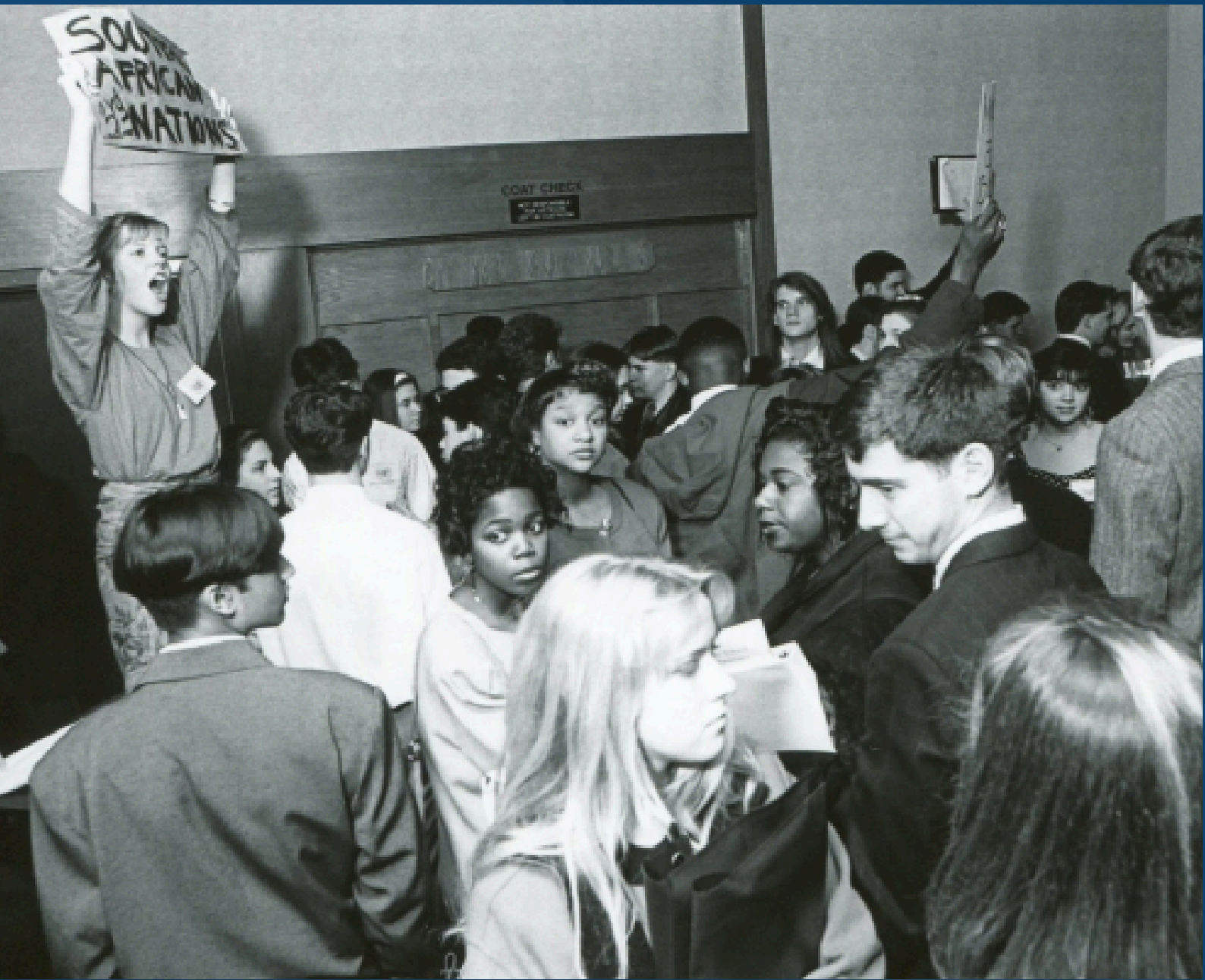


OLD DOMINION UNIVERSITY MODEL UN

Magazine

June 2026



SAVE THE DATE!

ODU Model UN alumni are invited to our Fiftieth Anniversary Conference, 11-14 February 2027. The anniversary event is an extraordinary milestone for the program. You made it happen as a student. You carried the torch. Be there in 2027. More info on pg. 9.



