

Cameron Kesinger, Class of 2011

By Emily Schuldt



Cameron Kesinger's strength as a debater during the founding years of the Bear Creek forensics team indicated he would be going places. And most recently, his rhetorical skills and interest in international relations took him to New York to participate in the National Model UN, a conference made up of more than 5,000 university students, who assumed the roles of ambassadors to UN member states in a simulated UN General Assembly.

Against the backdrop of the UN Headquarters, student delegates worked together in committee groups drafting resolutions, debating current issues, and using their skills of diplomacy to artfully advance international cooperation to resolve problems and advance the national interests of the countries they were assigned to represent.

Cameron and his partner delegate stepped into the shoes of the ambassador to Peru and participated in a committee that worked on issues of food security. Kesinger explains that even in a UN simulation, some countries, like Peru, have less negotiating power than more

powerful countries like the United States, China, or Russia.

"As a country with less negotiating power, it was necessary to find other countries with similar interests to ours," Cameron explains. Delegates formed blocs based on geographical region or level of economic development and formed alliances within those blocs. "Eventually, we would find enough countries with similar interests and would negotiate how to address all of our concerns in a larger group. This required a lot of individual discretion because in negotiation, you have to judge what is acceptable to sacrifice for the sake of a larger group and what is absolutely necessary."

The opportunity to participate in the National Model UN in New York came through Cameron's participation in Macalester Model UN, a student-led group at Macalester College, where he just finished his sophomore year. He joined the campus group to sharpen the skills he had begun to develop through the forensics team at Bear Creek and to complement his classroom learning in International Studies.

Through his experience at the National Model UN Conference in New

York representing Peru, he has learned that negotiation is truly a delicate art – one that often requires diplomats to give a back-seat to their own personal views.

Reflecting on this challenge, Cameron states, "It's difficult to fight passionately for an issue that your country advocates if you don't support it personally." In the long term, Cameron would like to work in international law in a way that is more closely linked to people and practical change. He has also enjoyed the work in asylum law that he has engaged in with a professor at Macalester.

Though a career in diplomacy may not be Cameron's future long-term choice, he emphatically states, "I wouldn't change my Model UN experience for anything and am looking forward to two more exciting years with the Macalester team."