

ANNUAL REPORT 2024-2025



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MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTORS



**HORACIO A
GRIGERA NAÓN**

Director

It is with great pride that we present this year's Annual Report of the Center on International Commercial Arbitration. The past years have reaffirmed the importance of arbitration as the preferred mechanism for resolving complex cross-border disputes, and our Center continues to stand at the forefront of academic and professional developments in this dynamic field.

Our mission is to provide a high-level academic forum where ideas, perspectives, and practices converge. Through our programmes, we prepare lawyers and professionals to navigate international commerce and dispute settlement with confidence and rigor.

We remain committed to fostering an environment where learning and practice come together. By engaging students with leading arbitrators, practitioners, and institutions worldwide, the Center reinforces the bridge between theory and real-world application. This international outlook equips our graduates to manage disputes across jurisdictions. It also encourages dialogue across legal cultures, building a stronger and more connected community of arbitration professionals.

While this Report summarizes last year's activities and achievements, we want to thank all our law firm and institutional partners, faculty who teach our courses, and students who have joined us, for the collective success of the Center on International Commercial Arbitration.



BJORN ARP

Assistant Director

ABOUT THE CENTER

AT THE FOREFRONT OF INTERNATIONAL ARBITRATION

VISION

To be a global leader in advancing excellence, innovation, and inclusivity in international arbitration, shaping the future of cross-border dispute resolution through education, research, and engagement with the international community.

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FACULTY AND VISITING PRACTITIONERS

The Center is enriched by a diverse group of faculty and practitioners with academic expertise and hands-on experience in the field of arbitration. Their involvement ensures that students gain practical insights into the challenges of cross-border dispute resolution while engaging with leading voices in the profession.



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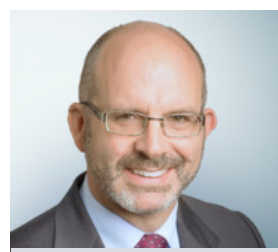
LIZ SNODGRASS
PARTNER, THREE CROWNS



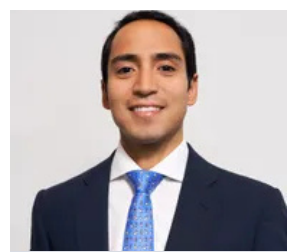
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CHANCE

ACADEMIC PROGRAMS AND CERTIFICATES



LL.M. in International Arbitration and Business Law

The LL.M. in International Arbitration and Business Law is a specialized master's program designed for lawyers, legal professionals, and business practitioners seeking to deepen their expertise in cross-border commercial transactions and dispute resolution. The program is particularly suited for those pursuing careers in international law firms, arbitration institutions, corporate legal departments, government agencies, or international organizations.

Key highlights include:

- Flexible duration (1–5 years), enabling both full-time and part-time study.
- A curriculum with core doctrinal foundations, such as arbitration, contracts, and investment law, as well as practical electives in mediation, negotiation, drafting, and damages.

- Multiple study formats: in-residence, fully online, or hybrid.
- Direct access to practitioner faculty, leading arbitration institutions, and global networking opportunities.

A promotional graphic for OAS-AUWCL scholarships. It features a collage of images: a woman working on a laptop, a group of people in a meeting, and a modern building at night. Text elements include '10 SCHOLARSHIPS' in large white numbers on a teal background, '50%' in a white circle on a dark teal background, and 'APPLY BY: MAY 1, 2025' in white text. Logos for 'OAS-AUWCL', 'AMERICAN UNIVERSITY WASHINGTON COLLEGE of LAW', and 'CENTER ON INTERNATIONAL COMMERCIAL ARBITRATION' are at the bottom.

10 SCHOLARSHIPS

50%

**APPLY BY:
MAY 1, 2025**

OAS-AUWCL
OAS Scholarships

**AMERICAN UNIVERSITY
WASHINGTON
COLLEGE of LAW**

**CENTER ON INTERNATIONAL
COMMERCIAL ARBITRATION**

The Center has a unique educational agreement with the Organization of American States to offer scholarships for this LL.M. Program

ACADEMIC PROGRAMS AND CERTIFICATES



Mentorship & Career Development

Each student is paired with a mentor and benefits from personalized career advising, externship opportunities, and professional development workshops. Graduates gain access to a wide alumni and practitioner network worldwide.

Bar & Professional Opportunities

Foreign-trained students may pursue the New York Bar track within the LL.M. curriculum, and eligible international students can apply for Optional Practical Training (OPT) to gain U.S. work experience after graduation.

