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- High School Model UN Liaison position, NCWA contract position.
- Led workshops for high school Model United Nations (UN) students on public speaking, debate, research, and strategy to improve delegate performance and enrollment.
- Trained students, judges, and FGCU club members on committee rules and procedures for Model UN conferences.

Background

I went to high school in Naples, and during my time at FGCU, I became part of the Model UN club. Initially, I was engaged in committees related to the Human Rights Council or DISEC. In my junior and senior years, I transitioned to FGCU through their dual enrollment program, becoming a full-time student there. Despite being a full-time student at FGCU, I continued to

participate in high school clubs, and that is how I got introduced to the FGCU Model UN club. It was a smooth transition for me.

Can you provide a brief overview of your background and experience in international affairs?

In high school, my involvement in debate club and other activities like JSA and mock trial all revolved around the debate aspect, and that was my connection to international affairs back then. I competed in various events that circled around debating. Moving on to college, I chose to major in history, primarily focusing on the past. Model UN became my sole extracurricular activity that dealt directly with international affairs. The courses I took in high school delved into subjects like Russian history, French history, and World War Two, providing a foundation for my interest in global affairs.

Were there any specific courses or experiences that significantly shaped your understanding of global issues?

I participated in a program called the Washington Center, specifically related to global affairs. In this program, you apply and get assigned an internship, which could be in various fields, like a law firm or interning for a senator in DC. Due to COVID, my internship was virtual. I also took a course on international relations and human rights as part of the program.

Originally on the track to law school, my first internship was with Grossman Young and Hammond, an immigration law firm. There, we worked on issues like work visas for chefs and similar professions. Later, I interned for the Department of Justice under their strategic

communications staff, focusing on PR activities such as posting on LinkedIn and preparing reports for the Attorney General.

In college, my courses were more broadly focused on global affairs, including modern Russia, modern France, and modern Latin America. I also delved into colonial courses. However, my senior paper specifically focused on the Holocaust and women's role in that historical context. So, while my coursework had a global perspective, my internships provided a more hands-on experience in areas like immigration law and government communications at the national level.

How are you applying your experiences now in your everyday life and current position?

Model UN played a significant role in developing valuable skills for my current job. It taught me how to conduct thorough research and consider historical, cultural, and geographical aspects when representing a country. The practice of playing devil's advocate was particularly helpful, as it honed my ability to embody a nation's values when addressing specific issues. This skill set proved crucial in my first job, especially in research-related tasks, which later contributed to my success in grant writing.

In my current role, where I write grants and federal proposals for foundations, assessing their priorities and tailoring proposals to align with their focus is a key aspect. The research skills acquired from Model UN have been instrumental in this process, ensuring that my applications are well-matched to the foundation's interests.

Additionally, public speaking, a significant component of Model UN, has proven invaluable. Whether addressing 15 or 30 delegates during Model UN sessions or leading tours in my current position, the confidence and skill developed through public speaking in Model UN have had a

lasting impact on my day-to-day job. It is a testament to how the skills cultivated in Model UN can seamlessly transfer to various professional contexts.

How are you currently involved in international affairs? Please, describe your role and responsibilities in your current position. Involved now and role.

Currently, I hold the position of a philanthropy officer at the Guadalupe Center, a nonprofit organization in Immokalee, which is about a 30-minute drive from Naples, Florida. My primary responsibilities involve major gifts and grants, where I engage with high-level donors, organize tours, and build relationships by explaining our mission.

Editor's note: Immokalee is a relatively underserved community within Collier County, characterized by a high poverty rate of around 30%.

The skills I developed in Model United Nations have significantly influenced my approach to this role. Navigating professional conversations with donors mirrors the diplomatic skills honed in Model UN. Similarly, the ability to write position papers in a specific format has translated seamlessly into my grant applications. I work towards monthly goals by writing applications for government grants, family foundations, individual foundations, and corporate sponsorships, covering a broad spectrum of responsibilities in my job.

Interestingly, in January, I received an offer at Gartner, and I am planning to transition into a business development role, marking a new chapter in my career.

How are you preparing for that transition from one job to the other which are two different fields?

