

Welcome Third Committee Delegates:

My name is Andrew Kapral and I will be the chair for your committee sessions at Midwest Model United Nations 48. I would like to take this opportunity to introduce myself, MMUN, and the committee process in the hope that we will be able to hit the ground running when we arrive in St. Louis.

This year's conference will be my seventh year as a staff member at MMUN. Throughout my time on staff I have had the opportunity to serve in a variety of roles, and have always found the experience extremely rewarding. As a university student I was drawn to MMUN because I am passionate about international issues. After college I was fortunate to be a member of Teach for America, a national corps of teachers fighting to close the education achievement gap in the United States. I currently work at Rice University in Houston, Texas as an Assistant Director in the Center for Education. I mention these last two points to underscore how strongly I feel about the General Assembly Third Committee and particularly the two topics to be discussed at this year's conference. Educational inequality and the proliferation of drugs are scourges upon the global society, and we have a responsibility to eradicate them from the face of the Earth. If this rhetoric seems somehow over the top or misplaced please remember that while our time in St. Louis is spent in simulation the issues we discuss are very real and hold dramatic implications for people of all nations.

Each year several hundred students from around the United States and beyond come together in St. Louis to discuss international issues of the day as part of Midwest Model United Nations. Our organization is by no means the only conference of its type, but I do believe there are several factors that set it apart from other conferences of its size and type. Based on my experience and conference statistics from the last several years, it is likely that more than 60% of the participants at MMUN will never before have attended a Model United Nations conference. Some may argue that this is a shortcoming, but I believe this fact is the underpinning for our conference's continued success. In general the MMUN philosophy is one of mutual education through collaboration. What this means is that as a conference we are committed to the idea that the main responsibility of each delegate is to come to conference prepared to work with his or her peers in an attempt to learn about the topics presented and the United Nations as a whole. The conference in general and I in specific do not put a premium on the use of divisive procedural tactics in favor of genuine debate and coalition building. Our focus must remain the meaningful discussion of the important issues that face the committee.

The committee process at MMUN is designed to give delegates a sense of how documents are actually produced in the United Nations. As is the case in many legislative institutions, documents are first considered in the committee setting as we will do for the first two days of the conference. Following this, documents are sent to a general session where the entire body has an opportunity to review, and vote on the document. The final two days of our time in St. Louis is spent in General Assembly doing just that. As a chair it is my responsibility to make sure that the committee has everything it needs to produce quality resolutions for consideration by the General Assembly. My staff and I are available to help in whatever way we can to ensure that all members of the committee have the quality experience they deserve. Thank you and I look forward to meeting you all in St. Louis.

Regards,

Andrew Kapral