

## **A comparison of my United Nations experience and my Model United Nations Experience**



*Myself and the whole Costa Rica team with members of UVU's Austria team.*

In 2019, I had the incredible opportunity of attending the 63rd Commission on the Status of Women (CSW63) in March with the Utah International Mountain Forum in New York, New York and had the opportunity to present on the Youth and the Mountains Journal. Then in April I had the opportunity to attend the Model UN conference in San Francisco, California with my team from Utah Valley University. Utah Valley's Model UN team represented two countries this year at the conference, Costa Rica and Austria; I was part of the Costa Rican team, which was all women this year. The Model UN conference is a simulation of what delegates at the United Nations do by participating in model session of the United Nations. This is an effort to understand how international relations are maintained and the policy and resolution building that is required to maintain peace. The theme of the 69<sup>th</sup> annual session of this Model UN conference was A Common Humanity: Back to the Principles of the UN Charter. Each nation participating had members that

went to different committees, the General Assembly, Third Committee, and the UN Environment Assembly. I was placed in the General Assembly the largest body made up of 69 countries in attendance from different universities and colleges from the West.

My experiences between CSW63 and Model UN were very different. For CSW63 there were months of preparation to finish the Youth and the Mountains Journal, then practicing and writing my presentation with the UIMF. At CSW63 our delegation's activities comprised of attending parallel events at the United Nations and preparing for our parallel event which can be viewed here on day 3 of our trip (<http://utahimf.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/19-03-21-Rebecca-Bindraban-My-presentation-at-UIMF's-parallel-event-at-CSW63.pdf>). Preparing for CSW63 was hard work, everything had to be rehearsed and perfect to make sure our event went off without any problems. Everything had to be technically sound and well researched, we had to be prepared to answer difficult questions about Utah and SMDs if necessary as well. After everything was done at the United Nations, there was a huge feeling of accomplishment and I felt so lucky to have attended the events I did while I was in New York. It was extraordinary meeting all the individuals, I met and to learn about several NGOs that are changing what the world looks like for women and girls.

The Model UN conference was dissimilar than the real UN experience for the reason that I was doing very different things at both of the events. At the Model UN conference, we were simulating being delegates of our specific countries so I had to be well informed on Costa Rica's history and about specific topics and so I could act accordingly as Costa Rica would. In the 4 days I spent as part of the General Assembly representing Costa Rica the body took on different topics and types of resolutions including the freedom of information and the role of media, the elaboration of sexual rights in the 21<sup>st</sup> C, and we were tasked with creating a consensus resolution that required every nation to line by line approve a resolution and if one country did not agree with a line then the whole document got thrown out. In preparation for this conference I took a Model UN class this semester, essentially all we did was simulate the General Assembly but on a much smaller

scale. The class was very helpful because I was able to learn the required rules of procedures and decorum that were necessary in the General Assembly while we were in session.

The first day of the conference was the most difficult because there were so many more delegates and many countries with diverging opinions present. By the second day, I was feeling more confident because I found the way to be most impactful was by gathering the Latin and Caribbean Bloc and pooling out ideas together first. By the third



day of session, I had Costa Rica as a sponsor on two resolutions. I learned specific skills I would not have gained from anything else in terms of negotiation and compromise. The consensus resolution day was a 14-hour session and I could begin to feel the frustration that also comes with consensus building. At the end of the conference, our Costa Rican team received a certificate for achievement of the practice of diplomacy and excellence in academic achievement.

Overall, my experiences between the United Nations in New York and the Model UN Conference in San Francisco were very different. At the UN, I learned so much about the international community and NGOs, and a lot of work and effort was put into the opportunity to present. At the Model UN, we simulated the experience of resolution building and there was the heavy influence to compromise and consider the world views of many countries. Though between the United Nations and Model UN conference the experiences were patently contrasting, both were extremely influential in my understanding of international politics and negotiation. I feel very lucky I was given the chance to experience both, and will carry these experiences with me to build upon them in the future.

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