

Friday, Nov 20, 2015

OU's Model UN team takes first place at international conference

For the second time in three years, Oakland University's Model United Nations team took first place at the Lake Erie International Model UN Conference. More than 200 students from 12 schools competed at the conference, which was held November 5-8, in Huron, Ohio.

During the event, participants were judged based on how well they represented the interests of different countries on United Nations committees and organizations. Students debated numerous issues, including ISIS and the Syrian conflict, the Israel-Palestinian conflict, xenophobia, rights of children, the conflict in Sudan, the death penalty, climate change and food security.

Of the 17 OU students who competed at the conference, seven took home individual awards. The following students received ratings of "excellent" for representing various countries in Model UN:



- **Jacqueline Yee** - Mexico on the Food and Agricultural Organization
- **Richard Williamson** - Turkey on the Social and Humanitarian Committee
- **Adam George** - Russia on the Social and Humanitarian Committee
- **Alexa James** – France on the Security Council
- **Benjamin Timpf** - Portugal on the Human Rights Council
- **Ryan Dempsey** - Cuba on the Human Rights Council
- **Marissa Coloske** - The A Team on Unrepresented Delegations

OU took first place at the Lake Erie International Model UN Conference and several students won individual awards.

To prepare for the conference, students spent weeks learning about the issues – developing research and presentation skills – to effectively advocate for their country's interests. Model UN is open to students of all majors and can be taken as the course PS 362.

Oakland's Model UN team is now in its eighth year and continues to impress at conferences throughout the U.S. and Canada. Dr. Paul Kubicek, political science professor and Model UN faculty adviser, said this year's team is a winning combination of youthful enthusiasm and veteran leadership.

"I attribute our success this year to both a core of returning students who set a great example and a dedicated group of newcomers who grasped both the rules and procedures of Model UN and really like to debate issues," said Dr. Kubicek. "We had several practice sessions including public forums in the Oakland Center, and I think these really helped in our preparation."

Team president Alexa James said that participating in Model UN helps students become proficient researchers and public speakers. The Erie conference was her third event since joining Model UN two years ago.

"Model UN helps us learn to research and present issues concisely and accurately," said the senior international relations major.

The team is gearing up for its next competition at the North American Model UN Conference in Toronto and also planning to host a high school Model UN conference on OU's campus. Both events are scheduled for February 2016.

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