OLD DOMINION
UNIVERSITY

WELCOME TO THE ODU MODEL UNITED NATIONS MAGAZINE

Back in 1976, when Dr. Dave Hager and the newly hired Dr. Jerry Bookin-Weiner launched ODU's Model United Nations program, they already knew where it was headed. The next year, under their guidance, ODU welcomed delegates to its first simulation conference. Now we're preparing for the fiftieth ODUMUNC. The conference will be an extraordinary milestone for our university and the program.

Under their leadership and others like President James Koch, international education and global perspectives became core missions of ODU. The Model UN remains a vital part of that mission. I see it everyday in the work of our students, in the careers of our alumni and their global engagement.

It was MUN that grabbed me in college, that first got this boy from the Ozarks personally engaged in the broader world. It opened a door, leading me to government agencies, research institutes, the UN and ODU. It is wonderful to see the ODU Model UN doing just as much for others, to be part of its fifty year history.

This issue of ODU MUN Magazine celebrates program history and recent accomplishments. You will find an article by the late Dr. David Hager explaining how the program came to be. Alum Keith Easter continues that story, focusing on events in the 1980s.

Future issues will continue their story. As everybody connected with the ODU Model UN knows, it has an intense history.

When I joined the ODU Model UN in 2008, the fiftieth anniversary was not on my mind. But it should have been. The achievements and continuity come from extraordinary dedication. Our alumni made it happen in their day. It is my greatest pleasure to watch the same dedication here, right now.

This inaugural issue of the ODU Model United Nations Magazine testifies to what our alumni accomplished, what they created and sustained, and what our students are building right now. Planning for ODUMUNC 50 is led by Society President Oliver Sedgwick, Secretary-General Gabe Kinnison and Director-General Brian Vernon.

We are working on two rich days of alumni events at ODUMUNC 50: receptions, presentations, tours and more. If you haven't already, help us prepare by doing the Alumni Survey.

An essential source of strength for the program is the commitment of the University. Our student activists and leaders come from all across campus. Lately we've had something special with engineering and pre-med majors. But our home always will be in the College of Arts and Letters. Nobody is more supportive of our program than Dean Laura Delbrugge. If you see her, thank her.

If you have not visited ODU recently, you can look forward to many surprises. The university has developed and expanded over the years. Enrollment is over 23,000. In 2005 ODU opened its biggest expansion project, east of Hampton Boulevard. In 2016 ODU began opening new student facilities along 49th Street. In 2021 it was named an R1 research university by the Carnegie Foundation. Recently the university finished new buildings for Chemistry and Health Sciences. As I write, from my window in the Batten Arts and Letters Building, I see concrete being poured for the fifth floor of the new Biology Building.

When you are here, visit the Model UN. You are guaranteed a warm welcome. You will see differences there, too. Maybe you have not been to our home on the second floor of BAL. It is not the old house on 49th Street. But alumni will recognize everything else. The most important elements of the program will never change. We are building on traditions our alumni created and enriched. It feels great.

Keep up with the ODU Model UN by [checking our website](#). There is a lot to see. In August we will welcome new staff. Tim Kidd, better known at ODU as Director of the Bachelor in International Studies, will join the Model UN as Associate Director. With his involvement we gain reassuring depth and continuity.

Stay in touch. Find our [Alumni Contact Form](#) and also take the ODUMUNC 50 Alumni survey. Can you contribute to the Fiftieth Anniversary or to the next issue of the Magazine? We would love to hear from you

Aaron Karp

Director, ODU Model United Nations



SAVE THE DATE ALUMNI REUNION 2027

01

All ODU Model UN alumni are invited to our Fiftieth Anniversary Conference, 11-14 February 2027.

The anniversary event is an extraordinary milestone for the program. You made it happen as a student. You carried the torch. Be there in 2027. More info on pg. 9.

Help prepare:

[Complete the Model UN Alumni Info Survey](#)

ODU's Intercollegiate Model UN Achievements 2025-26

ODU made it to four intercollegiate model UN conferences this year, winning awards against the strongest competition in the nation. Our destinations were Boston, Bloomington, Chicago and Charlottesville.

