

Introduction

In recent years, Model United Nations (UN) programs have grown in popularity in middle schools, high schools, colleges, and universities throughout the world.¹ According to Susan Engels et al. (2017), Model UN refers to “an experiential learning technique where participants discuss ideas and brainstorm solutions to global challenges as model diplomats.”² Simulations of UN bodies have been organized by teachers during class sessions at individual schools and have taken place during Model UN conferences involving several schools.³ In recent years, an estimated 400,000 students participate in annual Model UN conferences.⁴ This number is four times larger than the estimated 100,000 students in the mid-1990s, and eight times larger than the estimated 50,000 students who participated in Model UN conferences in the early 1980s.⁵ Model UN has also expanded to other regions of the world, sometimes with the assistance of successful Model UN groups in the United States.⁶ Recently, the Model UN program has experienced “explosive growth” in high schools in China, where the first Model UN group was formed at Peking University in Beijing in 2000.⁷

Today, there are some 400 Model UN conferences held each year worldwide, providing participating students with a unique learning experience.⁸ Studies of the effectiveness of Model UN simulations in International Relations courses indicate that they also provide participating students with “valuable experience, knowledge, and proficiencies”, including cultural awareness and diplomatic skills.⁹ Furthermore, Kirsten Taylor (2013) argued that role-playing simulations such as Model UN “help students develop the general knowledge base and key practical skills that are associated with a liberal education”, including critical thinking, moral reasoning, good citizenship, and communication.¹⁰ Originating as the Model Assembly of the League of Nations following the First World War, Model UN has been described as an “extracurricular activity in which students typically role-play delegates to the United Nations and simulate UN committees.”¹¹ Similarly, Muldoon and Myrick (1995) noted that students “are assigned the roles of ambassadors of UN member states and, through negotiation and debate, seek resolutions to global problems on the UN’s agenda.”¹² Participating students, also known as delegates, “learn the arts of negotiating, consensus-building, and public speaking.”¹³ The objectives of Model UN delegates are to “debate a set of agenda items using some variant of parliamentary rules of procedure, and to negotiate with other delegates in resolving crises, drafting resolutions, or in some cases, committee reports.”¹⁴

One of the many long-running Model UN conferences held in the United States is the Arkansas Model United Nations (AMUN). Originally established at what was then known as Arkansas State Teachers College (ASTC) in 1966, the first AMUN conference took place in early January 1967. Since then, students from nearly two hundred high schools, colleges, and universities have gathered on the campus of the University of Central Arkansas (UCA) for the annual two-day Model UN conference, competing for outstanding delegate and outstanding delegation awards. Since 2001, participating students have come from more than 80 high schools in the states of Arkansas, Alabama, Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, Oklahoma, Tennessee, and Texas. The students include those attending public and private high schools, academies, public charter schools, and home-schooled students.¹⁵ During the same

period, many of the volunteer staff members of the AMUN have been college and university students from the University of Central Arkansas, University of Arkansas-Little Rock, Arkansas State University, Arkansas Tech University, Harding University, Hendrix College, and the University of Arkansas-Fayetteville. Students from each of these four-year institutions of higher learning have also regularly competed at Model UN conferences throughout the United States, including the Midwest Model United Nations (MMUN) conference in St. Louis, Missouri, the American Model United Nations (AMUN) in Chicago, Illinois, and the National Model United Nations (NMUN) in New York City.

Very little has been written about the history of Model UN in the United States, thus contributing to the widespread uncertainty regarding its origins. Many sources refer to the start of Model League of Nations in the 1920s, but the information has often been limited and inconsistent.¹⁶ For example, Muldoon and Myrick (1995) indicate that the Model League of Nations began in 1926, but the authors did not cite any sources or provide an explanation of exactly where the Model League of Nations was established.¹⁷ Kirsten Haack (2008) noted that since 1927 “Harvard University has offered student-led simulations of international conferences, first of the League of Nations, later of the UN, both nationally and internationally.”¹⁸ Similarly, Elsa B. Endrst (1991) indicated that the “concept for the programme originated in the 1920s when a small group of Harvard University students organized a Model League of Nations.”¹⁹ While Harvard University was certainly one of the pioneers in student simulations of international relations in the 1920s,²⁰ Syracuse University was most likely the location of the country’s first intercollegiate Model League of Nations conference held in the Spring of 1927. Likewise, there is some ambiguity regarding the origins of Model UN following the Second World War. It has generally been accepted that the transition from the Model League of Nations Assembly to the Model United Nations Assembly occurred in late 1940s. In fact, the first Model UN conference probably took place at Lafayette College in Easton, Pennsylvania in March 1946.²¹ Three years later, St. Lawrence College probably hosted the first “Model United Nations Security Council” in Canton, New York in February 1949.²²

