

Participation in Student negotiation Competition – The Negotiation Challenge 2020

Three MBA students; Dinesh Kumar, Esteban Aceituno Valera and Haissam Khan from the Graduate School of Management represented Kyoto University in the Negotiation Challenge 2020 (TNC-2020), held from April 2nd to April 19th. The international competition is hosted by a different university every year and Kyoto University hosted it in 2019. This year, it was the turn of EADA Business School in Barcelona, but due to COVID-19 pandemic, the event had to be fully organized and conducted online, via videoconference.

Established in 2007, TNC gathers passionate negotiators from leading universities to compete against each other in realistic negotiation simulations to reach an agreement on business or governmental disputes and business problems while assuming leadership roles in those organizations such as corporate executive officers or city council authorities. Teams from Kyoto University, Graduate School of Management participated in 2011, 2012, 2019, and 2020.

“Rather than two parties going head to head to maximize the outcome for their represented side, negotiation is an art of working together with a counterpart to solve often complex issues in an aim to create maximum joint value and build strong relationships; this event presented us with realistic simulations of the future scenarios we, as business leaders, might face in our careers.” says Dineshkumar, who took the role of spokesperson for team Kyoto.

This year, 18 teams from top Business and Law international schools competed in TNC. Over the course of five rounds, Team Kyoto negotiated with: Harvard Law School (USA), ESMT Berlin (Germany), University of Connecticut (USA), University of Twente (Netherlands), and Universidad de Los Andes (Colombia).

Esteban, who took the strategist role expanded on the biggest challenge in this year’s event. “Our biggest challenge was to work and communicate swiftly and accurately through online platforms. Due to lockdowns, Dinesh was in India, Haissam in Pakistan, while I was here in Japan. In each of the 5 rounds we had counterparts from different countries, located in different time zones. To work as a team, and somehow manage to communicate internally, while at the same time keeping the negotiation going with our counterpart was not an easy task. The main communication channel with our counterparts was ZOOM, and for in-team

communication we used an online collaborative spreadsheet where we also calculated the financial terms of our business offers. It was a unique experience and we are glad to have gotten used to online communications channel, which might be more frequently used in post pandemic business world.”

Haissam, the data analyst of the team went on to credit the professors for their involvement, “We learned about negotiations skills and tactics through two unique courses at GSM: ‘Business Negotiation’ and ‘Advanced Topics in Negotiation’. Hearing about our interests, the Negotiation professors, Dr. Will Baber of GSM and Dr. Michele Griessmair of University of Vienna, introduced The Negotiation Challenge to us, and subsequently they put us together as a team, trained, and supported us throughout the event.”

Kyoto University team put its name on the winners’ chart in round 4, and finished at 8th place in the overall competition. As a closing remark, the members described TNC as a fun-filled yet very competitive event which provided a unique learning experience.