

History of National Model United Nations (NMUN)

National Model United Nations (NMUN) traces its origins to 1927 when it was a simulation of the League of Nations (mid-Atlantic section). The transition to a Model UN simulation began in 1943 and 1944 when model United Nations (World War II allies) simulations were held instead of a Model League of Nations. With the creation of the United Nations, it transitioned to a Model United Nations program in 1946. To ensure the long-term success of NMUN, the organization incorporated as the National Collegiate Conference Association (NCCA) in 1968, a U.S. 501(c)(3) nonprofit educational organization. In 1982 NCCA/NMUN was formally recognized as a registered Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) by the United Nations Department of Public Information. In 2013 NMUN became a registered United Nations Academic Impact member. In 2017 a decision was made to retire the NCCA name and operate both the conferences and the governing body under the NMUN name.

Portions of the New York conferences take place at UN headquarters, when space is available, and give students a hands-on experience in the very institution they are simulating. The strong, enduring relationship between NMUN and the UN provides numerous benefits to students who participate in our New York conferences. The rules of procedure used at NMUN programs were adapted by us from actual UN rules and reviewed by the UN Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) in the 1990s.

Our conferences have also drawn some notable speakers over the decades. Some examples of NMUN•NY keynote speakers include UN Secretaries-General Kurt Waldheim in 1973, Boutros Boutros-Ghali, Kofi Annan in 1999, Ban Ki-moon in 2008 and 2015, UN Deputy Secretaries-General Jan Eliasson in 2013-2016, and Amina J. Mohammed in 2017. Other well-known speakers include The Honorable Susan E. Rice, Permanent Representative of the U.S. to the U.N. in 2010; goodwill ambassador and basketball legend Dikembe Mutombo in 2011; the Honorable Samantha Power, Permanent Representative of the U.S. to the U.N.; His Excellency Thomas Mayr-Harting, Head of European Union Delegation to the U.N.; and Richard Engel, NBC News in 2014. In addition, Eleanor Roosevelt spoke in 1956 and 1961. Ambassador George H. W. Bush, the Permanent Representative of the U.S. to the U.N. spoke in 1972 (he became President of the U.S. in 1989). U.S. First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton gave a video address in 1996.

Over the years we have also been involved in other endeavors. In 1974, we developed the National High School Model UN program (NHSMUN). It was spun-off into a separate nonprofit entity in October 1978 and continues as IMUNA. In the 1990s, we created the Southern Regional Model United Nations program (SRMUN). It was spun-off into a separate nonprofit entity in 1993 to allow the NMUN board to focus on the New York college conference.

NMUN•NY: In the early 1990s, our principal NMUN program in New York City drew more than 1,500 college and university students. By 2001 this number had grown to 2,500 students. In 2004, growth management continued to be an issue and corporate governance improvements were implemented. That same year, a full-time, Executive Director was hired. In 2007, we began hosting NMUN•NY at two separate venues during the same week. By 2010, there were over 5,000 students attending the New York conferences. As the number of student delegates expanded, so did the number of volunteer staff members. By 2012, there were over 120 volunteer staff members assisting with NMUN•NY. In 2013, NMUN•NY split into two separate weeks at the same venue. Currently, NMUN•NY is not only the oldest and largest but also one of the most prestigious, intercollegiate Model United Nations programs in the world.

What is NMUN? Our Model UN activities are experiential education programs in which groups of students are organized as delegations and are assigned to play the role of Member States of the United Nations. Like literature or history, experiential education programs require students to draw on their reservoirs of empathy to see the world through the eyes of others. To effectively simulate their roles as diplomats, participants in NMUN programs must learn the history of their assigned state, the history of the United Nations, the committee structure and rules of the United Nations, and the current perspective on global affairs espoused by their assigned state. By participating in NMUN, students begin to see local and international issues and cultures with a new perspective, find a role for themselves as active participants in the global community, and gain life skills applicable in a variety of contexts.

NMUN•DC: In 2007 NMUN partnered with the Osgood Center for International Studies in Washington, DC to host the first NMUN•DC conference. 378 delegates attended that first year. By 2016 it had grown to over 1,000 attendees. Affiliation with the Osgood Center ceased in 2020.

Non-U.S. Conferences: NMUN began to host international conferences through partnerships with schools based outside of the United States in 2008. These popular conferences allow us to reach out to student populations who cannot afford to come to the United States and provide our U.S. students unique opportunities for cultural experiences inherent in travel.

NMUN Program History by Academic Year				
Academic Year	NY	DC	International	Other U.S.
1927-1967	See Notes Below*			
1968-2006	One Conference			
2006-2007	Two Conferences			
2007-2008	Two Conferences	X		
2008-2009	Two Conferences	X	Xi'an, China Nov. 2008	
2009-2010	Two Conferences	X	Quito, Ecuador Jan. 2010	
2010-2011	Two Conferences	X	Olomouc, Czech Republic Nov. 2010	DC (Model APEC) March 2011
2011-2012	Two Conferences	X	Lille, France Jan.-Feb. 2012	
2012-2013	Two Conferences	X	Xi'an, China Nov. 2012 (canceled in late Oct. by the Chinese government) Galapagos Islands, Ecuador Jan. 2013	
2013-2014	Two Conferences	X	Songdo, South Korea Nov.-Dec. 2013	Portland, Oregon Feb. 2014
2014-2015	Two Conferences	X	Rome, Italy Nov. 2014	
2015-2016	Two Conferences	X	Olomouc, Czech Republic Nov. 2015	
2016-2017	Two Conferences	X	Kobe, Japan Nov. 2016	
2017-2018	Two Conferences	X	Banff, Canada Nov. 2017 Galapagos Islands, Ecuador Jan. 2018	
2018-2019	Two Conferences	X	Xi'an, China Nov. 2018	
2019-2020	Two Conferences (canceled shortly before they were scheduled due to	X (virtual, due to the global pandemic)	Erfurt, Germany Nov.-Dec. 2019	

	COVID-19)			
2020-2021	Two Conferences (held virtually due to the global pandemic)	X	Kobe, Japan Nov. 2020 (postponed until 2022 due to COVID-19)	
2021-2022	Two Conferences	X	Olomouc, Czech Republic Nov. 2021 (canceled before registration opened due to COVID-19)	
2022-2023	Two Conferences	X	Kobe, Japan Nov. 2022	

* The New York conference traces its roots back to 1927 when it was a Model League of Nations. The annual conference was held in different cities on the U.S. east coast. The transition to a Model UN simulation began in 1943 and 1944 when model United Nations (World War II allies) simulations were held instead of a Model League of Nations. In 1946 it became a Model UN. What is now considered the NY conference has been held exclusively in New York City since 1961 (with the exception of the 1963 conference which was held in DC). The NY conference had to be canceled twice: 1945 (WW II travel restrictions) and 2019 (COVID-19 travel restrictions).