ICC Launches the First International Commercial Mediation Competition

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From January 14th to January 16th, the International Chamber of Commerce with the collaboration of the American Bar Association, Section of Dispute Resolution, held the first international commercial mediation competition. The competition, which took place at the ICC’s headquarters in Paris, France, involved thirteen schools from the United States, United Kingdom, France, Germany and Canada, with mediators and judges from twelve different countries around the world.

The competitors were required to act as counsel and parties before professional mediators, analyze different ADR techniques in accordance with ICC’s ADR Rules, and mediate problems devised by a special drafting committee of ADR experts. During the sessions, participants benefited from the experience of international mediation experts who offered guidance on such skills as effective collaboration between a client and attorney in mediation; use and diffusion of emotional issues; timing of caucuses; identifying interests; handling issues of trust; and navigating cultural nuances in international mediation. The Competition consisted of four preliminary rounds, a semi-final and a final round.

The University of Houston Law Center (USA), represented by Jim Lawrence and Katherine Sands and their coach Jeff Abrams, won the competition and, among other things, the school received an internship in ICC’s Dispute Resolution Secretariat. The second place honors went to the University of California at Hastings and third place honors went to Marquette University Law School. From the participants’ reviews, the competition was a tremendous success in its organization, format, social events, and caliber of mediators and judges.

ICC plans to make this international competition an annual event, and hopes that it will make a key contribution to the education of law students in the area of international commercial dispute resolution.

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