ODU's Delenn Main won Best Delegate (first place) at the Boston Area Model UN Conference (BarMUN) in the autumn. In April, MUN President Brayden Beall was part of our delegation to the University of Chicago's conference (ChoMUN), where he won Best Delegate. At the same conference, a verbal commendation (fourth place) went to Elizjah Eddy. Both Brayden and Elizjah graduate this May.

The ODU conference program for 2025-26 was designed and led by our College Conference Coordinator, junior international studies major Delenn Main. Just one week before, Delenn won an Honorable Mention (third place) at the University of Virginia Crisis Simulation Conference (VICS). Last year she came in fourth at the same conference.

The biggest surprise at the UVA event was ODU freshman pre-med major Holden Plemmons, who won the *The Spirit of VICS* award, given to the delegate who most impressed the conference organizers. Last year the same award went to ODU's J Belin. 'My goal was not necessarily to get an award', Holden confessed after. It was the second year in a row for ODU. Next year Holden will serve ODU as Secretary-Treasurer for our high school conference, ODUMUNC 50.



Delenn Main and Holden Plemmons, with their awards at VICS 2026



ODU delegates at the Virginia Crisis Simulation Conference (VICS) in Charlottesville, March 2026

After returning from the University of Virginia event, Elise Corbin said, 'As a freshman at ODU and a new member of the delegation, I thoroughly enjoyed how welcoming everyone is. My favorite experiences from the conference all surround speaking in front of my committee; you don't believe you can do it until you do!'

I spoke once, and from there found the confidence to speak several times and lead committee debates, which other delegates in my committee complimented me on. Gabrielle Edwards, a junior biomedical sciences major, and part of our delegations at both Charlottesville and Chicago, shared the same sentiment, 'We're a fun and close-knit group that trust each other. Most people here are like my family, and I love the bond that we have.'

Matthew Juarez, Model UN leader and President of the ODU Political Science Association, said after Chicago, 'The best part of this conference overall was working with my team of delegates who provided great advice and camaraderie throughout the conference. Our head delegate, Delenn Main, led a very organized and successful experience. Without her, our delegation would not have performed so great.' Delenn Main note that 'winning an Honorable was incredibly rewarding, but what meant the most was how immersive and intense the experience felt from start

to finish! Every session was engaging, making my time stand out as a high quality experience like no other!'

Delenn says, 'Being able to represent Old Dominion University makes me so proud to be a Monarch. This year, ODU as a delegation stood out. Comments from other schools such as the University of Georgia and Georgetown University reflected that, with each and every ODU delegate upholding a high standard of conduct and competition. I couldn't be prouder of this year's delegates!' Next year, Delenn will study in China.

According to Teaching Professor Aaron Karp, Director of the ODU Model UN, 'Our students compete directly against the best known schools in the country and emerge victorious and accomplished. I know nothing else that reveals as much about the talent and ambition we build here.'

Highlights from ODUMUNC 49



Secretary-General Elizjah Eddy and committee chairs Oliver Sedgwick and J. Belin at ODUMUNC 49 (2026)

ODUMUNC 49 (2026) was an extraordinary success, reflecting the planning and devotion of the ODU leadership and staff. We welcomed 648 delegates from 42 schools, representing 72 delegations. Participants came from as close as one mile away and as distant as Michigan, and Pennsylvania. Delegates passed a total of 27 resolutions.

As always, the conference was an extraordinary event for the ODU staff. We were led by Secretary-General Elizjah Eddy, Director-General Eugenia Asigbee, Secretary-Treasurer Gabe Kinnison and Graduate Counselor Brian Vernon.

Their leadership and commitment ensured our success. 73 other staff played essential roles. They wrote the issue briefs, organized and ran the three-day conference sessions, and completed the thousands of managerial tasks alumni know so well.

The conference benefited greatly from major support by ODUMUN alumni, the ODU Graduate Program in International Studies, the ODU campus community, Hampton University, Regent University and the exceptional professionalism of the Sheraton Norfolk Waterside Hotel.

But nobody deserves congratulations like the 120 award winners are listed below. Congratulations to all delegations for their impressive performances. Congratulations to everybody who made the conference an extraordinary success.



