winners then proceeded to the Quarter-Final Rounds and the Semi-Final Rounds.

Singapore was ranked second among 94 teams at the end of the preliminary rounds. It therefore proceeded directly to the run-off round from the top 16 teams. The top 16 teams included three US teams (Harvard, Columbia and Michigan), three teams from Australia & New Zealand (Melbourne, Monash and Otago), two European teams (Germany and Austria), two Latin American teams (Venezuela and Mexico), and six teams from Asia (University of Hong Kong, National Law School of India, University of Indonesia, International Islamic University of Malaysia, Ateneo de Manila University Philippines, and National University of Singapore). This was the first year in which so many teams from Asia ranked in the top 16.

In the run-off for the top 16 teams, Singapore defeated Indonesia. In the other run-off rounds, Harvard beat Columbia, Philippines beat Germany, Mexico beat Venezuela, Monash beat Melbourne, Malaysia beat Michigan, Hong Kong beat India, and Austria beat New Zealand.

In the Quarter-Final Rounds, Singapore defeated Harvard, Mexico defeated Hong Kong, Vienna defeated Malaysia, and Philippines defeated Monash. The Singapore-Harvard round was very close, but Singapore prevailed in what the judges described as an extremely close decision.

In the Semi-Final Rounds, Singapore defeated Mexico and the Philippines defeated Austria. The Singapore-Mexico round was also very close, and could have been decided either way. The

Singapore team was particularly impressed by the fact that the Mexican speakers were absolutely fluent in English even though it is their second language.