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# NEVER BEFORE № 31



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## TOWARDS VSU CENTENARY

Our University has already begun to prepare for its centenary in 2018. To commemorate this great event the English Chair for Science Departments announced publication of the book "VSU from A to Z".

At the first stage the contest for the words to be included in the book was held. 10 winners who suggested the most interesting words were awarded with sweet prizes.

The current stage presupposes writing the entries. The list of the words to be included in the book can be found at the University site (section "Announcements"). Contributions are welcome at [vsuatoz@rgph.vsu.ru](mailto:vsuatoz@rgph.vsu.ru) until the end of April.

Победителю  
конкурса на  
составление словника  
для издания книги

"Voronezh University  
from A to Z".



belief, can be used for making our world better. It was a great pleasure to work on a resolution, then fight for every point because different countries have different interests as in the real world of politics. I was really impressed by some school students who participated in the Model among more experienced students and were not afraid to state the position of their countries. I learned many interesting things about countries around the world. The participants were highly argumentative because they had studied a lot about their countries. Despite some hot discussions showing different opinions, the atmosphere was very friendly. People were ready to help each other in writing a resolution or making amendments to it, if others were not aware of the procedure.

Additionally, I would like to mention the organization of the Model itself. The range of cultural activities was wide and entertaining. We were offered a theatre trip, visits to different museums, and a walking tour free. The cultural programme made this conference more informal and gave more time for the participants to make new acquaintances, to chat or to win somebody over. We are waiting to debate again at the next Model.



**Michael:** During our student life we take part in numerous conferences, seminars, and roundtable discussions but one event in that list plays a particular role, its name is Model United Nations. It is not only its immense professional importance, but also the thrill that we get in the participation process, that makes the Model UN especially outstanding. I had heard about the Model from my fellow students on numerous occasions but I had not happened to take part in any of them until the last semester when it took place in the beautiful historic city of Yaroslavl. With thorough preparations done and great experiences awaiting us, in the company of 13 other students from my faculty we hit the road in the direction of fun.

Some words about the Model itself. The event was well planned and managed, but the main part was obviously the sessions themselves. We got a bit anxious before the start, but all the stress literally evaporated as we began our discussions. Three days in a row, we were nothing but true diplomats, both inside and outside the sessions' room. Building coalitions, drafting resolutions, finding common approaches, exchanging positions, and discussing trouble spots kept us occupied throughout those amazing days. Undoubtedly, this experience of being a diplomat has certainly broadened my understanding of what it really means to be a representative of «your» country that has sovereign interests and views concerning issues our world faces today. You always have to think strategically, be aware of what plans your rivals are devising and where these developments can go. I got lucky from the very beginning since the organizers, surprisingly enough, gave me an opportunity to represent India in the Human Rights Council. It was fantastic to play that role since not only did I get to know about Indian culture in the process of preparation (which I would not otherwise have done), but I also understood how this fast-growing, second most populous country in the world approaches global issues and how it sees their resolution.

Last, but not least, I got extremely enthusiastic about the Model UN movement and immediately applied for a couple of Models as soon as I got back home from Yaroslavl. I am sure that there are many more UN simulation sessions to come for me and there will be, hopefully, a real one in the long-term. Nevertheless, for now, I feel that this experience of being a diplomat for a couple of days has once again helped to prove that diplomacy and international relations are the place where I see myself in my future professional life.



**Anastasia:** It was just the very beginning of September when I first heard about an upcoming professional role-play YARMUN (Yaroslavl Model UN). Now, when more than four months have already passed, I can say without any doubts that it was the greatest experience of 2015. I was excited and a little worried to take part in this event. However, my fears were unfounded. The atmosphere during all three working days of the Model was unforgettable. Delegates were presenting the positions of their countries clearly. I was honoured to represent the views of the People's Republic of China on Protection of human rights in the conditions of IT development in the Human Rights Council. There were many hot discussions, and I am 100 per cent sure that the atmosphere in the audience where sessions were held was as heated as at the real sessions of the UN committees. After every productive and hard-working day, all of us had a real chance to get acquainted with the people from the other committees more closely and learn a lot, not only about them but also about the places they come from. The most memorable moment for me was to meet exchange students from the USA and Great Britain. Communication with them helped not only to polish my English, but also to learn a lot about the situation in the world and in my own country through the eyes of foreigners. Overall, these three days gave me not only a useful experience, but also a chance to visit one of the major cities of the Golden Ring of Russia in the company of good friends.

