

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

UTRGV’s Model United Nations Club earns two awards at national conference

By Steven Masso

RIO GRANDE VALLEY, TEXAS – APRIL 6, 2018 – Eight UTRGV students attended the annual conference of the National Model United Nations in New York City in March, and brought home two awards.

The students made the trip as part of a special topics course in political science taught by Dr. Michelle Keck, associate professor of political science, who also serves as the adviser for the [UTRGV Model UN Club](#).

The Model UN organization gives students hands-on experience by having them participate in educational simulations of UN meetings and other activities dealing with international relations.

This year’s conference dealt with issues regarding the [Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons](#), the [International Organization for Migration](#), the [Third Committee of the General Assembly of the United Nations](#), and more than a dozen other international agencies.

Seniors Janet Ekezie and Giovanni Rosas Escobedo won a position paper award for the General Assembly 3 Committee – which means their paper was judged to be in the top 10 percent of all the papers entered. The paper addressed the topics of religious intolerance, ensuring equitable access to education and the right to self-determination.

In addition, the entire UTRGV delegation, representing Sierra Leone, won an honorable mention delegation award.

“It was challenging and required a lot of research,” Escobedo said. “For instance, I may personally lean more progressive, but we had to step back and look at the population of Sierra Leone to get their perspective in order to make the best decision.”

Ekezie said the conference is especially important for students interested in working at the international level.

“Even if you aren’t a political science major, this is a great opportunity to address huge issues, create awareness and set the tone,” she said.

This is the second year UTRGV has had students participate in the conference.

The trip was sponsored by the UTRGV Office of Global Engagement, the College of Liberal Arts, and the Division of Student Success.

Following are the students who went to New York City.

- Michael Schlater
- Ebony Saucedo
- Janet Ekezie
- Fernando Rodriguez
- Samantha Acuna
- Jose Escobedo
- Phillip Taboada
- Giovanni Rosas Escobedo

Keck said the conference has many benefits for the students.

“They do public speaking, writing, problem-solving, and get to practice their negotiation skills,” she said. “And the conference is an international competition, so they get to interact with other students from all over the world.”

ABOUT UTRGV

The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley (UTRGV) was created by the Texas Legislature in 2013 as the first major public university of the 21st century in Texas. This transformative initiative provided the opportunity to expand educational opportunities in the Rio Grande Valley, including a new School of Medicine, and made it possible for residents of the region to benefit from the Permanent University Fund – a public endowment contributing support to the University of Texas System and other institutions.

UTRGV has campuses and off-campus research and teaching sites throughout the Rio Grande Valley including in Boca Chica Beach, Brownsville (formerly The University of Texas at Brownsville campus), Edinburg (formerly The University of Texas-Pan American campus), Harlingen, McAllen, Port Isabel, Rio Grande City, and South Padre Island. UTRGV, a comprehensive academic institution, enrolled its first class in the fall of 2015, and the School of Medicine welcomed its first class in the summer of 2016.

CUTLINE

Eight UTRGV students attended the annual conference of the National Model United Nations in New York City in March, and brought home two awards. Shown here, UTRGV seniors Giovanni Rosas Escobedo and Janet Ekezie won a position paper award for the General Assembly 3 Committee, for placing in the top 10 percent of all the papers entered. In addition, the entire

UTRGV delegation, representing Sierra Leone, won an honorable mention delegation award. The students made the trip as part of a special topics course in political science taught by Dr. Michelle Keck, associate professor of political science, who also serves as the adviser for the UTRGV Model UN Club. The trip was sponsored by the UTRGV Office of Global Engagement, the College of Liberal Arts, and the Division of Student Success. (Courtesy Photo)

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