

News Release

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Media Contact –Danielle Rush

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Communications Specialist
2300 S. Washington Street
Kokomo, IN 46904-9003
(765) 455-9414
darush@iuk.edu

Model UN class learns about international diplomacy while preparing for its first competition

KOKOMO, Ind. — Justin Summers will never forget what he learned about France, because he experienced it as part of that country’s delegation to the Model United Nations.

“I love simulations,” Summers said. “I learn better from doing, rather than reading it in a book. This was a valuable experience for me as a student and as a future teacher.”

Summers and 11 other IU Kokomo students participated in Model UN as part of a class taught by Todd Bradley, political science professor. This is the first year it has been offered as a class.

Bradley said students are not only learning about current affairs and history of countries, they are learning about conflict resolution, diplomacy, writing and speaking skills, and debate, as they participate in a simulation of what happens at the United Nations, in New York City.

Each three-student delegation represented an assigned country, researching that country and presenting resolutions in its interests. Members also debated solutions to international problems, from the point of view of their assigned country. IU Kokomo’s students represented Somalia, India, the United Kingdom, the United States, and Guatemala.

Jeremy Gilman, a junior who represented the United Kingdom, said it was interesting to consider views other than those of the United States.

“You learn to respect and understand other countries’ points of view,” he said. “It puts you in a different perspective, and you realize there are views different than ours.”

He was surprised that the UK's views on Iraq are not the same as those of the United States.

Summers, a junior who represented India, and learned that country believes it should be on equal footing with other international super powers like the United States.

Senior Jensen Pickett was surprised to learn that France has been one of the major financial supporters of Syrian rebels during that country's civil war.

Students said it was hard for the model UN to accomplish a lot, because of so many differing viewpoints, but they believe it does important work, particularly in humanitarian efforts.

Gilman said the experience showed him the importance of being willing to negotiate and change.

"It made you see compromise as a positive thing, because otherwise you would never get anything done," he said.

Other participants were Chad Barlow, Doran Brown, Ralph Corwin, Jeremy Cotton, Collin Holmes, Lucien Madding, Alejandro Mata, Robert Moore, and Shannon Stockdale.

Bradley said each delegation also judges the others on how prepared they are, how much they contribute, and on negotiation and collaboration skills. IU Kokomo's delegation from India was a runner-up for the best delegation award, he said.

"I was quite proud of them," he said. "They represented IU Kokomo well. This is an intense program, but it's fun. They learn to be creative in brokering deals with other nations. It also makes them more aware of international issues."

Indiana University Kokomo serves north central Indiana.

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