

Stockton Model United Nations International Travel Team

Japan, November 20-27, 2022



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In 2022, 11 students from varying academic disciplines were selected to be a part of the Stockton Model UN International Traveling Team for the National MUN Conference in Kobe, Japan, in partnership with Kobe City University of Foreign Studies. This was the first International Model UN Conference since before the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, so it was a great honor to be in attendance.

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Outcomes, Skills Gained, Awards

On the first day of the cultural tour, we visited the UNESCO World Heritage site where the first atomic bomb was dropped and the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park (Genbaku Dome) and Museum. On the second day, we explored the ancient city of Kyoto, home to numerous UNESCO temples and gardens, where we visited the Kiyomizu-dera Temple Complex and Fushimi Inari Taisha Shrine with its 5,000 vermillion gates. After being immersed in the amazing cultural tours, we officially became “delegates” representing the Republic of Congo (Brazzaville) and the Kingdom of Thailand in a United Nations simulation to discuss important matters of food security in a globalized world, mental health, climate change, nuclear security, and strengthening women’s role in building.

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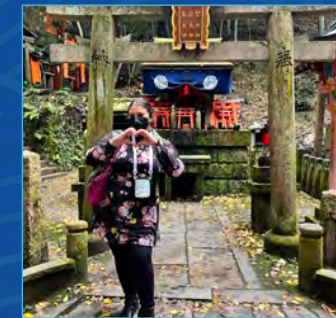
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We would like to sincerely thank President Harvey Kesselman for his generous funding to the Stockton University Model UN International Traveling Team: Japan.

Meet the Team



Emily Kramer,

Class of 2023, Political Science Major (concentration in International Affairs), Language and Culture Studies Major, Global Studies Minor:

“My favorite part of the Model UN travel experience was trying all the delicious food! The first night in Kobe, a group of us went to a local restaurant where the food was amazing, and the workers were all so welcoming and accommodating, even though our group collectively knew less than three words in Japanese. I do not remember the content of our conversations at that dinner, but I do remember laughing until tears streamed down my face.”

Erin Kee,

Class of 2023, Political Science Major, Writing Minor:

“The most challenging part of the journey was going out of my comfort zone to learn new topics for the committee and try new foods while out to eat in Japan.”

Lynn Tran,

Class of 2023, Economics Major, Pre-Law Concentration, Political Science Minor:

“The most unexpected part of my trip was how comfortable I was with taking charge of my working group in terms of creating a shared document and giving out a speech in the chambers of Kobe’s City Hall. This was my first NMUN experience and I felt super proud that I was recognized for my leadership efforts. Giving a speech about food security in Kobe’s City Hall was such a unique experience and made the simulation of the United Nations worthwhile.”

Camille Benoit,

Class of 2024, Political Science-International Affairs, Global Studies Minor:

“My favorite part of the Model UN travel experience is also the reason why I love being a part of the Stockton Model United Nations national team as well. It is the unity and the people you meet while you are there. From the first day of tours, there is a sense of bonding and togetherness with the other schools that are at the conference. It is a much different feeling than any other type of academic conference/competition I have been to in the past. People truly want to make friends, and it is so cool that at this conference, we even meet people who can guide us throughout another country like Japan. It is part of the reason I love being part of the National Model United Nations and being in Japan was definitely an added bonus! I also really got to form great friendships with my group from General Assembly (Mike, Irene and Luka). We really immersed ourselves in the culture and found some really great spots!”

Michael Klein,

Class of 2024, Computer Information Systems Major:

“Preparing for the conference and understanding how best to work with others in a political setting was the most challenging part for me. In particular, researching the Congo proved difficult at most points. There was so much information that I ended up worrying I’d missed key details that would be helpful for the conference. Model UN is something completely outside of my major and general comfort zone, but I’m really glad I tried it out. Our professor and my classmates were able to help me with any questions and build up my confidence leading up to the conference. I learned techniques I could use for better research and was taught what actually being at a conference would be like, and I’m grateful for everyone’s support.”

