Introducing the Model United Nations Institute

At Best Delegate, we are passionate about Model United Nations. Today, we are proud to announce the Summer 2015 dates of our Model United Nations training programs!

The Model United Nations Institute by Best Delegate features high-quality educational programs designed to prepare future leaders through Model United Nations. Our programs help students learn international politics and diplomacy, improve their leadership and communication skills, and join a passionate global community of future leaders.

We offer programs for high school and middle school students of all MUN experience levels, from no prior experience to the most advanced delegates. Our programs are offered all summer at world-class universities, including Harvard, Columbia, Georgetown, UC Berkeley, and UCLA. And the MUN Institute is taught by a passionate team of professional educators and the Diplomacy Fellows — the best delegates in college-level MUN.

Learn more about the MUN Institute on our new website - mun.bestdelegate.com. Also, follow us on Facebook and Twitter!

Continued on page 5

O-Mun Receives World Summit Youth Award

On 13th November of this year, Online Model United Nations became the proud recipient of the World Summit Youth Award. The determination and tenacity of its delegates and its Executive Team had led it to winning one of the most prestigious awards for Information and Communications Technology (ICT) development in the world. The World Summit Youth Award competition is a project of the United Nations Millennium Campaign and brings together young developers and digital entrepreneurs under 30 years of age who use internet and mobile technology to put the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) into action and make a difference.

Over the last few months, a large international jury of social activists, young entrepreneurs, UN officials, businessmen, and ICT experts evaluated over 1896 submissions, across six different categories, from 138 UN member states. O-MUN emerged as one of the three victors in its category, likely in part because of its uniqueness. Amidst projects which aim to use the power of the internet to "redefine wealth and social welfare" and others which seek to "tackle the interrelated problems of hunger and waste" stands Online Model UN, a completely student-run organization with the potential of having an impact anywhere in the world that deals with the largest demographic in the world: youth. It is due to this distinction that the award has been very fitting for this organization, for it propagates, across every level of its organization, the idea of harnessing the power of the youth to change the world.

While many of the other recipients perform commendable work to further the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), their focus is generally narrowed down to a particular MDG. Online Model United Nations, on the other hand, serves as an organization working towards the fulfillment of every MDG of the United Nations. Through numerous debates and discussions, all held in an online environment, O-MUN does a job which very few organizations can do. It teaches young minds about the world's problems and the UN's goals, motivating them to take action and create a better world.

It is perhaps for this reason that O-MUN has been awarded with such a prestigious prize and been invited at the Winner's Event at Brazil. There, O-MUN representatives will have the opportunity to meet other social entrepreneurs, business leaders, representatives from international organizations, and government officials as well as get the chance to present their project to an international audience, gaining valuable support and a brilliant platform.

It is my hope that this event will enable the uniqueness and value of O-MUN to be recognized even further, this time by the UN itself, and enable it to cater to a wider body of potential leaders. Brazil's Winners Event holds new and great opportunities for this organization, and I am confident that it will be able to make use of them all.

Find more information about the Youth Award at http://youthaward.org/winners/online-model-united-nations

Zohaib Ahmed

The Results Are In: Impactful, Life Changing and Improvable
The Diplomatic Lens

THIMUN Qatar
Proudly Presents:

The Regional Committee on the Middle East and North Africa
February 3-6, 2015 Doha, Qatar

This committee is the first-ever international Arabic committee to be held at THIMUN Qatar. Conference procedures will all be conducted in Modern Standard Arabic. The topics to be debated are:

1. Measures of Promoting Arabic Language and Culture
2. The Question of Syria
3. Religious Organizations’ Effect on the Political Process

In addition to the THIMUN Qatar committee, other programs to help you develop Arabic include:

- A one day Arabic MUN Conference, held on April 25th, 2015 at Qatar Academy
- Online MUN Arabic Conferences, held monthly, free of charge, starting November 1, 2014

Why Arabic MUN?

This unique initiative aims to make passionate MUNers and Arabic-speaking students learn, think, research, analyze, debate, and give speeches, all in Modern Standard Arabic. By joining the Arabic Committee, you can:

- Become a pioneer by participating in the development of a first-of-its-kind, international MUN program
- Take a practical step in strengthening your Arabic language
- Develop critical thinking skills around pressing political and economic issues in the region
- Develop MUN skills like research, debate, rules of procedure, speechmaking, public speaking, and resolution writing as they are all performed in Arabic
- Stand in the shoes of an Arab diplomat in order to gain a broader world vision
- Gain significantly-valuable qualification for college applications and career opportunities

Our Vision

The THIMUN Qatar Arabic MUN program aims to:

- Create a language of diplomacy between young Arabic-speaking delegates and leaders
- Expand the reach of Model United Nations to new, diverse students
- Assist in creating tomorrow’s leaders
- Become the leading Arabic MUN conference destination worldwide.