ODUMUNC 49 was the most intense and rewarding experience I've had. Behind the scenes, coordinating staff and logistics, pushed me to lead under pressure and solve problems in real time, not just talk about them. It showed me that the success of something this big depends on the people doing the unseen work just as much as those in the spotlight.
-Eugenia Asigbee, Director-General

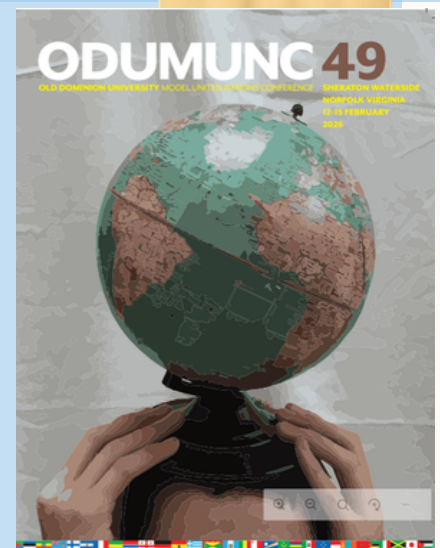
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ODUMUNC 49 was more than just a conference, it was a reflection of what ODUMUN stands for at its core. Beyond the debates and resolutions, it's about building leaders who can think critically, adapt under pressure, and work collectively toward solutions. This conference showed how our mission extends beyond the committee room, preparing delegates and staff alike to engage with real-world challenges through diplomacy, collaboration, and service. ODUMUNC 49 was not just an event, but a continuation of our broader commitment to developing globally minded leaders.
- Elizjah Eddy, Secretary-General



2026 ODUMUNC WINNERS

Congratulations to the winning schools at ODUMUNC 49

- **Best Delegation:** James River Academy of Diplomacy, Richmond, Virginia
- **Outstanding Delegation:** Leonardtown High School, Leonardtown, Maryland
- **Gazarian Award for Diplomacy:** Maury High School, Norfolk, Virginia



The Jean Bernard Gazarian and Gilbert Crippen Scholarship



Jean Bernard Gazarian (center) with ODUMUN Director Maria Fornella (right)



Gilbert Crippen

Tyler Rector (Class of 2026) is best known in the ODU Model UN as the public face of the 2025 conference, ODUMUN 48, when he was Secretary-Treasurer. Tyler also stands out as the first recipient of the *Old Dominion Model U.N. Society Alumni Jean Bernard Gazarian and Gilbert Crippen Scholarship*.

An endowed scholarship for MUN students was an enduring goal for everybody associated with the program. Started in 2016 and endowed with the support of innumerable alumni, faculty and friends of the Model UN, the scholarship owes a special debt to the leadership of James Ryan Grizzle (Class of 2004), Jon F. Hays (2008) and Robert Paramore (1995).

The scholarship commemorates the extraordinary gratitude of MUN alumni for two of their greatest mentors. Gazarian was an international civil servant at the UN and frequent guest at ODU Model UN events. Gilbert (Gil) Crippen taught at Denbigh, Warwick and other high schools in Newport News. He also was adjunct professor of geography at Christopher Newport University and ODU.

The scholarship goes to a full-time sophomore, junior or senior who is a member of the Model UN Society, selected by the ODU Office of Financial Aid.

Tyler was awarded the scholarship of USD 1000 twice, in 2024-25 and 2025-26.

While finishing his last term, Tyler shared his thoughts about his Model UN experience and what comes after.

What does your ODUMUN experience mean to you? ODU Model UN connected me with students who were passionate about the world and couldn't resist a spirited debate. It opened up travel I wouldn't have done otherwise, taking me to conferences and cities I'd never have seen on my own. More than anything, it was a chance to work shoulder-to-shoulder with some of the sharpest students I've ever met. The friendships and habits of mind I built there have shaped how I approach every room I walk into now.

Tell us about being the first Gazarian - Crippen scholarship recipient? It meant the first semester in my college career where I wasn't juggling two jobs alongside a full course load. For the first time, I could actually give my classes and research the attention they deserved instead of running on fumes. Being the first alumni recipient also carries a weight. I don't take lightly. It was a vote of confidence from people who walked this path before me. I hope to live up to it and someday be in a position to pay it forward.

