

NZ mediation community rallies around Auckland Law School - the leading global performer in mediation advocacy

Auckland Law School has won back-to-back International Chamber of Commerce Commercial Mediation Competitions and become the global performer in mediation advocacy, owing a great deal of its success to the supportive New Zealand mediation community.

The team, comprising University of Auckland law students Madison Hughes, Susie McClusky, Louis Norton and Benjamin Seto, coached by solicitors Chris Brunt and Tunisia Napia, won the July 2019 Asia-Pacific mediation advocacy competition in Melbourne.

This followed the Auckland team's win in the February 2019 international mediation advocacy competition in Paris. That team comprised Celia Brownlee, Isabel Kelly, Isabelle Kwek and Jodie Llewellyn, led by coaches Stephanie Panzic and Jean Yang. All four of those competing team members have since gone on to become internationally accredited ADR ODR Civil Commercial Mediators.

With these back-to-back wins, Auckland Law School now holds both the global and regional ICC Commercial Mediation Competition titles, enabling it to claim world dominance in mediation advocacy skills.

In the Asia-Pacific competition, competing against teams from Australia, India and Singapore, the team faced five gruelling rounds. Each round involved two team members, acting as client and counsel, in which the students aimed to negotiate their way through complex commercial disputes, along with the help of highly experienced mediators. The teams were judged by some of the world's leading dispute resolution specialists.

In the grand finale, the Auckland team represented

a celebrity management firm and went head-to-head against the National University of Singapore team, representing a restaurant. The teams mediated a range of commercial and legal issues that arose between the parties after a celebrity chef walked away from a brand ambassadorship deal.

As the first place winners, Auckland University won the Henry Jolson Award, awarded by The Victorian Bar in honour of the late Henry Jolson QC, and automatic entry to the international mediation advocacy competition in Paris in February 2020, with the entry fee paid for by the International Chamber of Commerce. The Resolution Institute has also offered the four competing team members places in its five-day mediation course, in which the students, after completing the course, may sit an exam to become an accredited mediator.

The team could not have achieved its success without the generous support of their coaches and a network of alumni and practicing commercial mediators who trained them in mediation skills. For the 2019 competitions, these coaches included Celia Brownlee, Chris Brunt, Caroline Coates, Yao Dong, Matthew Jackson, Mark Kelly, Nina Khouri, Isabelle Kwek, Ana Lenard, Jodie Llewellyn, Tunisia Napia, Stephanie Panzic, Anna Quinn, Helen Rice, Geoff Sharp, Rima Shenoy, and Jean Yang.

Ultimately, the continued success of the University of Auckland, presently without doubt the leading global performer at these mediation advocacy



Auckland Law School's victorious 2019 Asia-Pacific mediation advocacy competition team

Left to right - Chris Brunt, Tunisia Napia, Benjamin Seto, Susie McClusky, Louis Norton and Madison Hughes

competitions, is the product of the 'village' of dispute professionals and competition alumni who throw themselves headfirst into training and supporting the team year after year.

The team is looking forward to defending its title in Paris 2020, led by coaches and accredited mediators with Resolution Institute, Tunisia Napia and Rima Shenoy.

The team and coaching community are proud of the tradition that they have built over many years of participation in the mediation advocacy competitions. This tradition sees promising students develop into fierce mediation advocates and, in time, professional mediators. The team is

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seeking sponsorship to enable it to continue to participate in the competition. If you are interested in discussing further, please contact the coaches Tunisia Napia (tnap871@aucklanduni.ac.nz) and Rima Shenoy (rshe794@aucklanduni.ac.nz).

"Participating in the mediation advocacy competition has been the highlight of my time at law school. It has shaped me as an individual and completely changed the way I see the world. The skills that I have developed, the mediation community that has taught me and the opportunity to interact with people from all around the world has been a once-in-a-lifetime experience." - Benjamin Seto, Melbourne 2019 team member