Who are we looking for?

Strong Leaders who want to develop diverse skills, gain experience in Arabic MUN, meet amazing people, and have a great time in the process. We welcome first time and experienced MUN delegates. We welcome proficient and beginner Arabic speakers. However, the essential factor is a desire to lead a change and become an influencer.

ARE YOU UP FOR THE CHALLENGE? Then the Arabic MUN Program is the place for YOU!

Places are limited, so APPLY NOW. Send an application request to thimunqatar@qf.org.qa, and email nabila.lassar@onlinemodelun.org for any questions or assistance.

Who are we looking for?

THIMUN Qatar

February 3-6, 2015

Doha, Qatar

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A Leadership How-To: Three Pillars

Best delegates and gavel chasers are prevalent throughout the Model UN community. However, often times the definition of what an effective leader is unclear for delegates. Therefore, this post will focus on three aspects of effective leadership, which will focus on the importance of developing into a best delegate as opposed to a gavel chaser. The “Three Pillars” include:

1. They Treat Others Well
2. They Are Treated Well by Others
3. They Treat Themselves Well

These Three Pillars will allow you to improve your communication skills, work more efficiently, and continually reflect upon your development as a leader.

Pillar I. Treat Others Well

A Best Delegate leads by example and works to empower others. People within Model UN committees are trying to represent their position to the best of their ability; a leader recognizes this, and instead of dominating the committee conversation, they orchestrate it. When it comes down to it, Model UN boils down to positions, ideas, and compromise. Finding commonality between these three factors is the cornerstone of productivity. A productive delegate can cut to the core of the differing opinions argument and distinguish what they agree with and what they do not. Going one step further, a Best Delegate then figures out a way to highlight those similarities to push the group forward.

A lot of “gavel hunters” are so focused on winning an award that they forget the educational purpose of Model UN is to learn about leadership, diplomacy, and international relations. This means that a Best Delegate is primarily concerned about producing a quality product with their team. Therefore, it is important to find the “team players” of the committee: those who want to engage in Model UN to learn and enjoy their experience. This means collaborating with individuals so that everyone is contributing to the wellbeing of the group.

Pillar II. Be Treated Well by Others

Being a leader implies that there are people willing to follow you. People who do not treat others well are often times met with contempt in Model UN. Gavel chasers tend to dominate their caucus group by aggressively talking over their fellow delegates and not collaborating. For better or for worse, these delegates will win awards. However, just because gavel-chasing tactics can lead to awards, it is merely a short-term success that is unsustainable outside of the standard four-day conference. Outside of a Model UN committee, leaders have the ability to garner, maintain, and build respect. It is true that Model UN provide tips and tricks for being perceived as a leader, but true leadership can lead to genuine and sustainable relationships. Best Delegates focus on creating these types of relationships that branch beyond the committee room.

On the high school and college circuits, the reputations of successful delegates will often times proceed them. Sometimes this is a good thing, and other times it is not. However, being aware of this reputation inside and outside of committee can be used to your advantage. If you develop the reputation inside and outside of MUN as a respectable leader who is enjoyable to work with, then you will naturally attract “team players” looking to develop something great, as opposed to the “power delegates” who are just looking to dominate conversation.

Pillar III. Treat Yourself Well

There is only one person you can control, and that person is yourself. This pillar is arguably the most important of the three pillars and is often overlooked in Model UN training. The idea of “treating yourself well” means that you devote time to developing your own leadership as well as the way in which you react to the world. This is all about focusing on personal development and striving to become better than what one was the day before. In terms of leadership, this means becoming self-aware. By developing self-awareness, we can become our own best teacher.