What happens after graduation? I am working towards getting into an MD/PhD program to pursue a career in academic medicine. The plan is to split my time between caring for patients and running a research lab, letting each side sharpen the other. Academic medicine is the rare field where curiosity and compassion pull in the same direction, and that's exactly where I want to spend my career. It's a long road, but it's the one I have been working toward for years



Tyler Rector, Class of 2026

In the Beginning: Roots of the ODU Model United Nations Program

David R. Hager, Ph.D., 1941-2020, was Professor of Higher Education and International Studies at ODU, Chair of the Political Science and Geography Department, Assistant Dean of the College of Arts and Letters, Dean of Graduate Studies, Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs and Acting Provost.

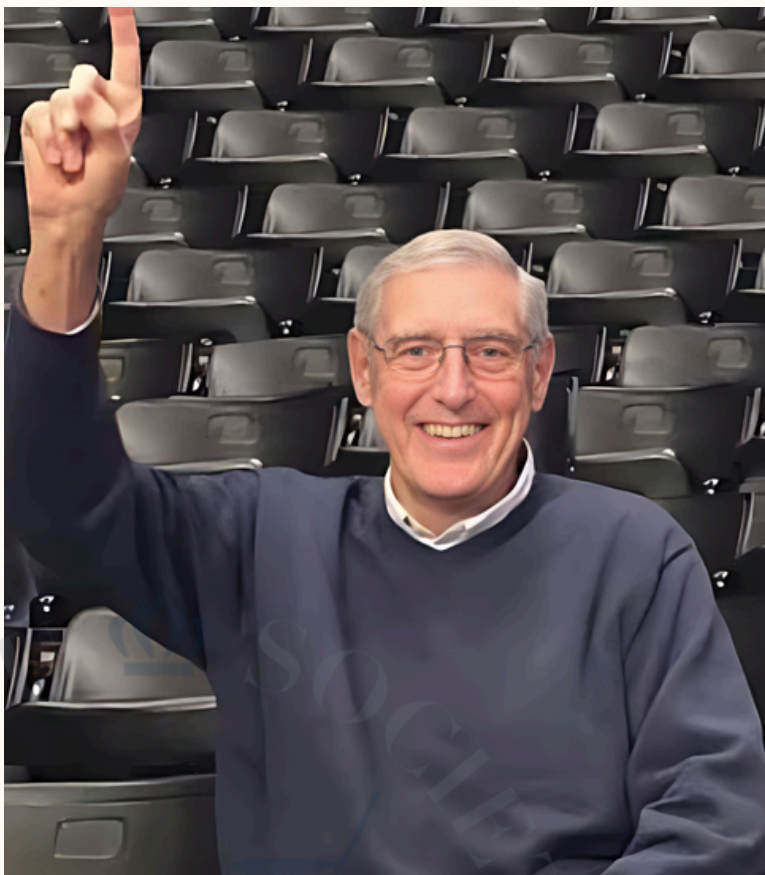
In this article, based on a manuscript he wrote in 2013 and never published before, Dr. Hager explains how the ODU Model UN came to be evolved in its early years.

The Old Dominion University Model United Nations (MUN) program can trace its beginnings to several strands from the 1970s and 80s that nurtured the MUN program and sustained it.

The first strand was the efforts to establish a curricular emphasis in international studies within the political science and history bachelor's degree programs. When I joined the political science department in the late 1960s, there were a few courses in the area that were available in the bachelor of arts program. The courses and areas of interest were expanded with the addition of new faculty to ODU's Department of Political Science and Geography, such as Dr. John A. W. Bennett and myself.

Despite the addition of these resources and expertise, we were a long way from considering initiating even a master's in the discipline. This was the case even though to us it seemed obvious given ODU's geographic location in a major port and a host of military neighbors with international responsibilities.

The latter included NATO's Supreme Commander Atlantic (now the Atlantic Command Transformation), the world's largest naval base, and the Armed Forces Staff College (now the Joint Forces Staff College). Our view was that an expanded menu of international studies programming, at the undergraduate and graduate levels, should be implemented as soon as possible to serve their needs and develop graduates with strong international relations backgrounds.



However, those at ODU who were responsible for its long-range planning efforts during the early to mid-1980s did not share either our perspective or enthusiasm for launching a major effort in international studies.

In fact, a nationally-known higher education consultant advising ODU on its transition from college to university, Dr. Lewis Mayhew, questioned whether the institution should even consider international studies as an emphasis area at all in its long-range planning. In spite of this setback, new international courses were developed, new curriculum implemented, albeit slowly, and eventually a master of arts in international studies emerged as a concrete statement of the overall initiative.

