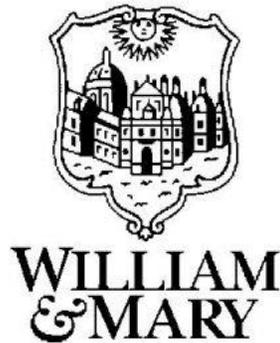


ODU at the 2011 CIA Simulation Review



The trend toward intense college crisis simulations reached a new peak with the CIA simulation held at the College of William and Mary on 7 February 2011. The event was organized by a team from the CIA and Professor Dennis Smith of the Project on Intentional Peace and Security (PIPS) at William and Mary. This was the first competitive crisis simulation run by a team of CIA analysts and by far the largest college simulation the agency has undertaken. Participating schools were:

- Old Dominion University
- The College of William and Mary
- Norfolk State University
- Sweet Briar College
- University of Mary Washington
- University of Richmond
- Virginia Tech
- Washington College

The one-day event set a new mark for intensity and realism. The design deserves special attention by anyone crafting a crisis simulation. It started with an introduction from the CIA's ten-person team from the agency's Directorate of Intelligence, led by super-assertive "Nicole". Each school was given an initial information packet featuring a variety of different intelligence, *aka* "traffic." This traffic focused on a single topic, which for the purpose of this simulation was the hypothetical sudden death of North Korean leader Kim Jong Il, creating a split among his sons, each leading factions vying for national dominance. Teams competed for the ostensible prize of briefing the President as part of the morning Presidential Daily Brief (PDB).

Each team was given three questions: who controls the nuclear weapons, what are the regional implications of the civil war, and lastly, which group will come out ahead? From this point on, a new intelligence packet was given to each group every twenty minutes, four in total. With the last update, the question that each group would have to brief their senior official on was revealed. For this simulation, it was the second question--on the civil war's implications for the region--that dominated.

At this point each group had twenty minutes to not only review the last intelligence packet but prepare their representative on what to present to the senior analyst. After the allotted time had passed, one group member presented their brief, while the other four had one hour to write a situation report. Each team presented its briefing to the assembled audience of all teams. In the final presentations, where public speaking was key, victory went to the team from Norfolk State.

“This simulation was great fun, but our decision not to delineate specific tasks for each group member cost us a lot of time. Our designated CIA Team Chief commended us on the use of graphics and for our situation report, but it was shoddy analysis that failed us.” – Amanda Armstrong

" This was my first conference representing ODU, and I learned a lot about how to analysis, and read information and discuss it within a group. I am very grateful for Amanda, Connor, Taylor, and Kyle for all there help... I had a great time and would do it again." Michelle Clark

“The most vital thing that I got out of this simulation was the importance of answering the question given. Granted our group was lead astray slightly by the advice to tailor our brief to our audience, but in my opinion our group became too focused on a threat to the United States and did not adequately answer the question. I also learned that as a universal rule, the most important thing in any competition is the portion that involves human to human interaction, not the written portion. To win, take preparations for the briefing very seriously.” – Connor Clarke