

The Students behind the Gavels.

An insight on the experiences and leadership challenges of student chairs at SPIMUN 2025.

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Every year at MUN conferences, student chairs shoulder the responsibility of guiding the intense diplomatic debates that occur, and are one of the reliable cogs that keep every MUN conference efficient and engaging. We spoke with one of the chairs from the security council, the junior committee and the senior committee, to shed more light into the unique experience of being MUN Chairs.

Reporter: What inspired you to become an MUN chair?

Senior Committee Chair: Probably my brother, he organized SPIMUN when he was a year older than I am now, and he really encouraged me. I think it's a really fun experience as well.

Security Council Chair: I think that it's a great opportunity and it's fun. The position is very different from being a delegate, and you get to see and experience things from different perspectives.

Junior committee chair: I was always interested. I started as a delegate and I had a couple of friends who were Chairs and I really enjoyed and looked up to them. I became a Chair because I aspired to be like them. I moved here (to St. Peters) and I became a chair. It was a natural progression to one of the best MUN experiences that I had.

Reporter: How has being a chair changed your perspective on global issues and diplomacy?

Senior Committee Chair: It has definitely made me realize how difficult it must be to be in the actual UN. I mean, just getting people to talk, getting the flow of debate right and getting the clauses presented, because each clause has its own problem and you need to make it super, super specific. I mean, we had problems with the vagueness of the clause, and certainly when those clauses are actually going to be implemented, they need to be incredibly specific.

Security Council Chair: As a chair, we need to observe situations in a more neutral light, so that we can see more perspectives and understand the different and conflicting perspectives more easily.

Junior Committee Chair: That's interesting because when I was a delegate, I used to defend the position of my country. But when I became a chair, I realized that these debates are very meaningful. Every issue that we debate, every point of view that is approached by every delegate, it's actually a very interesting and very valuable experience that we can take from it.

Reporter: Have you ever had to deal with a particularly intense or controversial debate?

Senior Committee Chair: We touched a bit on a policy from North Korea on the first day of the conference, which was a bit difficult. We had a fact check, that was 'do women have rights in North Korea?' So, I think that was really controversial, but I believe the topics aren't particularly strong or as controversial this year. For example, yesterday we had a clause about gender discrimination in the criminal justice system, and I think that the delegates had mostly focused on discrimination in the criminal system, and the discrimination of women was a bit forgotten. So it hasn't been too controversial this year.

Security Council Chair: I think everything is fine right now. Though the debates are quite sensitive and the topics are quite sensitive, I believe that the delegates have been able to manage and represent it with care.

Junior Committee Chair: Yes, half an hour ago. A delegate of Afghanistan urged all women refugees to get out of the committee, or something to that effect. Although this may seem like a joke, I spoke to the delegate and he said that he was just defending the position of his country, so we had to approach this with seriousness.

Reporter: What's the biggest challenge you've faced while moderating debates?

Security Council Chair: In the beginning, there were some technical issues and our skills in multitasking were really challenged. Dealing with delegates was also a challenge, but as the debate went on, everything has become much easier.

Junior Committee Chair: Sometimes the delegates get over excited and very passionate in defending their own points of view, and we have to ensure that the committee remains silent and respectful at all times because people can get offended.

Reporter: How do you keep the debate structured and ensure fairness among delegates?

Senior Committee Chair: Well, it's been difficult. We have had a lot of complaints from the delegates that we're not picking fairly, but our jobs have us simultaneously looking at all aspects. We're keeping a spreadsheet, we're keeping the quality of POIs, the quality of clauses and the quality of speeches. We're also trying to make the debate, you know, good and the people who speak or people who have done the work, or we see are trying, we're appreciative. The moment we see a placard that perhaps we hadn't seen before, or we see a person trying to speak who hasn't spoken before, we always try to prioritize picking those people, trying to encourage everybody to speak really.

Security Council Chair: Basically, we tell them the rules and I think the delegates right now are quite experienced and they know how the debates are supposed to be like, so we didn't have to spend a long time explaining the rules and such to them.

Junior Committee Chair: We tried to give everyone the chance to speak equally. We try to get delegates that are a little more shy to speak as well, so we can have a more comprehensive overview of all the opinions.

Reporter: In your experience, what makes a great MUN Delegate?

Senior Committee Chair: I think of course you need to have a bit of confidence when you speak, you need to be comfortable with the way you express yourself. But, I believe that a lot of good delegates, I mean they're all nervous, you know, in this room are going to be very nervous speaking. So the good candidates are the one who has done their research, who knows exactly what they're talking about, who knows the topic very well, and who is prepared to answer the questions that they're asked. I think it's not the person who gets on the stands and speaks the loudest, I think it's the person who actually knows.

Security Council Chair: So being able to, firstly, understand the different positions, having debating and communication skills. That would help, I would say.

Junior committee chair: In my opinion, what makes a great delegate is two things, confidence and research. Yes, you need to know what he or she is talking about, and they have to be confident enough to come to the floor and express their opinions or points.

Reporter: If you could give one piece of advice to aspiring MUN Chairs, what would it be?

Senior Committee Chair: I believe that the advice I would give to aspiring MUN Chairs is to have a lot of delegate experience. You need to go to the conferences, because especially at St Peters, we didn't really go through or sit through a teaching or a seminar or anything like that. So, paying attention to the flow of how the debate works and everything, you need to be prepared for every situation. For example, I had never handled a formal apology before, and I just got my first one. So, just going to the conferences to experience them, to know what they're like is the advice I would give.

Security Council Chair: Being a chair is very different from being a delegate, and it's definitely an experience that's worth it. It develops leadership and communication skills, and allows you to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the event.

Junior committee chair: Be aware that being a head chair, the committee is yours, everyone has to go according to your rules and as long as you're confident enough to do so, everything is going to turn out great. Responsibility is a big factor in this, the committee is yours, and you have to ensure that everything goes according to plan.

To conclude this article, student chairs are a branch of MUN conferences committed to ensuring the productivity and integrity of discussions and resolutions. Where the core values of MUN: diplomacy, cooperation and global awareness is upheld for the benefits of its participants.