

MUNFW Experience

"Each student will be required to write a 3-5 page paper about his/her experience at the Model UN conference or in-class simulation. This paper will ask you to detail your experience and provide an assessment of your strengths and weaknesses as a UN delegate. In addition, you will describe how you attempted to advance your country's position on each topic, and what you learned from the overall experience."

On the evening that would begin our simulation, I was anxious to get things started, all the while being afraid I would massively fail and look like an idiot in front of all these delegates from universities around the US. Luckily, there was no massive fail. In fact, overall I feel quite confident in my performance at the conference.

That first evening began slowly. As I entered the room I was greeted by our chairs, and informed that there would be no assigned seating, thus we would be able to choose where we wanted to sit. The only problem was I didn't know who I should sit by! I immediately decided Russia would be the best option, but after minutes of waiting Russia was nowhere to be found. I ultimately decided to sit next to China and Japan, two Asian allies. The evening began with roll call and my anxiety got the best of me, causing me to choke on the simple word "present." Worried that I was already off to a bad start, I kept quiet for the rest of the evening, only speaking during caucusing. During the first debate we reordered the agenda, voting to first focus on water scarcity, second on renewable energy sources, and last we would debate biodiversity and agriculture (a topic we never had time to address.) The first day was a great introduction into the Model UN experience. Everyone there was a bit nervous, most of the group being first timers like myself. The experienced students were the ones guiding us in our caucusing discussions, the first to raise their hands for the speakers list, and generally pushed their policy in a manner, in my opinion, at times not in line with their respective countries (I believe this

was a commonality in the conference, not exclusive to the experienced ones, however. I would argue a bit of their example caused others to follow suit, following more in line with what their personal instincts or thoughts would do, compared to their countries true foreign policy objectives—however, how can I say for certain that is the case?)

On Saturday I braved the thought of being on the speakers list! After hard work and delegating on topic number one, water scarcity, we had submitted resolutions and would begin debate on topic two: the transition to renewable energy sources. I shot my placard up when they began asking for delegates wishing to be added to the speaker's list. I ended up as the tenth speaker, and would not be able to speak until Sunday afternoon.

Sunday was definitely long. From 9 am to 11 pm (three four hour sessions, with hour breaks for meals) I was doing everything from writing resolutions, debating preambular clauses, advocating for sustainable mountain development, caucusing and finding blocs of countries to sponsor resolutions, etc. Saturday was my shot at speaking. After seeing plenty of speakers the first couple of days I had gotten the feel for a good speech and spent time crafting one that could be delivered with power, while still being the best representation of Kyrgyzstan. In my speech I addressed the vast need for renewable energy, and Kyrgyzstan's strong support of a full transition to renewable energy sources. Kyrgyzstan does not have vast resources of fossil fuels, but has an abundance of potential in renewables, and wishes to reduce its reliance on importing for energy needs. I further tried to emphasis the necessity of foreign governments', NGO's and business' investments into renewable energy sources to promote sustainable energy production in developing nations, especially land-locked countries such as Kyrgyzstan. Sunday, in my eyes, was the most accurate depiction of the UN: long days of

negotiations, plenty of stressful situations when you don't feel your country's policy is even being considered as important, etc.

Monday ended up being a nice wrap-up to the experience. After all of our hard work negotiating, writing, and compromising, we put both topics and their respective resolutions into voting. Voting was a long, mentally arduous process. For each topic, every resolution had to be read in full before voting on any potential amendments to resolutions, all of which must also be read in their entirety. Topic one, more of a trial run for many of us, involved many amendments due to the fact that it took us a bit of time to better collaborate, which happened after we had already submitted seven resolutions. Normally in the UNEP only one resolution can go forward to the GA, however, due to the size of our group and inexperience/lack of time, we ended up passing three resolutions for both topics. I felt proud of my work, specifically on topic two, because many important issues pertaining to Kyrgyzstan were included in one of the resolutions that Kyrgyzstan sponsored.

For the first topic, water scarcity, my focus was on addressing the need of developed nations to help provide water infrastructure development funding to developing nations. I stressed the necessity of water for both agricultural and domestic needs, and emphasized the countries' previous commitments to Sustainable Development Goal 7, which addresses this specifically. I allied with Russia on this topic, as well as China and parts of Africa.

On renewable energy, I was actually better allied with European countries (many of which are the largest investors in Kyrgyzstan's energy sector) rather than common central Asian allies and Russia, due to their desire to continue fossil fuel use, as a result

of their respective economies reliance on them. I worked on pushing the main concern for Kyrgyzstan, which is that developing nations need foreign investments to build renewable energy capabilities, and that renewable energy is vital to helping developing nations become energy independent, which could help to decrease poverty. I was strong in supporting European nations' stance on the danger and need to decrease nuclear energy (Kyrgyzstan has seen many negative effects from nuclear waste being improperly disposed of,) as well as the need to fully transition to renewable energy sources, rather than just introducing carbon capture and continuing the use of fossil fuels.

I believe that my greatest strengths in Model UN are that I am a good listener, and am able to use a person's stance and their viewpoint to help further my objectives. I like to use reason and relate to both the person and their policy to show the commonalities between their policy and mine. I was able to use that to help convince others of more of my policies...to a certain extent.

My greatest weakness is my confidence! When I wasn't confident, especially in the beginning, I was too soft on my stance on issues, and that allowed other delegates to have more control of the group we were debating in, were the first to speak, etc. If I could increase my confidence in my knowledge on the subject at hand, I feel I would be a better diplomat.

Overall I learned a lot about diplomacy. It isn't just giving a speech and then getting people to believe you. It takes persuasion and longsuffering, and ultimately you have to make compromises. I think one of the most difficult parts of diplomacy is knowing where a compromise is appropriate. Sometimes a country needs to be willing to

compromise on certain aspects, and you must know the importance of a variety of issues/concerns of a particular country to aid in the compromising process.