

Thursday, March 4, 2010

Model UN team honored at international conference in Toronto

By Eric Reikowski, media relations assistant

Oakland University's Model United Nations team turned in a stellar showing last month at the North American Model UN Conference in Toronto, Canada. The competition featured 22 Model UN teams from eight countries around the world.

Oakland's Model UN squad consisted of 17 students who represented diverse countries, including Israel, Turkey, Sudan, Canada and Turkmenistan.

Six members from Oakland's Model UN team earned individual honors, including two who were named the "Outstanding Delegate" of their respective committees.

Chelsea Ross was named an Outstanding Delegate for representing Israel on the Economic and Social Council, while Justin Clark earned the honor for representing Bogdan Trifunovic on the historical Yugoslav Crisis Committee.

"Being in Model UN teaches us how to view the values and beliefs of others and support them in a debate," said Clark, a senior political science major who also took part in the Lake Erie Model UN Conference held in Cleveland last fall. "You cannot have a closed view of the world and be in Model UN, it just doesn't work."

Ross, a freshman pre-med student majoring in biology, said that Model UN has helped broaden her academic horizons.

"I've actually always had an interest in international affairs and have wondered if I could succeed in such a field," Ross said. "Model UN is honestly what finally convinced me that I could be successful in this field, so I decided to add on International Relations and take up a double major."

Other awardees receiving an honorable mention include Laura De Santo, representing Israel on the Disarmament and Security Council; Brett Geschke representing Turkey on the Security Council; Rhiannon Zielinski, representing Turkey on the Human Rights Council; and Nargiz Nesimova, representing Israel on the World Heritage Convention.

Prior to competition, the students conducted extensive research on the countries they would represent and learned about various issues before their respective committees, said Dr. Paul Kubicek, professor of political science and Model UN team coach.

Some of this work was done as part of Political Science 362: Model United Nations, a two-credit course that helps students develop the skills and confidence to succeed in competition. In the course, students learn the rules of debate used in the UN and practice the art of public address.

"I enjoyed coaching them at the conference," said Dr. Kubicek. "All of the students did very well and it was especially rewarding to see some first-time Model UN students gain confidence in their public speaking."

Kubicek added that it was also interesting to watch OU students debate one another, as some represented countries with conflicting interests and perspectives.

For more information on Oakland's Model UN team, contact Dr. Kubicek at kubicek@oakland.edu.



OU's Model UN team holds a trophy won at the Lake Erie Model UN Conference held in Cleveland last fall.

SUMMARY

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