Arkansas Model United Nations (AMUN) is preparing for their 42nd annual conference on the campus of the University of Central Arkansas this Friday and Saturday.

The AMUN, which is the largest Model United Nations (MUN) conference in the state of Arkansas, has the goal of enhancing local and regional high school and college students' communication skills, improving their critical thinking skills, and increasing their understanding of diplomacy and international politics.

The annual AMUN conference, during which high school and college students simulate sessions of various committees and councils of the UN, has been held at UCA for more than 40 years.

The conference staff includes students from UCA, Hendrix College, and the University of Arkansas-Little Rock, as well as some 20-25 high schools from Arkansas and neighboring states. During last year’s AMUN conference, more than 350 high school students and 50 to 60 college students participated as delegates and staff.

"We are looking forward to this year's AMUN conference and hoping that all of the hard work and planning will pay off," said Dr. Mark Mullenbach, AMUN Coordinator and Assistant Professor at UCA since 2001.

Each high school will represent one or more UN member-states. During the conference, the delegates will be separated into several different committees and councils, including the Security Council, Special Political Committee, Legal Committee, Economic & Social Council, and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).

In each committee, the delegates will discuss several challenging global issues and questions. For example, what, if anything, should UNICEF do to address the spread of HIV/AIDS among children and the impact of HIV/AIDS on children throughout the world?"

During the sessions of the UN committees and councils, delegates have the opportunity to propose, debate, and vote on draft resolutions dealing with the global issues. UCA, Hendrix College, and UALR students serve as the chairs, co-chairs, and legal counsels of the various UN committees and councils.

Issues and detailed information regarding the issues are posted online on the AMUN homepage.

Conway High School’s Model United Nations (MUN) group has met twice a week since August preparing for the conference.
Conway H.S. faculty advisor William Richardson, who has participated in the AMUN conference since 2003, has worked hard to prepare his students for the conference.

"It's a great program to let (students) see what's going on in the world today. There are a lot of issues they don't get to in the class," Richardson said.

Conway High School’s Model United Nations (MUN) group has 25 delegates, 12 of who are returning students. They will represent Iran, Israel, Canada and Yemen.

Conway High School student Nicholas Rogers will participate in the conference for fourth time.

"It's a great opportunity to get to debate, learn and meet new people as well as expand on the world issues that most teenagers don't discuss at our age," Rogers said.

During previous conferences, Rogers and his Conway H.S. MUN group has won several awards, including outstanding delegate awards and best position paper.

On Oct. 24, students from UCA and Hendrix College met at Hendrix College for training sessions prior to the conference.

UCA student Paola Hernandez will serve as registration coordinator.

"(The conference) is fun and students will learn what's going on in the world at the same time," Hernandez said.

At the opening session of the conference, UCA President Lu Hardin, Consul General at Consulate of Mexico at Little Rock Andres Chao, Dr. Mullenbach, and 2007 AMUN Secretary-General Timothy Hurley will speak during the opening session of the conference on Friday.

Award presentations to outstanding delegates and the announcement of 2008 secretary-general will take place at the closing session on Saturday.