National Model United Nations
NMUN

2015 Student Reflections
NMUN Participants
who earned Honorable Mention at the 2015 Conference,
representing the Republic of Vietnam

Head Delegate: Monica Mendez
(2014 NMUN Participant)

Ibadillo Ashrafov
Ousmane Ba
Asmaa Fatima
Hannan Javaid
Rubia Khalid
Rudolf Muradov
Diane Nguyen
Krystle Sullivan
Danish Syed
Ka’Ron Thompson
David Vacianna
Michelle Yedin
Ibadillo Ashrafov

The National Model United Nation was the first program that I have participated in college. It was an unforgettable educational experience. I have always wanted to experience the responsibilities of a diplomat. I was a delegate of Vietnam on a Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations. Our agenda was Enhancing Robust Mandates to Deal with Complex Crises, Enhancing the Use of Technology in Peacekeeping Missions and Strengthening Regional Arrangements in Africa. I couldn’t have asked to work with a better group of delegates. I didn’t know what to expect when going into the conference. However, everyone was excited, motivated, and friendly, but as the days progressed delegates became more aggressive, and selfish. Last but not least, I will never forget this educational experience and all of the friends I was able to make along the way. To students, who are interested in participating in this program: If you get the chance, don’t even hesitate because it was the best experience of my life.
Asmaa Fatima

Attending National Model United Nations has given me a chance to view diplomacy in action as well as put myself in the place of a diplomat protecting my country's interest. Being part of the GA1 committee, the topic that got voted on to be discussed was "The Control of Biological Weapons in Today's Modern Era." Even though it wasn't the topic my partner and I decided on at first, we were prepared for it in case it was to get voted to be discussed. Both my partner Krystal and I worked to sponsor two papers separately and were signatories on several others. The enjoyable part of the conference for me was to walk around the room and negotiate as well as getting my country's perspective across. It was due to those initial dialogues I had with other delegates that allowed me to work with countries such as Bolivia, Mongolia, Slovenia and others on a working paper which later got voted and turn to a resolution. NMUN has given me a chance to see and experience how Nations come together on one platform to work together towards world issues while protecting their national interest.
Rubia Khalid

As a student of Kingsborough Community College, I never really considered this an actual time to make college memories. The plan was to rush through it and hope the two years would end before I knew it. As I reached my last year, I began to realize that Kingsborough had a bundle of opportunities that I could have been taking advantage of the entire time. Venting my concerns upon wasting two years and leaving with nothing remarkable to look back on is when my head delegate introduced me to the program of National Model United Nations. As a fellow member of the 2015 group representing the country of Vietnam, I must admit not only did it change my outlook on Kingsborough but is something I’ll always remember. A week away in Manhattan performing as a certain country, working with people all around the world, being benefited financially by the school, and given chances to create many memories.

To be honest, at first it was hard. I remember walking into the first day of NMUN and being introduced to eleven strangers that I was supposed to call “my teammates”. The transition from feeling awkward to hugging the class left and right after the conference because “it’s been a week since we’ve seen each other” happens quite fast. Along with watching the growth of your team, you’ll see the growth of yourself. From day one of the conference, I would just pray for it to be over from how nervous I was. By day three you’re talking about staying up all night with people you just met to finish your papers. Although my paper failed, which could happen, I was grateful for standing up for my country, sticking strong with my alliances, and staying in character.

National Model United Nations has opened my eyes not only to the political importance that the actual United Nations imprints on the world, but also the importance of taking part in
what your college has to offer. This was an experience I wish I could take part in again and I’m highly upset my four-year college does not participate in the program. This program offered me a chance to leave home for five days (it being my first opportunity of such), meeting a whole new set of people I got to call my team and now refer to as my family, and an amazing story to tell from my time at Kingsborough.
Rudolf Muradov

Before I start, I would like to thank Dr. Rachelle Goldsmith and Dr. Reza Fakhari for their unqualified support for this program. I also want to express my gratitude to Head delegate, Monica Mendez and Dr. Rick Armstrong for mentoring and guiding me and my fellow students in this program. I offer special thanks to Janine Palludan, without her support, I would not have made it to where I am.

We are in an age of globalization where the problem of a small African or Asian country can produce an effect on future global social economic development. We often fail to realize that our international community represents the symbolic play of the domino effect: One piece stands behind the other; if one falls, the rest collapse as well. A program like the National Model United Nations offers the best way in making future generations aware of what makes up our global community.