## Model United Nations: YOUNg. Global. ACTive. (YOUth ACTION)

Model UN is a unique platform where everyone who is interested in international relations can hear and be heard by adherents from different parts of the world. University and high school students gather for several days to perform in an elaborately planned professional simulation of the UN's work. The participants of Model United Nations (MUN) include delegates, chairs, observers, and experts. The participants assume the role of official representatives of the UN members and international organizations, who have gathered at the UN Headquarters to discuss issues on the agenda of the respective committees. The goal of each committee is to adopt a resolution, which means participants must defend the position of the country they represent. This exciting game allows one to try different roles from the world of big politics and understand what it is like to be a representative of a sovereign country. Representatives must follow the rules of procedure and communicate according to diplomatic etiquette. While participation is more important than victory, there is the chance to win the title of Best Delegate.

Historically, the United Nations was the first and unique platform for the representatives of all the countries in the world to discuss global and regional issues and address them based on equality and "in conformity with the principles of justice and international law". Model UN simulation as an instrument of spreading UN principles and ideals among the young is rising in importance in order to attract more and more enthusiastic youths concerned about global problems.

Today three 3<sup>rd</sup> year VSU students who major in International Relations — **Anna Meremianina, Anastasia Bukas and Mikhail Polianskii** — share their thoughts about Model UN with our readers.

**Anna:** This year it has been my first unforgettable experience of participating in the 10th MSU Model United Nations held between February 29th and 4th March. I was a representative of Japan in ECOSOC, a country which I had not known much about, therefore I felt so responsible to give relevant and appropriate information about it and answer questions according to my country's interests. The agenda of our committee this year was "Overcoming social inequality in Latin America". Personally, I learnt many useful things, such as how to defend your country's position, how to be persuasive and answer subtle questions without any preparation. On the first day it was not that easy because you could not speak or react to a delegate's speech unless the President of the Committee allowed you. Fortunately, there is another means of communication in such a situation — to write notes to any delegate in order to start a discussion, offer suggestions or join a coalition. All delegates and the Secretariat have deep knowledge of the problem under discussion. They express fresh and sometimes unusual ideas which, to my deep





# Greetings from Spain

Twice a year students of our University have an opportunity to apply for participation in one of the existing exchange programmes and go to study abroad. One of those who became an exchange student this term is a 3<sup>rd</sup>-year student of the Applied Mathematics, Informatics and Mechanics department Sofia Vainshtein. Today she shares her impressions about her first month at the University Castilla-La Mancha, Spain.

Everything here is different. Let's start with the education system. Here you have to choose by yourself the courses that you want to take. It is a bit difficult, but Spanish students and professors are always ready to help.

The university has a special site, each student has got his/her own account where he can find chosen subjects, presentations from classes, and also where he can upload his homework. I think it is a very convenient and useful system.

All the classes are together with Spanish students, professors use presentations and videos at every lecture. Studying here allows you to attend courses that you haven't got in your university.



Undoubtedly it is a big advantage. For example, I took a course 'Virtual Reality and Videogames'. I thought that it would be one of the easiest subjects, but really it is one of the most difficult. For the final project you have to develop in teams your own VR game using VR helmet, gloves, or what you want.

Some subjects end with a final exam, some just by a big project. You have to pass at least 3 courses, but I took 6 different subjects.

In Spain they don't have any classes on Saturday and at 2 p.m. they have 2 hours for rest, it is the so-called 'siesta'.

Studying here gives me a great experience of interaction with people from all over the world. You can learn more about their culture, traditions of their countries, and of course you can show them your own country. Every day you have extensive language practice, it is very interesting to speak in English when everybody speaks with different accents: Spanish guys don't pronounce 'h' at the beginning of the word; French people have got problems with 'r' and so on.

At the beginning of March we had a trip to Sevilla with other Erasmus students.



There was a traditional parade: foreign students from all over Spain and Portugal came there for the weekend. Everyone painted a flag of his country on his cheeks. In the photo you can see me and my French friends. At that festival I met 3 girls from Moscow. It was very pleasant to speak Russian with them.

In Albacete (the city where I am studying now) I rent a flat together with a Russian student and French guys. For me it was a surprise that in Europe people use the same shoes at home as in the street. However, in our home we respect Russian traditions and ask guests to take their shoes off.

I will be here until July and I am sure there will be many new discoveries in the future!

## ORATORY COMPETITION IN MOSCOW

Nowadays more and more students participate in different contests and competitions. Usually all these events are thoroughly organized and do help young people in their professional growth. But sometimes they do not meet their expectations, as in the case of the Public Speaking Competition described below by one of its participants — a third year student of International Relations department Nikita Bulavintsev. We think that such experience will still be useful for our readers.