A lot of times, delegates will judge their performance in committee based on whether or not they won an award. However, Model UN awards are subjective and are poor at measuring one’s personal development as a leader. The important person to measure yourself against is yourself because that will be the only constant in your Model UN career. This means reflecting on the things you do well and the things you need to improve upon after each conference. It can also be helpful to gather feedback from advisers, friends, and other delegates as to how to improve as a leader. Each Model UN conference is an opportunity to learn about one’s own leadership, so treating yourself well becomes a journey of personal development. Understanding this concept will allow one to focus on learning from their success and failure. The journey of becoming a best delegate becomes more than just winning a wooden hammer. It becomes a journey of learning to treat others well, being treated well by others, and treating yourself well.

My hope is that these Three Pillars of leadership will make you reflect upon how you approach committee and your values as a delegate. Best of luck on your future MUN endeavors!

- Aaron Kalafarski
Introducing the Model United Nations Institute, Inc.

The MUN Institute features the following programs for high school and middle school delegates:

The Diplomat Junior Diplomat Program for beginning-level delegates who want to get started and have fun learning Model United Nations.

The Ambassador Program for intermediate and advanced delegates who want to participate in exciting and fast-paced crises simulations, a growing trend in high school and college MUN.

The Crisis Program for intermediate and advanced high school delegates who want to participate in exciting and fast-paced crisis simulations, a growing trend in high school and college MUN.

The UN Studies Program for high school delegates who are interested in learning about history, politics, and international relations in college. This is a special program offered only at Columbia that features visits to the UN and simulations using the new UN4MUN guidelines recommended by the United Nations.

Registration is now open!

We are currently running our Early Registration discount until February 1. Sign up now and you will automatically receive $50 off all of our programs!

Please contact Laurabeth Goldsmith, Program Manager, at mun@bestdelegate.com with any questions or thoughts about the MUN Institute, including our online registration system. She reads every email!

Afghanistan Initiative: Second Meeting

Focuses on Education

As our second session of the QLC-AFGHAN project commenced, we were all very excited and eager not only to spread our MUN knowledge, but also to engage in a discussion with these students. Their mentality and view on issues continues to shock and impress us all.

Our session began by reviewing country research. We use a collaborative Google document in which all the information, I am compiled and assessed by all members of the project. Research is one of the most important skills to acquire in the MUN world. It enables a delegate to speak and argue with their country with a great amount of compassion and confidence as a result of their extensive research. The concept of research is quite a foreign idea to our students in Afghanistan who have yet to be exposed to various resources and mediums in which they can research such as the Internet. However, we all agreed on one thing: "Knowledge is power." Not only is this phrase applicable in MUN, but it is also applicable in life as well, especially in the lives of these students.

Next, we moved on to our question-and-answer session. In an effort to initiate a discussion panel between everyone, we had questions prepared to ask the students in Afghanistan. Their answers truly blew us away: they speak with articulation and wisdom of those beyond their years. Among the topics discussed were changes to be made in the educational system in Afghanistan. Without any hesitation, one of the students stated that she would like to see a curriculum which isn’t heavily reliant on textbooks and memorizing information but one that encourages students to think on a broader scale and explore different areas of learning, much like the IB system.

In addition to this, we discussed the importance of the role of women in the greater scope of Afghanistan. It was very eye-opening to hear not only the females in the group stress the importance of a woman’s role but the males agreeing to this as well. This is a testament to how able we all are regardless of how far away we live to different the fate we lead are. At MUN conferences, we discuss empowering women as well as granting women and men equal rights, and this is exactly the kind of plans these students are passionate about implementing in their nation in years to come.

- Ola Al Tai is a student at Qatar International School and one of the founding members of the THIMUN Qatar-Afghanistan Initiative

Community and Opportunity: A Word on O-MUN

You know you’ve done countless O-MUN debates when you’ve become an expert in Java when you least expected it. When you’ve become an expert in any medium in which they can research such as the Internet.

O-MUN has, as you’ve seen above, opened a window of opportunities for both me and my fellow peers. I didn’t participate in numerous online debates just to received points; I did it because I felt empowered every time I clicked the speaking button to voice my nation’s opinion. I felt a sense of responsibility, a feeling that I quite alienated from in the beginning. Obviously, not everything I’ve been through in O-MUN is full of sunshine and rainbows, there were times when I stumbled and fell, but those experiences helped me made stronger. Those experiences are what have made me who I am today.