Years later, an interdisciplinary PhD in the field was added to the university's offerings, but not without some difficulty in gaining the approval of the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia and a failed attempt to implement a PhD in Military History.

Most importantly during the mid to later 1980s, ODU began to seriously embrace international programming as an element of its mission and goals. This theme was explicated through a series of strategic plans that expanded the concept beyond the curriculum to include expanding international student enrollment, study abroad, and increased international course offerings and related programming. The expansion matured into a strategic initiative that Old Dominion would become the premier international university in Virginia.

It was within this context that the development and initiation of a model UN program emerged. The program was connected to the strength and popularity of international relations, and law courses that were regularly taught and a substantial cadre of students interested in more opportunities to learn about international politics and organization and, most importantly pursue advanced study and careers in these fields.

The second strand woven into the roots of the MUN program was the effort undertaken by the international studies faculty in the Department of Political Science and Geography to connect with and coordinate the internationally-oriented civic organizations in the Hampton Roads (then known as Tidewater) in order for them to be supportive of initiatives to expand international studies at ODU. This initiative developed by Dr. E. Grant Meade, the then chair of the Department of Political Science and Geography. His objective was to strengthen our program and gain

the support of influential members of the community who were members of these organizations. A corollary to his proposal was that the university also serve as a secretariat for these organizations, providing functions similar to an executive director's office.

Dr. John Bennett was selected to work with the newly-formed World Affairs Council (WAC), the English Speaking Union, and Alliance Française. I worked with the Tidewater Chapter of the United Nations Association of the United States (UNA-USA). Together, we provided the link between the organization and ODU and we both assumed leadership positions in the WAC and UNA-USA, bringing the organizations closer in line behind the proposition that international affairs were important to the Tidewater Virginia community and that ODU should support the development of its faculty, curricula, research, and outreach efforts in this direction. These organizations and their members lobbied for an expression of this international dimension in the institution's mission and goals.

The UNA was an important factor in the ultimate development of the MUN program at ODU. The local chapter of this national organization was born in the early post-WWII era and inaugurated with an event that featured Eleanor Roosevelt in 1947. The Tidewater UNA provided support for more emphasis on the UN in order to a greater understanding of the organization and its capabilities as well as its potential contributions to achieving world peace. In addition to

verbal support, the UNA provided access to its guest speakers and programs for ODU faculty and students. The organization also provided financial support for international and UN-related programming at the university. One such initiative was the UN Seminar that I implemented in 1970. Aside from developing a group of students at ODU with in-depth knowledge of international politics and an exposure to the workings of the UN, the seminar produced a cadre of UN Secretariat officials and member government diplomats who came to know ODU and could be called upon to support its growing international studies curriculum and related programming, such as the Model UN that came later, with visits to campus, materials, guidance, and access to information and contacts.

It was from this cadre that Jean Gazarian emerged as one of the most helpful individuals at the UN to ODU with the annual UN Seminars and the nascent idea of the Model UN program. The former Under-Secretary General for General Assembly Affairs was a veteran at the UN, having joined the Secretariat staff as a simultaneous translator in 1946.

Gazarian rose steadily through the ranks and achieved considerable influence, serving with several Secretaries-General and at historic times such as Premier Nikita Khrushchev's shoe banging response to Sir Anthony Eden's speech to the General Assembly and the speech of the Palestine Liberation Organization's (PLO) leader Yasser Arafat, where he appeared armed before the General Assembly delegates. Jean Gazarian's willingness to help ODU with its plans for UN-related programs and regular participation in the UN Seminar made him an invaluable ally.

Years later, following his retirement from active UN service, ODU conferred an honorary degree on Jean Gazarian for his many contributions to the UN and financial support for students to participate in the UN Seminar came directly from civic organizations in the Tidewater community, most importantly the UNA and World Affairs Council.

Even after the Tidewater Chapter of the UNA ceased to exist, it dedicated the resources remaining in its treasury to the support of students participating in the UN Seminar and related programs. Similarly, the World Affairs Council consistently supported this program with student scholarships throughout its more than 40 year history. While the UN Seminar served to provide a unique educational experience, it did not fully meet all of the desires of internationally-oriented students either enrolled or entering ODU. Many new students came to ODU with experience with Model UN at their high schools.

