Future leaders in the realm of international cooperation are gathering in Norfolk to participate in Old Dominion University's 33rd Annual Model United Nations High School Conference, the oldest and most professional U.N. simulation in the region. The conference, sponsored by the university's Model United Nations Society, is being held at the Sheraton Waterside Hotel in downtown Norfolk from Feb. 10-13.

Approximately 850 students, representing 48 high schools across the region and the United States are participating in the program, which has been held at Old Dominion since 1977. This year's delegation includes five students from Minsk International School in Belarus, who are coming to Norfolk with their faculty sponsor, Stephen Stahl, a former graduate student at ODU.

"Partnership is the way of the future," advises United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, in a letter to the student delegates. "The challenges we face are increasingly those of collaboration rather than confrontation. The United Nations is uniquely placed to mobilize the collective effort that is needed for success. You can count on me to do my part, and I will count on you to do yours. … Together, we can set the stage for a new era of global prosperity, more widely and equitably shared. In that spirit, I wish you a most stimulating conference."

Nicki Porter, a senior English major and ODU Model U.N. Society Secretary General, offers this advice to the student delegates: "Please remember that while it is important to talk about current events, it is even more important to act. Take the same passion you used to heatedly debate in your committees and apply it. Start an awareness group, a charity, a nonprofit organization. Take a career in civil service. Whatever you decide, wherever you end up, send us a postcard and let us know how you're changing the world."

Opening ceremonies will be held at 9 a.m. Thursday, Feb. 11, in the Sheraton's International Ballroom. Following a welcome by Porter, ODU President John Broderick and Jean-Bernard Gazarian, of France, will offer opening remarks. Gazarian is a senior fellow and coordinator of the Training Programme for Permanent Missions of the U.N. Institute for Training and Research, who has been with the United Nations since 1946. He has been a speaker at the ODU Model U.N. Conference since 1983.

After the opening, delegates will break into their various committees and discuss topics such as an "Evaluation of Democratic People's Republic of Korea's nuclear disarmament process" at the Security Council session and "Pandemic disease preparedness in developing nations" at the Economic and Social Council, among others.

Faculty forums will be held in conjunction with the student conference, during which guest speakers will deliver presentations on domestic and international political issues. Speakers include five ODU faculty members - Jie Chen, Louis I. Jaffe professor of political science and department chair; Regina Karp, associate professor and graduate program director for international studies; Aaron Karp, lecturer in political science and director of the Model U.N. program; Ambassador Bismarck Myrick, lecturer of history and political science; and Glen Sussman, professor of political science - and Dan Shannon, director of youth outreach and campaigns for People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA).
The 26 participating Hampton Roads schools are:

- **Norfolk**: Booker T. Washington, Granby, Lake Taylor, Maury, Norfolk Academy, Norfolk Collegiate;
- **Chesapeake**: Deep Creek, Grassfield, Hickory, Indian River, Oscar F. Smith;
- **Virginia Beach**: Bishop Sullivan Catholic, First Colonial, Floyd E. Kellam, Princess Anne, Tallwood;
- **Hampton**: Bethel, Kecoughtan, Phoebus, Hampton;
- **Newport News**: Menchville, Warwick, Woodside;
- **Williamsburg**: Lafayette, Warhill; and
- **York County**: York.

For more information about the conference, contact Alan Rogers, assistant director of ODU's Model U.N. Society, at 683-5933 or ajrogers@odu.edu, or visit http://al.odu.edu/mun/conference.

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