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## PRESS RELEASE

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*The CSUSB Model United Nations delegations from the San Bernardino and Palm Desert campuses represented the countries of Mexico and Morocco at the 2025 National Model United Nations Conference, held November 23-29 in Banff, Alberta, Canada.*

### **CSUSB students garner top awards at Model UN Conference in Canada**

PALM DESERT, Calif. – Marking a historic milestone for the university, CSUSB delegations from the San Bernardino and Palm Desert campuses earned the prestigious Distinguished Delegation Award at the 2025 National Model United Nations (NMUN) Conference, held November 23–29 in Banff, Alberta, Canada.

The San Bernardino campus delegation included six students representing Mexico, while a historic first for the university saw five students from the Palm Desert Campus (PDC) participate in the NMUN conference, representing Morocco.

The conference brought together 26 universities and colleges representing five continents for a week of experiential learning, cultural exchange and global policy simulation.

“Our students were immersed in conversations about the future of the planet, the rights of Indigenous peoples and the role diplomacy must play in addressing these global challenges,” said Kevin Grisham, co-coordinator of the CSUSB Model United Nations Program and professor of global studies. “This conference is unlike any other academic experience.”

During the initial two days, students participated in academic study tours that highlighted Canadian environmental stewardship and Indigenous history. They explored the Canadian Rockies from the summit of Sulphur Mountain,

hiked through snow-filled Johnston Canyon and visited the famed glacial lake, Lake Louise. Workshops led by Indigenous educators featured a blanket ceremony, warrior training and drumming traditions.

“The experiential learning component was transformative,” Grisham noted. “Our students gained a deeper understanding of how colonization, treaty-making and intergenerational trauma continue to shape life for Indigenous peoples in Canada. It was a powerful reminder that diplomacy must start with understanding lived experiences.”

Following the tours, students engaged in three intensive days of committee sessions simulating United Nations diplomacy, where they collaborated with global peers to negotiate and draft resolutions on sustainability and Indigenous issues. CSUSB delegates played active roles throughout the process, speaking frequently, negotiating with international counterparts and building coalitions.

“Model UN is not a simulation where students sit quietly and observe,” Grisham said. “They become diplomats. They negotiate, compromise, persuade and learn how difficult —but essential — international cooperation really is. Our students rose to that challenge.”

At the closing ceremony, CSUSB was awarded the Distinguished Delegation Award, placing it alongside seven other leading global institutions, including Cal Poly Pomona, Riverside City College, McMurry University (U.S.), Royal Holloway—University of London, The University of Melbourne (Australia), the University of Erfurt (Germany) and Washburn University (U.S.).

Additionally, Palm Desert Campus students Shekinah Daffon and Andy Vasquez earned the Outstanding Position Paper Award in the UN Environmental Assembly. Their work placed them in the top 11 percent among universities and colleges representing 44 countries in the committee.

“For our Palm Desert Campus students to earn such an honor at their very first Model UN conference is extraordinary,” Grisham said. “It speaks to their dedication, preparation and ability to engage thoughtfully with complex global issues. I could not be more proud of them.”

Reflecting on the university’s performance, Grisham emphasized the significance of the achievement.

“These students demonstrated what CSUSB stands for — excellence, resilience, intellectual curiosity and a commitment to global citizenship. Whether they were trekking through snow to learn about glacial landscapes or negotiating the final paragraphs of a UN resolution, they represented our university with distinction.”

The CSUSB Model UN program has been active for the past 52 years and has earned national recognition for its excellence in academic diplomacy and experiential learning.

Visit the [CSUSB Model United Nations website](#) for more information about the program.

**About the CSUSB Palm Desert Campus:** The [CSUSB Palm Desert Campus](#) is dedicated to providing a transformative educational experience in the Coachella Valley. With a focus on academic excellence and community engagement, the campus offers undergraduate and graduate degree programs designed to meet the diverse needs of its students and the region.

For more information about the CSUSB Palm Desert Campus, contact Mike Singer in the Office of Marketing and Communications at [msinger@csusb.edu](mailto:msinger@csusb.edu) or (760) 341-2883, ext. 78107, or visit the PDC website at [www.csusb.edu/pdc](http://www.csusb.edu/pdc).