The fourth strand that of the roots came from a newly-initiated Center for International Programs in the 1980s, led Dr. Jerome Bookin-Weiner. It was a time when I served as acting provost and, as a result, was able to advance the international agenda as well as support and gain approval of his proposal to launch a model UN program, under the auspices of the Center.

The program would be designed for high school and, eventually, college students. It began modestly and grew rapidly to become among the largest, if not the largest, in the US, that attracted the support and active involvement of UN officials and diplomats who had participated in the annual UN Seminars in New York.

Dr. Bookin-Weiner's work was carried forward and expanded by subsequent directors of the Center, such as Dr. John P. Broderick, and faculty who assumed responsibility for the MUN. In particular, these included Dr. Christine Drake, Maria Fornella and Aaron Karp. They provided the leadership to the MUN program, organized the high school and college conferences, prepared ODU's teams and conference leaders, introduced innovations such as the Historical Security Council and Faculty Seminars and expanded the scope of the MUN to encompass international experiences, such as at the International Court of Justice at the Hague. (*continues on pg. 9*)

That started something by Keith Easter



My membership in ODU MUN Society helped me become the adult I am today. It directed me into my current career as an educator. After my attending the conference as a high school delegate in 1983, I chose to attend ODU to be part of the group and continued to be part of the group even after I graduated from ODU. My involvement with the ODU program began as a high school student from Frank W. Cox High School representing Iraq at the 1983 high school conference.

That started something that continued from 1983 to 1990, as a member of the ODU MUN Society Secretariat, from shortly after arriving at ODU. My participation included serving as president of the Disarmament and Special Political Committees, ECOSOC, an ICJ lawyer for Argentina for the Falkland/ Malvinas, and Under-Secretary General of the High School Conference 1986 and 1987.

A big moment was convening the ODU College Conference in 1986 as Secretary-General. Held in the Webb center, the crisis simulation centered on a historical International Court of Justice trying the outbreak of WW I. I recall throwing a big party for the college faculty after the college conference in 1986 at my townhouse in Olde Towne Portsmouth.

Meanwhile, we were active off campus too. I accompanied the UN Seminar class and Dr. David Hager on trip to New York in 1986 and 1987. As a delegate representing ODU, I received awards for best delegate from University of Pennsylvania in their League of Arab States in 1986. There also were honorable mentions at that conference other years and at for representing Japan at National MUN,

the latter in a joint delegation with a student from Japan in the model International Atomic Energy Association.

It was extraordinary to be selected to represent ODU as a student scholar for the summer Petra Program in Jordan in 1986. An article about my experience there, "On Being in Jordan", appeared in International Program Notes, Spring 1987. I remember being reprimanded for beginning a relationship with a delegate that was not in my committee.

Dorothy Burton was then a delegate from Portsmouth Catholic High School who later served in various positions in the ODU secretariat from 1985-1990. Later we were married—the first MUN marriage—and had the first Model UN baby with the birth of Catherine Dawson Easter, born on 10 June 1989.

Even so, Dr. Weiner instituted a NO Fraternization rule with delegates and we had a Secretariat decorum sheet drawn up for society members to follow. Many people called it the Easter Rule. By the way, the baby, Catherine, is now 22 years old and in graduate school studying to be a special education teacher.

Model UN introduced me to Kathryn Ogg. I have written about her influence in "Lifelong learner Kathryn Ogg a truly inspiring woman", Old Dominion University Alumni Magazine, Summer 2004.

Then there were tragedies. I was serving as a committee chair at Garfield High School's MUN conference in 1987, along with other members of the ODU MUN secretariat helping out by running the sessions. A student from Denbigh High School, representing Micronesia, Darnel Draper, collapsed while reading her speech. We attempted to administer CPR until an ambulance came and the crew took her to hospital where she was pronounced dead from a brain aneurysm. She was only 17 years old.

I have since run a successful MUN Society at Williamsburg Middle School in Arlington Virginia winning over 50 awards in four years at conferences at University of Virginia and William & Mary, where the middle school students competed against high school students. We actually came to the 25th annual ODU MUN Conference in 2002.