Information and Outreach to the WCL Community on Arbitration-Related Courses and Opportunities

On November 7, 2024, the Center hosted an info session with the international law faculty to help students explore how international law can shape their legal education and careers. Professors presented upcoming course offerings, highlighting how they build global legal expertise. LL.M. and J.D. students engaged directly with faculty and received guidance on aligning courses with career goals.

ACADEMIC PROGRAMS AND CERTIFICATES

International Arbitration Summer Institute

Every year, the Center organizes the International Arbitration Summer Institute in Washington, D.C.

The Institute is a worldwide recognized training certificate in international commercial and investment arbitration that has helped many attorneys to advance their legal careers. Through practical courses from top ranked arbitration practitioners and professors, the Institute offers participants from around the world an opportunity to gain foundational and practical training in international commercial and investment arbitration. The program combines rigorous academic coursework with professional networking, guest lectures, and site visits to international institutions, providing a truly immersive experience.

From May 27 to June 20, 2025, the Center successfully hosted the latest edition of the Summer Institute. The 2025 program featured six courses in English and six in Spanish, with topics ranging from damages and compensation, construction arbitration, and mediation, to evidence, corruption, and complex choice-of-law issues.

The 73 participants could opt between a Diploma track (completing at least three courses and exams) or a Certificate of Attendance track. This made the program accessible to J.D. and LL.M. students, as well as professionals. In addition to coursework, attendees engaged in networking activities, coffee hours, and site visits. The site visits included the International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID), which provided valuable exposure to the workings of international investment dispute resolution.



ACADEMIC PROGRAMS AND CERTIFICATES

Practical Seminar in International Construction Arbitration

In collaboration with the *Comisión Interamericana de Arbitraje Comercial* (CIAC), the Center on International Commercial Arbitration offered the fourth edition of the Advanced Practical Seminar in International Construction Arbitration (held in Spanish).

The Seminar took place over four weeks online and one week in person in Washington, D.C. between July 14 and 18, 2025. A total of 37 Latin American arbitrators and counsel participated in the Seminar. The instructors were leading practitioners and experts on FIDIC contracts, dispute boards, damages, cost overruns, and arbitration hearings.

The Seminar is organized together with the Inter-American Commission of International Commercial Arbitration (CIAC). The CIAC is an association of some of the largest arbitral institutions of each of the member States of the Organization of American States.

Highlights included practical sessions on cross-examination and working with expert engineers and accountants, as well as a study visit to the ICSID. The seminar concluded with networking events in Washington, D.C.



CERTIFICATE PROGRAM IN CONSTRUCTION LAW & DISPUTE RESOLUTION

In June 2025, the Center on International Commercial Arbitration, in collaboration with the Hospitality and Tourism Law Program, hosted the inaugural edition of the Certificate Program in Construction Law & Dispute Resolution in Washington, D.C.

This two-week intensive program in Washington, D.C. allowed general contractors, subcontractors, owners, attorneys, and academics to examine best practices and innovative strategies for efficiently resolving complex construction disputes.



The program featured three specialized modules:

- **Construction Law & Dispute Boards** — led by **Ken Roberts**, Partner at Venable (Chicago); **Ann Russo**, Executive Director of the Dispute Board Foundation; and **Steven Shapiro**, Professor at AUWCL.
- **Construction Arbitration** — taught by **Leslie O'Neale**, JAMS Arbitrator.
- **Mediation: Theory & Practice** — led by **Hernando Otero**, independent mediator and arbitrator.

Through a combination of conceptual instruction, case studies, and practical simulations, participants gained hands-on experience in handling delay claims, dispute board processes, arbitration procedures, and mediation techniques.



MOOT COMPETITIONS

12TH ANNUAL MOOT COMPETITION IN INTERNATIONAL ARBITRATION

In April 2025, the Center on International Commercial Arbitration organised the 12th Annual Moot Court Competition in International Arbitration. The event brought together top law schools from across the United States, including American University Washington College of Law, University of Pittsburgh School of Law, The George Washington University Law School, University of Virginia School of Law, Northwestern University Pritzker School of Law, Boston University School of Law, and University of Georgia School of Law.

From April 3–5, 2025, ten student teams showcased outstanding advocacy skills and legal reasoning before panels of experienced arbitrators. Awards included Best Team, Runner-Up, and Best Oralist. The competition highlighted not only academic excellence but also the collaborative spirit and growing community of future international arbitration practitioners.



SUPPORT OF WCL'S ADR HONOR SOCIETY



In February, 2025, Prof. B. Arp coached the WCL team participating in the ICC Mediation Competition. The final rounds took place in Paris in February, 2–7, 2025. The WCL team consisted of Margaret Hemifield, Zachary Schumacher, and J.D. Chavarria.



