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Sac State’s Model U.N. delegation on a winning streak

Sacramento State’s Model United Nations delegation has become a juggernaut over the past few decades.

For the third consecutive year, the talented Hornet squad captured an Outstanding Delegation award at the National MUN conference in New York for its representation of the Non-Governmental Organization, Third World Network. That’s quite an achievement in light of the participation by more than 6,000 students from 397 colleges and universities, and 30 different countries. Most of the students came from abroad.

Senior Marcus Taylor won awards for Best Delegate in Committee and Best Position Paper in the Organization of American States. Junior Alyssa Boyce and senior Milena Paez also won a Best Position Paper award in the Commission on the Status of Women.

Sac State’s evolution from contender to champion began in 1977 when Government Professor Ronald Fox fielded a team from an extracurricular gathering of internationally inclined students. By the late 1990s, the Model U.N. had become a stand-alone credit class that ultimately morphed into one centered upon contest preparation. A decade hence, Fox was recruiting students for contests ranging from Chicago to Washington, D.C., to New York City.

“Our delegation now gets a jump-start on the forthcoming competitions,” Fox says. He retired in 2010 but has remained in an advisory capacity to government
instructor Steve Iverson, who now leads the team. Iverson is the delegation’s driving force, Fox says, adding that he is especially grateful for the University’s financial support over the past 25 years.

Sac State squads have been on a roll for the last several years. “Our delegation scored a trifecta in 2009,” Fox notes with pride, “winning top awards at the Chicago, Washington, D.C., and New York conferences.” The delegation has also swept the Chicago award in seven of the last nine years.

“We select students,” he adds, “who combine academic excellence in analysis, writing and oral communication with personality traits that make for a successful delegate.” That’s because, as Iverson says, “Our students commit to doing summer reading and answering study questions on the structure of the U.N. and the foreign policy of the country represented.”

Iverson hastens to add, “Our program has never emphasized awards. Instead, our focus has always been on substantive preparation. The students understand the importance of researching and remaining in character during their presentations.”

Conference judges appreciate those skills, according to Iverson, who was a delegate as a Sac State graduate student in 2002. “It was a great experience going to Chicago,” he says, “and engaging in diplomacy.”

For media assistance, contact Sacramento State’s Public Affairs office at (916) 278-6156.

– Alan Miller
amiller@csus.edu

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