Currently I am Social Studies Department chair at Freedom High School in Woodbridge, Virginia.

We had a MUN Society, but it is currently not active. My international engagement continues in teaching Government and world history courses, as well as organizing and leading annual student spring break trips to Europe and Central America for high school and middle school students.

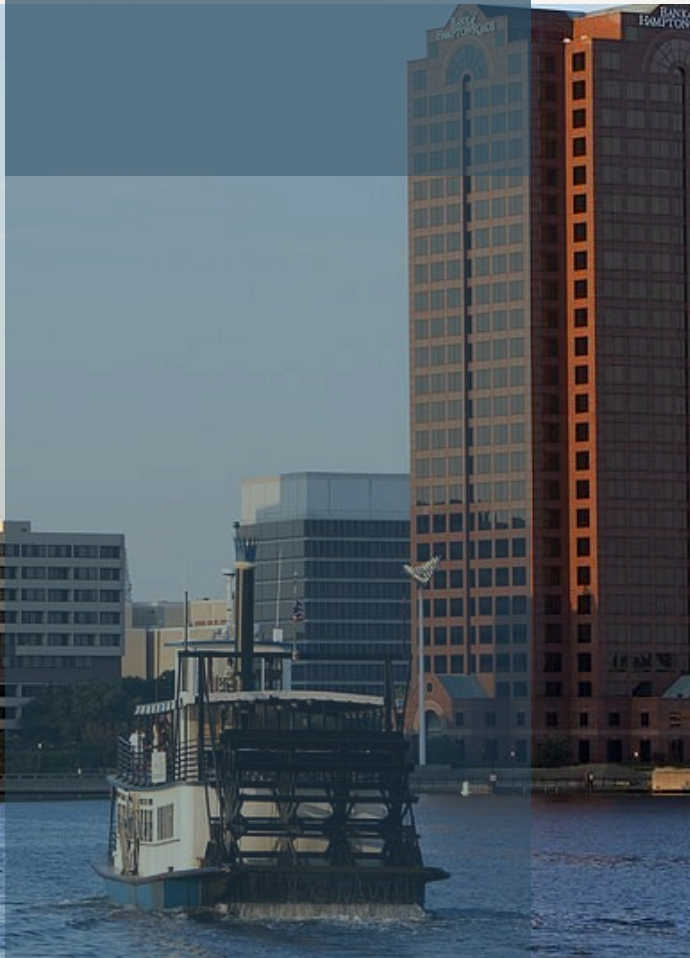
Continuation of Hager's article...

Through their creative and selfless efforts and with the continuing support of the university, the MUN has become an integral part of the ODU's international studies programming and an element that continues to contribute to its mission and goals.

The final strand of development that contributed to the initiation and growth of the MUN were ODU's efforts attract and retain high quality undergraduate students. Availability of a model UN program was viewed as one part of a larger strategy that would attract high achieving high school student to ODU. It joined other initiatives such as the formation of the Honors College and renewed emphasis on departmental-based honors programs in the plans to address the needs and desires of such students and recruit them to its entering freshmen classes.

The benefit to the MUN program was the active support, including financial resources that it received from the leadership of the Office of Admissions, including its current head Dr. Alice McAdory. This interest and support provided an important part of the foundation upon which the MUN rested.

All together, these various strands formed the root system of the MUN program. Some of the efforts were planned and some were serendipitous. Whatever their source or motivation, these came together to be the basis for what emerged as an exemplar of an effective and attractive program that provided a meaningful educational experience for its participants and leadership as well as significantly contributing to the achievement of the international dimensions of Old Dominion's mission and goals.



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Alumni Reunion at ODUMUNC 50 11-14 February 2027

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The anniversary is an extraordinary milestone for the program. You made it happen as a student. You carried the torch. You should be there in 2027.

Alumni and guests are invited to the conference and special events, including alumni receptions, presentations, the campus tour and more. If you haven't been back to the ODU campus for a while, be ready for surprises.

The Conference will return again to the Norfolk Sheraton Waterside Hotel. There will be a special room bloc for alumni.

Save the date, 11-14 February 2027!

Help prepare: [Complete the Model UN Alumni Info Survey](#)



Sunday morning, earlier this year at
ODUMUNC 49.

For Further Information Contact:

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