Model U.N. meets at UCA

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Arkansas Model United Nations (AMUN) held their 42nd annual conference in Brewer-Hegeman Hall on the University of Central Arkansas' campus last Friday and Saturday.

More than 330 high school students from Arkansas, Tennessee, Oklahoma and Mississippi and college staffs from UCA, Hendrix College and University of Arkansas at Little Rock attended the conference.

Consul General of Consulate of Mexico at Little Rock Andres Chao and UCA President Lu Hardin attended the opening session.

"Our society together can be beneficial to each other," Chao said. "Mexico, Canada and the United States will be more capable by making use of advantage of each country."

Hardin welcomed the high school students in his speech.

"If you want to separate yourself from other students even with a 4.0 (GPA) be involved and be aware of everything that is going on in this nation economically, socially and politically," Hardin said. "If you are willing to do that, you can be ahead of other students and you are going to get a job."

Hardin also stressed on UCA's academic and athletic achievements to the students.

The AMUN is an Arkansas body of the group called Model United Nations, an international simulation of the United Nations whose goal is to enhance high school and college students' communication skills, improve their critical thinking skills and increase their understanding of diplomacy and international politics.

In their annual conference, students simulate the legislative session of certain committees at the United Nations - high school students discussing assigned topics initially posted on the AMUN Web site as model delegates with college staff presiding over the committee as model secretariats and chairs.

AMUN Coordinator Mark Mullenbach, AMUN Secretary General Timothy Hurley and Undersecretary General for Committees and Committee Topics Ryan McCormack decided the topics for each committee.

William Richardson, faculty adviser for Conway Model United Nation, watched over his students from back seat.
"I see my students involved pretty well (in the committee)," Richardson said. "(The conference) is always well run."

Richardson said his students spent August and September researching their representing nations and topics.

Anatoliy Shatkovskyy, co-chair of the committee, said he had learned many international affairs from the conference.

"I get to see what's going on in the world," Shatkovskyy said. "As a co-chair, I'm responsible for moderating everything that is going on in the committee making sure everybody follows the right procedures and rules."

The preparation for staffs started last November.

"I met with (Mullenbach) once a month to talk about the event and had training sessions. We reformatted the training session so that it (would bring) better level of preparedness," Hurley said.

Mullenbach said the purpose of the conference is to raise students' awareness of international affairs.

"I hope students will get better understanding of United Nations and international politics," Mullenbach said. "We will try to recruit more schools in Arkansas and neighboring states."

Award presentation to outstanding model delegates and announcement of 2008 secretary-general, McCormack, took place at the closing session.

"I really want to get the students back (next year) and since a lot of our seniors are graduating I want to recruit more staffs to bring another generation," McCormack said.