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High School Students Converge on Campus for Model United Nations

Winthrop University

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Quick Facts

- This year's keynote speaker is David Birdsey '84, a Foreign Service Officer with 20 years of government service, most recently in Afghanistan.
- Started in 1977, Winthrop's Model UN is the first program of its kind to combine participation of college and high school students.



David Birdsey

ROCK HILL, S.C. - High school students from more than 20 schools in the Carolinas will address "**Reaching for the Future: The Millennium Development Goals**," the focus of the **34th annual Model United Nations** conference March 24-26 at Winthrop.

This year's keynote speaker is **David Birdsey**, a Winthrop alumnus of 1984 and a Foreign Service Officer with 20 years of government service, most recently in Afghanistan. He began his government career in 1990 with the Department of Commerce, where he focused on U.S.-Japan trade relations. From 1991 to 1994, he managed the Market Oriented Sector Selective talks on medical devices and pharmaceuticals, and led technical-level negotiations on government procurement of medical technology during the 1993-1994 Economic Framework negotiations. Birdsey also served as deputy to the USTR negotiator handling telecommunications trade issues during the annual NTT procurement reviews.

In 1994, **Birdsey** joined the Foreign Service, and was posted to Lahore, Pakistan, in August 1995, and the U.S. Embassy in Bonn, Germany in 1997. In 1999, Birdsey continued his work on international economic issues in Washington, in the Office of Austrian, German, and Switzerland Affairs, and a short assignment at the National Security Council in 2001, where he was acting Director for International Economic Affairs. He served as Director of European Regional Affairs at USTR from 2001-2003, where he managed efforts to combat intellectual property rights piracy and deepen agricultural and textile trade with Turkey. In 2004, Birdsey took on the Trade and Telecoms Policy Officer position at the U.S. Embassy in Warsaw, Poland.

In July 2007, **Birdsey** was assigned to the U.S. Embassy in Kabul, Afghanistan, where he served as Commercial Officer and Deputy Economic Counselor, focusing on improving the trade and investment climate in Afghanistan in the mineral, textile and agricultural sectors. He speaks fluent German, and has professional proficiency in Dari, Polish and Urdu.

He is studying Serbian in preparation for his posting to Banja Luka, Republik Srpska, Bosnia as Head of Office beginning in July.

Started in 1977, **Winthrop's Model UN** is the first program of its kind to combine participation of college and high school students. The program pairs Winthrop students enrolled in PLSC 260, who act as delegate chairs, with teams of high school students to represent each of the 65 nations. Select students from the UN class are part of the Secretariat, which plans and runs the following year's conference. Student coordinators Joanna Bryant and Jamie Singleton lead this year's Secretariat. Liz Kelly serves as secretary general.

For more information, contact **Chris Van Aller**, faculty advisor and associate professor of political science, at 803/323-4667.

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