

UPEI National Model United Nations gearing up

by Sheila Lund

"We want students who are serious about international affairs and who are looking for a challenging educational experience."

The National Model United Nations simulation "provides students with a realistic perspective of international affairs," stated the UPEI NMUN President, Paul Peacock, during a recent interview.

The Model United Nations course is a credit course offered every second semester at UPEI under the title of Spécial Studies 482B and is under the instruction of Professor Gary Webster. Students interested in taking a course need 'no special prerequisites other than interest," said Peacock, but added that "experience in public speaking is a definite asset." The coordinators of the course hope to get people from Toastmasters, to help the students' public speaking abilities. Peacock commented that

they also hope to "draw knowledge and experience from different faculties at UPEI and from some outside experts in the Canadian Government."

The actual simulation takes place in late March and early April every year in New York City. It is usually during the last week of classes, when exams are starting, "so we need students who can handle this experience without their grades suffering."

While in New York, participants usually only get about 1½ days of free time in which to go sight-seeing, but get about 4 full days of intense politicking. "You're up at 7 a.m. and go right through until 11 p.m., with two-hour breaks for lunch and supper," Peacock stated.

The simulation opens and closes in the General Assembly of the United Nations Building, but the majority of the simulation takes place in the different conference

rooms of the hotel in which you are staying.

Approximately 1500 students representing approximately 100 different universities across Canada and the United States are involved in NMUN, such as Georgetown, West Point, and McGill. Peacock felt that as a participant "you not only get to experience politics from an international perspective, but also experience how other people across North America perceive international affairs."

Peacock said the simulation was a "team effort", with no one position any more important than the other. "It is a real experience in diplomacy and back-room politicking. Students can really experience the frustrations and challenges that face the world today."

During the run of the course, people will be developing public speaking skills as well as

knowledge of the specific countries' political structure, and international and external policies. "Ideally, each student in New York will feel like they are a citizen of the country they are representing."

Peacock felt that the UPEI delegation has "done very well in the past." As a group, they have not won any awards, but each year seem to be only one or two committees away from getting awards.

In the past, the UPEI delegation has represented countries such as Algeria, Nicaragua, Ethiopia, and Mongolia, which constitute Arab, African, Central American, and East Asian bloc countries.

"Up to this point in my education, the NMUN simulation in New York has been the most gratifying and beneficial experience of my academic career," stated Peacock, who has been the NMUN twice so he cannot

take the course again. He sees the potential of the course as to the benefit of UPEI students. As NMUN President at UPEI, Peacock feels his responsibilities are to organize the UPEI delegation properly with a minimum of

student involvement in fundraising activities, which have taken a lot of students' time in the past. He has already begun contacting local service clubs and corporate sponsors to try and integrate the community with the university for this event. People who are interested in participating in the NMUN should pick up an information sheet which they have to submit to the Selection Committee before October 30th. "This doesn't necessarily mean that everyone who applies is accepted, or that they won't be accepted," Peacock stated, "but just serves to give the committee a better idea of what kind of students are applying for the course."



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