- Bassim Eledath
From the Techie’s Desk: THIMUN Qatar Launches New Film Festival Platform

The THIMUN Qatar office recently partnered with three talented Carnegie Mellon University (CMU) Information Systems seniors who designed an online film festival submission program. As part of their capstone project, Sakib Mahmoud, Abdulrahman Takiddin, and Prince Abraham created a new platform that will greatly ease the film submission process for filmmakers participating in the annual THIMUN Qatar Northwestern University Film Festival. The development of this new program was overseen by THIMUN Qatar’s IT Coordinator, Abhay Valiyaveettil, also a CMU graduate.

The online film submission system will allow students to seamlessly upload their films, posters and other materials directly onto the Film Festival database. In previous years, film submissions were accepted via physical CDs and flash disks. Registration forms were handwritten and then converted to digital format manually for processing. The newly-designed platform allows for all these tasks to be done seamlessly and online, making the submission process easier for student directors from around the world.

THIMUN Qatar, in partnership with Northwestern University in Qatar, organizes the annual Film Festival, now in its sixth year. Since its inception, hundreds of student-made films have been submitted for this increasingly prestigious competition. Several successful short films have emerged as a result of the event and have gained recognition internationally. Last year, over 95 films were submitted by students from countries ranging from the United States to Singapore. Local filmmaker Amal Al Muftah’s Al-Hamali, the Festival’s 2014 Best Film recipient, is indicative of the high quality of film submissions the THIMUN Qatar Northwestern Film Festival continues to attract.

- Abhay Valiyaveettil

How To Approach a Small Country Assignment in Model UN

The vast majority of Model UN delegates will be assigned a smaller or seemingly obscure country at some point in their career. Simulating smaller countries is a challenge because they have less influence and are less active in international relations in real life. It becomes difficult to do research on that country’s policies and past actions, and that makes it difficult to educate others about their policies and solutions or to get others to follow a small country as a leader in a MUN simulation. Many delegates, particularly those who are newer or struggle with research, do not like being assigned smaller countries for all these reasons.

I was part of a club program during high school and a brand new travel team during college though, so I had spent a significant portion of my Model UN career representing smaller countries. From my experience, I have observed several approaches that I believe are the wrong and right ways to take when given a small country assignment.

Wrong Approaches

I believe there are two wrong approaches that delegates commonly use. The first wrong approach is to just complain that they are not a P5 country and how unfair it is for the powerhouses to always get assigned a P5 (and win awards easier). These delegates tend not to try or put in a full effort or dwell on their disadvantage when they see a more influential country in real life take a leadership role in a MUN simulation. Life is not fair, and complaining won’t help you be productive in this case.

The second wrong approach is to think that just because no one will probably know anything about your country, you should just make up your country’s policy and “BS” your way through committee. It might work, especially if you’re in a novice high school setting, though less likely in advanced committees or at the university level where people actually know their facts. However, you would be doing yourself an educational disservice for not learning about a certain part of the world and not learning how to deal with less influential positions.

Right Approaches

I believe there are two right approaches to such an assignment. The first right approach is the educational approach, or what I call the Best Supporting Actor approach. You want to become an expert in simulating your specific small country. Instead of stressing out that you are not an influential country, you want to role-play your country to the best extent it can realistically be in...
IV ANNUAL SESSION ADMINISTRATIVE HANDBOOK

THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA
TRANSFORMATIONS AND CHALLENGES AHEAD

3rd February to 6th February 2015, Qatar National Convention Center, Doha-Qatar
I went to the Qatar Leadership Conference this October as a student speaker for the O-MUN/Taipei American School team. The QLC itself was great, and making speeches about O-MUN ICJ was also great, but what I took away most from the QLC was neither of the above. It was rather a deep-seated feeling of inspiration and passion — a passion that I had never encountered before.

How To Approach a Small Country Assignment in Model UN, cont.

the international system. For example, you could be a great deputy to a larger country in your regional bloc, or you could act as a neutral mediator and present.

The second approach is the competitive approach, or what’s called the Lion in the Mirror approach.

You want to become an expert at overcoming the challenge of a small country and become a leader as one. Instead of seeing yourself as limited to your small country, you want to see yourself as the bloc leader based on shared background (geographic, political, economic, etc.), similar policies, or common solutions. It helps to imagine yourself as a duplicate of the regional hegemon. Bhutan is no longer just Bhutan; it is now the leader of the large Asian bloc or the influential anti-intervention bloc and has the same power as a second China or India in committees.