I am one of the lucky students who received the opportunity to be part of the National Model United Nations program. NMUN helped me get a sense of international politics. It also presented me with the opportunity to take part of the stage. Students from around the world gathered for the conference in New York City every year to advocate the interests of the country they represented. 167 countries, 2 delegates from each, 334 total students who were complete strangers gathered into one room to be on one committee and denote the world’s most talked about issues such as Women’s Rights. Being a part of something so big, was a first for me. It was amazing.

During the conference, my partner and I set aside our own personal interests and began thinking about how our ideas can benefit the Country we represented: Republic of Vietnam. We
worked with other countries in order to create a plan that would benefit every party. We worked day and night with delegations, even outside of our delegate sessions to pursue ways for other delegates to become signatories of our paper. We persuaded them to vote for our paper, causing it to pass the voting procedures, which was a success. In the end the paper on which we worked with our allies passed.

The experience that I acquired from the conference was priceless. I will hold onto it as a tool and use it in my career as an international lawyer. I want to express my deepest recognition to Kingsborough Community College and the Honors Office for having such a program which allowed me to work with amazing students coming from around the world. I hope the successive students entering the program will enjoy it and appreciate it as much as I did.
Krystle Sullivan

Kingsborough’s Model United Nations program was a great opportunity to be involved in and I am glad I was able to be a part of it. It is an amazing experience that I would recommend to anyone even if they do not have an interest in International Politics. Through this program, they will learn more about it, and might even become interested in it. Before I joined the program, I was not interested in politics on an International level because I never really thought it affected me much. However, soon I learned that it affects us more than we know.

Surprisingly through the program I learned about the tremendous power of the English language. One missed word, or one word too many can cause disputes and arguments between countries. My partner and I were separated during most of the un-moderated caucuses when our delegation was not in a large group debate. She was advertising our paper while I worked on the actual language of the paper to make our case stronger. I watched people leave papers just because some wording was changed, and my partner and I refused to become a signatory on a paper because the wording did not fit our country's views.

With the conference we were able to learn about things going on around the world that are not shown here in American media because they show our country in a bad light or most people do not care about these issues. Most people by now know about deforestation occurring in the Amazon. However, without being in the conference, I would have never known about the fact that the chemicals being used are the same that were used in the Vietnam War. Through the program, I learned about more issues and developments than I would have thought I would.
An important part of the program to me was going to the conference in Manhattan. The preparatory conference in Baruch was intriguing, but it was nothing close to the conference in Manhattan. By this, I do not mean the amount of participants, but I mean their backgrounds. Under normal circumstances most people do not have the opportunity to argue global politics with people from different countries; which is what made this conference special. We could discuss our views and bounce ideas off of people from completely different backgrounds from our own, but with none of us feeling confused about the topics because we all became experts in that topic in a few months.
Danish Syed

The experience of being a part of the NMUN made my last semester at Kingsborough the most amazing experience of all. Being able to stay at one of the top hotels in the middle of Manhattan just made the trip more spontaneous and exciting. The country my delegation represented was Vietnam. I was part of the Human Rights Council committee. Although our council was not as big as the other committees, the experience being around a diverse group of students all over the world made it very memorable and rewarding. I enjoyed talking to students from other countries and speaking about my thoughts and ideas. I loved how we teamed up with our ally Japan, who wanted to pass a resolution on women’s rights.

I loved being able to develop my leadership skills to speak up for what I believed in that would benefit Vietnam, while staying in character. I thought it was very important to be in character since I was representing myself as one of Vietnam’s delegates. I enjoyed the debates with many countries that were there although there were times that I had disagreements with them as well.

There were delegate lounges that I attended which were fun too. My favorite part was meeting up with the representatives from Japan at 7:30 in the morning to discuss our resolution paper and get to know them and their feelings of the paper as well. It was a great feeling, felt like it was worth it, because that is who I ended up writing our paper with. Although this was a practice session, it made me excited to know and understand how the real committees must be like. I’m glad I got the experience, skills, and the education I wanted. I am looking forward to continuing this journey at Baruch College.
Karon Thompson

