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Gardner-Webb's Model UN Team Makes History at Virtual Event

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Gardner-Webb's Model UN Team Makes History at Virtual Event

BY OFFICE OF UNIVERSITY COMMUNICATIONS ON APRIL 26, 2021



Six Students Bring Home GWU's First Overall Team Award and Three Other Honors

BOILING SPRINGS, N.C.—The Model UN team from Gardner-Webb University made history recently at the virtual Southern Regional Model UN (SRMUN) based in Charlotte, N.C. The six members, representing the Republic of Korea, brought home GWU's first overall team award. Additionally, the duo of Rob Elovecky and Eliza Gunson were awarded Most Diplomatic and Best Delegation, while Grace Burgin and Melissa "Nani" Perez worked together and were awarded Most Diplomatic in their committee.

Burgin also served as the head delegate, and other team members were Kayleigh Floyd and Lucas Gardner. The theme, "Unity: Coming Together to Address a Changing World," examined the forces that are pushing the world apart, from personal anxieties and fears of an uncertain future to communities under the pressures of nationalism and changing economies.

Model UN is a simulation of a United Nations conference. Participating schools represent their country at the conference and pursue its interests in various committee meetings, such as World Health Organization, International Criminal Police Organization, International Court of Justice and others. Burgin, a biology major with a concentration in biomedical sciences, served as head delegate this year. She has competed with the GWU Model UN team four times. "I love Model UN because of the interactions I have with other students from so many universities," observed Burgin, a junior. "We're all there to achieve a common goal, and it is so worthwhile to see the hard work and research students put into their topic pay off during conference."

The team began preparing in January by writing position papers that outline the Republic of Korea's view on assigned topics. "I was on the World Health Organization Executive Board, and my topic was about access to mental healthcare for populations in crisis," Burgin explained. "I began researching how Korea has handled mental health during the pandemic and any legislation they have in place regarding mental health and wrote my paper. Once all the papers are complete, we begin explaining how the conference works, terminology the delegates should know, and how to write a resolution paper during conference. Sometimes, we even hold simulations and practice being at the conference."

She said the virtual setting had some challenges, but the committee chairs were patient to answer questions and help with any technical glitches. "Participating in Model UN has really helped me get out of my shell and be more comfortable talking in front of a group of people," Burgin stated. "It's also good for practicing professionalism and diplomacy. You are also able to make new friends and learn more about international politics. I am very honored to have led this group this semester, and I hope we can continue to improve and win more awards for Gardner-Webb."

Gunson, a global studies and psychology major with a minor in French, participated in the Model UN event for the first time. A junior, she prepared for the conference last year, but the event was cancelled because of COVID-19 concerns. "I first participated as a class but realized how much I enjoyed the concept of Model UN that I wanted to not only continue with Model UN, but I hope to be a member of the actual United Nations in the future, specifically with human rights work," Gunson affirmed. "There are tons of benefits from participating in Model UN. For me, being forced to keep my written language short and concise while still getting my point across has been huge. Also just interacting with peers in a diplomatic and professional manner is so beneficial as it is preparing us for any future job. It teaches you to remain respectful to people who have conflicting opinions."

She continued, "Model UN is just a lot of fun. It is like putting on a whole new persona because you are acting like a diplomat from a country with a completely different culture. Everyone is so nice and despite being on Zoom, I was able to connect with so many people."

Perez, a freshman, decided to participate in Model UN because she wanted to be more involved, make new friends and develop connections in her new setting away from home. "As a political-science major looking to work as a lawyer and or a political leader, Model UN was a good environment to simulate what those positions would be like," she noted. "On top of that, being on the team adds experience in a professional working domain. Plus, meeting other people and having fun is always a benefit."

[Learn more about the Department of Social Sciences.](#) >

Located in the North Carolina foothills, Gardner-Webb University is a private, Christian, liberal arts university. Gardner-Webb emphasizes a strong student-centered experience and rigorous academics to prepare students to become effective leaders within the global community. Ignite your future at Gardner-Webb.edu.

Representing Gardner-Webb at the Virtual Model UN were, from left, Rob Elovecky, Eliza Gunson, Kayleigh Floyd, Nani Perez, and Head Delegate Grace Burgin. Not pictured: Lucas Gardner.

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We welcome your suggestions and feedback, contact:

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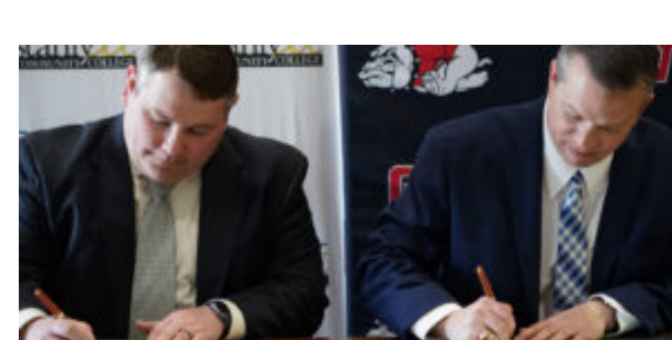
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