

**Oxford International Intellectual Property Moot**  
**20-21 March 2009**  
**Report**

*"I'm sorry, ladies, your red luggage is 16 kg overweight.  
Would you like to repack it?"*

Just like our moot arguments, which were constantly being repackaged, it seemed that the art of repackaging had carried over to our departure. We were saddled with more than 40 kg of moot authorities and only 10 mins to repack. It was under such frantic circumstances that we departed Singapore for the Oxford Intellectual Moot (the "**Moot**") on 17 March 2009. The Moot was to take place on 20-21 March 2009.

Upon reaching the UK, our first destination was in fact Wolverhampton, rather than Oxford. Thanks to the IP Academy's generous sponsorship, we were able to stop at Wolverhampton University on Wednesday, 18 March, for a pre-moot friendly. Organised by the 2008 Wolverhampton IP Moot team, we sparred against our British counterparts from Wolverhampton University before practitioners who served as judges. We were thankful for the pre-moot warm up and the opportunity to respond to arguments coming from a different perspective.

On Thursday, 19 March, we arrived in Oxford to be greeted with a series of "firsts". Not only was this our first Mooting competition ever, the competition itself seemed determined to depart from the traditions of the past. This year, the Moot moved to new premises (St. Catherine's College) under new management, and the moot problem revolved round a fact pattern with a new focus - patent law and recombinant gene technology.

The competition also witnessed a quantum leap in both the quantity and quality of the teams participating. There was a much larger band of excellent teams, coming from a range of countries more diverse than previously seen. For the first time, more than half the participants came from non-English universities. As for the quality of the teams, judges and observers agreed that several of the preliminary rounds were pitched at a level equivalent with semi-final rounds in past years. This was certainly borne out by our experience.

Our first round was against Southampton University, which fielded two mooters who had participated in previous international competitions. As appellants, our task was to argue that the Appellant's patent on rCT, a recombinant version of a human protein was valid and not revocable. Further, we had to show that the Respondent's production of its own variant of rCT violated the Appellant's existing patent on rCT. Although we were inexperienced vis-à-vis our opponents, we managed to clinch this round. Within one hour, we were back on our feet mooting this time as respondents against a favourite contender for the title,

University College London (“**UCL (London)**”). The judges’ decision was as close as it could get - a mere point separated us from UCL (London), the winner of this round, which itself had come from losing a round by one point to eventual winners, Queensland University of Technology (“**QUT**”). Despite the defeat, we were greatly encouraged when the judges complimented us on our advocacy skills. The months of hard work and preparation we had put in had indeed not gone to waste.

UCL London went on to the Quarterfinals, together with the teams from Oxford, Hong Kong University, UCL Dublin, University of British Columbia, QUT and Edinburgh. While we were unable to advance any further, we, as mooting neophytes, are gratified by this opportunity to moot internationally. Looking back, both of us enrolled in the law school’s mooting module without any expectation of making a moot team. Having barely gotten over the surprise of being selected for the Moot, we were then hit with three months of intense training under Associate Professor, Eleanor Wong, who sagaciously dismantled every one of our arguments, but who also left us with a humbling experience that will remain etched in our minds for years to come.

We also received help from the larger community of mooters and IP advisers, to whom we are profoundly grateful: the in-house experts Profs Loy Wee Loon and Ng Siew Kuan; judging panels from Allen & Gledhill, ATMD Bird & Bird, Baker & Mackenzie, Drew & Napier, and Rajah & Tann; moot coach extraordinaire Lim Lei Theng; IHL Mooter Magdalene Sim and Maritime Mooter Venetia Tan who took time off their own moot preparations to help us prepare, and the IP Moot Alumni (Suegene, Felicia, Nawaz, Ramesh, Zeming and Nuru), all of whom pitched in with gusto. Additionally, we wish to note the invaluable research assistance rendered to us by the librarians of the C J Koh Law Library, for which we are extremely appreciative.

Last but not least, we owe a debt of gratitude to the IP Academy for providing us with all the necessary support, without which, our participation in the Moot would not have been possible.

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