UCA hosts Model United Nations Conference

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UCA is hosting its 46th annual Arkansas Model United Nations Conference this weekend, bringing in 400 students from 24 high schools in Arkansas, Florida, Mississippi and Tennessee.

“We hope the students will gain first of all an appreciation for international politics and international diplomacy and an appreciation for how difficult it is for countries to come together and discuss and cooperate and deal with global problems and global issues,” said Dr. Mark Mullenbach, Associate professor of political science, Director of the International Studies Program in the UCA Department of Political Science, and AMUN Coordinator.
Currently, the high school students serve as delegates in the conference, while college students work as staff. Students from UCA, University of Arkansas-Little Rock, University of Arkansas-Fayetteville and Harding University are attending this year. Each year, UCA participates in the Midwest United Nations Conference (MMUN) in St. Louis, where the students serve as delegates.

Mullenbach said the conference prepares high school students for college in equipping them with critical thinking, writing, debate and speaking skills, among others.

“They’re required to think on their feet and to critically think about global problems and how to address global problems,” he said.

The students are split into different United Nations countries and set in different committees to address and debate issues with one another.

Junior Willis Arnold is a UCA student and AMUN Secretary-General, who started coming to the conference in his sophomore year of high school, and has returned each year since.

“I had no idea what this was, but I still went ahead and did it,” he said. “Once I learned what all you do in this, which is to understand different countries and how international politics typically works, it really stuck to me. I was always very excited and motivated to do a lot of research on the countries I portrayed.”

Arnold said the AMUN conference is centered on being a learning experience for the high school students, whereas the Midwest U.N. Conference is more of a competition for college students.

“I’ve always enjoyed it, obviously, otherwise I wouldn’t be here as a Secretary-General,” Arnold said. “I hope this provides one of the most influential experiences in the field of political science and international politics and they can use that for their benefit later on as they continue, if they decide to continue.”