Transitioning from the nonprofit world to the corporate sector, my new role as a Business Development Associate at Gartner is a shift toward a faster-paced environment. The decision to change jobs was motivated by a desire for a new challenge and the appeal of business development and customer relationships at Gartner.

In my new role, I will be focusing on generating early leads, a responsibility like my previous role as a fundraiser. The transition involves meeting monthly or quarterly quotas, making cold calls or sending cold emails, and instead of explaining a mission, I will be explaining a product. The move is a deliberate step to take on a larger challenge and be part of a larger organization.

Reflecting on my time at the Guadalupe Center, I believe that my experience there has well-equipped me for the challenges ahead. The skills developed in dealing with C-suite donors at a nonprofit will be transferable to dealing with C-suite executives at Fortune 500 companies in my new role. This competence was cultivated through early experiences in high school and college, including my involvement in Model United Nations.

While my current role does not directly involve working in global affairs, the foundational skills and competencies developed through my experiences in Model UN and the nonprofit sector have proven invaluable in navigating new challenges and professional transitions.

What advice do you have for individuals looking to pursue a career in international affairs or join model un?

The Global Scholars Program is an excellent avenue for opportunities, but my biggest piece of advice is to actively reach out to people and build your network. Connecting with organizations like the Naples Council on World Affairs opens doors to valuable connections. Once you establish a network of individuals with careers in global affairs, it can pave the way for internships, which, in my experience, are often the most effective route to securing a job. Internships, like the one I had with the Naples Council, played a crucial role in landing my job right out of college, allowing me to start working within a month of graduating.

Are there any lessons you have learned that you wish you knew when starting your career?

In college, there was an internship opportunity that I regret not being able to pursue. Specifically, I had the chance to intern with a history professor, which I believe would have provided valuable exposure to the field of history. Looking back, I wish I had taken advantage of that opportunity to enhance my understanding and experience in history.

What courses helped you to prepare for your role that you will be transitioning to?

My academic background, with a double major in history and communication, along with a minor in Spanish, has significantly prepared me for my current role. In particular, my communication courses played a crucial role in honing skills that are highly relevant in sales.

Focusing on rhetorical criticism and theory, as well as taking a course in propaganda, might seem unrelated to sales. However, these courses equipped me with the ability to assess someone's tone quickly and efficiently. Learning how to summarize a pitch, a skill developed in

these courses, has proven invaluable in both donor conversations during my time in fundraising and now in my sales role.

Courses in public speaking and advanced public speaking, including participation in the FGCU public speaking competition, have been instrumental. They provided me with the confidence and skills needed to engage in high-level conversations with donors and are equally applicable in my current sales position. Additionally, my history courses at my alma mater, particularly those involving writing, drafting emails, and creating proposals, have been indispensable in shaping my capabilities for success in my current job.

How do you recommend is a good way to bring more kids into the program?

Developing and supporting new Model UN clubs is a multifaceted process that hinges on the dedication of the coach and the resources available to the school. In my experience, the success of a club often depends on how committed the coach is to supporting student leaders and identifying individuals who want to be part of the club.

For example, in Immokalee High School, the club started with a modest number of 2-4 students interested in competing. The key was the coach's ability to identify students with the inclination to participate, especially those with an interest in history classes. Through different coaching changes, the best experiences were marked by coaches who actively advocated for the club.

Fundraising plays a crucial role, especially in schools with limited resources. The ability to travel to different cities for competitions depends on the club's capacity to fundraise effectively. The involvement of organizations like the Naples Council on World Affairs has been pivotal in

providing support, both in terms of guidance on fundraising strategies and direct financial assistance.

The success of newer Model UN clubs is intricately linked to the coach's advocacy, the identification of motivated students, and the availability of resources to fundraise and compete beyond the local level. The support of organizations like the Naples Council can be instrumental in leveling the playing field and offering opportunities to schools that might otherwise face challenges in establishing and sustaining their Model UN programs.

Anything you would like to share?

Working with high school students in Model UN has been incredibly rewarding, especially witnessing their growth, drive, and eagerness to learn. One of the most fulfilling aspects of my experience has been observing students with a genuine thirst for knowledge, an unquenchable desire to explore new things, and a willingness to try new experiences.

