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Georgia Southern's Model United Nations team returns from New York with national accolades

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Georgia Southern's Model United Nations delegation poses for a picture at the national conference in New York City. The team earned a collection of accolades.

Georgia Southern's Model United Nations team is continuing a legacy of success on one of the largest stages. The 20-student delegation recently attended the National Model United Nations Conference in New York City and returned with another round of accolades, including another "Outstanding Delegation" designation.

Think of the Model U.N. Conference like a giant international diplomacy role-playing event. Universities from all over the world had students compete in the national conference by meeting together and acting as countries to solve the world's biggest dilemmas. Georgia Southern acted as delegates for Ireland.

According to the student delegates, being a member of the team is challenging and incredibly rewarding.

Before the schools step foot into the conference, students must write a position paper. This document outlines a country's stance on a global issue and their plan for solving it. Georgia Southern received recognition for Outstanding Position Paper Writing.

Andrew Eunice is a political science senior with an applied music minor. In this conference, he served as a delegate for the Security Council. At this table, students negotiate with other students in order to solve an ongoing global issue such as international terrorism, while also being bombarded with other immediate crises. These extra events were not given to the teams in advance, so much of the preparatory work was thrown to the side, and students were left to negotiate among themselves.



At that point, everything was in the moment," Eunice said. "It was the biggest curveball moment in the entire thing because we were so prepped for the first topic. And we realized that everything that we had been prepping for since December had to be thrown out the window."

Like many other organizations, participation and membership have been rebuilding since 2020. This year was the first

time the conference was conducted in-person since 2019. This left many students unsure of the environment for which they should prepare.

Emma Williams is a philosophy of law and political science major and the assistant advisor for the delegation. She's one of the few members who have participated in a Model U.N. before this year. She helped recruit new members and get them conference-ready.

"This really opened my eyes to how to lead people from something that they don't have any training in, to become subject matter experts," said Williams. "A 20-person team is pretty big. So I try to help everybody with simple things like trying to get them through TSA security, or other bigger things like being in committee."

The hard work paid off. Despite the team being full of greenhorns, Georgia Southern collected recognition in three different categories while in New York. This has kept pace with the tradition of success with previous Georgia Southern Model U.N. teams.



Georgia Southern's recognition as an Outstanding Delegation is the 13th time in 14 years that it has been awarded this distinction. The Outstanding Award for Position Paper Writing is the 20th time Georgia Southern has received this award in the last 21 years.

"We know that there's a legacy at Georgia Southern, and you don't want to be the one to break the legacy," said Bianca Joseph, a sophomore delegate. "It was important for all of us to put our A-game in. When we got those awards, when we got recognized, we were all satisfied."

The team isn't just young; it's also diverse in background. Joseph recently became a geology major, but entered this inherently politically immersed conference as a delegate on the committee handling international refugees. She said she joined because scientists are becoming more diplomatic in their work and need those skills that lend themselves to politics.

Joseph isn't alone in mixing science and diplomacy. Gabi Wiggill is a junior public health major with a minor in chemistry. She said many of the committees in Model U.N. and the real U.N. benefit from having people with different backgrounds sitting at the table. Sometimes those different viewpoints can lead to a need for skills in debate and problem solving.

"Not everyone agrees with everyone's perspectives about things," said Wiggill. "If you want to be a really good delegate, you have to be able to voice your views as a country in such a way that other people start seeing your point in agreeing with you, because that's also the goal of the real United Nations."

The talents acquired for Model U.N. have been applied beyond committees. Many students see their writing, public speaking and organization skills improving in the coursework and everyday life.

Chemistry and Spanish double major Steven Boyles said he's seeing his communication and confidence improve in the classroom.

"In the past, I really haven't been a good public speaker, just to be honest," said Boyles. "In front of a class of 20 of my peers and having to give a speech about microplastics made me have to polish that skill as well as wording. I can get the words down on a piece of paper, but whether those words make sense to everyone is a big thing."

Ultimately, the delegates say going to New York for the national convention was a fulfilling experience. For some students looking for a career in policy, the experience was unmatched.

“That was definitely without a doubt the peak of my time at Georgia Southern, not a single doubt,” said Cesar Gallardo, political science major with an economics minor. “I was looking for something like this since the beginning. I was incredibly happy that I was given this opportunity.”

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