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**Southwest Florida Model UN Competition Names Winners;
Local High School Places Third in National Event**



Surya Dodia, Ralph J. Bunche Award winner

In the Top Schools category, prizes in the recent Southwest Florida Model UN competition at Florida Gulf Coast University were awarded to three high schools from Collier and Lee Counties.

The annual program is sponsored by the Naples Council on World Affairs and hosted by the FGCU Department of Political Science and Public Administration. Almost 200 students from high schools across Collier, Lee and Charlotte Counties attended the two-day event at FGCU, with 14 schools representing 31 countries at mock United Nations proceedings. This was the 29th year that NCWA has been operating the Model UN program for area high schools. NCWA awarded $36,000 in prizes and scholarships to students and teams.

The top school was Gulf Coast High School winning first place, including $1,000 to be shared by the student team; Port Charlotte High School, second place and $700, and Barron Collier High School, third place and $300.

Winner of the Ralph J. Bunche Award and $6,000 for multiple years of participation in Model UN competitions at FGCU was Surya Dodia of Gulf Coast High School.

Gulf Coast High School students were coached by Sue Soulard, head of the school’s Social Sciences Department, who also was named NCWA Educator of the Year for 2022.

A school that didn’t place in the FGCU competition, St. John Neumann Catholic High School in Naples won third place in the National High School Model UN competition in New York City. The Merit Award was given for the team’s research and preparation, including position papers and opening speeches. More than 250 national and international teams attended the national competition.

St. John’s team members included Megan Ayan, Mia Brewer, Alessio Cirino, Bella Fernandez, Sloane Janopoulis, Catherine Lund, Hunter Lund, Thomas Lund, Jake Marks, Sophia McCartney, Ben O'Brien, Clark Purdom, Kale Van Wart, Sophia Van Wyk, and Morgan Zolna.

In the Southwest Florida competition at FGCU, Golden Gate High School won the $500 Diana McGowen Most Improved School Award. Other first-place winners were Lely High School, Climate Change and Hunger Special Competition, $500; Jacob Silver of Cypress Lake High School, Greg Hudson Award of $1,500 for best position paper; Osei Allen of Gulf Coast High School, Best Single Year Performance and $1,000; and Alejandra Ramos of Lely High School, Rising School Delegate Award of $1,000.

In the competition, student teams selected mock countries they would represent and presented papers and debated positions on a wide variety of topics, ranging from the future of Afghanistan, to developing a new framework for global conservation, to developing new vaccines for future global pandemics.

Leading the 2022 competition at FGCU were Edwin Leland, NCWA chair; Alan Van Egmond and Mo Winograd of NCWA, co-vice chairs; and Rick Coughlin, associate professor and faculty advisor for Model UN at FGCU.

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