Moujnir Lewis,

Class of 2023, Psychology Major, Political Science Minor:

“The most challenging part of this conference was hearing from a Hibakusha or a survivor of the Hiroshima Atomic Bombs. As an American, hearing the devastation of this survivor, Ms. Ogura Keiko—who at the time of the bombing was six years old—was difficult to contend with. She spoke of enduring nightmares, self-blame for the aftermath when she gave two victims water, and they died afterward, as well as disbelief that nuclear weapons still exist in this world. Her words have stayed with me, and I am certain that they will continue to inspire me to stay involved in politics and do my part to make a difference in the world.”

Meet the Team



Irenonsen Eigbe,

Class of 2023, Biology Major (concentration in Pre-Professional), Dance Minor:

“The most unexpected part of the trip was how involved I was in the committee. Despite being new, I took the initiative of gathering delegates for our working paper when we needed to begin organizing what everyone was contributing. I became someone my group members would come to if they had a question or needed help explaining their idea, something especially beneficial to the students that didn’t have English as a first language. I was surprised enough seeing how much of a voice I had, but more so when I realized how much of a voice I had for others.”

Detty-Maidanove Exantus,

Class of 2024, Political Science Major (concentration in International Affairs), Business Studies Minor:

“I would say that the most unexpected part of this trip was how fast I was able to befriend the delegates in my committee and how smoothly we all worked well together. As there can often be a spirit of competition rather than collaboration in the room, I was grateful for this surprise which made the committee very enjoyable. I would also add being able to navigate so well around Japan was unexpected. I had thought I would personally have a harder time due to the language barrier.”

Luka Buncic,

Class of 2023, Psychology Major, French Minor:

“Experiencing the culture of Japan in contrast to the United States was unexpected. It is a thing of everyday opposites, from the efficiency of public transit to subtle gestures of gratitude and patience. I think there is a lot that can be learned between both countries.”

Allyson Vezos,

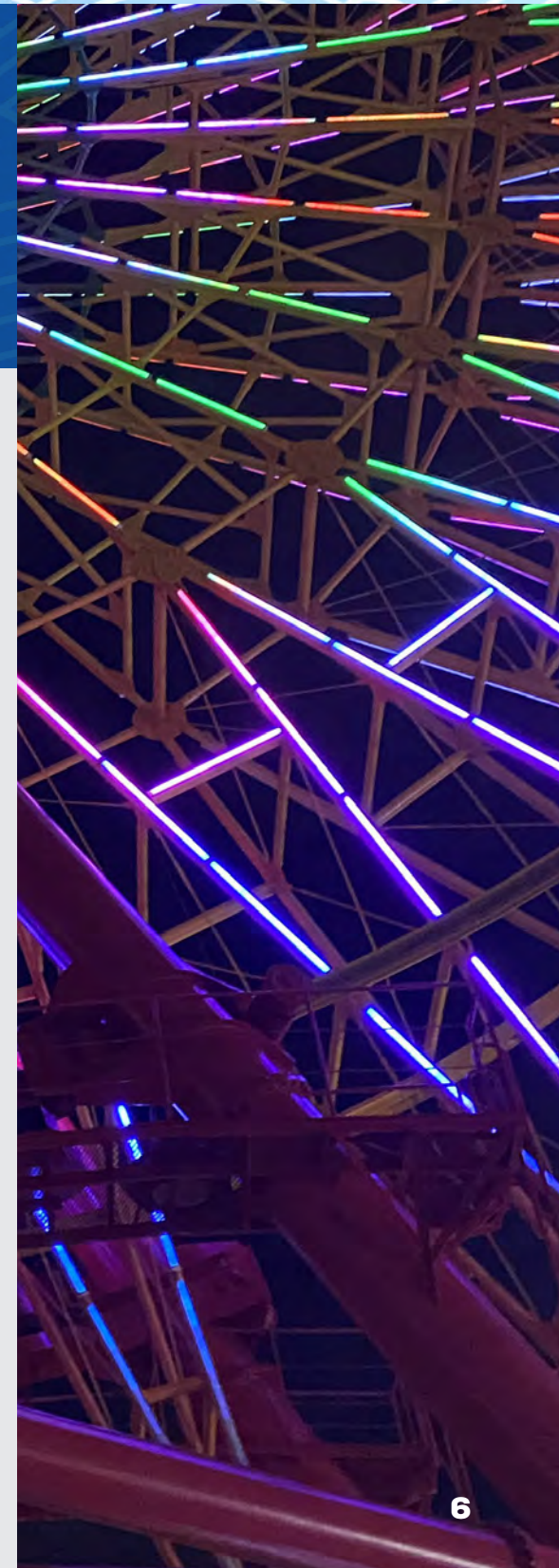
Class of 2023, Biology Major:

“My most unexpected part of the trip was how much I genuinely enjoyed my time participating in the conference. While I was looking forward to being there for the NMUN, I was also a little overwhelmed seeing that there were some days of the conference that started at 8 a.m. and ended at 10 p.m. However, every day of the conference seemed to fly by, and I thoroughly enjoyed my time in committee sessions. I truthfully never thought being in a professional setting could also be so enjoyable.”

Stephanie Kusi Bamfo,

Class of 2023, Social Work Major, Sociology Minor:

“My favorite part of this experience was the fact that I learned insightful skills and knowledge that I will implement into my practice as a future macro social worker. This experience has definitely justified my own thoughts about delving into social policy and international social work, and I will endeavor to work in international non-governmental organizations in the future. Through this whole experience, I have come to realize that I am capable of being a voice for underrepresented communities despite being introverted. I have learned to adequately interject and advocate during negotiations while maintaining my personal values. I was able to break out of my shell and overcome my fear of public speaking while meeting new friends from all over the world.”



Preparation for NMUN-Japan



Preparing for Japan was difficult but rewarding. And once we were in Japan, we were able to see the impact of our newly developed skills in our actual work in United Nations (UN) committees. From the first week of our class with Dr. Tina Zappile, we were assigned to an in-depth country background on our two assigned countries where we learned about environmental issues, freedom scores, political leadership, pressing issues, and tailored our approaches in committee to best reflect each country's actual practices. We then researched extensively about the mandate of our committees— General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council, and the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference—and discussed how we could uphold this mandate and

respectfully encourage peers in the conference to uphold it as well. In preparing for Japan, we were challenged to become as familiar as we could not only with our assigned countries but also with the functions of the different UN bodies. In discussing different solutions to our assigned topics, this enabled us to confidently represent The Kingdom of Thailand and The Republic of the Congo (Brazzaville) as we were familiar with their international cooperation and participation in the World system, their economics, their environment, their issues of war and security, and their peoples' current issues. All this knowledge allowed us to best present solutions to the committees from which our countries could greatly benefit. One of the most difficult, yet also important, tasks we

prepared for was speaking to a survivor of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima. This assignment was given to us about two weeks before we left for Japan; we were asked to watch the documentary, *The Fog of War*, which details the life of Robert S. McNamara, and holds no punches about the devastation of World War II—including the horrific aftermath of both the atomic bombs, and the fire strikes that preceded them. We then took a quiz about the facts of the film, but we were also asked what we, as students representing Stockton University, would say to a survivor and how we discuss our own feelings as people who either identify as American or live in America. This last assignment enabled us to realize that, in addition to being able to deliver impactful speeches, set an agenda, and gain intimate knowledge about our countries and topics, being able to learn from our global history and foster interpersonal relationships that transcend cultural differences, and the difficulties of a shared past was also vital to our success at the conference.



