

Salutations to the delegates, advisors, judges, observers, volunteers and others who made this conference possible,

The Secretariat would like to cordially welcome you to Winthrop University in Rock Hill, South Carolina for the forty-fourth annual Winthrop Model United Nations Conference.

This program and the university it calls home wish to foster diplomacy, leadership, professionalism, and cooperation among up and coming generations. Winthrop's Model United Nations has continually strived to build upon these foundational principles among both university and high school students. In doing so, it has also tried to imbue these students with the skills to have constructive dialogues on the ever relevant, often contentious contemporary issues in the hopes that they will take these experiences and skills into an ever more complex global society.

These efforts have led the Secretariat this year to focus on **International Advocacy through Organizational Collaboration** as the conference theme. Students will have to focus on and deal with the issues provided in complex manners, while taking a holistic approach to how the resolutions they create are actually implemented. After all, international change can only be accomplished after the success of many combined efforts on the ground. Looking at those efforts, whether they are community organizations, advocacy groups for the underrepresented or disenfranchised, or other NGOs, can be critical in determining if a resolution made will be met with success in the world because students will be able to critically analyze all the different parts to the implementation of these policies from funding to organization, purpose, and accountability.

Reflecting these debates, this year's conference will have the United Nation's Environment Programme as its rotating committee. This forum will allow its delegates to debate the issues regarding this topic, while also allowing them to come up with coordinated and realistic approaches to this pressing issue.

This year, the Economic Commission of Latin America and the Caribbean will serve as the regional Special Committee. Mass development and political instability in much of the area exhibit in microcosm some of the grand divides in industrial development, geopolitics, and social status which affect nations the world over. Central and South America host many outcries of corruption, humanitarian crises, and disparities in power that the world has to offer, so this committee should force delegates to consider many angles of debate in order to find solutions to these issues.

Our keynote speaker this year will be Mr. Matthew Burkhart. Since graduating from Tufts University with a degree in International Development and NGO Management, Mr. Burkhart has been a global advocate for underrepresented and underprivileged peoples through his work with Catholic Relief Services. Given his passion for helping people in any way possible, the Secretariat is excited to hear him share his story of how his organizational experience influenced his ability to be an international advocate for many.

We thank you for your participation in a Winthrop tradition which involves much of the community and ignites passions for leadership and global citizenship among young people in South Carolina and further afield.

Sincerely,

Lauren Hill – Secretary General

Austin Spencer – Director General

Kennedy Mayers – Coordinator General