AMUN Conference brings 400 students together

By Kaycie Surrell Staff Writer, The Echo

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The Arkansas Model United Nations holds its 42nd-annual conference in Brewer-Hegeman Conference Center and Reynolds Performance Hall on Nov. 16-17.

This year’s keynote speaker is Mexican Consulate Consul General Andres Imre Chao Ebergenyi.

AMUN strives to give high school and college students an opportunity to improve their communication and critical thinking skills and provide insight into diplomacy and international politics.

The conference brings together about 400 students from Arkansas, Oklahoma, Tennessee and Mississippi.

The AMUN is co-sponsored by the Model United Nations, so students from UCA, Hendrix College and the University of Arkansas at Little Rock who are involved in the MUN are working at the conference.

Political science instructor Mark Mullenbach coordinates the AMUN.

My role is to coordinate all the various aspects of the conference, including recruiting high-school participants, recruiting college and university staff and making arrangements for the keynote speaker, Mullenbach said.

The conference begins with an opening session featuring Mullenbach, followed by President Lu Hardin, 2007 AMUN Secretary-General Timothy Hurley and keynote speaker Chao.

Mullenbach said Chao is an important speaker for this event.

Mexico has been and continues to be an important trading partner of the U.S., Mullenbach said. And many Arkansan residents have family and other links to Mexico.

During the conference, members of the AMUN committee introduce topics of discussion. Topics may range from capital punishment to Internet crimes to the crisis in Darfur. At the end of the conference one delegate from each committee is awarded the outstanding delegate award.