This book, *Model United Nations: A History of the Arkansas Model United Nations since 1966*, commemorates the six decades of Model UN in the state of Arkansas, as well as more than ninety years of Model UN (and, previously, Model League of Nations) in the United States. In the first chapter, we describe how Model League of Nations spread rapidly from Syracuse University to other colleges and universities throughout the country in the late 1920s and early 1930s, but then largely died out by the end of the 1930s. In the second chapter, we describe the development of Model UN in the United States in the aftermath of the Second World War, including both intercollegiate and high school Model UN conferences. Chapters 3 through 8 discuss the six decades of the AMUN in the state of Arkansas. The book is dedicated to the efforts of the thousands of students, teachers, professors and other individuals who have contributed to the growth of Model UN in the United States, including the state of Arkansas, in the past several decades. This book honors the commitment and dedication of Professor Simms McClintock, who coordinated the AMUN at UCA for some three decades after its founding in the Fall of 1966. This book also recognizes the leadership of the dozens of secretaries-general and other staff members of the AMUN over the past six decades. Without the hard work and dedication of these students, the AMUN would certainly not have lasted as long as it has. Finally, we hope that by recognizing the achievements of those involved in Model UN and the AMUN in the past several years, we will help ensure the continuation of this experiential learning activity for many more years to come.

Notes - Introduction

1. See Obendorf, Simon & Claire Randerson. 2013. "Evaluating the Model United Nations: Diplomatic Simulation as Assessed Undergraduate Coursework," *European Political Science*, vol. 12, pages 351-352.
2. Engels, Susan, Josh Pallas, and Sarah Lambert. 2017. "Model United Nations and Deep Learning: Theoretical and Professional Learning," *Journal of Political Science Education*, page 1.
3. McIntosh, Daniel. 2001. "The Uses and Limits of the Model United Nations in an International Relations Classroom," *International Studies Perspectives*, vol. 2, page 270.
4. United Nations Cyber School Bus, <http://www.un.org/cyberschoolbus/modelun/faq.html>. Webpage accessed on December 8, 2013.
5. Muldoon Jr., James P. and Mary J. Phillips. 1996. "The Model United Nations: A Strategy for Enhancing Global Business Education," *Journal of Education for Business*, vol. 71 (3), page 142; and Hazleton, William A. and James E. Jacob. 1982. "Simulating International Diplomacy: The National Model United Nations Experience," *Teaching Political Science*, vol. 10 (2), page 89.
6. Gittleman, Linda. "Already a Star at Model UN Conferences, Alma College Helps Another Country Start its Own," *The Morning Sun*, September 19, 2013, <http://www.themorningsun.com>.
7. Qian, Wendy. "Romance! Money! Intrigue! It's Model UN ... in China," *The Atlantic*, April 25, 2013, <http://www.theatlantic.com>.
8. "The Model UN Experience," *E-Journal USA*, vol. 16 (12), U.S. Department of State, Washington DC, page 3.
9. Obendorf and Randerson, page 361.
10. Taylor, Kirsten. 2013. "Simulations Inside and Outside the IR Classroom: A Comparative Analysis," *International Studies Perspectives*, vol. 14, pages 137-138.
11. What is Model United Nations?, <http://bestdelegate.com/what-is-model-united-nations/>. Webpage accessed on December 8, 2013.
12. Muldoon Jr., James P. and Catherine J. Myrick. 1995. "The Model United Nations: 50+ and Growing Strong," *Educational Leadership*, vol. 53 (2), page 98.
13. Rodriguez, Lucia. 2004. "Model United Nations: A World-Focused Pedagogy," *UN Chronicle*, no. 3, page 57.
14. Crossley-Frolick, Katy A. 2010. "Beyond Model UN: Simulating Multi-Level, Multi-Actor Diplomacy Using the Millennium Development Goals," *International Studies Perspectives*, vol. 11, pages 187-188.
15. AMUN Participating High Schools, <http://uca.edu/politicalscience/student-activities/amun/highschools/>. Webpage accessed on August 3, 2015.
16. See Dittmer, Jason. 2013. "Humour at the Model United Nations: The Role of Laughter in Constituting Geopolitical Assemblages," *Geopolitics*, vol. 18, pages 493-513.
17. Muldoon and Myrick, page 98.

18. Haack, Kirsten. 2008. "UN Studies and the Curriculum as Active Learning Tool," *International Studies Perspectives*, vol. 9, page 397.

19. Endrst, Elsa B. 1991. "The Model UN: Learning About Diplomacy," *United Nations Chronicle*, vol. 28 (4), page 75.

20. American and international students at Harvard University organized a series of meetings of what was known as the International Assembly between January 10 and May 16, 1923. At least 15 countries were represented in the assembly. During the meetings, the students represented their own countries in discussions of international issues such as opium trafficking and the China-Japan dispute concerning Port Arthur ("Hold First Meeting of International Assembly Tonight," *The Harvard Crimson*, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts, January 10, 1923; and "International Assembly Holds Lively Session," *The Harvard Crimson*, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts, May 17, 2013).

21. Muldoon, James P. 1995. "The Model United Nations Revisited," *Simulation & Gaming*, vol. 26 (1), page 28.

22. "Ten Colleges Participate in Model Session of United Nations Held at St. Lawrence University Campus," *Watertown Daily Times* (Watertown, NY), February 14, 1949; "To Conduct Model Security Council / Ten Colleges to Follow United Nations Procedure / Sessions Will Take Place on St. Lawrence Campus February 11-13," *St. Lawrence Plaindealer* (Canton, NY), January 25, 1949; and "St. Lawrence University Sponsors Model UN Meeting," *Commercial Advertiser* (Canton, NY), February 1, 1949.