100 YEARS OF THE FAA: SHAPING THE FUTURE OF ARBITRATION

On June 5, 2025, the Center on International Commercial Arbitration, together with the College of Commercial Arbitrators (CCA), co-organized the conference **100 Years of the Federal Arbitration Act – The Future of Arbitration** in Washington, D.C. At this conference, 200 participants and over 30 speakers from the United States and abroad reflected on the FAA's legacy, examined the impact of the Supreme Court's jurisprudence applying the FAA, and explored new challenges such as the role of generative AI in arbitration.

Specifically, the Conference panels addressed the following issues:

- The impact of generative artificial intelligence tools on arbitral practice.
- Evaluation of the Roberts Court's interpretation of the FAA.
- Exploration of unanswered questions under the FAA.
- Critical assessment of the CCA Protocols and their potential to shape arbitration for the next century.

This milestone event reaffirmed the Center's leadership in fostering innovation and dialogue on the future of arbitration and its strong collaboration with leading arbitral institutions in the United States.

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2024 ANNUAL LECTURE ON PROCEDURAL GOOD FAITH IN INVESTMENT ARBITRATION

The Center on International Commercial Arbitration traditionally organizes an Annual Lecture in International Arbitration, bringing leading experts to engage the academic and professional community in discussions on pressing issues in the field.

In 2024, the Annual Lecture was hosted **in collaboration with Arnold & Porter** and featured **Meg Kinnear, Independent Arbitrator and Former Secretary-General of International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID)**. Her lecture, titled **“Procedural Good Faith in Investment Arbitration - What Is It and What Could It Be?”**, explored the evolving role of good faith in investment arbitration proceedings.

The event took place at Arnold & Porter’s Washington, D.C. offices and gathered students, faculty, practitioners, and arbitration professionals. The Annual Lecture remains a cornerstone of the Center’s programming, fostering high-level dialogue and strengthening its leadership in the field of international arbitration.



WORKSHOPS AND NETWORKING



INTERNATIONAL SUITE TALKS: EMERGING ISSUES IN ARBITRATION

In 2024–2025, the Center hosted its International Suite Talks seminar series, providing an interactive platform for dialogue on timely issues in arbitration and law.

- **On November 13, 2024**, Tarek Rchaid (Dubai/Sharjah), an international arbitrator specializing in Middle Eastern disputes, spoke on Arbitrating Commercial Disputes in the Middle East.
- **On February 19, 2025**, Professor V. Gerard Comizio, Associate Director of the Business Law Program at AUWCL, led a discussion on Crypto & The Law: Navigating Regulation in a Rapidly Evolving World, exploring the intersection of digital assets, law, and financial regulation.
- **On February 26, 2025**, Cherine Foty, Senior Associate at Covington & Burling LLP, presented Women in Arbitration: Opportunities and Challenges, addressing diversity and inclusion in international arbitration.
- **On November 1, 2024 and On March 24, 2025**, ILSA hosted *Paradoxical Enforcements*, a conference on enforcement challenges in international criminal, investment, and trade law, and *Global Connections*, a networking event linking students with professionals and faculty in international law. Dr. Björn Arp, Assistant Director of the Center, participated as a panelist and arbitration professional.



In 2024-2025, the Center on International Commercial Arbitration continued to expand its global impact through the active participation of its faculty in key academic and professional events across Europe and Latin America. These international engagements reinforced the Center's role as a leader in shaping the dialogue on arbitration worldwide.



Professor Horacio A. Grigera Naón represented the Center at major international conferences, including by delivering keynotes on fundamental questions related to the future of arbitration at the Open Arbitration Conference in **Madrid**, a keynote program in **Panama**, and an academic panel at **Harvard University**. He also contributed to an online conference in Bogotá, reaching a wide audience of practitioners and students across Latin America. In October 2024, Professor Grigera spoke at the Southern Cone International Disputes Forum in **Buenos Aires**, Argentina.



Professor Björn Arp strengthened the Center's presence in Latin America by presenting his latest book on Leading Cases in International Commercial Arbitration at the book launch in **Bogotá**, hosted by Gómez-Pinzón Abogados. He also presented the book at the Ankawa International Arbitration and Dispute Resolution Center. His comparative research and public engagement emphasized the importance of cross-regional dialogue in the practice of arbitration. In May 2025, Professor Arp participated with leading arbitration experts on the panel "Arbitration and the Judiciary: Synergies for an Effective Private Justice," organized by CIAC and AICO in **Santiago de los Caballeros**, Dominican Republic. On April 8, 2025, Professor Arp spoke at a panel about bifurcation in investment treaty proceedings at the Externado University in **Bogota**, Colombia. On 21 March 2025, he inaugurated the Investment Arbitration Moot Competition pre-moot event held **virtually** for all teams in Latin America.