ESU International Public Speaking Competition is organized by the 'Global World' and supported by the 'English-Speaking Union'. This contest has now been running for 32 years. When the IPSC started, it was an international tournament between England and Australia only, and now the competition reaches 50 countries across the globe. This competition is not very well known among students in Russia. Maybe you've heard something about the winners from Russia? Me neither.

In theory, it is a great opportunity to test your oratorical skills, improve the ability of holding the crowd's attention, increase your proficiency in controlling facial expressions and gestures, and finally, join the art of creating an oratory text — with catchy phrases, a memorable structure and unique points of view. But that is just in theory, and I want to know what it is like in practice.

The first stage of the contest is simple — using all your charisma and skills in five minutes to present a prepared speech. After the speech there should be a question session. What is strange, however, is that according to the jury we are forbidden to express our opinions or ask a speaker to expand their opinions — we are just allowed to ask simple questions clarifying the content of the speech. "We have little time," an instructor explains. "And what if someone is telling us blatant nonsense — we cannot even doubt when someone seriously says

that the earth is flat?" — the thought appears in my mind. In order to test my hypotheses and enliven the trivial performances I decide to completely distort the main topic of the contest. My speech consists entirely of lies and uncovered contradictions — and no one can question that because we have no time for that. So it goes.

The next stage of the competition, according to the jury, is called 'spontaneous monologue'. Sounds really great — for such a contest it is really important to test how people will behave in an extreme and unprepared situation, when they need to make an on-the-spot monologue using all the ideas that might come into their mind. However, I am surprised to discover that we are given 15 minutes to prepare our 'unprepared speeches'. For an average student this time is enough to write a final coursework. Using a dictionary I try to check the meaning of the word 'spontaneous' — someone in this situation must be obviously misinterpreting it. Receiving the theme of the 'spontaneous monologue', even not giving it a fleeting glance, I decide to restore linguistic justice — for these 15 minutes I go out, take a cup of coffee and study the paintings on the walls — there are abstract children's drawings that remind me either late Picasso or Francisco Goya, don't know for sure. However, they could really be some unknown works of Picasso — I couldn't question that, 'I had little time'.

After the second stage it is time to announce the results. "Well, today there were a lot of wonderful performances. Therefore, the first place we award to the one who delivered his speech within a five-minute limit and did not use any handouts." So it goes. It turns out, that the art of oratory is not about the performance itself, but more about fitting within the time limits imposed by someone. If Demosthenes heard that he would die a second death. As I learned later, before the contest the "Global World" held oratory seminars which cost a fortune. What is strange, there was no difference between those who attended the seminars and those who found a better usage for that amount of money. Probably, one could find some connections between the winners and those who attended paid seminars — but I do not think this is important.

Making a logical conclusion, ESU International Public Speaking Competition is a unique event that is worth attending. Perhaps, your ability to control the audience, your sophisticated speech, professionally adjusted gestures and facial expressions will go unnoticed, but you will get an unforgettable existential experience and will sense the hilariously absurd atmosphere that will be for sure provided. And don't forget — The important thing is not to win or take part, but to see others lose. Good luck!

## APRIL FOOLS' PARTY AT AMM

Every year we celebrate April Fools' day at our faculty in the form of a competition between advanced English groups. It is always funny, entertaining, and amusing. We all have to prepare to show the jury really interesting and comical performances.

This year's April Fools' party was very surprising. All performances were great and funny, but some of them were really affecting. For example, the first team performed a scene from 'The Godfather'. The head of a mafia clan was their teacher and the other man who asked for Don Corleone's help was a negligent student, who came to take a credit test. The famous cat, who lied on Don Corleone's knees, was also there — played by one of the students. It was funny when he tried to mew and rub up against Vito Corleone's legs. However, it seemed that the student who played Don Corleone was not enjoying this process.

The other smart team decided to play a game with our English teachers. They took them one by one out of the room so that they could not hear anything that was going on in the room. One student sang a song and they reversed the recording with the help of a computer program. After this it sounded like a Chinese folk song. The teacher was to listen to this reversed version of the song and then sing it. Then this new recorded version was in turn reversed and the teacher had to guess what song it was. It was really funny and the most amusing fact was that regardless of whether the teachers guessed the song or not they were given prizes.



At the end of the event all the teams ate delicious cakes, made photos, and discussed the performances. The April Fools' Day party at AMM is a good tradition which helps students to improve their English not only by grinding at endless grammar rules but also by communicating with the other students and performing in English.



Elena Em,  
3<sup>rd</sup> year student of AMM



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