I tended to use the latter approach since I came from a competitive circuit. I shared some of the preparation tactics in my blog post about my experience as Bhutan dominating the P5 here. Tactically though, it’s important to focus on research because common knowledge or the news probably do not cover this country’s policies. Specifically, the research can focus on treaties, conventions, and resolutions that the country has adopted or not adopted, country specific programs that have been implemented on the topic including domestic ones; and any statements made by government officials including UN GA speeches. These are better starting points for extrapolating country policy if it comes down to having to make part of it up.

Ultimately, Model UN is about learning. Regardless of if you want to learn about the real world and how small countries fit into the system and struggle to influence policy or if you want to learn about how to compete with a disadvantageous assignment in order to challenge your skills, you should take the small country assignment as a good learning opportunity and make the most of it.

Have you been assigned a small country? How did you effectively approach it?

- Kevin Felix Chan

After hearing Mr. Keesey and Ms. Leahy’s presentation on their work in creating the Kony 2012 campaign and resisting the Lord’s Resistance Army in Uganda, I was deeply moved by the sheer variety of ways in which we could help make the world a better place. Even as teenagers, there are so many different ways in which we could help change other people’s lives for the better. This presentation, or rather the general atmosphere of the QLC, got me fired up and ready to do something, anything, to change the world for the better. I then met a man who changed my view of the world and has become my mentor and role model for years to come.

His name was Peter Dalgllish. Upon first sight, he seemed like an ordinary middle-aged man with sun-/tanned skin and a slight disregard for physical appearance. But when he spoke, he became a sort of angel-incarnate who talked genially and practically about improving the world, step-by-step, and inspiring young people to stand up for their own passion. According to Dalgllish, regardless of age, location, or creed, everyone could make a change for the better in their own ways. So, after his speech, I eagerly went to talk to him about a project that I had in mind. This meeting, surprisingly, considering the sheer amount of people waiting in line to talk to him, lasted for an entire hour. My idea was simple. By combining my passion of tennis and my drive to change lives for the better, I proposed to bring a group of students to teach rural Nepali kids how to play tennis.

After QLC, I remained in contact with Peter. Approximately one month later, in November, I packed my bags, bought a plane ticket, and went to Nepal. This reconnaissance trip, suggested by Peter and eagerly followed up on by me, opened me up to a brand new cultural background and urgency for change. I visited several public schools in Pokhara and rural Bandipur to get a sense of what education is like there. But as one of Peter’s friends in Nepal said, the schools’ infrastructure is extremely dilapidated, and the educational curriculum is based solely on rote memorization, something which has remained the same since the 1960s. So based on my firsthand observation of Nepal kid’s situation and their predicament, I went back to Taiwan and started to devise a plan that would directly tackle the deficiencies of Nepal’s education system.

My basic plan is to build a public multi-functional playground for the kids in rural Banipur that would provide kids with a suitable facility to play sports (tennis, volleyball, soccer, and cricket). This allows the kids to learn actively and develop self-confidence. Additionally, I would also like to use the time while we are there to introduce more advanced technologies such as PCs and tablets to the kids so that after we are gone they will be able to learn by themselves more sustainably, and with minimal maintenance.

Although everything is still in the planning stages, I nevertheless would like to say that none of this could have happened without the QLC. The QLC is truly an inspirational conference that I believe will continue to inspire young people to do great things. In the words of Mark Twain, quoted by Mr. Dalgllish, “Never let your school get in the way of your education.” Stand up, discover the world, and be a change.

- Timothy Shu
THIMUN Qatar and Northwestern University in Qatar are encouraging high school student films through a documentary film festival from April 2-4, 2015 in Doha, Qatar.

Educational opportunities and prize money are offered for winning entries.

The film submission deadline is February 14, 2015.

Details can be found online at http://qatar.thimun.org/film-festival
The Global MUN survey, the largest of its kind, has recently wrapped up its first submission window, and there are very few surprises for Model United Nations practitioners. The results do, however, allow MUN program developers to make a case that Model UN has long term impact on participants. With just under 1500 past and present MUN delegates weighing in, their collective voice is extremely clear: MUN impacts feelings of social identity, helps to develop hard academic skills, and, ultimately, impacts career choice. Very few extracurricular programs can make this case. The purpose of this article is to lay out the findings and issue a challenge to school administrations around the world: if you are not investing in MUN for your students, why not?