First of all, we would like to thank Kingsborough for providing the opportunity to participate in such a world renowned program. Now with a minimal knowledge of the inner workings of the United Nations, and a similar lack of insight on Viet Nam, we were faced with an enormous task; immersing ourselves in enough United Nations and Vietnamese culture, history and political policy to make sound, educated decisions regarding the promotion of resource efficiency in urban development at the NMUN conference. There were passionate discussions regarding the need for both developed and developing nations to utilize limited resources in a manner that promoted efficiency, yet still were viable from an economic standpoint using current technology. Discussions like these were what made the experience so riveting, for examples, addressing issues that affect us on a global scale using diplomacy as our vehicle for change. Coming from a community college, though, we felt we lacked the preparation and experience of our fellow delegates. Still, we more than made up for this lack of background with drive, diligence and our own individual talents. Our delegation represented what’s best about Kingsborough: success through the coming together of diverse cultures in a manner that fosters a rich learning environment for the exchange of ideas and ideals. With this we realized life at Kingsborough was a microcosm of how work gets done at the United Nations. We use diplomacy to negotiate every day affairs in a way that attempts to promote community harmony. In closing, participation in NMUN helped us to not only become globally aware citizens, but to realize that whatever power and limitations there are to diplomacy. It is still the best tool we possess in striving towards a more perfect world.
Michelle Yedin

I had the privilege of working on committee General Assembly 2, covering the issues of women in development. Overall, I felt that this class and program was a great learning experience. I absorbed a lot more information that I had planned on learning, such as learning various acronyms, jargons and terms exercised by the dais and body. I worked with Rudy Muradov on the working paper. He and I decided that setting the agenda to 1, 3, 2 would be appropriate and in Viet Nam’s interest. In our favor, the body voted for topic 1. This was the first successful moment Rudy and I felt, which allowed for the excitement and optimism to carry on with us through the rest of the week there. I was nervous at first about starting the working paper because I had felt that other delegates were more educated on the topics and had more awareness of how the papers were written and the overall responsibilities of the delegations. Eventually I found myself leading a working paper, which partnered with delegates from countries such as Zimbabwe, St. Vincent and the Grenadines and Ethiopia to focus on primary and secondary education for both genders while providing safety to girls and women en route and while at school. Rudy and I felt from the get-go that ensuring proper education for girls and women would only benefit Viet Nam politically, socially, and economically in the long run. We obviously sponsored this paper, and became signatories to two other papers dealing with education as well as women’s health. This experience allowed me to get out of my comfort zone and jump into an unfamiliar territory while maintaining and demonstrating leadership as best as I could. I truly feel honored to have participated in Model United Nations, especially with the support from Kingsborough by Professor Rick Armstrong and the whole class. We really got to know each other throughout the conferences, and ultimately bonded over that
experience. It was also really amazing to find out that we (the students) didn’t have to pay out of pocket for anything, which I learned was not the case for many of the other colleges that participated. This program is great, but the only critique I have is that the class should be held in the fall or winter semester so that we have a larger and more relaxed amount of time to prepare. Thank you.
Monica Mendez

Two years being part of Kingsborough’s National Model United Nations team has flown by. Before I joined, I did not have a lot of knowledge of foreign affairs or other worldly issues which made me feel like I was not a right fit for the program. However, Helen-Margaret Nasser encouraged me to apply and although I was hesitant, I thought, “the worst that can happen is that I don’t get in”. Luckily, the worst did not happen and I was accepted a week later! Last year Kingsborough represented The Plurinational State of Bolivia and I was part of General Assembly Third Committee; which focused on topics of: Migration and Human Rights, Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Systems and Their Development in a Changing World, and Intensification of Efforts to Eliminate All Forms of Violence against Women. My partner and I were very new to this, but with the amazing guidance of Professor Rick Armstrong and my Head Delegate Marie Borra, we were able to understand and come up with ideas to write in our position paper about these issues. Going to the actual conference was a different experience; we interacted with people from all around the world and got to share our ideas with people from Ivy League schools and they respected us.

Being part of NMUN made you feel like you can take on the world and help solve worldwide issues. After seeing how amazing this program was I decided that I wanted to be head delegate for this year’s team. Therefore, I submitted my application and was thrilled when Professor Armstrong chose me. Being on the other side of the team was a completely different experience. Being a delegate you have more hands on experience and you work twice as hard to make sure that your state’s interest is kept while at the conferences whereas, being a head delegate is like being an assistant coach to your fellow delegates. If they have questions about
the position papers or conference etiquette, they’ll ask me or Professor Armstrong and during the conference we would check in on them to see how they were doing or if they needed last minute advice. Being able to help or mentor my peers felt so enriching and I’m glad I had the opportunity to do so.

Being part of National Model United Nations for two years has taught me leadership skills, diplomacy, and other cultures. The program helped my networking skills and overall has made me a more open minded, and diplomatic person. Thank you, Professor Armstrong and Kingsborough for having this one of a kind program. For future students interested in joining, do it! You don’t need to be a political science expert to join; you just need the passion and drive to help make changes in our world.