Model UN attracts students who are not just interested in learning but are truly driven to go above and beyond. For instance, at a high school, I encountered a student who not only participated in Model UN but also took the initiative to study Mandarin in Taiwan. This student's commitment to learning and participating in a program thousands of miles away exemplifies the kind of dedication and enthusiasm that Model UN can instill in students.

Seeing these students stand out, build their confidence, and take on challenges has been the most rewarding part of my work with them. It is a testament to the transformative power of Model UN in shaping young minds and fostering a passion for continuous learning and exploration.

What qualities do you think are the most important to be part of model un?

Certainly, there are key qualities that contribute to success in Model UN. One crucial attribute is the ability to persist and overcome challenges, especially in the face of public speaking and the confidence required to stand in front of a group. Grit becomes evident when students continue to engage, even if they make mistakes or do not secure a top position in the committee or conference.

Intuition, in the sense of being able to assess the room and strategize effectively, is another valuable quality. Successful students are those who enter the competition with a mindset that the moment they step into the room, the competition begins. Being able to apply the research they have conducted right from the start is a skill that sets them apart.

Moreover, students who excel are those who go beyond merely knowing the history and stance of their assigned country on an issue. They delve into understanding the influential world leaders impacting their country, their position in global affairs, and the dynamics of their relationships with other nations. It is about comprehending the broader context and alliances.

Lastly, a commendable trait is the willingness to teach others and contribute to the growth of their Model UN club. Students who aspire to leave a lasting impact and build a legacy for their club beyond their competition experiences demonstrate a remarkable drive and commitment.

How will you look back to your experiences now that you are transitioning to Gartner?

Model UN has left a lasting and significant impact on me, shaping the person I am today.

Looking back, I am genuinely happy with the experiences and connections it has provided. The connections I made in high school with fellow competitors, including my sister, and later with FGCU students, have endured over the years. When reflecting on my upbringing in Naples, Model UN always stands out as a transformative and influential part of my journey.

The large-scale impact it has on every student involved is remarkable. Even during my college years, amid the challenges posed by the pandemic, Model UN continued to be a platform for discussing crucial global issues and their impacts on nations. The experiences, discussions, and connections made during those years are memories I hold fondly.

As I navigate through my post-college career, I take pride in the growth and success of the schools I have worked with. Checking in with schools like Donahue Academy and witnessing the continued growth of their students at competitions is a rewarding experience. The ripple effect of Model UN, reaching beyond my own experiences, is something I cherish and hope to see perpetuate in the schools I have been fortunate to collaborate with.

What would you tell students as advice that are shaping their career now?

College is a time to explore, and the best experiences often come from unexpected places. My college journey took a turn I had not anticipated, I began as a biology major with dreams of becoming an optometrist. However, a basic history class opened new possibilities, leading to a research relationship with a professor and sparking my interest in history. The same happened with my communication major, stemming from an elective course that was not initially on my radar.

My advice to any college student, regardless of their major, is to step out of their comfort zone and try something unexpected. Even if you are in a STEM field, attend a public speaking meeting, join a club unrelated to your major, or engage in community outreach programs. Actively listen to what is happening on campus, attend student fairs, and connect with professors. These experiences, when woven together, contribute to a holistic college career.

Employers value candidates with a diverse set of experiences, so do not hesitate to explore different areas of academia and participate in extracurriculars. Joining clubs, taking part in community engagement, and embracing a multifaceted college experience will not only make your journey enjoyable but also give you a competitive edge when you enter the job market. Remember, employers appreciate candidates with a well-rounded background, and the ability to share a diverse range of experiences can set you apart during interviews.

How did you get the job at Gartner?

FGCU has a lot of career fairs, and Gartner is recognized as a very rapid and reputable company. My cousin works in software sales, which piqued my interest in transitioning to a faster paced environment. I was not sure if I wanted to stay in nonprofits forever, so I decided to explore different companies and opportunities.

I reached out to around five current employees and one former employee at Gartner to understand their experiences, and I was delighted with what I heard. Initially, I investigated the customer success side and the relationship-building aspect of sales. However, in further conversations, I discovered a real passion for business development, the prospect of reaching out to hundreds of businesses and building connections.

I am thrilled to start at Gartner in January. I will be starting as a Business Development Associate. What appeals to me about the program is its focus on teaching foundational skills crucial for success in a sales environment.