

Missoulian

UM students among top delegations at Model U.N. meeting in Paris

By CHELSI MOY of the Missoulian | Posted: Monday, February 13, 2012 8:30 pm

University of Montana students returned to Montana from Paris last week after bringing three dozen developing countries to the table to craft a plan to build a sustainable, green economy as a way to eradicate poverty.

OK, so they weren't the actual leaders of those countries, but the students may have proved themselves as future leaders on the world stage.

The students took part in the Model United Nations European Conference, where they acted as representatives of Cambodia.

The university walked away from the conference as one of the top five delegations out of 50 participants. And each of the four UM students also earned individual awards, as voted by their peers.

"It was a bonus to realize that we did that well," said Robert Cahill, a senior earning a triple degree in business marketing, management and international business. "As a university, we've left an impression in New York and in France that it doesn't matter if you come from an Ivy League school or public school, that we can still compete with you guys."

UM has come home with honors from the Model U.N. conference in New York City the past five of six years, and last year UM ranked in the top 10 percent of the delegates representing about 190 countries.

That's why this year, UM decided to step up to the international stage by sending four delegates to France to tackle global issues. The team was Cahill; Madeline Bermes, a junior studying international relations; Madison Brooke, a sophomore studying international relations; and Stephen Carnes, a senior studying international relations.

Eight UM students are now preparing for the national conference in New York City in March. The students write speeches and research papers on a country assigned to them at random. However, Cahill said achieving success has more to do with a delegation's ability to negotiate, lead, communicate and motivate than it does with research.

"The end result is not to win awards, but the students want to get recognized for all the hard work they've done," he said.

UM has had a Model United Nations club for 45 years, and this year's group numbers about 25.

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