The Facts

Before launching into the actual results and drawing some obvious conclusions, here is a bit on the actual survey, which opened on October 16 and closed November 14. The survey was shared extensively within the THIMUN network, via Best Delegate, MUN Planet, and individual networks in the USA, Latin America and Asia. Just under 1500 individuals took the survey (1487 to be exact), with 70% being current high school students, 17% in university, and 12% representing post-university/working adults. This last group was harder to reach, and it is one that future surveys hope to target and expand upon. Respondents were almost equally split between male and female (49% to 51%), with the largest demographic groups coming from the Middle East (23%), Europe (17%), and North America (18%). Seventy-four percent of students were familiar with THIMUN procedures, with 32% familiar with North American style and 19% with USA-USA. Just under 7% were aware and knowledgeable about UN4MUN procedures, something that we hope to explore in a future survey.

The Results

The survey aimed to gauge participant perception, motivation, and impact related to MUN, as well as to gather feedback on the current state of Model UN and the direction current and past delegates would like to see it develop. Participants also had the opportunity to share their MUN story, something we will profile in a series of blog posts in upcoming months. We’ll also share more of the raw data in the upcoming month, but for now, the most compelling numbers are given here.

Individuals were asked to rate a series of statements related to their MUN participation. Individuals who somewhat or strongly agreed with the following statements are represented below.

General statements about MUN participation (agree somewhat, agree strongly)
- Developed better analytical skills (39%, 50%)
- Learned to argue effectively (35%, 58%)
- Increased self-confidence (31%, 55%)
- Challenged my own beliefs (35%, 43%)
- Allowed me to work collaboratively with others (39%, 50%)
- Became part of a community that meant something to me (27%, 35%)

Participation in MUN helped me to (agree somewhat, agree strongly)
- Become a better researcher (41%, 47%)
- Improve public speaking (27%, 68%)
- Understand the workings of the UN (26%, 68%)
- Develop leadership skills (31%, 59%)
- Learn about global issues (23%, 73%)
- Helped me socially (31%, 56%)
- Understand the importance of collaboration in problem solving (38%, 49%)

These two sections of the survey asked similar questions in different ways, but the striking feedback from participants is that they gained significantly both social and academic skills from their participation in MUN.

Jobs and Careers: Did MUN Participation Matter?

In the early stages of developing this survey, this question rose to the fore time and again. At the end of a student’s MUN career, did it impact job/career choice? This was the one question many people wanted to have an answer to. And the answer is yes. Post-university students were asked the following. 162 respondents replied that they

- MUN directly influenced my career choice: (28%, 24%)
- Opened doors for me professionally (27%, 30%)
- Taught me skills that I use in my job (39%, 32%)
- Improved my public speaking which has benefited me in my job (30%, 51%)

Lastly, a whopping 71% of these respondents said that MUN played a significant role in shaping their career and professional life. 48% of university students also stated that MUN directly influenced their choice of major.

Future of Model United Nations

The survey also asked current and past delegates how they would like to see MUN develop in the future. This question dovetailed into a larger question of perception of Model UN: to what degree is MUN elitist or too expensive? The majority of participants (57%) felt that the cost of Model UN kept the program from growing and expanding, but only 28% of participants found MUN to be elitist. Support for programs in foreign languages (70%), free online platforms like THIMUN Online (48%), and an expansion of Model UN programs into middle schools (60%), and a move to make Model United Nations more like the real United Nations (61%) were all areas where respondents thought the program could expand.

I’ll be publishing some of the raw data in the next week or so and let people judge for themselves. The survey will reopen in late January and run through the end of February 2015. We hope that more post-graduate responses can be gathered. In the meantime, the evidence speaks loudly that Model United Nations promotes career choice, and engagement in global affairs, promotes confidence in public speaking, and encourages appreciation of the importance of collaborative work. All of which sounds exactly like what education should be doing for all of our students.

- Lisa Martin
When I first started working with O-MUN over two years ago, I would have never imagined the places O-MUN could and would take me. I can honestly and proudly say that the two times I've travelled outside of North America were as a result of O-MUN. Further more, I could not have possibly imagined how O-MUN would spawn so many lasting friendships, both online and in the real world. This has been the experience of many O-MUNers, delegates and leadership team members alike.