Outcomes, Skills Gained, Awards

There are a lot of reasons for the Stockton University team to be proud of their work from the conference, whether it be conference awards or personal growth, strides were made by everyone. Model UN has taught us important skills on how to be a better global citizens. We have all witnessed the importance of including different perspectives because hearing different perspectives can open your mind to different solutions that you may have not found possible. We also found a high value in uplifting voices to make sure everyone has a seat at the table when creating solutions. Six of our students represented the Republic of Congo on three UN committees. The Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Committee on nuclear weapons was part of two accepted draft resolutions that became officially accepted on the final day of committee. These resolutions focused on suggesting a variety of security measures, from expanding the International Atomic Energy Agency's ability to track nuclear energy to encouraging direct communication between fissile material producers and consumers. Congo, in the General Assembly, was also



a leader within their working group that eventually passed a resolution. The delegates from Congo in the General Assembly were also voted by their peers in the room as "Outstanding" because of their commitment to fairness and equality. The Republic of the Congo maintained its stance within the Economic and Social Council through advocating for the utilization of climate-smart agriculture and implementation of agriculture education. Congo was able to work with other esteemed delegates and contribute ideas towards two working papers—now passed resolutions. The other five students represented Thailand on the same UN committees. In the General Assembly, Thailand

was pivotal in keeping up morale and leading the organization of two working groups that eventually passed two resolutions that addressed climate change and created clear guidelines for countries to follow in mitigating its effects. In the ECOSOC committee, Thailand worked diligently in collaboration with other delegates. With seven papers on the floor to start with, Thailand served as a sponsor on two working papers and a strong advocate for mergers. With the merging process, the seven papers became four and the ECOSOC committee was able to adopt four resolutions on Saturday in the Kobe City Council Chamber. In the While our main goal at the conference is to work together with fellow member states in order to draft resolutions to better understand international issues and the work of the UN, our delegations were honored to receive three total awards for our work in preparation for and in committee; Congo GA receiving the Outstanding Delegation award, Thailand NPT receiving an Outstanding Position Paper award, and the Thailand delegation receiving an Honorable Mention award.

Overall Experience, Touring Japan

By the end of the trip, it was hard to say goodbye to Japan! In such a short time, we became more connected as a group and to the country. All of us are grateful for the experiences and skills we developed in this international setting. We advanced our public speaking skills through numerous speeches and greatly improved our communication, diplomatic, and negotiation skills. We are ready to apply these skills in our future endeavors. We are thankful for the opportunity provided by the Office of the President, as many of us would not even be able to dream of going on an experience like this. It truly enriched our time here at Stockton University, and we will forever look back fondly on the time we spent in Kobe, Japan, representing the university and working towards upholding the key ideals of the United Nations, such as collaboration, peace, and negotiation.

Our first stop for cultural tours in Japan was Hiroshima. The streets of Hiroshima and the Peace Park were gorgeous and served as an incredible introduction to Japan. Despite that, it was a hard day for us. The feeling of being an American in Hiroshima is indescribable.

Our country was responsible for the devastation that occurred there, and we couldn't help but feel remorseful on account of our country's past actions. We heard powerful, firsthand accounts of the atomic bomb being dropped on Hiroshima from survivors, and saw disquieting and moving imagery within the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum. In the end, we gained a different perspective on our country's



history, and a motivation to ensure tragedies like the dropping of the atomic bomb never happen again. On the second day of cultural tours, we had the opportunity to see Kyoto. First, we visited the Kiyomizu Temple. The busy, winding streets leading up to the temple were filled with stores and small restaurants and led up to a breathtaking view of the temple atop the hill. We were able to choose if we wanted to pray, pay our respects to our deceased loved ones, or simply take in the rich history of

the grounds we had the honor of standing upon. We got to overlook the city of Kyoto from the temple, and witnessed many different shrines, idols, and incredible pieces of architecture on temple grounds. Next, we visited the Fushimi-Inari Shrine. The shrine was massive, and we experienced scenic walks through nature while covered by the shrine's many Torii gates. Everywhere we turned, we saw smaller shrines or altars adorned with intricate statues of foxes. During our time on cultural tours, we were led by students from the Kobe City University of Foreign Studies. We loved having them as our guides, as we had enriching conversations about our different ways of life, our hopes for the future, and asked each other questions about our home countries. We bonded with them over the duration of the tours, and loved the experience of making friends with other international students. Overall, the tours themselves were eye-opening and life changing. We got to see the beauty of a country we had never been to before, experience a different culture and way of life, and interact with incredible people we would not have met without Model UN.



NMUN



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