Dean's Fellowships

Each semester, the Center on International Commercial Arbitration selects two talented students as Dean's Fellows for Research. These Fellows assist with academic projects, contribute to research initiatives, and support the Center's events. This opportunity to serve as Dean's Fellow offers a unique professional experience in international arbitration and business law.



In the Spring 2025 semester, the Dean's Fellows were Maite Castells Cercadillo and Kawtar Belbark.

- **Maite Castells Cercadillo** (Spain) brought nearly five years of experience in Brussels, specializing in arbitration, investment disputes, and EU law, with a focus on governance, ESG, and sustainability.
- **Kawtar Belbark** (Morocco/France/U.S.) contributed her comparative legal background, with prior studies and work in Morocco, France, and the United States, focusing on corporate law and cross-border legal solutions.

In the Fall 2024 semester, the Dean's Fellows at the Center were Laura Londono and Ofeliya Ahmadzada.

- **Laura Londono** (Colombia) contributed her extensive experience in Colombia and focused on international dispute resolution.
- **Ofeliya Ahmadzada** (Azerbaijan) worked at the Center to acquire best practices in arbitration with the goal of applying those in the growing field of arbitration in Azerbaijan.

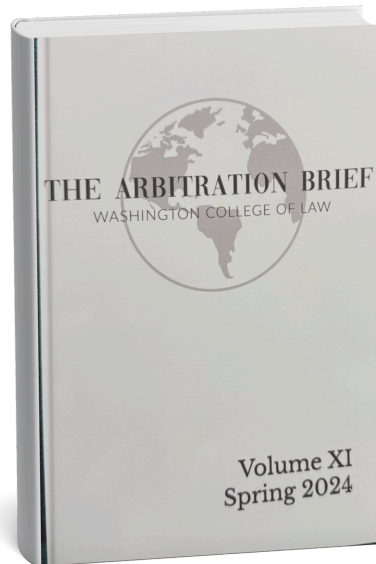
Together, they advanced the Center's efforts to promote excellence in international arbitration while enriching AUWCL's global academic community

PUBLICATIONS

LEADING CASES OF INTERNATIONAL COMMERCIAL ARBITRATION

Professor Björn Arp, from the Center for International Commercial Arbitration at American University, has published a book compiling the landmark cases that have shaped international commercial arbitration in our time.

A total of 49 cases, originally adopted in English and French, have been translated into Spanish and are preceded by a commentary that places them in context and explains their significance in the progressive development of international commercial arbitration.



SPECIAL ISSUE ON THE 100 ANNIVERSARY OF THE FEDERAL ARBITRATION ACT

In 2024, the American University Business Law Review published a special issue commemorating the 100th anniversary of the Federal Arbitration Act of 1925. This milestone volume (Vol. 14, No. 2) featured contributions from leading scholars and practitioners in arbitration and business law, offering forward-looking reflections on the FAA's legacy and its future.

This publication stands as a significant scholarly contribution, bridging history and reform, and highlighting AUWCL's role in shaping arbitration discourse on both national and international levels.

ARBITRATION BRIEF WINTER 2024 EDITION

In 2024, The Arbitration Brief, the Center's student-led journal, successfully published its Winter/Spring edition. This issue featured contributions from students, practitioners, and academics addressing contemporary challenges in international arbitration and related fields. By publishing innovative research and commentary, The Arbitration Brief reinforced its role as a platform for the next generation of arbitration scholars and professionals.

PARTNERSHIPS

In 2024-2025, the Center continued to strengthen its collaboration with leading arbitral institutions, universities, and professional associations worldwide. Partnerships included joint activities with the Inter-American Commission of International Commercial Arbitration (CIAC), the International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID), the College of Commercial Arbitrators (CCA), the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC), and the Swiss Institute of Comparative Law, as well as cooperation with emerging arbitral institutions in Rwanda, Guatemala, and Azerbaijan.

Through conferences, certificate programs, webinars, and roundtables, these partnerships brought together academics, practitioners, and students from across the globe, enhancing dialogue, training, and innovation in international arbitration



A YEAR IN IMAGES



LOOKING AHEAD



The Center will continue to build on these partnerships in 2025 and beyond, with flagship initiatives such as the International Arbitration Summer Institute, specialized certificate programs, research collaborations, and international conferences. Interested stakeholders can stay connected and find up-to-date information about upcoming programs and opportunities.





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