Since the start of the school year, I’ve had the pleasure of meeting up with three of my fellow O-MUNers: Omar Naguib, AD for Global Debates; Audrey Cabral, AD for Community Outreach; and Head of Administration Maryam Al-Annari. It so happened that I saw Omar three times in my first two weeks of school. The first time, he was making his way from Rhode Island to Toronto for tennis and made a stop in Vermont for a night to visit me at school. I tried to show him all my quaint little university town had to offer. That weekend, which was the first weekend of school and the Labour Day long weekend, I drove home to collect some things that I had forgotten to bring with me to school. It was during this weekend that I met up with Omar once again in Toronto. We caught a professional soccer game between the New England Revolution and Toronto FC. Unfortunately for me (though fortunately for Omar), the Revolution took this match 3-0. We also visited the Hockey Hall of Fame, as part of my plan to get Omar into hockey (it worked).

After the weekend was over, I drove back to school for another week of classes, only to return to Toronto the very next weekend for my brother’s wedding. This time, our meeting was rather brief, as we met up for a late-night snack at Hero Burger in downtown Toronto after I had left the wedding. Even though we hadn’t seen each other for nearly two years before these chance meetings, it felt as though no time had passed at all.

In October, the University of Vermont sent a small delegation of three delegates to BarMUN in Boston. This was exciting to me a few reasons: it would be the first time since the first O-MUN THIMUN trip in January of 2013 that I would participate in face-to-face Model UN; it was my first time visiting Boston, or anywhere in Massachusetts for that matter; and it would result in more O-MUN meetups. The conference went fairly well, though it took me a committee session to get my bearings back. All was well in the end though, as 1970s Iran became communist and built a Death Star (historical crises are fun, eh?). Boston was amazing, easily one of my favourite cities, partially because my trip allowed me to meet up with Audrey and Maryam. Unfortunately, as we were all pretty busy, we could not meet for long. However, we were able to find time to meet Friday night during my dinner break. Once again, despite not seeing either of them for a very long time, it felt as though no time was lost at all.

Not only does O-MUN allow students from different backgrounds, cultures, and nationalities to cooperate and befriend each other in an online environment, it also allows students to become friends in real life through O-MUN travel teams to face-to-face conferences.

- Russel Evans

**Student Profiles: Around the Region**

**Name:** Abdullah Naji  
**Grade:** Grade 11 (Year 12)  
**School:** Doha British School

**Favorite MUN Conference:** THIMUN Qatar - surely!  
**Dream Vacation:** I’ve always wanted to travel all over the world really, from the wonderful culture of ancient Europe to the landmarks of America, but the Bahamas is definitely somewhere on the top of the list! What better way to relax than sit by the clear waters of its seas and enjoy exotic fruits?

What you like to do when you are not doing homework: Port custom ROMs to my Android phone or, most of the time, I’m found debating and discussing recent political news with my peers.

**Personal Goal for MUN:** To be an executive member for a conference.

**Dream Vacation:** Diving trip in the Great Barrier Reef (Australia) to see sharks and study ecosystems.

**Biggest hope/dream for MUN:** For it not to turn into a trend or social gathering and see the UN actually try to implement the resolutions that we pass.

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**Name:** Sandev Ferdinando  
**Grade:** Grade 10  
**School:** Park House English School, Doha (originally from Sri Lanka)

How MUN has benefited you personally: Model United Nations has opened a door of endless opportunities for me to do what I love to do; to do things that I could have never imagined.

**Favorite Comfort Food:** Ice cream

**Favorite MUN memory:** Undoubtedly my favourite, and rather hilarious, MUN memory was when delegates were allowed to tap their speeches, with the help of a backtracking admin – and if I may say so, the delegate of Argentina killed it! Everyone unanimously agreed to this as we had all endured tedious and endless hours of debating the same issues.

**Dream Vacation:** Pizza is my go-to comfort food, and chocolate is my way of life!

**Personal hope for MUN:** My personal hope for MUN around the world is that it will be accessible to everyone, regardless of where they live, their race, whether they are rich or poor or the standard of education provided to them. After all, everyone has the right to take part in debates on global issues; it doesn’t just impact the lives of specific groups of people.

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**Name:** Marsiam Hassaballah  
**Grade:** Grade 11  
**School:** Hayat International Academy, Cairo

**Greatest MUN Ambition:** Become Secretary-General and pass a resolution that would actually be effective while battling crisis or demanding issues in our world today.

**Best MUN Conference you have attended:** HIAMUN

**Favorite MUN Comfort Food:** Ice cream

**Dream Vacation:** Diving trip in the Great Barrier Reef (Australia) to see sharks and study ecosystems.